

MODERN DRUMMER™

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DECEMBER 1985

Tony Thompson

Iron Maiden's

**NICKO
McBRAIN**

**PAUL
WERTICO**

**DRUM
ROADIES**

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**The Chicago
Blues Drummers**

**Developing Jazz
Independence: Part 3**

**Peter Erskine
Solo**



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FEATURES

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TONY THOMPSON

In the past year, Tony Thompson received a lot of attention for his drumming with the Power Station, and for being chosen to fill John Bonham's chair when Led Zeppelin reunited for the Live Aid concert. But musicians have known about Thompson for a long time, largely through his work with Chic. Here, he discusses his relationship with Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards, as well as his work with Power Station, Zeppelin, David Bowie, and others.
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Photo by Rick Gould

PAUL WERTICO

The drummer for both Pat Metheny and the group Ear Wax Control discusses the special demands of Metheny's music, how that music evolves, and the recording process for Metheny's albums. Paul also talks about the art of improvisation, his technique of letting music "breathe," playing for other musicians, and his relationship with bass players.
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NICKO McBRAIN

The drummer for the heavy metal band Iron Maiden has played with such diverse performers as Pat Travers and Jim Capaldi. Although he describes himself as a "power" player, Nicko cites Joe Morello as his earliest influence. Here, McBrain discusses playing for various styles of music, surviving the ordeal of touring, and why he doesn't use electronic equipment.
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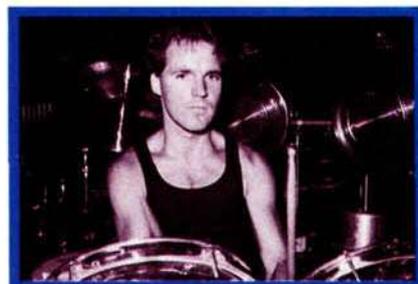


Photo by Rick Malkin



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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

A Turning Point



This issue of *Modern Drummer* Magazine represents the completion of nine years of publishing. In essence, we'll be entering our tenth consecutive year of *MD* with the January '86 issue. This special issue of *MD* has actually been in the planning stages throughout a good portion of this year, and we think it's going to be truly outstanding. Here's a sneak preview of some of the things we've got in store for next month.

First off, we've taken advantage of this opportunity to speak with a selection of *MD*'s 1985 Readers Poll winners and Hall Of Fame members. Comments on trends and styles in the drumming world over the past ten years, combined with a look to the future, will be offered by Louie Bellson, Larrie Londin, Danny Gottlieb, Neil Peart, Buddy Rich, Steve Gadd, Omar Hakim, Sly Dunbar, Alan Dawson, and David Garibaldi.

An in-depth focus on equipment will also be a key focal point of our anniversary celebration issue. We'll be presenting this information through a comprehensive overview of the changes we've witnessed in ten years, and the evolution of the percussion instrument field during that time span. We think you'll find this to be an interesting observation on just how fast—and far—our industry has progressed in a decade.

As long as I'm on the subject of equipment, I'm sure we're all well aware of the incredible impact electronics has had on our lives as drummers. Because of this, in next month's issue, we'll also be debuting *MD*'s *Sound Supplement*, our first vinyl soundsheet recording. A demonstration of various studio drum sounds, from the aspects of miking and electronic enhancement, will be offered by New York drum computer and electronics specialist Jimmy Bralower, complete with some super grooves layed down by Mr. Andy Newmark. This special demonstration record was done at The Power Station in New York City, well known nationwide for its great drum sound. Next month's *Sound Supplement* will be the first of several we hope to present in the future.

We'll also be running our usual column roster, with many of the articles relating to the special tone of the issue. For example, we'll be expanding our *Up & Coming* department, which focuses on outstanding new talent, to present a few of the younger artists we feel certain you'll be hearing more from in the next few years.

All in all, we think next month's issue of *MD* will be quite special in many aspects. It's a landmark issue for *MD*, and we hope you'll join in the celebration, and enjoy it with us. January '86 will also be our way of saying *thanks*, and that we're really looking forward to having you with us for the next ten years of *Modern Drummer* Magazine.

RS

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READER'S PLATFORM

THE DRUMSET PLAYER: A SPECIAL TALENT

I owe a great debt of thanks to Mr. Rodman Sims. His article, "The Drumset Player, A Special Talent" [September '85 MD] brought tears to my eyes. Never were truer words spoken about the prejudices arrayed against us drummers. I hope that drummers will take a good, close look at this article, and be ready to argue down anyone who puts them down.

I was able to experience the importance of a drummer this past summer. I joined a community band where the percussion section consisted of a trumpet player on bass drum (who tediously "whomped" on every beat) and an old man on the snare who knew his rudiments, but was sadly out of date with drumset playing. After my first two concerts with the band, I heard comments left and right on how my presence improved both the sound and the morale of the band. They said that I added a lot to the feeling of fast and modern numbers. We drummers are the foundation of music, so we deserve to be treated—and to treat ourselves—with great respect.

Luc R. Bergeron
Lewiston, ME

PETER DEUTSCHMAN: CIRCUS DRUMMER

I just received your September issue and enjoyed reading about Peter Deutschman, the drummer with the Clyde Beatty Cole Brothers Circus. The band was in town a few years back, and they were great. Every drummer would really appreciate Peter's work; he and the band played every style with much joy, and were really alive. Russ Darr was the director at the time, and he was kind enough to give me his office address in Pennsylvania, so I could send for a tape of the band that was recorded earlier in the year. Whenever I'm feeling down, I listen to this cassette, and it gets me back up.

Ed Thomas
St. Augustine, FL

ON SHINY CYMBALS

Hang around long enough, and sooner or later your pride in your craft will compel you to "tangle with a giant." My gripe is with the late, great Thelonius Monk. In your August '85 article on Frankie Dunlop, that gentleman quotes Monk as saying that he would not have hired Mr. Dunlop as his drummer had the latter been playing shiny cymbals. It was Mr. Monk's contention that shiny equipment indicated "lack of seasoning" on the part of the

player. Please delete my predictable expletive.

To be sure, I have heard superb playing on ratty-looking kits, and I have heard totally inept playing on shiny new setups. But I have also heard the converse. One does not see shabby instruments in the symphony, and there is rarely a "lack of seasoning" in those players!

The only way to know "if a cat can cook" is to listen to him or her play. A great many of us feel that a clean, shiny cymbal gives "more fire" when we're "cookin'" than any filthy cymbal of the same type can offer. Also, today's drummers take more pride in their craft than ever before. I recently had the privilege of hearing a master drummer "work out" on a set of mid-1930s *Radio Kings*. The chrome gleamed, the cymbals (from the same era) glistened, and the music soared at more dynamic levels than I have ever heard. The player was 75 years old—ya wanna talk "seasoned"? Don't judge drummers by their drums; let their playing tell their story.

Burt Dotson
Tullahoma, TN

GEORGE L. STONE

I am writing to tell you that I enjoyed your article about George Lawrence Stone greatly. I have read it several times. You have paid a well-deserved tribute to a true giant of the drum world. Mr. Stone was a man of sterling character and a person who put principle above profit.

All of Rick Mattingly's articles have been of special interest to me, as they are always well-written and without bias. Needless to say, *Modern Drummer* Magazine fills a need, helping to cement drummers of every age into a fraternity of common interest. I thank you sincerely for what you are doing to inspire all of us.

Ralph G. Eames
Wakefield, MA

Thank you for the interesting article on George Stone. However, how can Les Harris say that "his motto was, 'practice tight so that you can play loose,' " when he clearly states in his *Stick Control* book, "Practice at all times with relaxed muscles, stopping at the slightest feeling of tension." These statements seem to contradict each other.

Karen Berwick
Mike Browne
E. Patchogue, NY

Editor's Note: Joe Morello noticed the same thing. He suggests that what Stone was looking for was precision and accu-

racy. Morello says that Stone stressed the importance of the hand movements being anatomically correct, and of all notes and rests being given their full value. In an attempt to be precise, some players do, unfortunately, "tighten up," but that was never what Stone intended.

BOB CHRISTIANSON

I think Rick Van Horn should be congratulated on his *In The Studio* interview: "Bob Christianson: Working With Drum Machines." [August '85 MD] The interview was fabulous (both questions and answers), and should serve as inspiration to drummers who are curious, afraid, or too stubborn to accept drum machines and electronic drums! As Bob stated, electronics are happening now, so now is the time to get into them!

Don't get me wrong: I love playing my acoustic kit and playing jazz. And I love listening to the masters (both old and new) of jazz and acoustic drumming! But I equally enjoy listening to the modern-day drummers/programmers who are utilizing electronics. I just recently bought an album simply because Jimmy Bralower did all the Linn and Simmons programming!

I would also like to say that I can relate to the "Fear Of The Drum Machine" syndrome. When I first played with one, I had that same reluctant attitude. But since then, I have bought a drum machine and two sets of Simmons (8's and then 7's). Not only are my electronic instruments good for studio work, as rentals, as teaching tools, and for practice, but once you get into them, they are a *blast!* And a lot of times they make my job easier! Thanks again to Rick and Bob for a great article! Let's see more articles of this type!

Jeff Monroe
Cincinnati, OH

THANKS FROM JOHN

I just wanted to let everyone at *Modern Drummer* know how much I appreciate your fine magazine. It's a magazine for all drummers, the novice or the professional. You keep me up to date on the latest news about other drummers, the latest in equipment, etc. I find the articles most informative, and I just wanted to take this opportunity to say "keep up the good work."

Also, I'd like to thank all the readers for their support in the Readers Poll this year. It's good to know that my work and efforts in the business don't go completely unnoticed. Again thanks. *Modern Drummer* is #1 in my readers poll!

John Stacey
Goodlettsville, TN



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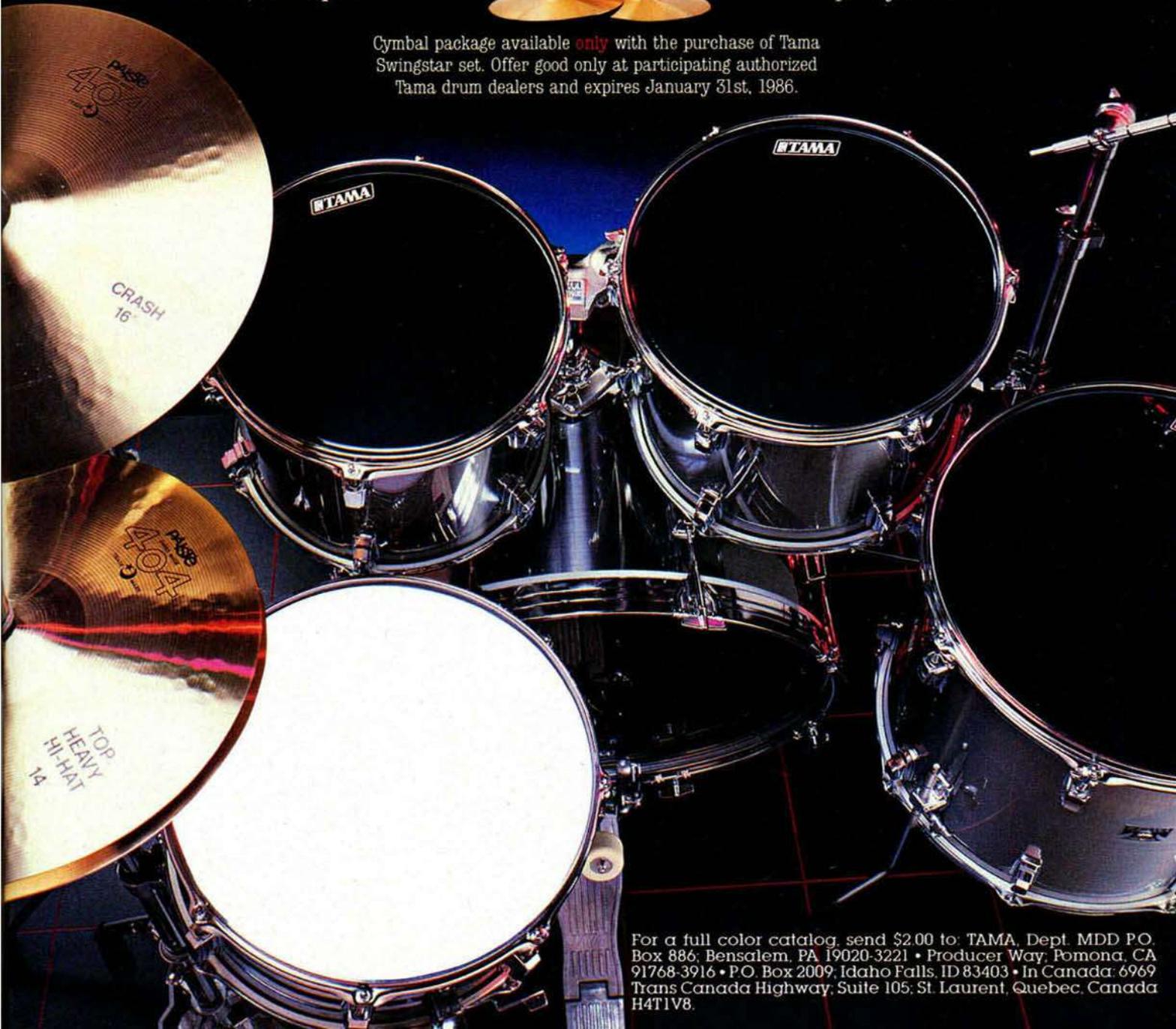
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ASK A PRO

VINNIE COLAIUTA

Q. What method did you use to learn and to improve sight reading? What books did you use to aid in reading development?

Jordi X. Blasco
Barcelona, Spain

A. I went through just about every drum book I could possibly find. The books that I think were the best for me were the Bellson books in 4/4 and odd time, and Portraits In Rhythm, by Cirone. Cirone's book is really good for sight reading, because it's a legit snare drum book; that was one of my favorites.

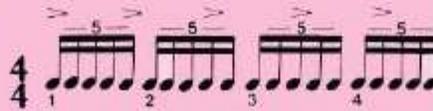
I would play exercises at faster tempos than were called for in the book. I didn't stop, no matter what mistakes I made, but I would try to remember what the mistakes were. Then I would go back, learn the phrases correctly, and then play the same exercise again, slower—at the suggested tempo. In this way, I trained my mind to go faster than it was "supposed to," so I could read ahead of the bar. Once I corrected the figures that I made mistakes on, my mind registered those corrections, and stored them in my musical vocabulary, so that I could recognize the figure—the way it looked as a whole. I would look at certain figures, and see every possible permutation that they could be written in, and memorize them all. After a while, I would just recognize them within a bar, and instead of looking at one figure on one beat, I would read a whole bar at a time. If that was too much—if there were too many notes in the bar—I would just cut the bar in half and try to learn how to read two or more beats at a time, instead of just concentrating on one figure.

When you look at a figure like a "word," on one beat, and then you look at another "word" on the second beat, a lot of times they'll go together rhythmically in a logical sense to form "sentences." If you find a figure that throws you within a phrase, it's just like reading a sentence that you understand, except for one word that you have to translate. If that figure happens at the end of a bar, you already know what the "sentence" means, and so you're translating that "word" while you're playing the "sentence." You're working within a context that you understand, and that gives you a clue. Even if you can't recognize the figure quickly, you have a

logical feel for what it should be, based on what has gone before.

This system enabled me to develop my sight reading to a level that got me my gig with Frank Zappa. I had to sit down and sight-read really difficult music for him. But I was prepared for that, because in my earlier studying, I had found as much literature as I could dealing with polyrhythms and had figured it out mathematically myself. When I got to Berklee, studying with Gary Chaffee really fine tuned my knowledge of polyrhythms. The Magadini books are also real good for that. They explain the fact that you're supposed to play an alienated group of notes evenly dispersed throughout a given number of beats. So once you work that out with a metronome—figure out how to subdivide it mathematically—then you can pretty much figure out the rest yourself.

For example, if I wanted to learn how to play 5 over 4, I would take a measure of 4/4, put a quintuplet (five 16th notes) on every beat, and play that evenly. Then, if I wanted to play a group of 5 in a bar of 4/4, I would play all the 16th notes, but accent every fourth one, starting from the first beat, as shown below.



That way, you would hear what the "big 5" was supposed to sound like.

One good way to do it is to play it and accent every fourth beat with the right hand, and play the in betweens evenly with the left. Then eliminate the in betweens, and just keep playing that at different tempos, until your mind is used to hearing it. That gets the figure into your head, so that when you see it, you just read it as a whole and play it easily. You should then try going between that and something that sounds very similar to it, like sextuplets. Play back and forth between figures that sound real close together. After a while, your vocabulary builds up, and you can use that formula pretty much to figure out every other polyrhythmic subdivision. You have to learn to count it first, and then get to a point where you can hear it. It's just like learning new words in a difficult language.

MEL LEWIS

Q. In your interview in the February '85 issue of MD, you mention that you use calfskin heads on your drums. Could you please give me the name and address of the company where I might be able to purchase such heads?

Homer Bruning
Broomfield, CO

A. I purchased enough calf heads from the Pro Percussion Shop in New York (before it closed) to last me for years. But they got them, as can you, from United Rawhide Manufacturing Company, 1644 N. Ada Street, Chicago, Illinois 60622. Speak to Mr. Polanski, at (312) 276-1177.

STEVE SMITH

Q. Could you please give the rundown on your drums, cymbals and mic's on Frontiers? Also, could you explain how you got the "psshh" sound before your crashes on "Ask The Lonely"? It sounds like a China-type right before the crash. Finally, are you planning on doing any clinics in the near future? I would travel many miles to see you in clinic.

Ron Caton
Oklahoma City, OK

A. The drums I used on Frontiers are a set of Sonors with an oak veneer finish. I've used them on almost every record I've ever done. They are all standard sizes, starting with two 24" bass drums, 8x12, 9x 13, and 10x 14 rack toms, and 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms. On Frontiers, I had two Radio King snare drums—one tuned tight and one very loose, depending on the tune. The cymbals were all A. Zildjians: 14" Rock hi-hats, a 24" heavy Ping ride, 17" and 19" crashes, a 10" splash, a UFIP Icebell, and a 20" Swish. There were Sennheiser 421s on all the toms, an AKG 414, and a Shure SM57 on the snare, another AKG 414 on the hi-hats, and a Beyer 88 and a Sony C-500 on each bass drum (with no padding inside, just felt strips and a 10" hole in the front head). For overheads, we used Neuman mic's; I'm afraid I don't remember the model. As for the "psshh" sound, that's done by hitting another crash cymbal one 16th note before the main crash.

I plan on doing a clinic tour sometime after the release of my third Vital Information album in early 1986. Thank you for your support, and I'll see you on the road!



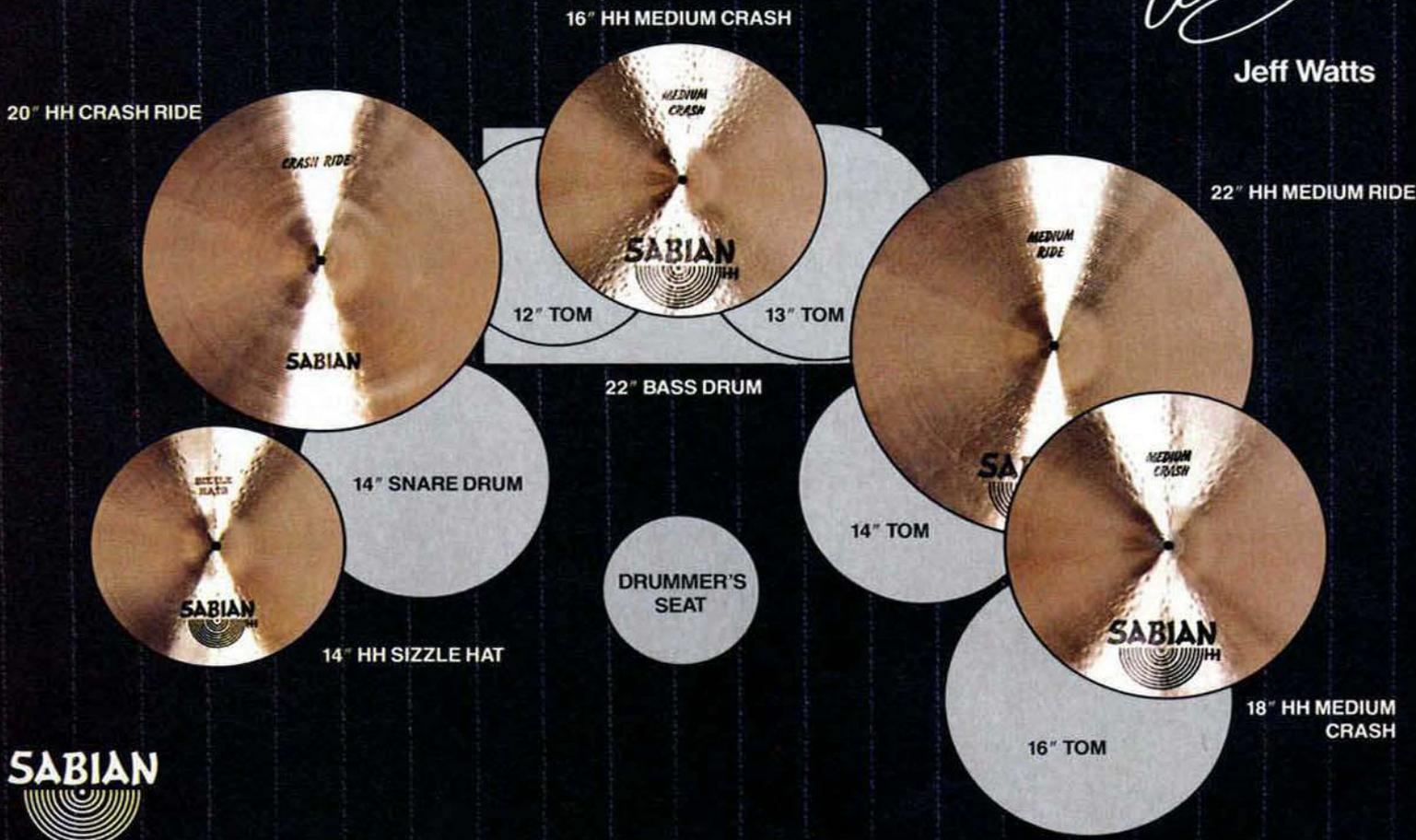
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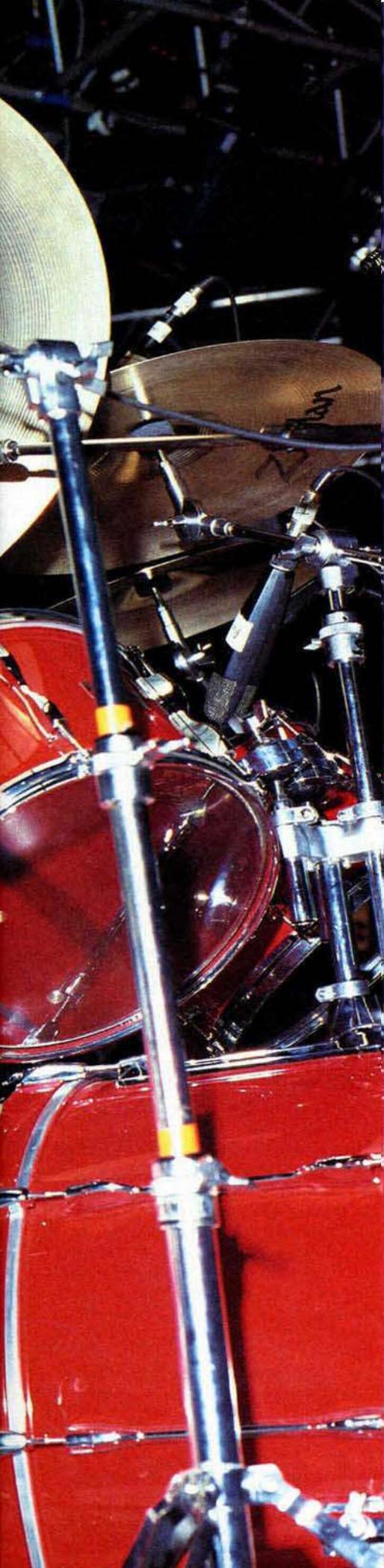
Jeff Watts



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TONY THOMPSON

by Chip Stern

DANCE Oriented Rock: It's been a long time coming, and now, hip-hopping into our ears from every blaster radio, MTV cable box, and local dance club west of the Berlin Wall, it is shaping up as one of the most dominant musical directions of the mid-'80s. Yet who but the most dedicated discophiles truly saw it coming?

The musicians, as always, anticipated this contemporary synthesis by the simple act of loving the musics that now comprise the groove, and by refusing to acknowledge the stylistic distinctions that were imposed by the media and a color-blind culture. And why should it be any more surprising to discover that young black musicians might be head bangers at heart than it is to realize that young white musicians can get up off of that good foot?

Together with guitarist Nile Rodgers and bassist Bernard Edwards, drummer Tony Thompson made up one-third of the most potent, ubiquitous rhythm section of the late '70s and early '80s—Chic. Denied the opportunity to stretch out and strut their stuff during the height of the jazz-rock craze (because, unless your name was Herbie Hancock, black fusion bands did not get signed or promoted during this era), they shuffled back into the modern equivalent of "race records," which in 1976 meant disco. Their succession of monster hits, beginning with "Dance, Dance, Dance (Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah)" and "LeFreak," culminating in "Good Times," set the standard for R&B rhythm sections, such as Motown and Stax-Volt had in the '60s.

It was a clean, open, commodious groove, and its effect on the disco and R&B rhythm sections that heard it was electric. Accepting the four-on-the-floor Zeitgeist of dance music as a given, Chic engaged in a bit of musical role reversal. Rodgers' polytonal rhythm figures and his percolating, choppy attack conveyed much of the energy usually carried by the hi-hats swinging the hustle beat. Edwards' bass lines, lithe yet rotund, breathy and syncopated in the manner of a tuba, slid in and out of the groove, not merely outlining the beat but orchestrating the rhythm.

All of their innovation left Tony Thompson free to rethink the accents in the groove, because his section partners were already covering most of the strong beats. Once Thompson had underscored their accents, he began to discover some subtle cracks in what most drummers would regard as a monolithic one-TWO-three-FOUR coal-mining operation. On songs like "I Got Protection" and Sister Sledge's "We Are Family," his bass drum and hi-hats slip and slide around the regular snare accents, giving the impression that he is simultaneously rushing and dragging the groove. Chic's groove was more than the sum of its parts, and you could set your watch to it.

And many did. For a lot of musicians, each successive Chic album constituted a stylistic crutch, even as the band continued to evolve, leaving their old styles to the commercial wolves in a series of grossly underrated albums (culminating in the glossy technocratic new-Gospel of Believer, their last for Atlantic). Chic became better known for their work as hired guns, whose stylizations revived the careers of Sister Sledge and Diana Ross, among others. As more and more rockers began to get the funk, Chic spent less and less time on their own music to the point where they seem to exist no more as a band in their own right.

Yet for Tony Thompson, Chic's status in limbo has liberated him from the sideman role, and allowed him to emerge as one of contemporary pop's most original power players with the likes of David Bowie (on the Serious Moonlight tour), Bill Laswell and Material, Jeff Beck, and Mick Jagger. Now his thundering, tom-tom inflected energy has been framed in a new setting. The

Photo by Jaeger Kotas



Photo by Rick Gould

Power Station—a collaborative band that promises for the first time to fully depict Tony Thompson's prowess as a pure rock slugger in a setting that might best be characterized as heavy metalfunk. That Tony Thompson's roots in this music run as deep as they do is but one of the surprising insights to be garnered from this garrulous, easygoing drummer.

CS: What are the origins of your new alliance?

TT: When I was with Bowie, I met the bassist and guitarist in Duran Duran [John Taylor and Andy Taylor] in the South of France, and they were really into the Chic thing. They said we should do a record, but it was just talk for a while. Then I saw them again in Sydney, and they were still really interested. So we finished the album last year with Robert Palmer as the lead vocalist, and the name of the band is Power Station.

CS: How appropriate—your studio away from home.

TT: Right. It came out on Capitol, and in the interim, I did Madonna's album. It's unbelievable that they're selling like they are, but what can you say?

CS: What is the status with the Power Station these days?

TT: Just a rest now. Andy and John are going to go back to Duran Duran. They're going to go into the studio and do another album, and they're talking about doing a tour. I don't know. I just finished doing the theme song with Power Station for Arnold Schwarzenegger's new movie called *Commando*, but that was the last project. We might release a live album in January. That's up in the air right now. Or we might do another studio album, but that's also up in the air. It's a time thing for everyone, when everyone's available. If we do a studio thing, we'll either use Michael Des Barres or Robert Palmer, but we'll consider using both, to tell you the truth.

**"IT'S A LOT
EASIER TO MIX
DOWN A DRUM
TRACK THAN
TO MAKE
A DEAD-
SOUNDING SET
OF DRUMS
SOUND LIVE."**

CS: So where does all of this leave Chic?

TT: My next project is an album with Bernard and Eddie Martinez—the guitar player who played on Jagger's stuff and played with Lenny White. I grew up with the cat. This is something that we always wanted to do. Eddie's been writing some stuff, and right now Bernard is producing *Missing Persons*. Once he finishes that, we're going to get down to the studio and lay down tracks. I might have to go to California to do that, but that's the next project for us. I don't know about a Chic album. I don't really see that happening. Nile's been quite busy and so has Bernard. If it does happen, it won't be in the near future, as far as I can see.

CS: Pity. It's hard to get a rhythm team together, and you guys were a *section*. How many real rhythm sections are there in pop, jazz, or R&B?

TT: I guess I always took it for granted how important it was for me to play with Bernard on all those records. It has the kind of feeling that would make it easy for any guitarist with half a groove to fit right in. Andy Taylor just jumped in and hooked up with me on the Power Station album, and simply played his ass off. There was maybe one track where we did the basic tracks with the bassist. Other than that, Bernard laid all the basic tracks and John Taylor overdubbed over that. It seemed that with just me and Bernard the foundation was right there.

CS: Well then, how would you characterize the Chicsound?

TT: I guess it's the funk foundation and a certain feel that we have: an open, spacious kind of groove that's never cluttered. I can lay it

down—the simplest of drumbeats—and Bernard will just fill in the holes. On every record we've ever made it's the same type of feeling—never any overplaying. It was just something that seemed to work, and I only get that feeling when I play with Bernard.

CS: Do you find that a lot of what is getting over as R&B, funk, or whatever they're calling it these days is on the dense, cluttered side?

TT: Not everything. But it seems as if they've locked into something that sounds familiar from the old days. I'm not exactly sure what the formula is, because you see, we didn't have a formula; we just played.

CS: Well, in a way, Chic is responsible for a lot of the popular scratch, rap, and breaking sounds, *vis-a-vis* the Sugarhill Gang's appropriation of Kool & The Gang's "Good Times" on Sugarhill's "Rapper's Delight."

TT: Yeah, we finally saw royalties from that—the Chic Organization did anyway. That's been dissolved, too, and we're no longer on Atlantic. We're dickering with some majors for a new recording contract, but first we want to make a little noise to let people know we never left. We thought we'd be signed by now, but then we all got involved in these other projects. But honestly, the album I made with Andy Taylor, John Taylor, and Robert Palmer is so hip. The Power Station is something else.

CS: They wanted another kind of identity outside Duran Duran?

TT: The whole reason the album came up was because Andy and John had wanted to play with me and Bernard for years. That's their thing—funk. And Robert Palmer's been living in the Bahamas, so he's been away from the scene for so long that he became sort of an underground rock hero. He's so talented, and as a result of this project, he realized that Bernard was the producer he'd been looking for for years. With all of us rubbing shoulders this way, it can only lead to better things.

CS: What other projects have you been working on? Didn't you play with Jeff Beck?

TT: I did a wonderful tune on his album, written by Vangelis, called "Arthur's Tune." It was a rock 'n' roll jam out—just great. I'd always wanted to play with Jeff Beck; he's one of my idols. But as it turned out, either the record company or Jeff felt it was too rock 'n' roll, and out of context with the rest of the album.

CS: *Too* rock 'n' roll? Jeff Beck?

TT: Well, Jeff sings on the album; Nile produced it; it has more of an R&B feeling. So I guess the rock 'n' roll tune stuck out like a sore thumb. And that was all I got to do on that date.

I played on four tunes on Jagger's album, but only one of those was released, a song called "Hard Woman." Jagger was right behind me dancing away as I played. He was just a sweetheart to work with. And the rhythm section I got to work with consisted of all monsters: Jeff Beck, Colin Hodgkinson, and Jan Hammer. You would have thought that it would have been a hot rhythm section, but it never worked out, I guess because here were four cats who just like to play—simple as that. "Hard Woman" was a slow ballad, and man, it was so hard to get into it and lay it down.

CS: So it was hard to get them settled?

TT: When you have all that talent in one room, things happen, and some of the jamming that went on when the tape wasn't running was incredible. Jan Hammer is something else, man. But it never really came together. I'd rather not elaborate on that at all. I also did Diana Ross's album, but I didn't get any credit, because there wasn't enough room to list credits, so to speak. Me and about 20 other musicians were pretty angry about that.

CS: The Motown/Rolling Stone syndrome: all those anonymous musicians who made those records for Berry Gordy,

and the way the Stones would use someone like Sonny Rollins and not even credit him. Anyway, did you get to play with Diana? How do her sessions work?

TT: Well, Bernard was the producer on a number of tunes. So he came in with a cassette of the tunes he'd done with this keyboardist Denizil Miller. There was this one tune, "Telephone," that I listened to, we talked it down, we did one take, and I was on my way home.

CS: Were there vocals on the tape?

TT: Nothing. Just a groove. So I ran it down with the two of them, and that was it. We had a track.

CS: That's interesting, because when you listen to a lot of pop, particularly tracks you, Bernard, and Nile have been involved in, it sounds as if you were all playing there live in the studio. How do you account for that feeling?

TT: See, I've gotten used to filling in certain spots where I think the singer will be doing something wild or laying out. I guess I've just gotten used to the formula of Chic—knowing where to fill before or after the singer completes the phrase. The David Bowie album was the only time I ever got to do tracks with the singer at the same time. He was standing there in the booth right in front of me, singing with my rhythm, and it was great, because I could see where the tune was going. That was really helpful. There was no guessing, like Bernard telling me, "Tony you played just a little too much there. That's where I have the singer coming in." With Bowie I could see where the tune was going, and knew when it was time to lay back and when to seriously jam. I had eye





contact with him, and I wasn't even listening to myself half the time; I was just reacting—going with the flow. It was fun. I'd never done that before. On the Power Station album, Robert [Palmer] and I did a tune called "Go To Zero" with just a click track when everyone was late—just me and him. It was hip. And with Bill Laswell, I did the same thing with just handclaps.

CS: What do they write for you on a typical rhythm chart?

TT: They don't; I never read, except for that track with Laswell. I don't work that way. No producer has ever come up to me with a rhythm figure. I just play. I'll listen to the rough demo, and then just lock in with handclaps for a click track. They'll set the tempo, usually on a *Linn-Drum*, and *I make the groove*. I don't use the handclaps for the feel—I provide the feel—but mainly for time. Still, I can't deviate too far from that.

CS: You know, most of the great bebop drummers had some big band experience, so that when they scaled down to a small combo, they were playing orchestrally: maybe suggesting brass figures with the snare. Do you see anything analogous in that to your work with Chic?

TT: That's interesting. I never thought of it that way, but it makes sense. In certain places I'll put the bass drum in when Nile does one of his little licks, and I'll just react—still keeping the groove. Or sometimes he'll go with something I'm doing. On some of the tunes we'll add strings, horns, or voices, and it sounds like we're playing together, because Nile and Bernard will write parts off of the little spots where we go off together. So perhaps as a rhythm section we do suggest orchestral parts.

CS: Do they generally forego room sound by just shoving you in the isolation booth and waiting for you to come up with the \$64,000 rhythm?

TT: Just the opposite. I'm usually out in the room, and everybody else is isolated. That's how I prefer to play, and that's how I get that big, fat, live sound I'm known for—which I prefer. Sometimes we go for isolation, but, man, you can get a much more exciting drum sound if you make the room work for you—taking advantage of all that resonance. It's a lot easier to mix down a drum track than to make a dead-sounding set of drums sound live.

CS: Are there any tricks you employ to obtain your characteristic drum sound at the Power Station?

TT: I'm most pleased with the drum sound I've been getting lately with an engineer named Jason Corsero. We're a little team now. I don't know what the hell he's doing, but he's gaining the daylights out of the traps, and it sounds like all bedlam's breaking loose. Of course, the room sound contributes so much, and those rooms at the Power Station are so big and resonant that a 10" mounted tom ends up sounding like a big floor tom. I'll just tweak the drums until they sound good together, just to get some basic tonal things happening. Then he has me hit the snare, hit the bass drum, and then I go in the booth, where we finish tuning up the drums together. In ten minutes, we'll have a terrific drum sound. Other engineers can't do that all the time. This one cat wanted me to come in two hours before a session to get a drum sound. Two hours! Man! That's nuts. All those knobs and you need two hours?

CS: So sometimes he'll electronically tune your drums with gates. How does that affect the pitch?

TT: It depends. Sometimes he'll tune them from the booth, and then I have to work with the heads just to get it fully together. There's no prescribed method for doing it. It depends on the sound we're going for. But basically, it's a John Bonham sound; do you hear what I'm saying? That sound in a funk context is my goal.

CS: In a recent *Modern Drummer* feature on Bonham, it became apparent that drummers going for that Bonham sound were going about it the wrong way, because Bonham used to favor a wide-open kit with no muffling—right down to the bass drum.

TT: Interesting. I find that, as I progress, I'm taking out more stuff—more padding. I don't pad my toms at all.

CS: What motivates producers to make drummers do that in the studio?

TT: Sometimes there's a ring. They can't get it out.

CS: What's the matter with ring? Your cymbals ring.

TT: Thank you. It really depends on the producers, and if they can't deal with it, you have to get rid of that ring. Sometimes they want me to get rid of drums, you know? "I can't get the ring out of the drum." Well, that's your problem, buddy. That's my sound.

CS: Strange, because that John Bonham sound is resonance.

TT: That's how my kit is heading these days, and it's been working, especially with Jason's contribution and the great sound of Studio C at the Power Station. Just the raw drums and that room combine for a kicking sound. I've been using Yamahas, the *Recording Custom* kit, in a cherry-red piano finish—real nice drums. Those are what I used with Bowie. This kit has a 26" bass drum, which is weird. The only time I ever used anything larger was in my rock 'n' roll days. I saw Carmine Appice with Cactus, and he had two 28" Ludwig bass drums, so I went out and copped them.

CS: But you do a lot of syncopations with your foot. Doesn't a drum that big tend to give you a really slow response?

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"WHEN I PLAY ON RECORDS, I TRY TO KEEP MYSELF HAPPY BY NOT ADHERING TO THE NORM."

TT: Not really. See, I *can feel* the bass drum. That way, whenever I lock into a groove, I can feel it. I want it to come back at me. And bigger bass drums do that for me, particularly on a live gig like Bowie's. I had the 26", and the monitors were up so close that they nearly made my ears bleed. All I wanted was bass drum; that's all I wanted to hear. The bass drum gave me a feeling, and let me lock into whatever the bassist was doing.

CS: What were you using on all those Chic albums?

TT: A standard studio set of Ludwigs with a 22" bass drum that's still there at the Power Station. It's one of the best recording kits I ever played on. It was *old* Ludwig, and not even a kit. It's composed of all these mismatched wood finishes: 8x10, 9x13, 16x16, 18x20. And I'd usually bring my own snare drum, which was a metal Premier for a while. It's a nice sounding, *nice feeling* kit, where you don't have to tweak with it—just slap on a set of clear *Ambassadors*, top and bottom. I like the sound, feel, and response I get from them. I played a rehearsal recently on a Yamaha kit fitted out with *Emperors*; for me it was a drag. The kit felt so sluggish, and as much as I was doing on the toms, nothing was coming out. With *Ambassadors*, I know what's going on because the sound comes right back at me. I can hear and feel what I'm doing, because the drum is resonating. It's essential to feel what I'm doing, which is why, when I'm recording, I leave one ear open with the can over the other ear so I can hear what's going on. On stage, I would use earplugs in one ear, just to give me the house sound mix and to let me know what I'm doing up there for real.

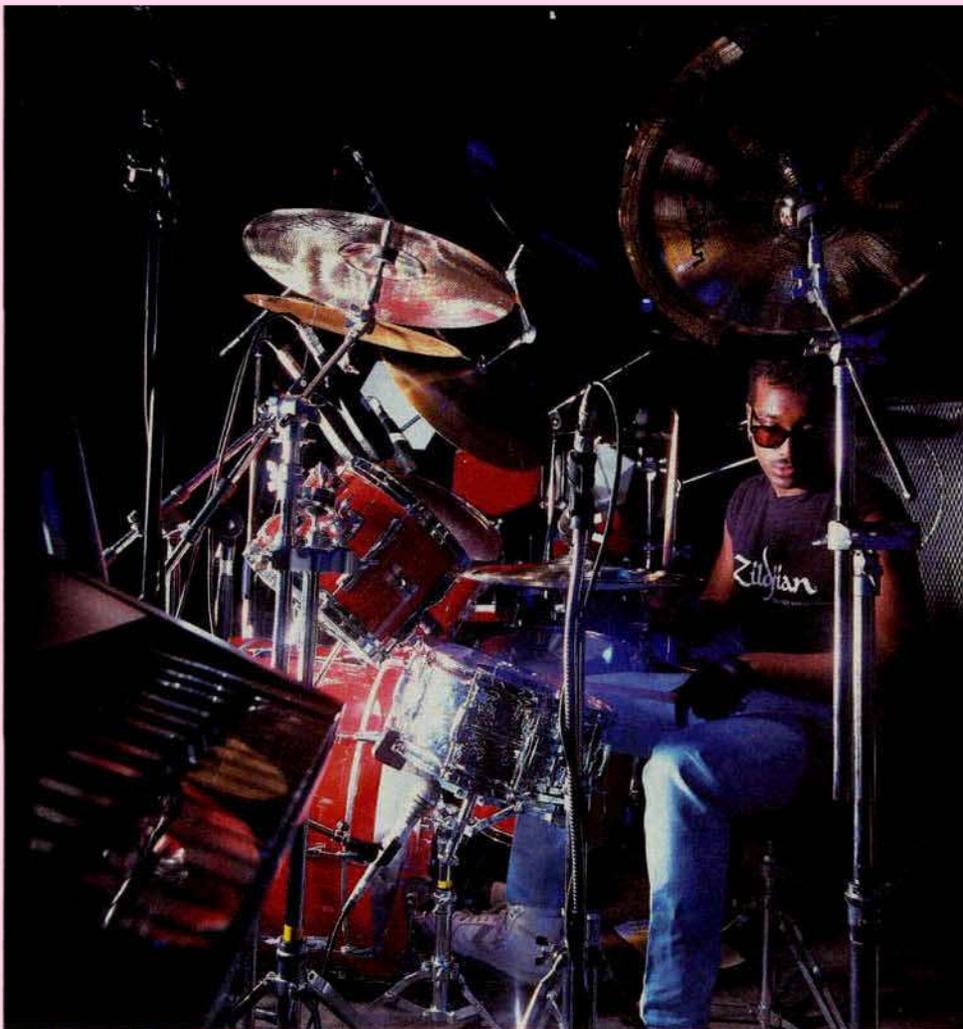
CS: A lot of people seem to be going for a clear *Emperor* on top, and a clear *Ambassador* or *Diplomat* on the bottom.

TT: That doesn't work for me. I'm a hard hitter, but thick heads don't give me enough of what I need. In my mother's basement in Jamaica, Queens, I have an old wooden Gretsch set with a 20" bass, and 8 x 12, 9x 13, 12 x 15, and 16 x 16 toms. That's a great sounding kit, and I practice on it all the time. It's *Ambassadors* all the way, although I have an Evans *Hydraulic* on the bass drum with a frosted *Ambassador* up front. It's a happening kit, and the sound I get in my mom's basement is great.

CS: Were your parents a source of encouragement to you in pursuing the drums?

TT: My mother was, and my father was too, after a while. You know how it is: When your son is eight years old and says he wants to be a drummer, you say alright, and then blow up the kit with firecrackers the next week. But my mom was with me all the way. A week after hearing "Toad" by Ginger Baker, I told her I wanted to be a drummer. I just got an insight listening to Ginger about what I wanted to do, which was play drums like that. Ginger Baker changed my life. I didn't want to play baseball or any of those other kids' games anymore. That was it; I knew what I wanted to do.

So I came home and started banging on tables, pillows—the works. Then I went to visit



DRUMS

a cousin in Connecticut. He could play "Wipe Out" on the table with his fingers, and he wasn't even a drummer. I'd heard that tune for years, and I couldn't play it, so that really psyched me. I had him show me what he was doing, and in two hours, I had it down the way I heard it off the record. And that's how I started.

My parents are still behind me. I have an apartment in the City, but when I come out to their place, I can blast 24 hours a day and they don't care. They're beautiful to me, and I love them for everything they've done for me. I think it's because they see me out there doing something with it, but even in the old days, I used to have band rehearsals there. And if I was out of work or between gigs and I said, "Ma, I need a drum lesson" or "I need sticks," she'd take it from the food money. So we were a team.

I remember coming home from school and listening to WPLJ. I just grew up on Led Zeppelin and Hendrix; that's all I did. I'd come home, do my homework, and just sit by the radio with my drumsticks and my pillow. My father bought me my first snare drum. It was a Kent or a Zumgar or something: a cheap, mother-of-pearl thing with a cymbal attached to the side. I used to beat the shit out of that thing, literally, 24 hours a day for a year, or so it felt. It took my pop a while to get me a whole kit, and I just wanted to join a band so badly at that time. I was around 11 or 12, and I used to have to borrow a kit. I thought I played quite well then. The first group I belonged to was called Reggie & The Atlantics. They already had a drummer, so we had to switch, but this guy never wanted me to play, naturally: It was his gig. I guess

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"WHEN you go on stage, it's like a big conversation. Music is about what you have to say on that particular day." So says Paul Wertico, drummer for Pat Metheny (and Chicago's Ear Wax Control), who it seems would be happy to communicate exclusively through playing music. Not that he isn't verbal—quite the contrary. It's just that music is his passion, and when he's behind the drums, he definitely speaks from the heart.

The music has always been foremost in his life. "If I had to choose between a \$100 gig or a \$15 gig that was more musical, I'd always take the \$15 gig, without fail. I think a lot of musicians don't do that, because it's hard to make a living playing music. I've starved and maybe I'll starve again, but whatever it is, the responsibility has always been the music, never the business angle of it. It still isn't. I still just like to play."

At 12, he began to take up the drums. His parents had suggested that he play any instrument but the drums, but that was his fascination. Perhaps the biggest source of encouragement in Paul's life was Donald Ehrensberger, his high school band director at Cary-Grove High School in Cary, Illinois. "When I got into the high school band, there would be auditions, and I'd come in late just because I didn't care. Yet, the band director would always make me head of the percussion section. He was really cool. If there were five chairs in the concert band, and I'd come in eighth in the audition, he'd stretch it to eight chairs and then make me head of the percussion section. He let me do all these crazy things."

From the time Paul was six and found himself playing "Mary Had A Little Lamb" at a wedding, his drum concept was a melodic one. Instead of bashing like a typical child, he recalls that he tried to play notes on the drums. "The concept of my drumming was never patterns or rhythms, because I didn't really study that. It was always melody."

Somehow, Paul decided to pursue becoming a drummer. "I never said, 'I'm going to become a musician.' I just always loved to play. I never planned out anything. That's why it's really crazy to be with this band. I never really thought about making money from it, because I've always taken the musical gig over the money gig. Maybe that's why I ended up here. A lot of times, people say, 'You deserve this gig.' But there are 10,000 people who deserve a gig like this."

RF: How did you get with Metheny in the first place?

PW: I had turned Pat down seven years ago. He called me to play some gigs, and I turned him down because I was playing with the sax player Joe Daley. He was sort of like a teacher/father figure. I was a young bebop drummer, and he saw a lot of potential in me and helped me along. We got this really good gig at the Jazz Showcase in Chicago, and Pat had heard my name from Ross Trout. I had been playing with Ross Trout and Steve Rodby in an ECM-type band. I knew who Pat was and really wanted to play with him, but I felt that I had to play with Joe. It was the best gig that band had done, and I couldn't just say, "Thanks, goodbye."

Pat and I didn't really stay in touch. I went to see the band a couple of times, although I think I only went backstage once to say hello. I never said, "Hi. How're you doing? Do you need a drummer?" I went to hear the music, I liked it, and I split. Then when Steve got the gig, he and Danny Gottlieb played together for a couple of years. One night, Steve brought Pat to hear me play with the Simon & Bard Group in Portland, the same night the Metheny Group was playing in Portland. Pat came up and said, "You sound great," and walked away. Then when Nana Vasconcelos left the group, Danny couldn't make the audition for another percussionist in Boston, so Pat called me to do the audition. I didn't even bother to learn any of the tunes. I just went out and played. I didn't really think about getting the gig. It's weird, but it's true, and it's kind of neat. I feel good about it, because it was a very natural thing. It's not like I'm trying to force my career to go anywhere.

RF: Musically, what are you thinking about when you're playing odd-time signatures with Metheny?

PW: The clave, basically. I hear the twos and threes, or the clave beat. On a tune like "Phase Dance," there's a certain one- or two-bar pattern that I hear, and I play around it. Maybe being a Capricorn has something to do with it, but I always think logically. My solos are based like those of Roy Haynes, who is my favorite drummer. His solos always appealed to me because they were really out, but they always made sense. I try to do that. If I'm playing odd-time signatures, it's the same thing. I hear one thing and I try to sculpt it. I'm hearing different things every night, but they're based on the same thing.

RF: Are you counting?

PW: No, not really. Sometimes if I feel a little weird, I'll start subdividing to make sure that everything is based on an even pulse. Like on that tune "First Circle," which is in 22/8, I just learned the clave pattern, which is 3-2-3-2-2 and then 3-3-2-2. I just phrase around that. Pat doesn't really write music that's real segmented, so I don't crash on the 1 a lot. I'll hear the pattern, but I'll be playing over it. I keep learning stuff about centering myself and really hitting the drums and the cymbals, rather than ghosting things. One thing I've learned about playing that stuff is that, even if I'm ghosting a note, I make sure I really play that note. A lot of drummers cheat on the count by implying it, rather than really giving it its full value.

RF: When we did an *Update* a few years ago, you said that there was something to be said for the mysteriousness of implication, as opposed to actually doing it.

PW: I remember talking about that, and that's definitely true. It's also important, however, that the message you are trying to convey is understood by the audience and not just by you. If there's a *mysterioso* factor and you're just thinking it, that's one thing, but if it's not real clear to the audience, then the effect is lost. It's very important that, if you ghost a note, that space is really there. It's also important for you to listen to yourself, and not just assume that what you're playing is sounding a certain way. Try to separate yourself, and really listen to what the audience and the other musicians are probably hearing.

I think of myself as supporting the other musicians by giving them ideas and a lot of energy, which is what drummers do, but I don't think of it in terms of "drumnastics" at all. It's really strange: I'm just playing the immediate thing, and the band sounds different every night. Everybody goes out on a limb a lot.

RF: What do you mean specifically by going out on a limb?

PW: A lot of times when I play "Straight On Red," which is a samba, Lyle Mays and I will just stare at each other while he's playing the solo. It's like we're looking through each other, throwing these things back. It's amazing the amount of ESP that happens. It's stretching. We're playing with the drum machine on that. There are certain tambourine things going on. We'll play over the bar and stretch a phrase twice as long. It could almost fall apart, but we make it. It's stuff like that, or even just approaching the tunes differently and not playing something we would play every night, just to see everybody's reaction and wake everyone up. Pat might start off a tune at a different tempo one night, just to see what will happen and to keep the music fresh. It never gets boring.

RF: Can you be more specific about the art of improvisation?

PW: That can almost get into some extrasensory stuff. One reason why this band is really good is that everybody has a different approach. Steve is very studied, Pedro has got a Latin approach, Pat has his thing, and Lyle has his thing. The reason it works is the combination of players. All five of us are really tuned into each other. The more we play, the more we get to know each other. But just like a man/woman relationship or something like that, some people just hit it off better than others, and some people are just more attuned to what's going on. I've played great with a lot of people I don't even know. I think one reason it works is that it's very open. If you're carrying on a conversation with five different people and all you talk about is what *you* know, it doesn't really

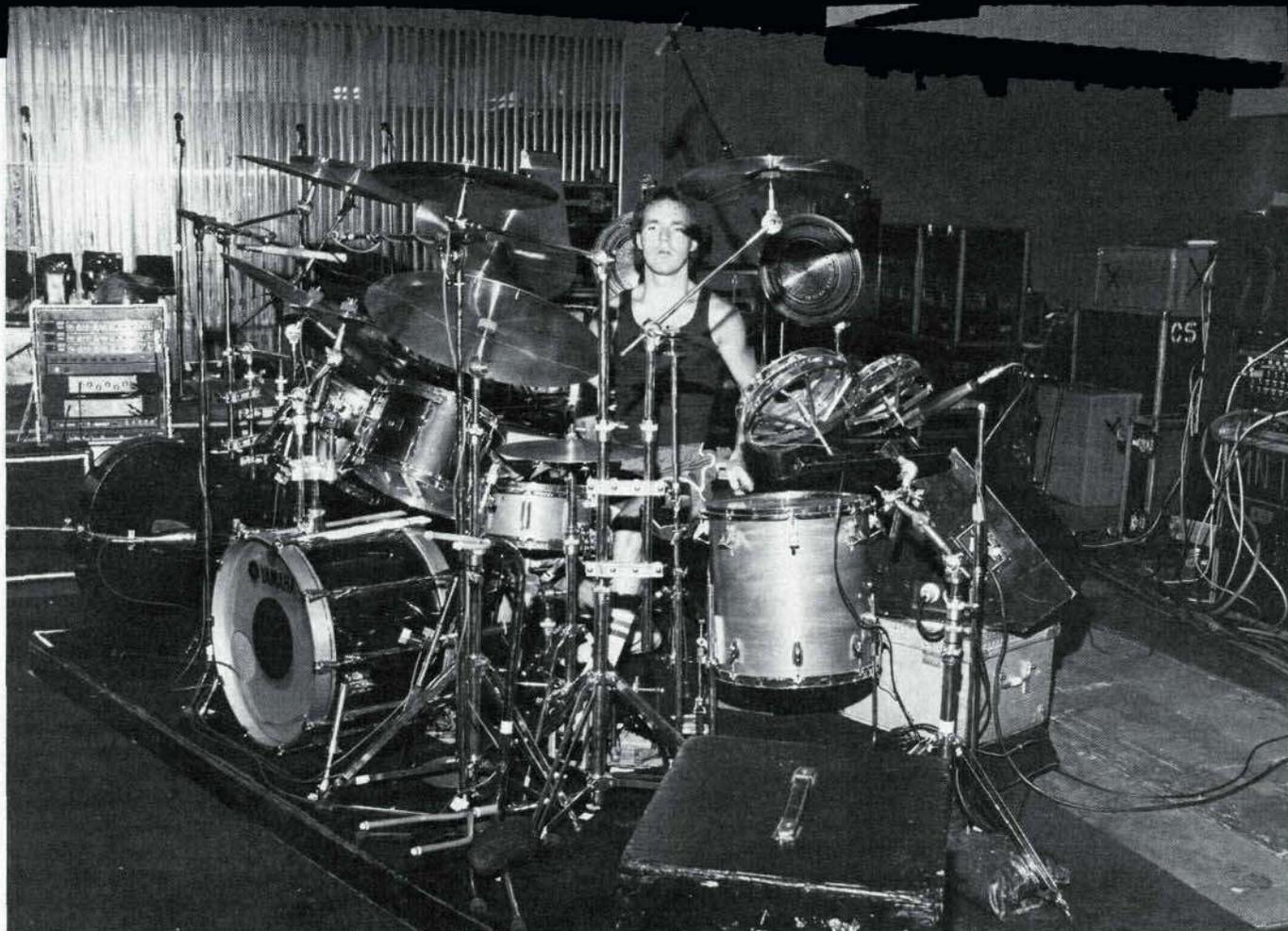


Photo by Rick Maikin

make that much difference who you're with. It really works out when you're with people who are very interesting, or people you have a lot in common with and can grow with. It's the same thing with music. I think the magical part of it has been that it reaches these dimensions where you don't understand why it works. I almost don't want to think about it.

RF: If I had to describe Pat's music and what I know of the inner workings of the band, the expression that comes to mind is "controlled looseness," which is really a contradiction in terms, if you think about it.

PW: I think that's very accurate. That doesn't imply chaos. You can be loose, yet controlled. That doesn't sound weird at all, to me.

RF: I want to know how much is controlled and how much is loose. Pat is pretty specific about the things he wants.

PW: He's specific about what's in the compositions. Pat's also pretty specific about things like maintaining a certain mood of the tune, things that may make him play better, sounds he wants to hear, and the sounds he wants surrounding his sound. But when you've played this music for as long as we've been playing it, you have an idea of what the rules are. On some tunes, I play exactly the same part every night, and I love it.

RF: Like which?

PW: For instance, the Bowie tune "This Is Not America." I play it the same way, but I always feel as though it's fresh. I'm into it, so that makes it feel fresh, whereas with some other tunes, I'll really take some liberties. Sometimes I'll break some rules.

RF: Is the Bowie tune that way because that's the way Pat likes it, or because you've found that that's what works the best?

PW: It's what works the best. There are a lot of machines and a lot of things that *have* to be there, because they're a part of it. It was a hit, so we play it that way. There's no improvisation in that tune.

RF: That's really a rock tune.

PW: It is. We're all 30ish. We all come from some rock back-

ground. You couldn't escape it. As much as I like to play bebop, if I had to play only bebop for the rest of my life, I'd probably be pretty depressed after a while. I like to bash. I like to play backbeats. I like to listen to rock 'n' roll music. I grew up playing half jazz and half rock, and my sound might be somewhat bastardized because of it. I've played with true bebop players, though, and they seemed to like my playing. In fact, I've even played with really traditional swing players and I'm first call on their lists, so I must be doing something right. They might like me because I'll throw in something that subconsciously comes from rock 'n' roll, or I'll play something solid that a jazz drummer might play more loosely.

RF: How does one work at blending rock and jazz?

PW: When I was 15, I used to practice by playing along with the rock radio station, but I used to play over-the-bar stuff. I would play jazz stuff while The Turtles were on the radio.

RF: Do you ever have to worry about crossing that fine line?

PW: I tune my drums sort of to get both. I tune the snare relatively high and real crisp, so I can get a snappy backbeat, and yet I can do all the little traditional-grip ruffs and play with brushes. I tune the bass drum round and low enough to be able to get some punch out of it, yet it still sounds good with the acoustic bass. The toms ring, but they're tuned in the range where they sound good if I do a rock fill or if I play in a jazz vein. We don't really play much bebop, so I don't have to have that high Gretsch sound, but we play one jazz tune that is almost like a big band thing, so the drums are tuned lower and they're loud enough to sound good in that. It took me a long time to find the right balance. I went through hell sometimes trying to figure out how to do it, but it finally worked out. Plus, it sounds good through the PA. You have to realize that the close-mic' situation on all the drums is almost like being in the studio. You can't just use a four-piece Gretsch kit. It's not going to sound the same if you've got mic's on every drum.

RF: Back to the rules of your present situation.

PW: Since I've been in the band, a lot of things have changed. We improvise a lot. I guess the band always improvised, but we take a lot of chances. Basically, Pat wants us to be into the music 100% all the time. That's really a demand not to shuck, although nobody in the band would ever think about shucking. Basically, the rules are to stay inside the set when we're doing it, and not get outside the music. Pat's concept is that it is a two-and-a-half hour set and that set should have a shape. Really pulling that off takes concentration from beginning to end. It's almost like a long dream or a movie. I think that's what he really demands of us. In the beginning, there were so many fine signals that I was missing. There are a zillion rules that I'm still learning now—not rules of his, but rules the music demands—and in the beginning, I'd close my eyes and miss a cue from him. He might have wanted me to get louder or something. Now I can feel that. But I remember drawing two eyes on my small tom-tom to remind me to keep my eyes open and look out at the band. It took me a long time to do that, because I used to get into myself. Now, I balance with both.

Pat's very conscious of the fact that people are spending \$15 to hear the band, so they should get their money's worth, not just in terms of how much energy we put into the music, but also in terms of a good presentation. If they come to hear us, we're going to give it our best shot. It's funny, because I love to play and I always put out my best. When we did the Bowie single, I was up for 52 hours—without drugs, by the way. I flew from Montrose to Chicago, put on a tuxedo and did a wedding, because I love to play and I already had booked it. I really liked the feeling of going from Switzerland and David Bowie to playing a wedding in Chicago. Whenever I play a wedding or a club, I try to sound good because I'm afraid to sound bad, basically. I feel that, if I start getting lazy, I am not only cheating myself, but it might become a habit. It also rubs off on others. A lot of musicians in Chicago have said that, when they play with me now, they feel as though they're playing in front of 10,000 people. For those three or four hours, I mean business. If that's what you love to do, you should do the best you can.

RF: With Pat, can you try whatever you want to try?

PW: Yes, to the extent that I would try it out. I'll try some things that I'm not sure will work. I trust my musicality well enough—and Pat trusts my musicality well enough—to know that, whatever I try, I'll be able to pull it off, at least to the extent that, even if it doesn't sound good, the band won't come to a grinding halt. Recently, on the Ornette Coleman tune we do, I added this double-bass roll in the really fast section. This one thing makes it sound like the tune is going three times faster, and it really works out great. I asked Pat if he liked it and he said he wouldn't use it all the time, so I said I'd just use it in the second half of the tune. When I do it, I hear the audience go "Ah," because it really sounds like it's burning. Pat told me to be careful, because it's sort of in the same range as his guitar. You have to think about all that, too. I'm not only aware of beats and movements, but I'm also aware of textures and sounds clashing with someone else's sound. I work to enable all the other musicians to play as much or as little as they want without scrunching them. That's why Steve and I play so well together. We breathe together. When I think about breathing, it's not only the breathing that's involved in centering myself and being relaxed. It's also having the music breathe, and letting a phrase have its natural contour for what it's supposed to be.

RF: Speaking of Steve, you mentioned that you wanted to talk about bass players.

PW: Most of my best friends are bass players, which is very interesting. Obviously, drummers and bass players are the foundation of the band, but it's really interesting, because I don't think I've ever had any trouble playing with any bass player of any style. Steve Rodby and I could play the first time we ever played together. It was instant. Steve's philosophies are probably very different from mine, because he's classically trained, he has a degree, and he's very exact. We play great together, though. I think one reason we work off each other is that he allows me the freedom to play the

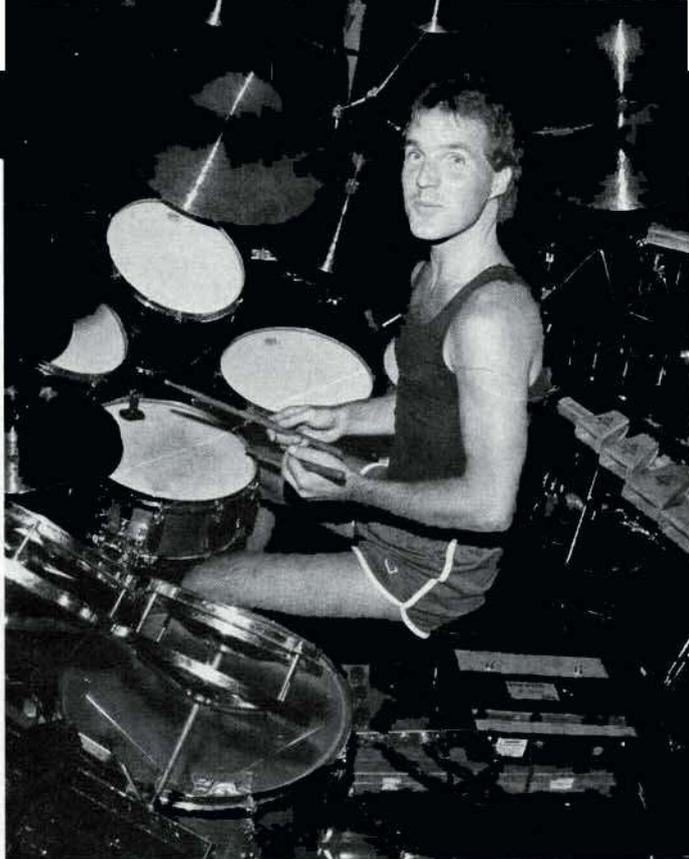


Photo by Rick Malkin

way I play, because he really just lays it down. He's really conscious of making the music exactly the way he thinks it should be, and I add the craziness element to the whole thing. It's the same thing with Jeff Czech, who is a totally opposite type of bass player from Steve. He's much more like me and probably more out than I am, yet we play great together. I think a lot of young drummers don't get the chance to play with good bass players. It's really important to play with good bass players, though, and to get together and play grooves. It's amazing how much freedom they can give you or take away from you. A lot of times, you can't really tell what Steve and I work out or don't work out, because what we don't work out is so intuitive that it sounds like we worked it out. We're very conscious of the ups and downs—downbeats and upbeats—and playing two notes or one note. We really think about all that stuff and then go off from there. Whereas with somebody like Jeff, we wouldn't work out anything. We were talking about improvisation before. To get back to the conversation thing, having a foundation with somebody you know is like having your friend there to help you through some of the conversation. Your

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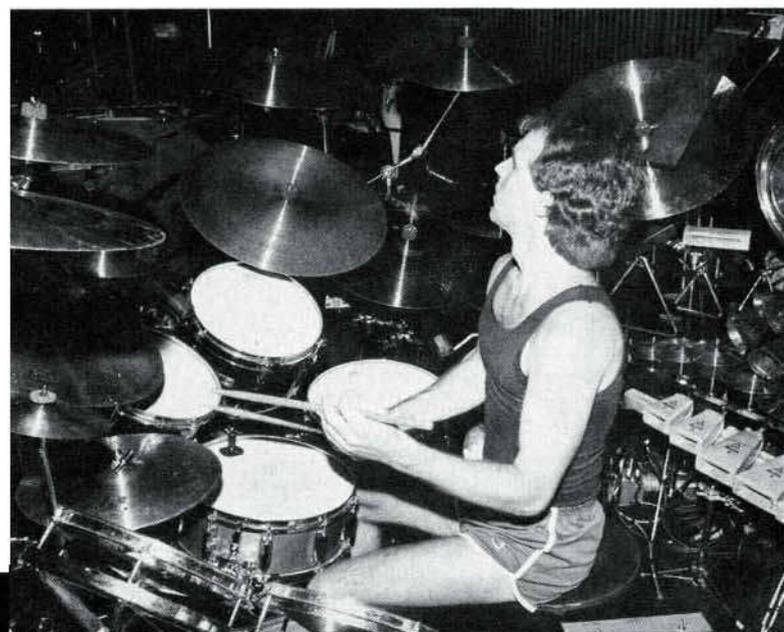
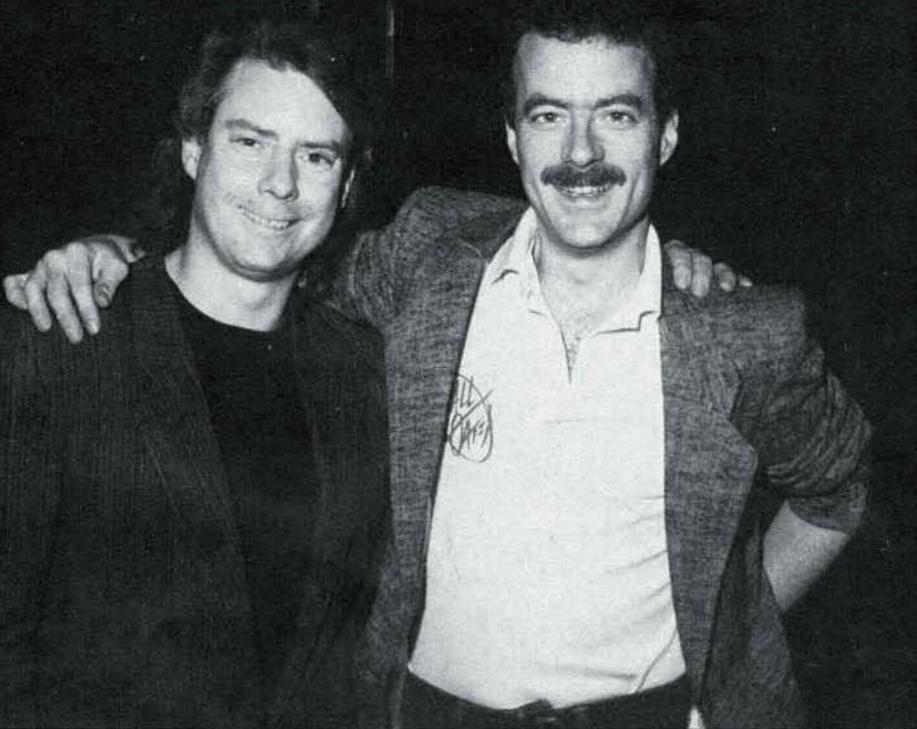


Photo by Rick Malkin

RORROADIES

Photo by Bill White

Michael Shrieve and Ted Leonard



TED LEONARD

"If you're going to hang out here every day, I'm going to put you to work," the music store manager warned. "Fine," replied Ted. And that's how his career as techie for some of rock's biggest talents began. On that day, 15-year-old guitarist Ted Leonard began his after-school job in his hometown of Taunton, Massachusetts, and soon became involved in the store's guitar repairs. After high school, Ted spent a year at an electronics trade school and paid his performance dues with various Boston bands.

Upon moving to New York, he "saw real good players doing some serious starving" and decided that it would be wise to offer his music tech services as a financial cushion. Through a friend, Ted picked up the job as sound engineer for JP's, a small Manhattan Club that featured original

local rock acts. Working with a house P.A. that was "a Cadillac system in a Volkswagen room," Ted rigged sound for hundreds of hopeful New York bands during his two-and-a-half-year residency.

Since that time, he has graduated to the top touring level, having handled guitars for Supertramp and keyboards for David Lebolt on a Billy Joel tour. Currently, Ted oversees guitars, keyboards, and basses for Hall & Oates. But the experience that Ted found most challenging and creative was his association with Michael Shrieve. Having already achieved international acclaim as the fiery drummer with Santana, Michael was accustomed to large touring crews and big budgeting. But with his own new group, Novo Combo, he was willing to start from scratch and persevere through the hard trials faced by "opening-

act bands." The budget was small, obstacles many, and only ingenuity and faith got Ted and the band through the launching period.

With the aid of only one other assistant, Ted had to handle virtually everything: instruments, sound, and stage managing. "At one Kansas City club, Michael broke a bass drum head. I literally had to run from behind the house board and go up to replace it while Michael explained the delay to the audience," Ted laughs.

Ted has also assisted on Michael's big-budget projects, such as recording sessions with Mick Jagger and Pete Townshend. Today, he recalls his jack-of-all-trades adventures with fondness. With Michael and Novo Combo, Ted learned how to deal with the unpredictable—a lesson that prepared him for his career on the rock tour road.

JP: As both soundman and drum techie with Michael, what kind of sound were you trying to get with the drums?

TL: Michael had been using a rented set of Premier drums with single-headed concert toms while he was awaiting arrival of his new Tama kit, which was coming special order. The drums on the Premier kits sounded great. With single-headed toms, I just took Shure SM-57 mic's and stuck them up underneath. There's a proximity effect in the 57's that's great for drums. When the drum is hit, there's an airflow that puts a lot of bass and a lot of "fat" into the sound, with the channel flat on the board. So, when Michael went across the toms, it sounded like cannons. And they required very little EQ.

Then there was all this hoopla when the new kit came in. It had double heads. I miked the kit up, and the manager turned to me and said, "What happened to the drum sound?" There was just no way to get the same type of impact in the lower frequencies with a double-headed drumset. It's a totally different sound.

Michael was looking for a very open sound on his drums. He wanted almost halfway between a tom and a timbale sound. I was in the enviable position of being the sound engineer who actually tuned and worked on the drums, so I was able to do good work as a result of that.

LONG gone are the days when a four-piece drumset, a couple of amplifiers, and a few general floor mic's were all that was needed to set the stage for a rock 'n' roll show. As rock technology has taken quantum leaps over the past 20 years, the role of the drum roadie, sometimes nicknamed "tech" or "techie," has also changed.

The audiences are bigger, the politics of touring are more complex, sound reinforcement has become massive, and the options offered by acoustic/electronic integration have created a whole new frontier. We spoke with six techs who are meeting the challenge of rock's new complexities—each in his own way—and who are actively involved in much more than setting up and breaking down. In this issue, we will speak with Ted Leonard, Adam Hunt, and Artie Smith. In the February issue of MD, we will speak with Robert "Bear" Lemons, Anthony Aquilato, and David Covelli.

JP: Does the specialization of big crews have certain drawbacks?

TL: Yes, because it's just a matter of communication. If someone is in control of a larger area, such as drums and house sound, as opposed to just one or the other, it helps communication. You know what you're looking for, and you know what you have to do on stage to achieve it.

I have very strange miking techniques for drums and amplifiers. I used to have a constant problem when we were on tour, especially as an opening act. Someone would always "do me the favor" of repositioning all the mic's, because they would look at them and say, "This can't be right!" I would put my guitar-amp mic's six inches away from the speakers, so that the waveform from the speaker would have a chance to develop a little more—have a little more air. In closer, it was just too peaky and aggressive. The sound has a tendency to be smoother a little further back.

JP: What exactly was your "strange miking technique" for the drums?

TL: I'm giving away all my secrets! [laughs] It's the easiest thing in the world. When you put a mic' somewhere, you're not putting a mic' there: You're placing an ear. That's the way I approach it. Put your ear right up against a guitar speaker and hear how it sounds. It's the same idea with drums.

I had a problem with Michael at first, because so much of his playing is very percussive, especially on the snare drum. He does so much rim work on the snare that I was having a problem getting the rim sound and the snare sound to be the same volume. So, instead of putting the snare mic' right above the head, I put the mic' along the side of the drum, perpendicular to the drum, *below* the head. It would take a little more gain on the board, but when you hit the head, it's a sound that carries and travels very fast. There was no problem picking up the head, but being that close to the rim, it took the head volume down and the rim up.

Of course, the drums themselves have to sound good acoustically first. It's very difficult to make a bad sounding drum sound good just by putting a mic' on it. The

source has to be right first. The ultimate goal of a good mic' is transparency: to add no coloration to the original signal.

Some people just assume that you need expensive mic's. Jim Reeves, who was a staff engineer at CBS, taught me a lot about engineering. Jim once did a "blind mic' test" in the studio, in which they had the drums around the corner and they referred to the mic's as "A," "B," or "C." Jim would swap different mic's without knowing which was which. They hit the drums and then switched mic's. Jim found that he liked mic' "C" best, and it was a Shure *SM-57!* It doesn't have to be expensive to be good.

JP: What special problems does a small-budget, first-tour situation present for the techie?

TL: It's much more of a challenge, especially as the house engineer, because you're using different equipment every night. On a big gig, like Hall & Oates, they carry their own sound system, and the house sound engineer has the best equipment money can buy. If he wants to put a second mic' under the snare drum, he can do it. But with an opening act, you don't have those options. You're in a position where you often have to punt.

I did live TV with Novo in Boston, and there were only three drum mic's. So, I just had to say, "Well, there's no sense in crying about it. Where can I best use these three mic's?" In the big-time crews, it's all specialization. But I think creativity really comes in more at the lower level, because you're forced to work with second-rate things and improvise for the best.

JP: An opening act in a major show often gets the short end of the stick. What was a classic example of "punting" under pressure with Novo Combo?

TL: We opened for The Who, and Michael is very close with Pete Townshend, but that still didn't get us a soundcheck. We got the stage at 7:00 when the doors opened, and at 7:55 I got the house board. The show started at 8:00. But to me, that was easy, because at that show we had great mic's, a great P.A., and great out-board effects. Novo opened their set with a song called "Long Road." It was eight bars of drums, followed by eight bars of

guitar, eight bars of the other guitar, and then eight bars of bass. So I had my soundcheck right there. People generally didn't even know that I hadn't had a soundcheck.

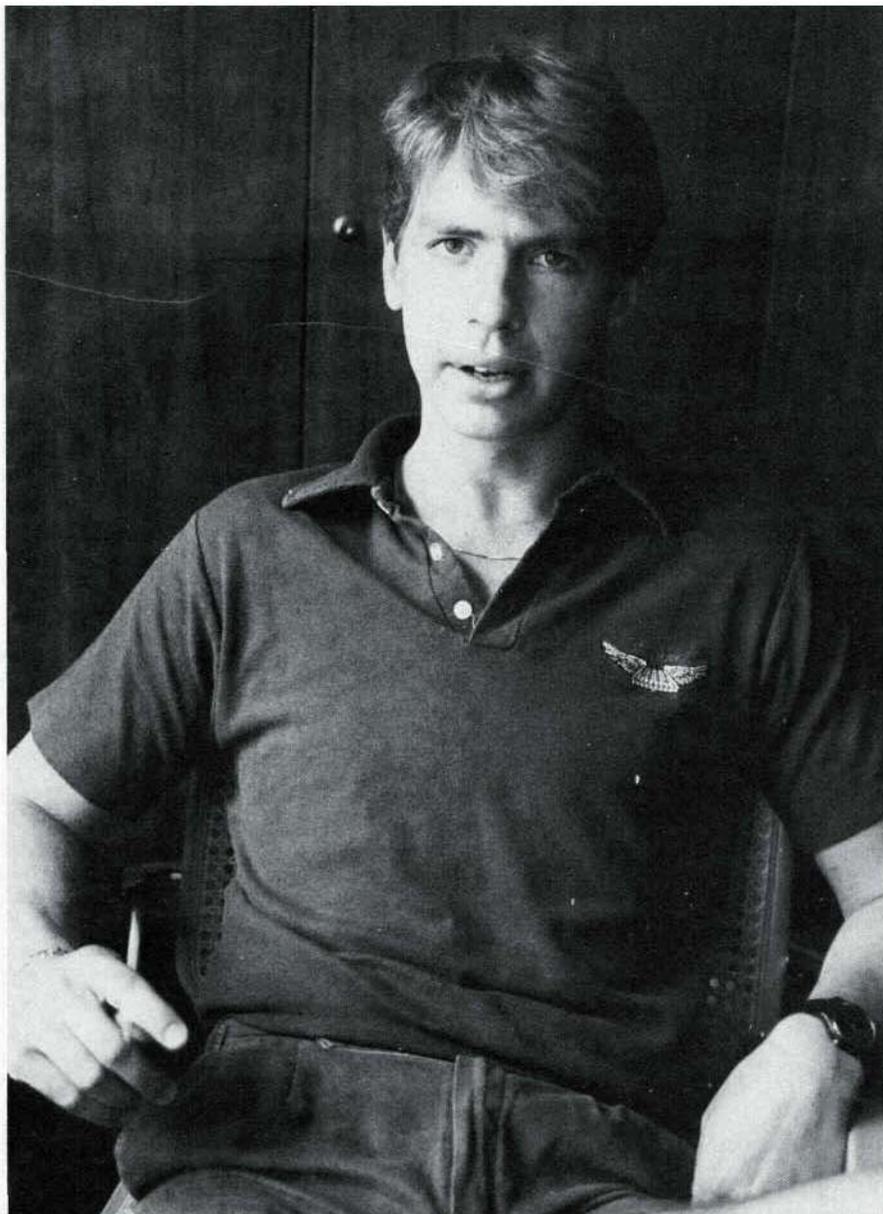
JP: Tell me about the electronic innovations that you and Michael collaborated on.

TL: I worked on a modification for Michael's Simmons *SDS5*. I called up Dave Simmons, and he instructed me on how to modify one of the modules. It enabled Michael to have a sweep of the tone control by a foot-switch pedal placed next to his hi-hat. On the record, there was one bit where Michael played a fill pattern, and I controlled the module by hand so that it made a descending tonal sweep. When we got on the road, Michael needed to be able to do it himself, so I rigged up the pedal. I took one pad and fed it into two modules from a Y-cord. I used the tom module, which had a pitch drop on it, combined with the snare module, which stayed constant. So he had a snare/tom sound, and the tom changed pitch.

There was another trick I used to do with a Simmons *Clap Trap*. We used a cheap mic' from a Conn strobe tuner as a trigger. I taped it over the sound hole on the snare drum, so that the air coming out of the drum would trigger the diaphragm on the mic'. The mic' went to the *Clap Trap* input, and then I put a footswitch on the other side of the hi-hat so that he could turn the *Clap Trap* on or off. Michael used to do some great things working with it, because the *Clap Trap* has a fixed response level. It only responds when you reach a certain volume. In his drum solo, he would take the volume down while playing press rolls, and then he would put the *Clap Trap* on. The *Clap Trap* would then trigger only when he hit a hard accent, but not when he was rolling softly. Michael worked within the limitation of the *Clap Trap* and turned it into a positive aspect.

JP: Like yourself, he was creatively improvising within the limitations of what was available.

TL: Yes. And Michael has taught me a lot personally, as well as professionally: Maintaining a positive attitude about your life and your work. You can't let the negative aspects get you down. You just deal with it—punt.



ADAM HUNT

Adam Hunt was a relative newcomer to the roadie world when he first went to meet Liberty Devito ("this mad person going crazy on his drums") during the shooting of a video for Billy Joel's *Glass Houses* album. Liberty needed an assistant for the upcoming tour of the United States, Europe, and Israel. Two years earlier, Adam had briefly worked as stage personnel for Kate Taylor, but he had not yet experienced anything approaching the major scale of Joel's tours. When he applied for a previous Joel tour, he had been turned down. The second time around, Adam had convinced the touring coordinators, through his enthusiastic determination, that they should give him a try. They agreed and sent him to meet Liberty in order to "feel things out." The two hit it offright away.

Not being a drummer himself, Adam

initially felt uneasy about his lack of technical knowledge. He decided that he would "just have to learn things fast." "Observing Liberty," he says, "I stayed right on his every move, and kept my ears open, my eyes open, and my mouth shut." Adam did absorb the technical element surprisingly fast. As he shuttled more and more miles, he realized that he already possessed an invaluable talent for making international tours successful: diplomacy.

"There's a give-and-take relationship between crews that you develop after a certain amount of time," he says. "You try to make somebody else's job easier, and that person makes your job easier. It just becomes a nice working relationship. That's the way to get through a tour."

Following the Billy Joel tour, Adam acted as roadie for the Simon & Garfunkel reunion concerts, and then on Paul

Simon's tours assisting Steve Gadd and Dave Weckl. While touring, drum chores took up most of his time, but Adam wisely seized all opportunities to expand his knowledge in other areas of stage production. "I burned myself out on that first Billy Joel tour, but at that time, I wanted to get involved in everything," he explains.

Now, at 27, Adam is working for Night After Night Productions, a growing new concert and tour production company. On his last assignment with the company, Adam was given the role of production manager for a Patti Labelle tour. Happy to be with Night After Night, Adam now has the springboard to learn more and "get involved in everything." With the technical and practical lessons of thousands of miles behind him, and with his diplomacy talent, Adam should eventually be able to make even the most mammoth road show roll smoothly.

JP: On such complex, giant tours, you must have dealt with Murphy's Law quite often. What are the things that go wrong, and how can one be best prepared?

AH: The first thing I learned is that you always have to have a spare for *everything*. There are certain things that are more apt to break than others, like the snares or the hi-hat. So for things like that, you should not only have spares, but you should have them set up and ready to go at any moment.

JP: What were Liberty's special demands for tuning?

AH: Liberty is a very easy person to work for. If I had everything up and working for him so that he could walk in and sit down to play, it would be fine. He wouldn't even really notice a small tuning change that much. He could hear if the whole rack had dropped. That would happen a lot in transport between the cold of the trucks and the heat of the lights and house. With all the differences in temperatures, those drums went through a lot.

JP: You had to wing it and learn technical details quickly. How were you able to swing that on such large, high-pressured tours?

AH: I found that my strong point was in dealing with people as people. That's what helped me get through the nontechnical part of this position. As long as they were willing to accept me, I was then more able to learn what their needs were. For instance, you would think that Steve Gadd might be a very particular person to work with, but he's a very easy person to work with.

As for working for Steve, what I thought was going to be more difficult than working for Liberty turned out to be easier, because of Steve's technique. He's a lighter player. We worked with Yamaha drums. He also used Evans *Hydraulics*. Since he plays so much lighter, plus uses the Evans heads, I only needed to change

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"We've all heard it said that it's not the drums; it's the drummer. But," contends Artie Smith, "it really is the drummer and the drums." If that weren't true, then Artie wouldn't have so many top drummers and studios consistently calling him for his services. Unlike the traditional touring roadie who logs daily highway miles while caring for the concert needs of one particular drummer, Artie works primarily within the New York City area, services several drummers, and spends much of his time assisting in the studio.

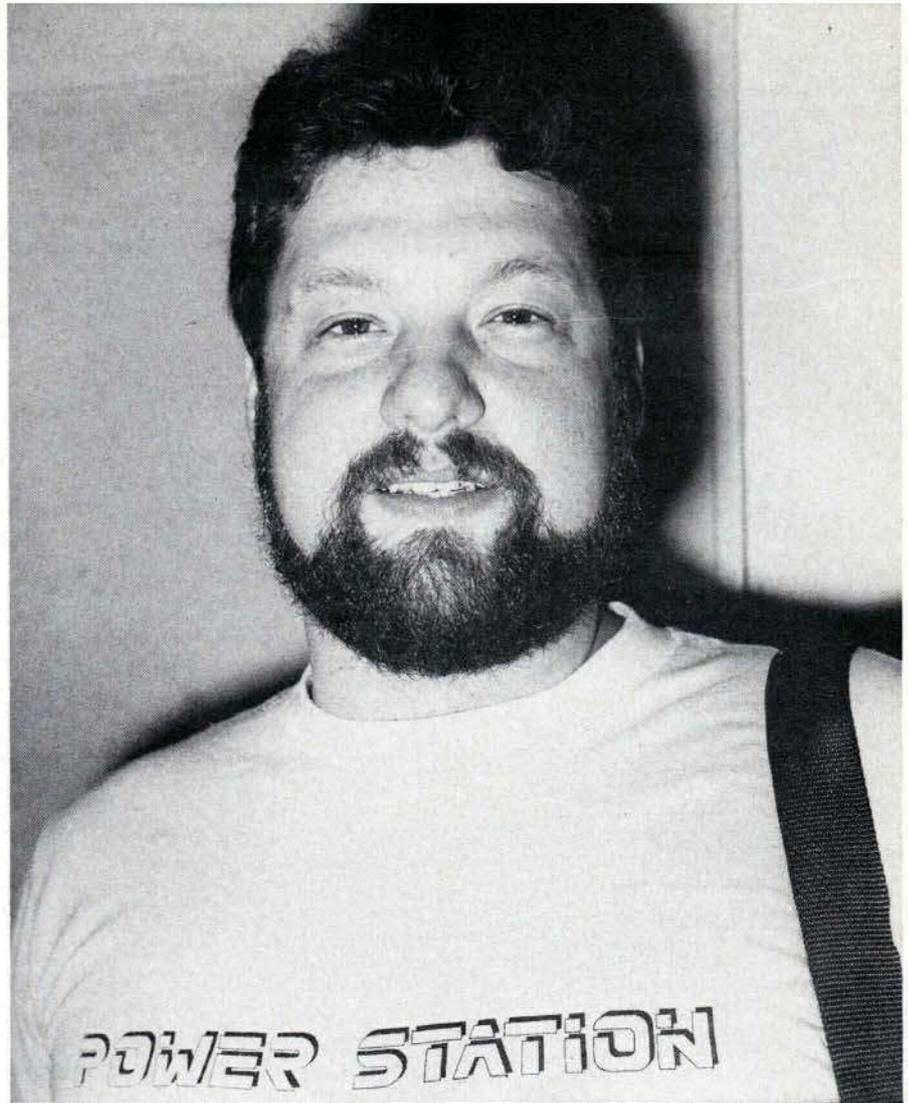
Always on the run, Artie was able to squeeze our interview in at a Manhattan recording studio where he has just finished setting up for Steve Gadd. In the studio lounge, Gadd bustles about, saxman George Young is trying to figure out the mysterious logic of a stubborn vending machine, and trumpeter Lew Soloff is rushing through some last-minute phone calls. When the brief break ends, they hurry back into Studio A. The red light above the studio door lights up, the session resumes, and Artie finally has the chance to rest his weary feet on the table and answer my questions between bites of the studio standard: take-out Chinese.

Artie's informal humor and energy belie the fact that he routinely functions short on sleep. His hectic schedule brings him to record dates, jingle sessions, movie and television soundtrack dates, clubs, and concerts. He regularly takes care of drum business for Saturday Night Live and Late Night With David Letterman, and also provides his help to a long list of name clients such as Gadd, Peter Erskine, Steve Jordan, Yogi Horton, Dave Weckl, Steve Ferrone, Rick Marotta, Jerry Marotta, Anton Fig, and drum electronics wizard Jimmy Bralower.

Besides carting and setting up clients' drum to their special needs, Artie provides the appropriate equipment when requested. If a producer demands eight different snares for eight different needs, Artie has the specialty tools for the job. Among his tools is a large snare drum collection that deserves to be displayed in a museum. When it comes to sorting out drum brand favorites, he is hesitant to compare or endorse products. Throughout our conversation, Artie repeatedly stresses that different drums have different personalities, and therefore fit different musical needs. A drummer who swears by a favorite brand and ignores the others, he feels, is missing the point.

JP: Time is money in the studio. Part of your function is to save it.

AS: The main thing to do is get there early enough so that the engineers have time to set mic's, and the most important thing is to get everything in the right position so that there will be a limited amount of movement when the date starts. When my clients arrive at the dates, they are usually coming from other dates. I want to make



ARTIE SMITH

that a point. It's not a drummer's ego trip—where people say, "What's the matter, can't you move your own drums?" It's a matter of saving time and money. Clients of mine can do jingles before they come into record dates, and they don't have to get there an hour and a half early to set up their drums and get sounds. Also, if I move their own drums, they haven't been played by five other drummers before they get there. So basically the tuning is consistent. If the heads need to be changed, they are changed. I have an idea of who likes what and when.

JP: Do you get involved with tuning?

AS: Usually I leave that up to the drummers' preference. They will know exactly the way they want it to sound. But in certain circumstances, like my own rental, I will bring it in with a general tuning that depends on the kind of setup that is being used. Generally, I like to have three rack toms, and one or two floors. Snare drums are a different story. With snare drums,

you have to have an understanding of what the producer or engineer wants the sound to come from, because nowadays there's a lot of processing—room sound, signal processors, and certain "gimmicks" that only an engineer can best deal with. Now a lot of people are going for the Police kind of snare drum sound: a crisper, higher pitch.

JP: That high crack was frowned upon by many pop recording engineers in the late '70s.

AS: What was happening then was that everything was close miked, usually in some sort of drum booth with sound dampening material. Consequently, it choked some of the positive frequencies of a snare drum that you always hear in an open room. So, you become "distorted" about what the drum should sound like. For instance, you can go into the stairwell of the studio, tune in there, then take it back into the drum booth, and your expen-

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the chicago blues drum- mers

by Robert Santelli

THE scene is the 1985 Chicago Blues Festival. Grant Park is brimming with people, many of whom are jockeying for seats and blanket space as close to the band shell as possible. Opening night of the city's annual free festival, which celebrates its incredibly rich blues heritage, will draw upwards of 100,000 people. The next two nights will attract crowds nearly as large. It is indeed a grand affair—one, you think, that should be celebrating its twentieth anniversary rather than its second.

The lineup for the three days and nights of music is quite impressive: Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, Koko Taylor, Johnnie Taylor, Lowell Fulson, John Hammond, Jr., Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Etta James, Big Joe Turner, Sunnyland Slim, Pee Wee Crayton, Lonnie Brooks, Sippie Wallace, Clifton Chenier, and many more. The music begins each day at noon with performances on a small stage adjacent to the band shell. Here, the lesser-known artists play until late afternoon. Then in the evening, the featured artists grace the band shell stage and play well into the night.

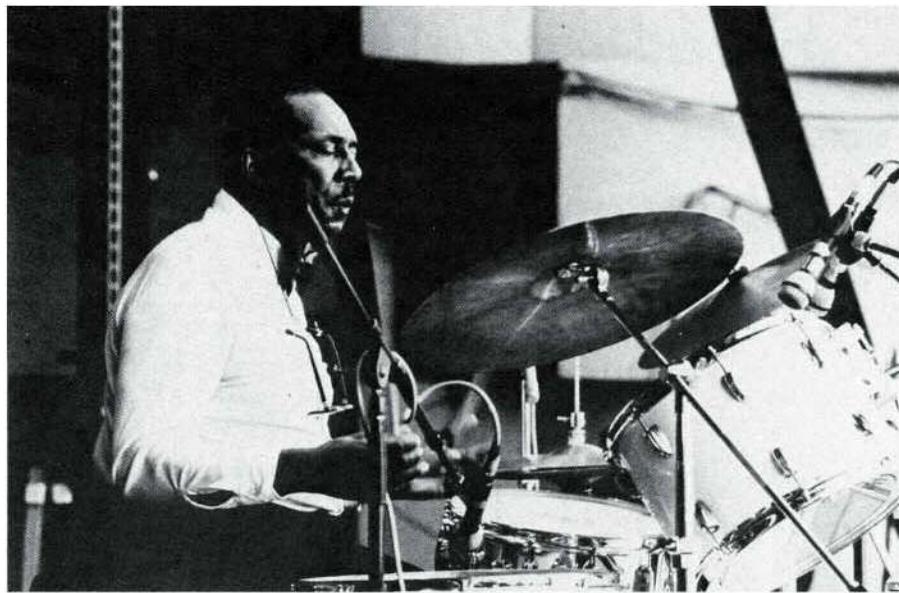
I went to Chicago—and the festival in particular—in search of blues drummers. It was a good time to be in town, friends told me, because it's often difficult to track down blues musicians at any other time. They always seem to be on the road doing the chitlin lounge circuit in the South, or else they are holed up in some recording studio you never heard of before. So come to the blues fest, my friends advised.

It was a good time to be in Chicago. Blues musicians were everywhere. I met a number of blues drummers, but I wasn't after any old blues drummer. I wanted to speak to those who would paint a clearer picture of what blues drumming is really all about, of where it's been, and of where it's going. I was surprised to find out that many of the drummers playing the festival were young—too young to shed the kind of light on blues drumming I was after.

I also wanted a cross section of drummers—ones with different styles, different stories, different approaches, and different attitudes toward the blues. I knew I wanted to speak with Odie Payne, Jr., because Payne is considered one of the deans of Chicago blues drumming, having been born and raised in the city, and still residing and playing there. Fred Below was another drummer that I wanted to interview. Like Payne, Below goes back a long way. He, too, played with many of the city's great blues artists and still resides in town.

I got to speak with Payne because he played the second night of the festival, and I managed to persuade him that other drummers would be very interested in what he had to say. I never spoke to Below, though. He had been sick and never made it to the festival. Friends of his thought it best I speak to him the next time I came to Chicago in search of blues drummers.

But I did speak with Morris Jennings, a well-known session player who is as adept at playing funk as he is at playing the blues; Casey Jones, whose recent work with Johnny Winter represents some of the best contemporary blues drumming you're apt to hear anywhere; and Jimmy Tillman, the drummer for Willie Dixon, and a walking encyclopedia of the blues—especially Chicago blues. I think that what each of these four drummers has to say about the blues, and blues drumming in particular, is an important first step in comprehending not only the history and function of the drummer in such a simple yet wonderfully expressive idiom, but also the underlying substances and nuances of this most American of music forms.



odie payne, jr.

Photo by Robert Santelli

musicians, all looking for work and places to stay.

RS: What kind of a kit were you playing back then?

OP: Well, I never went for names. My kit was a mixture of Slingerland, Ludwig—whatever I could get. I look at the hardware on drums nowadays; the pieces are so huge and heavy. I can understand why, though. Young drummers today use big sticks and then turn them over like baseball bats. You might as well give them all hammers.

RS: You did a lot of recording for Chess Records. How did that come about?

OP: Willie Dixon was the first one to call me in for a date with Leonard Chess. Chess Records was to the blues what Sun Records was to rock 'n' roll. Back then, Mr. Chess would request that you hit your drums awfully hard. He'd yell, "Hit it! Hit it! Turn the stick around and hit it!" Well, this seemed a little silly to me. But I did it, and I guess it sounded alright on record. I always considered myself a listener. I wanted to hear what the other players in the band were doing, and that would always reflect my drum style for whatever song we were playing. But with Chess, I always had to play so hard that I thought I would knock the walls of the studio down.

RS: How would you describe your blues drumming style?

OP: It is a relatively simple style. I mean, that's what playing the blues is all about as far as a drummer goes. But if you're a blues drummer, you've got to be able to tell a story with your sticks. The blues is simple, yes, but complete. It's also a quiet style of drumming, despite what went on in the Chess studio, and I'll tell you why. In the blues, the words are important. People want to hear what the singer has to say. If you play loud and drown out the singer, you're defeating the purpose. You've got to be in control: You may want to play loud and heavy because the blues is an emotional music, but you've got to keep in control and in touch with the singer. Now when the horn or guitar takes over, you can give it a shove if you want to. But you can't do it for a piano. Do you see what I mean?

RS: Have you ever played electronic drums?

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Odie Payne, Jr., speaks with a slow, tired drawl. He has a bad back, and when it acts up, the words come even more slowly. I spoke with Payne the morning after his appearance on the Chicago Blues Festival stage, where he backed up Pee Wee Crayton, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Lowell Fulson, and Margie Evans, among others.

It would have been a pretty taxing gig for most drummers in the best of health. But for Odie Payne, Jr., despite his aches, it was a joy. At age 60, he rarely turns down a date. "My back don't hurt when I'm playing; it's afterwards that it gets to me," he says, laughing a bit. "I've known a lot of these cats for a long time. I've admired them, too, but never had a chance to play with them for one reason or another. I wasn't going to blow this chance, no sir."

So today, Payne is walking and talking easily, and saving his strength lest the back start bothering him to the point where he would have to miss a rehearsal later on in the day. It's easy to get the impression that not being able to play would hurt more than the worst spasms in his back.

RS: Your career as a Chicago blues drummer stretches back to the late 1940s. That's a long time, no matter what kind of music you play, or where you play it.

OP: Yeah, that's right. I think I played my first nightclub date in 1949. That was with Tampa Red.

RS: Let's go back to when you first began playing drums.

OP: That was in Dusable High School. It was a great school for drummers to go to. Actually, it was a great school for all musicians, no matter what instruments they played. We had a heck of a fine teacher, Captain Walter Dyett. He was a very persuasive teacher, and he certainly didn't take any lip—not from anybody, no sir. He was very respected. When he walked on the stage in the assembly hall, everything quieted down real quick like. He could

really hurt you. He could make you cry with that look of his. But he was a good one. Everybody respected him. He got results.

RS: Was it then that you knew you wanted to be a professional drummer?

OP: Actually it was before then. Earlier on, I learned the principles of drumming by playing with my fingers on the desks at school. You know, a hollow desk has a nice ring to it when you hit it with your fingers. So whenever the teacher would leave the classroom, I'd start banging on the desk with my fingers, and soon the whole class would be jumping. Every now and then, the teacher would catch me in the act. She'd come back to the class, see what was going on, and say, "Odie Payne, Jr., out!" When I finally graduated, she wrote in my yearbook, "I hope someday you become a drummer." And I did.

RS: How did you fall in with Tampa Red?

OP: There was a record shop right by the Metropolitan Theater at the time. It was the number-one shop on the south side of Chicago. Every day they'd have speakers outside the door blaring music out for all to hear. I'd be coming home from school, and they'd be playing music. I'll never forget this one tune, "Let Me Play With Your Poodle." I would listen to the lyrics to that song and just crack up. I never realized that one day I would work with the man who sang it, Tampa Red. That was my first introduction to Tampa Red, and it was a memorable one.

RS: You began your career in a most exciting period. The post-World War II era brought many black musicians from the South to cities such as Chicago. From what I understand, there was music everywhere.

OP: Oh yeah. Blues musicians were coming up and bringing their musical roots with them. They could catch a train in the South and take it straight up into the heart of Chicago. The town was full of young



Photo by Robert Santelli

casey jones

Casey Jones came up to Chicago in 1956 with Little Richard on his mind. Little Richard was what it was all about. But Jones soon settled into the blues, Chicago style, and as he recalls, "I didn't care what kind of blues it was. I just wanted to count it off."

Today, Jones is one of the busiest blues drummers in Chicago. The two albums he did with Johnny Winter—Guitar Slinger and Serious Business (both on Alligator Records)—are fine examples of his cool, calculated backbeat. He plays out with his own band whenever he can, has his own small, independent record company called Airwax Records, and plans on recording some of the songs he's written recently.

When I spoke with Jones, he was fresh from his dates with Winter. An exuberant, proud musician, Jones is the type of drummer who'd do three sessions a day, every day, if he was given the chance. "I like to work," he says with a smile that reminds me of a James Brown smile. "I'm ready, able, and willin'."

RS: What made you migrate to Chicago in the mid-'50s?

CJ: Well, my brother-in-law's brother had a band in Chicago called Otis Luke & The Rhythm Bums. They needed a drummer. So I got a call one day, but I didn't know anything about a whole set of drums. The only thing I was used to was marching band drums. But I came to Chicago to try it—feel out the gig, you know—and I just fell into the groove. It was no problem except for the hi-hat. I had a hard time getting that hi-hat going the way it was sup-

posed to go. At first, I didn't even have a hi-hat. I had a bass drum, a snare, and a cymbal, and that was it. You know, back then you could go out seven nights a week and hear a different blues band each night. The city was kickin'. Today, there aren't that many clubs around to play. The clubs used to be on the south side of town. Now those that are still around are up on the north side. So it's more competitive for musicians and bands.

RS: You've played with Albert Collins, Otis Rush, Jimmy Witherspoon, and Johnny Winter. Who else?

CJ: Oh, let's see—Howlin' Wolf, Magic Sam, Muddy Waters, Eddie Clearwater, Lou Rawls, Lonnie Brooks . . . lots of others.

RS: What was playing with Howlin' Wolf like?

CJ: Me and the Wolf got along real well—real fine. Now, I heard stories about the way he treated his band, but maybe they should have been treated that way; I don't really know. Wolf used to call me "Long-hair." I used to have a perm and my hair hung down by my shoulders. "Okay Long-hair," he'd say. "Okay." [He imitates Howlin' Wolf's low, gritty voice.] "Now just go and lay back on that beat." I did what he wanted done. I played "Smoke-stack Lightning" the way he wanted it played, not the way I felt like playing it. I'd do it his way. That's what the man was paying me to do, see. I remember things like that.

RS: Is there such a thing as a Chicago style of blues drumming?

CJ: I don't know if you can pinpoint it as a specific style, but Chicago blues drummers concentrate more on shuffles. Now, shuffles seem simple, but they're not as easy as people think, especially if you're trying to do them right. I don't care for shuffles, though. I'm not a bad shuffle drummer. But shuffles can be a whole lot of work for a drummer, and little recognition is what you get out of them. I like solos. I'll take a solo anytime you want.

RS: What does it take to become a good blues drummer?

CJ: You've got to know how to listen and what to listen for, see. A lot of drummers will get up and play a whole lot of pocket with the rolls and such, and want to do something that will get them noticed. I'm lucky. I never had a problem getting recognized, [laughs] So all my concentration goes into my playing. But a blues drummer has got to know and, more importantly,

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Morris Jennings is known as the Bernard Purdie of Chicago. "I played, and still do play, a lot of different gigs, but I don't have any signs that I hang up behind my kit or anything like that," says Jennings. "I just play my drums. That's all."

In a way, Jennings represents the Chicago blues drummer who has gone far beyond the blues and has adapted rather successfully to offshoots of the music, namely jazz, funk, R&B, rock, and even mainstream pop. He is also established in the Chicago jingle field. For Jennings, this stretching out was due, in part, to his education, particularly in jazz and, as he says, "the classics," as well as his fascination with diversity. But it was also necessary for him to be able to survive as a drummer, and make a living in Chicago doing live dates and recording sessions.

RS: What was it like growing up in a town like Chicago with the blues all around you?

MJ: The music was all around; that's for sure. The whole thing was great. Bo Diddley lived a block away from me. Muddy Waters wasn't far away, either. All of the main streets had blues joints on them. Now this was when I was a little shortie, you understand. It was nothing at night to sneak out of the house and stand outside the blues joints just listening. Your education was right there. It was your Ph.D. I still draw from those experiences. But the biggest and best thing about Chicago back then, for a musician at least, was

morris jennings

to go to Dusable High School and study with Captain Walter Dyett. He taught everybody—Wilbur Campbell, J.J. Johnson, Nat King Cole, Sarah Vaughan. Lots of people who went to Dusable High School went on to become great stars and good musicians. The education was on the street, and it was in school, if you took advantage of it. The blues education I got is no longer available to the young ones. It's not possible to go to ten or 15 joints in one night, and see a whole range of bands and musicians. It just ain't possible anymore, because the clubs aren't there like they used to be. Now, I had formal music training at Dusable, two years of junior college, and one year at Roosevelt University where I studied music as a minor. Then in 1964, I got involved with Chess Records and that was it. It was music as a career from that point on.

RS: How did you come to work for Chess?

MJ: Being in the right place at the right time. I used to go by to hang out with my friends—people like Louis Satterfield. Well, it came to be that they had problems keeping a good studio drummer. There were a lot of drummers in Chicago, but the key to studio work is discipline. If you were disciplined, you could sit there eight to ten hours a day and make some money. I was easygoing and easy to work with, and somewhere along the line, I acquired discipline, which to this day, I still have.

RS: Working as a studio drummer at Chess, you must have played with some pretty decent blues artists.

MJ: That's right. Jimmy Reed, Koko Taylor, Albert King, Bo Diddley, Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters—too many more to mention right here and now. See, Chess had a knack for recording as much as they could get from you in an eight- or ten-hour day. Mr. Chess would turn on the tape and we'd record—all day. My biggest asset with the blues was Willie Dixon, because Willie knew I could lock in and learn fast. You know, with blues players you never read music. It was all by ear, so you had to be able to pick things up quickly. Willie would request me on drums all the time.

RS: What was it like recording with Dixon? Was he a very demanding boss back then?

MJ: No. He gave you a lot of room and was very sensitive to how you went about creating your patterns and whatnot, as long as he had confidence in your playing. Willie would say, "Just follow me and do

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Photo by Robert Santelli

jimmy tillman

Jimmy Tillman approaches the blues and blues drumming with an undeniable and powerful sense of history. No other drummer that I met in Chicago possessed such a commitment to the blues heritage and the preservation of it. Along with being a respected drummer in his own right, Tillman is also a teacher, composer, lecturer, playwright, and author. He was a driving force behind the theatrical production of Muddy Waters: The Hoochie Coochie Man, and has penned a booklet called The Art Of Blues Drumming, which seeks to give those drummers not familiar with the blues a most splendid introduction. Articulate and earnest about his work, Tillman states the case for the blues in a most convincing way—in print or in person.

Tillman invited me to a performance of Muddy Waters while I was in Chicago, but due to the Chicago Blues Festival, I was unable to make it. Thus, he gave me a run-down on the show's beginnings and its special relationship with Muddy, which I've included here.

RS: Tell me how *Muddy Waters: The Hoochie Coochie Man* came to be.

JT: This play was inspired by Muddy in 1982. I was working at the time with the Chicago Blues All-Stars, and touring with Muddy. He made mention of the fact that there hadn't been anyone who had written any books or anything of substance on his life. I told him that I'd been working with some children at a Chicago elementary school as a blues artist in residence, teaching them the history of the blues. I asked him if I could do something on him. Well, he said he'd love it and would really appreciate it. He wanted so badly for the young generation to know what it was like being a blues musician coming up in Chicago, and to know about the things he faced and the

hardships he encountered. So during this tour, we'd sit down and Muddy would start telling me stories. Most of the information that is in the play came from him and from Willie Dixon. Shortly after that, Muddy became very ill and had to stop touring. When I got back to the school and finished work on the production, we invited him to come to the show, but he was too ill to come. Two weeks after the play was performed at school, Muddy died. The whole purpose of his coming was not so much to have him see the show, but to also give him an honorary diploma. Muddy never did graduate from any school, you see. From that point on, I took the script that I had written and gave it to some people to get it on the stage. We made it into a "bluesical." It is about the blues, and it is a story of Muddy Waters' life. It's been running for more than six months here in Chicago. By the time people read this interview, hopefully, it'll be in New York, Canada, and Europe.

RS: With all the research you've put into the play, your booklet, *The Art Of Blues Drumming*, and your experiences as a blues drummer, can you define for me the qualities that make up good blues drummers?

JT: Blues drummers aren't any different from other drummers out there. First and foremost, they're drummers, so they must be able to keep a steady beat, have dynamics, and have control. Because the makeup of the blues is so simple, it must be played well. Blues are the roots to all American music. Drummers who come from other backgrounds and try to play the blues often feel that they must fill every space in the 12 bars. Well, that's not so. A drummer in a blues band is only one of four or five musicians working in concert together. The drummer sets it up for what it really is. In blues, the rule is that less is more. If drummers remember that, they'll be fine. The less they do, the more effective the song becomes.

RS: What about tuning the drums? Do blues drummers approach tuning any differently than drummers in other music forms?

JT: Blues drummers tune the drums to the sound that the bands have to have. Some drummers say, "Well, I tune my drums to G," or whatever. Well, listen, that may not work so well if you're playing in a band that does most of its material in E all night.

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by
Anne
M.
Raso

Photo by Ross Hallin

Nicko McBroin

IRON Maiden's Nicko McBrain may refer to himself as "The Thrasher," adding that he has "no coordination" and "no technique." Don't believe him for a minute! Being as modest as he is about his talents, McBrain won't tell you that his work on Maiden's recent LP, Powerslave, is some of heavy metal's most definitive drumming. You'll just have to hear for yourself, as McBrain's love for raw power and aggression drives him to perform with machine-gun precision.

The roots of McBrain's talents go beyond heavy metal drumming, although he admits that he knows that he will always be associated with the thunderous sounds that he brought to heavy metal when playing with Pat Travers and, now, Iron Maiden. Although this is not well known, McBrain got down to funk grooves when playing in Jim Capaldi's band in the early '70s, and when jamming with friend Ted McKenna (who's known for his roles in The Alex Harvey Soul Band and in Greg Lake's recent band). McBrain cites his earliest drumming hero as being Joe Morello and explains that, although he plays what he terms "power music," he has "a jazz feel."

At age 24, McBrain was cited by England's Melody Maker as playing in the vein of John Bonham and Keith Moon. McBrain calls that the greatest compliment that was ever paid to him. And it's no wonder these kind words were written about him. With McBrain, the famous Keith Moon lunacy is definitely apparent, both on stage and off. If you ever have the opportunity to catch one of McBrain's live performances, you'll see that he does have the overwhelming visual and aural impact of, say, a legendary rock player such as Moon or Bonham. Off stage, although McBrain has a very professional attitude when it comes to drinking and taking care of his health when he's on the road, he has a zany sense of humor and a laugh so loud that it's nearly deafening. "I'm a lunatic. You've got to be a little crazy to want to bash things all the time and make noises," he laughs.

Even if metal drumming isn't your cup of tea, you've at least got to respect McBrain for being the backbone of the largest rock tour ever. Period. When Iron Maiden finished their World Slavery Tour, they had performed almost 300 concerts in 28 countries over a 13-month period. (And that's not easy when each show featured their full Egyptian-concept stage production, which was transported in six 45-foot articulated trucks—along with a massive stage set with 120,000 watts of P.A.!) McBrain will be the first one to admit that he was physically exhausted, but in the true drumming spirit, he flew to major cities in Japan and Australia after the tour was completed to promote his specially designed Sonor concert kit.

McBrain's perfectionist attitude toward

mastering his craft has barely left him time for his second love, aviation, or to watch his two-year-old son practice on his Smurf drumkit. But fortunately, he was kind enough to take time out before a sold-out, 35,000-seat outdoor venue in Phoenix, Arizona, to speak candidly with MD. Here are the interesting results.

AR: Why did you choose to play the drums in the first place?

NM: Basically what happened was that, when I was 11 1/2 years old, there was a TV show with Dave Brubeck on it. He did "Take Five" with Joe Morello on drums. Morello did a solo and I thought, "This is what I want to do!" So, I went straight into the kitchen, took two knives out of the cubbyholes, and started beating the shit out of the stove, the washing machine, and anything that I could make noise with. My mother and father came out screaming, "What are you doing?" The paint was chipped off everything, and the wood was all ripped up.

It started from there. The very first time that I thought about it or dreamed about it was after I saw Morello on television. My father was into jazz. I think I got my talent from him. He used to play the trumpet during his early life and as a teenager. Then, when the war broke out, he got into aviation, and got into an accident. He lost a lung and had to stop playing the trumpet. He has a keyboard now—a bloody great one. It has a rhythm section—everything but the kitchen sink! Anyway, music runs in the family. My grandfather on my father's side was an entertainer/comedian on the semi-pro level, so I had a lot of encouragement from my father.

For a year, I played with knives and biscuit tins. Then, I started using my mother's knitting needles as drumsticks, and she went completely bananas! I drove her mad. Well, a little later, my father and mum asked me what I wanted for Christmas. I said, "I want a drumkit." My parents weren't the wealthiest people, and in those days, drums and equipment were very expensive. They still are, aren't they? So, they bought me a kit a year later, when I was 12 1/2 years old. It was a Broadway John Gray kit. They don't make them anymore. They were made about as well as Ajax. Oh, this is giving my age away, isn't it? [laughs]

Anyway, I got my first drumkit on the Christmas before my 13th birthday. My parents said, "This is going to be a five-minute wonder if we ever saw one!" And I said, "No, you're wrong!" My father said, "I think so, too." I'll never forget that.

My mother always wanted me to go to college and have a trade, but I was playing in bands. The first gig I did was two weeks after I got this drumkit. I met these guys in secondary school—a guitarist and a singer who thought he was Mick Jagger—and we did a gig at the Russell Vale School Of

Dancing in Woodgreen, London. You might well ask why a school of dancing. Well, I had to go to ballroom dancing when I was a little boy. It was one of the things my mother wanted me to do. It was a gig, anyway. They paid us ten Cabbage Flake chocolate bars each. I kid you not; this is very true! We stole about eight boxes as well, [laughs] The guitar and vocals were going through the same little amp sitting up on a chair.

Seriously, though, I always knew that I would be a drummer. It suits my character. I'm a lunatic. You've got to be a little crazy to want to bash things all the time and make noises—you know, clank-clank, bang-bang, wallop-wallop. So, it just developed from there, and since my professional career began, which was 11 or 12 years ago, I haven't looked back. I've had some problems, but if I had to live it all again, I definitely would.

AR: What bands were you in prior to joining Iron Maiden?

NM: Before I joined Maiden, I was in a French band called Trust. I did various French tours with this band. Before I even knew Maiden, this band Trust supported them. They had Clive Burr, a very dear old friend of mine. During a tour, both bands became very close. There was a mutual respect and friendship between the two bands. Then Iron Maiden left to do a second Japanese tour, while I did an LP with Trust. But I had problems with the band—circumstances which led me to leave. I had lots of problems with business and attitudes—part of the problem being that they're French and I'm English, which says it all. One day, I got a phone call. Clive said that he wasn't happy with Maiden, and that they weren't happy with him. After four more months—Christmas '81—it all came to a head, and that's when I came in. The ironic thing was that, after Clive left Maiden, he made an album with Trust, so we literally played musical chairs.

AR: Have you always been in heavy metal bands? If so, where do your jazz influences fit in?

NM: I do have a jazz feel. I have always appreciated the big bands—Krupa's stuff and Buddy Rich's stuff. Well, Joe Morello was the one who turned the spark into a fire. When I was a kid, my father was always writing to people like George Shearing, Benny Goodman—people like that. So, I've been around it. There was always a bit of influence. I grew up with Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, and The Beatles, to name a few. Then Vanilla Fudge and other groups came along that influenced drumming and music in general.

Ever since I started playing, I was a thrasher—no coordination, no technique, just thrash, thrash, thrash and power. I'm a very thin person. I just have the ability to smash the hell out of a drumkit. That's the



way I've always been. At the early stages of my career, I used to audition for local pub bands and pop/rock bands doing cover versions of hits, but I was always being told, "You're a good drummer, but you play too loud." And I'd say, "Well, tough for you, man. Turn it up!" In no way would I allow myself to be directed by any of this. I said, "This is my style, and that's it." I was always into the raw power. I never tried to discipline myself rudimentally. I'm not a really fine technician. I mean, I've got speed and can coordinate things, but I'm not real perfect. I mean, my time slides up and down a bit. I'm not a metronome like Steve Gadd is, or say, Simon Phillips or Sly Dunbar. You know, those guys are excellent with that. I can do it. I have done click tracks before, but it can be a bit of a problem sometimes. But style-wise, I mean, one of the first bands I played with was a group named Streetwalkers. It succeeded the band called Faithfully with Roger Chapman and Charlie Whitney. These guys were rock 'n' roll with a touch of funk in it. Well, it had an element of everything in it. It wasn't heavy metal, although it was power-driving music. It was a drummer's dream. It was a different style for me.



I even played with Ronnie Lane on one session when I auditioned for his band. I had a nine-piece Hayman drumkit with about nine cymbals, a couple of rides, and six or seven crashes. The first thing Ronnie said to me when I set my kit up was, "You aren't going to play all those, are you?" [laughs] He said, "What do you need all those for?"—because it's a different style of music. Ronnie Lane's style is like country folk/rock.

I've also played with Jim Capaldi's band; that isn't heavy metal. I do like to get down to funk grooves. I feel that I'm *not just* a heavy metal drummer. I've done things that you would not believe are me. I mean, I sold my soul for a little while just to make some bread. It wasn't what I really wanted to be doing. I just always wanted to play power music and to be an aggressive drummer. I'm an aggressive sort of person. That's my nature, and that's the way I play. My style hasn't really been molded on anybody in particular. The only two people I can say are Bonham and Moonie. Now, I'd hate to try to categorize myself—who I sound like and who sounds like me. There are so many brilliant drummers around—*young* guys. I look at them and say, "Gee, when I was 22 I knew I was good, but these guys are *serious!*" The classic example is Tommy Lee. He's brilliant—a fine drummer. He is like I was when I was his age. But that was my style of drumming—always has been.

AR: Would you guest on an album that wasn't by a heavy metal artist?

NM: If somebody asked me to guest on an album, I would and it wouldn't necessarily have to be heavy metal. It's not likely that somebody would, because people think Iron Maiden/Nicko McBrain, Pat Travers/Nicko McBrain—*heavy* rock 'n' roll. But that's the path I've taken, and that's the way I'll go until, God forbid and touch wood, my health diminishes or whatever. The day I can't take any more will be the end—not the end of my life, but the end of my career. People have asked me what I will do when I get to be an old man. In

terms of the age limit in rock 'n' roll, when it gets to the point where I'm too old to want to tour anymore, I'll get myself a big band—not too much into jazz, maybe into blues, maybe rock 'n' roll with brass. This is for the future, and as I said, the only way that would stop would be if, God forbid, something happened to my health, or by some act of God, I couldn't carry on with my career.

AR: Has touring taken its toll on you yet?

NM: Touring kills me every night. Now, I'm physically dying. Let's put it this way: *I feel* like I'm dying, [laughs] I mean, it's been such a heavy tour. This tour has gotten to us now, and I sort of punish myself. It's a very punishing sort of music to get into. It's very enjoyable at the same time, but when you do it every night for eight or nine months solid, you become very, very tired.

AR: Well, it's especially that way for a drummer. You have to be the most physically fit member of the band. How do you take care of yourself, especially on the road?

NM: I make sure that I eat at least twice a day. I have breakfast wherever I am, even if I have to make it McDonald's. At least it's something inside me. I might leave a hotel at 1:00 in the afternoon and go to sleep on the bus. I get into the hotel at 7:00 or 8:00 in the morning from the night before. Sometimes it's not possible to get into a restaurant in a hotel or wherever to have breakfast, so I have to find an alternative. I usually have steak and eggs, or something like that. Normally, I eat two hours before a show and then after a show. We usually have steak, spareribs, and beans, but unfortunately, we can't get good, wholesome cooked vegetables every time, every day. That's the only problem. You have to have a staple diet. That's one of the key things to survival. You can survive without a lot of sleep, unless you're down to only two or three hours a night. I know my limit is five hours a night. I get up and feel like a bear in the morning after only five hours, but half an hour after I'm up, I'm fine. I can carry on a day's work and perform without feeling totally out of it before I perform. Afterwards, it's a totally different story, but I make sure I eat twice a day. Also, I try to get as much sleep as I possibly can. So, I have to take the partying as it comes, and sometimes I have to leave it, but the parties are when I run into record company people, business people, and competition. The last thing I want to do after a show is to stay up for two more hours. I like to go back to the hotel, and put my feet up or go to bed. Looking after yourself is important, and that makes for a comfortable inner feeling about yourself. People can work together more easily when they're taking proper care of themselves. Not taking care of yourself does affect your playing. There's a lot of discipline involved, besides the discipline

you have when you're behind your drumkit. You can let your hair down two or three nights in a row, but if you go for a fourth and you know you shouldn't, you're messing things up for four or five other people. And then you've got the audience. You can't let thousands of people down.

AR: You don't totally abstain from drinking.

NM: No. I'll have a couple of beers. I might have a drop of tequila and orange juice, and go completely wild on that. No, I don't completely abstain. You can't become a monk. There is a time to party, but what I'm saying is that there is a right time and there is a wrong time. Nine times out of ten, it usually is the wrong time. You have to say, "Okay, I can take this in moderation." My job is physically demanding, and I'll feel bad the next day. Although I'll still give the max and still give a good performance, when my chops aren't quite together, I'll say, "Man, I just blew that." Someone else might say, "What?" Being a drummer is such a personal thing, even if you're not much of a technician. As I said, I'm not really a technician, but I'm a perfectionist. I don't like to make mistakes. So, if I go out the night before and make some mistakes, it makes things that much harder. At the moment, I feel really physically drained. The past week, I've really stopped late-night drinking. After shows, I go to bed, relax, and get room service for days. My room service bills have been astronomical! [laughs] You have to stay healthy in spirit and mind.

AR: Do you use any electronics?

NM: Electronics? In a word, *no*. In another word, *none*. In another word, *never again*. There's a big argument going on in the business over the pros and cons of electronic drums. Frankie Banali, who's a very, very dear friend of mine, has a gift for me that I'm waiting for. It's one of those pads with a little memory or whatever you call it—a brain. I said, "Frankie, I never thought you'd get into this stuff." And he said, "Neither did I until I tried it." So really, I can appreciate that point of view. You can't knock something until you've tried it. But I have tried it. In this studio in Geneva, this guy came up to me, and said there was this brand-new kit I should try out. I didn't understand it at all. The thing just didn't feel right. I said to the guy, "I feel like I'm playing pieces of plastic. This feels like playing on the tabletop I used to play on in my mum's kitchen. They don't feel right. There's something about them." Now, people who are into them will argue all night. Drummers who aren't *actually* drummers can program these things to do phenomenal things. Yet these people just couldn't sit at the drumkit for their entire lives, and play what they played on a machine. By all means, program an electronic drumkit, a Linn machine, or whatever to do what a drum-



mer can do, but don't program it to do something that you can't do. These people do that. People program machines to play 16ths. There are people with two bass drums who play pretty fast, but not *that* fast!

I hate them! I hate the whole concept! I'm sorry, but that's the way I am. If you've got a bunch of electronic junk out on stage, and the power goes out on you, what can you do? With my drums, I can carry the show to a certain degree. It's entertaining. That's my argument against it. I know it's a bit weak.

AR: Please describe your current setup.

NM: I use a Sonor. It's a 9-ply Sonor *Phonic Plus* kit. There are square-sized shells. They left the bottom heads off for me. I do believe my kit has beech-wood shells. They stopped manufacturing this particular drumkit—this particular line—about three years ago. They found that it wasn't selling so well, but when I asked them to make me a concert kit, this was what I wanted.

I have an old *XK 9212* model. It's a kit I had in 1979, which has standard concert toms. The head sizes are 6", 8", 10", 12", 14", 16", and 18". I use a 24x18 bass drum. The old kit has a 24 x 14, so I have an extra 4" on this bass drum, which makes it super. I asked Sonor to duplicate my old *9212* kit, and this is what they gave me, which is not what I asked for, but I'm ever so pleased about it. They said, "Well, we made it for you, but we left the bottom heads off it." And I said, "Oh, that's a nice little touch."

I have used Sonor since the first kit I had after my father bought me the Broadway kit. It had a 20" bass drum, a 16" floor, 13" hanging tom, and a little 4 1/2" snare. I was first introduced to Sonor a long, long time

ago, and then when I was with Pat Travers, I approached them to do an endorsement. They didn't want to do a 100% thing. They gave me a kit at factory cost, which in those days was ridiculously cheap.

The next kit I got was exactly the same, which was the one I was describing that I wanted Sonor to duplicate because it was the old model. They changed the fittings. They revamped the hardware. So I said to them, "Well, look." They built a white kit for me last year. It's exactly the same, in the square shells, but with the bottom heads on—twin heads. That was a lovely kit, but the problem with it was that it was a difficult kit to mike live. I've never used it in the studio, oddly enough. I know it would be good, but the problem is that you have to mike over the top for the twin heads. You get more sound response from the top skins.

My cymbal setup is very close to the actual vicinity and area of the skins, so to look at my kit, you'd wonder how the hell I hit the drums. There's not a lot of the drum showing around my ride cymbals, you know. So to mike the drums up, you get too much spillage, even if you try to gate the cymbals or gate the tom. It just doesn't work. We talked about it, and I said, "I'll go back to a concert kit for live performance," which is why they designed it in the first place. Apart from that, the single-headed drums have a little more volume to them. You can get some really sweet sounds out of them. So, that's what I'm with at the moment.

All the hardware is *Signature Series*, which is the top of the line from Sonor, and the best in the world, I might add. I mean, Pearl and Tama have similar kinds of stands and hardware—very solid, very

continued on page 104

JAZZ DRUMMERS WORKSHOP

by Mark Hurley

Developing Independence: Part 3

If you've been following this series from the beginning and have mastered all of the previous independence exercises, you should be ready to tackle the material presented here. Let's start out with a few four-bar solos that utilize jazz-8th notes and triplet patterns played on snare and bass drum against the unbroken ride-cymbal rhythm. From there, we'll progress to lengthier solo material. Begin slowly, be certain of accuracy, and play with a solid feel and a musical approach.

Four-Bar Solos

①

R. Cym

S.D.

B.D.

H.H. w/foot

②

R. Cym

S.D.

B.D.

H.H. w/foot

③

R. Cym

S.D.

B.D.

H.H. w/foot

④

R. Cym

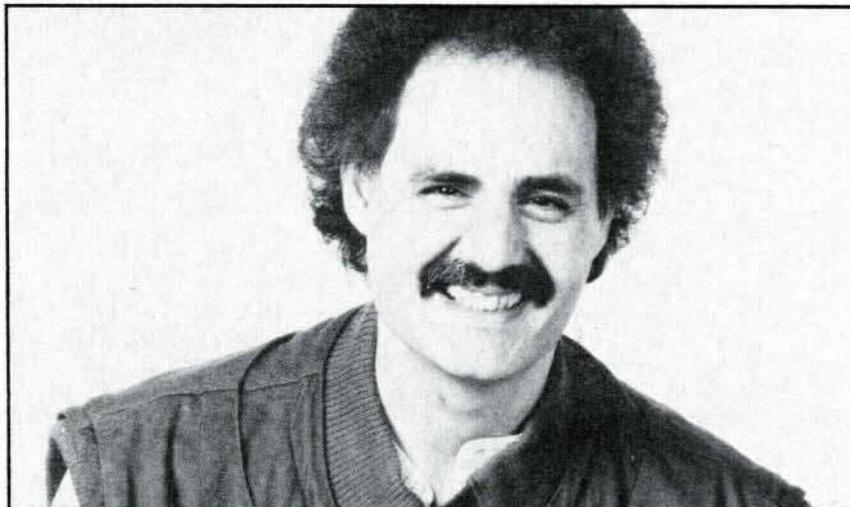
S.D.

B.D.

H.H. w/foot

In The Current Issue Of **MODERN PERCUSSIONIST**

A Conversation With **David Friedman**



One of the most innovative vibes/marimba players today, Friedman discusses his philosophies about improvisation and talks about his work as a solo performer, as well as his experiences with Double Image.

Rocking With **Jimmy Maelen**

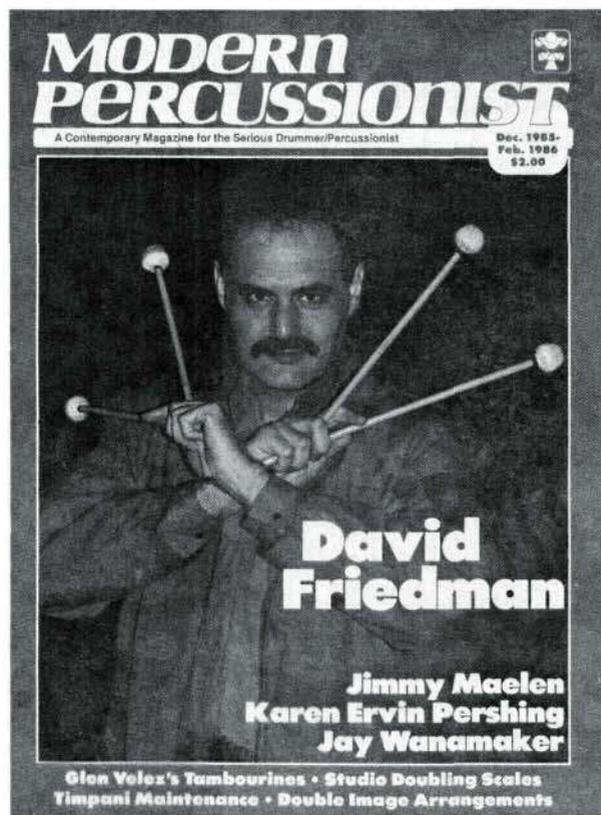
From Roxy Music to Kiss, percussionist Jimmy Maelen has lent his talents to a variety of concerts, recordings, and jingles. He discusses his career and gives tips on working in the studio.

The Multifaceted **Jay Wanamaker**

Jay offers valuable insights based on his experiences as a music editor, an educator, and a marching percussion specialist.

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Emil Richards On L.A. Studios
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⑤

Exercise 5 consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a sequence of eighth-note triplets, with a '3' above each group. The lower staff contains eighth notes, with a '3' above the first group. The exercise is divided into four measures, each containing two groups of eighth-note triplets in the upper staff and eighth notes in the lower staff.

Eight-Bar Solos

⑥

Exercise 6 consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a sequence of eighth-note triplets, with a '3' above each group. The lower staff contains eighth notes, with a '3' above the first group. The exercise is divided into four measures, each containing two groups of eighth-note triplets in the upper staff and eighth notes in the lower staff.

This block shows the continuation of exercise 6, with two staves. The upper staff contains eighth-note triplets, and the lower staff contains eighth notes. The exercise is divided into four measures, each containing two groups of eighth-note triplets in the upper staff and eighth notes in the lower staff.

⑦

Exercise 7 consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a sequence of eighth-note triplets, with a '3' above each group. The lower staff contains eighth notes, with a '3' above the first group. The exercise is divided into four measures, each containing two groups of eighth-note triplets in the upper staff and eighth notes in the lower staff.

This block shows the continuation of exercise 7, with two staves. The upper staff contains eighth-note triplets, and the lower staff contains eighth notes. The exercise is divided into four measures, each containing two groups of eighth-note triplets in the upper staff and eighth notes in the lower staff.

⑧

Exercise 8 consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a sequence of eighth-note triplets, with a '3' above each group. The lower staff contains eighth notes, with a '3' above the first group. The exercise is divided into four measures, each containing two groups of eighth-note triplets in the upper staff and eighth notes in the lower staff.

The first system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a drum set notation with various rhythmic patterns. The middle staff is a melodic line featuring eighth notes and triplets, with a '3' above each triplet. The bottom staff is a bass line with quarter notes and rests.

16-Bar Solo

The second system begins with a circled '9' in the top left corner. It features a bass clef on the middle staff. The notation includes drum set patterns, a melodic line with triplets, and a bass line. The melodic line starts with a triplet of eighth notes.

The third system continues the musical piece with similar notation to the previous systems, including drum set patterns, a melodic line with triplets, and a bass line.

The fourth system shows more complex melodic lines with triplets and eighth notes, accompanied by drum set patterns and a bass line.

The fifth system concludes the piece with a double bar line. It features the same notation as the previous systems, including drum set patterns, a melodic line with triplets, and a bass line.

For further study in the art of total independence in jazz drumming, refer to *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*, Volumes 1 & 2, by Jim Chapin, and *Fundamentals Of Jazz Drumming*, Volumes 1 & 2, by Rodman A. Sims.





Kevan McKenzie Canadian

Toward the end of my college years, in 1974, I joined a symphonic band. Between engagements, a master class was scheduled with Ian Bernard, during which he demonstrated the finesse that got him the job with the National Arts Centre Orchestra of Canada. Afterwards, I approached him for private lessons that I might apply to drumset playing. Bernard declined, suggesting instead that I contact Kevan McKenzie: Kevan was getting a lot of talk around that time.

Even back then, it was not just that Kevan could cover a variety of gigs; any good show drummer could do that. It was the strength of his attack and the authenticity of his approach. If he played funk, you thought of Nile Rodgers; if he played rigid threes, you imagined green hats and lederhosen. The piano player on a recent Canadian film awards show remarked on how Kevan played the date: "It didn't matter whether it was a polka or a swing number. He was just so funky. When he hits the cues, he doesn't just accent. It's like, *whack*. He's the loudest drummer I've ever played with."

I never did call Kevan for lessons. I talked to him a number of times, and as a matter of fact, I succeeded him in several groups after he left Ottawa. But the truth is that my pride would not accept that this young upstart just might excel in every area that gave me trouble. Dialing his number would have been a blatant admission of failure. All I know is that, for the longest time, I was a little thankful that Kevan packed up and left for Toronto. The Toronto scene opened up to embrace him in record time, and thus the good local jobs were up for grabs again.

Kevan McKenzie is a classic example of the application of appropriate energy and *means to well-conceived ends*. Kevan

knows, and has known for a long while, what he wants to do, the sort of obstacles he will encounter, the sort of red-herring issues which might divert his attention, and what he needs to do in order to stay in sight of his goals. Kevan has *always* wanted to be a studio player. Even years ago, when I would be expounding on some thrasher, Kevan would be praising John Guerin. Kevan was probably hip to Steve Gadd before Richard Tee was. I heard stories about Kevan waiting outside Steve's New York apartment just for a quick chat. These are embarrassing things to corroborate, but it is true that Kevan went through a Gadd stage (as most of us have). In Kevan's case, however, it started with the release date of Chuck Mangione's *Alive* album—certainly long before Gadd was first call in New York. Well over ten years ago, *down beat* published an article by Harvey Mason on being a studio musician. "That article influenced me so much," Kevan commented. "Somebody can have all the musical ability in the world, but there's so much more involved. I remember reading an article on Ralph MacDonald, in which he said that he learned when he was young to keep his mouth shut and his ears open."

Of course, it all depends on what there is to hear. The conventional school system is not necessarily geared towards producing artists, which eventually led Kevan to explore an institution like the one depicted in the *Fame* series. "I had gone to a high school that didn't have a music program. I wanted to take university music, and I needed some basic training in order to get in. So I approached a radical high school about just studying music all day—more or less doing four or five years of high school music in one year. Then at university I studied with Ian Bernard, a classical percussionist. I found I could apply everything he taught me to the drumset. Some of the invaluable things I worked on with him included practicing with a metronome and really getting inside notions of time—how to play time, how to play different figures—and analyzing it. I also learned how to produce a really good sound from a drum, and how to listen. A lot of players, especially from a drumset point of view, get into technique and playing certain

things, but are not really listening. You can get a hundred different sounds out of the snare drum, depending on how you hit it. When you realize that, you find that your sound starts improving because you're conscious of it."

This is all fine if you have access to able instructors and good schooling, or have sufficient on-the-job training. According to Kevan, "If you live in a city like L.A. or New York, you're looking constantly at some of the best players in the world and seeing them live. You're absorbing their abilities just by being around them, and that's great. Conversely, you're competing with the best players in the world when you may not be at a level where you can compete. Growing up in a smaller city like Ottawa, I obtained lots of experience that I probably wouldn't have been able to get in a larger city—a lot of recording experience in a lot of musical situations.

"I think practicing to records is really great. For a lot of years, that was my only musical outlet. If you're practicing to good music and listening to good players, you can just absorb without even knowing that you're learning."

The best in the business are the first to admit that we are always learning. In fact, in the pages of this magazine, we see that those most in demand are those keenly interested in the ways and means of their craft. But at a certain point, formal education ceases and street learning takes over. Kevan decided a decade ago that Ottawa streets were a little too narrow to accommodate the sort of traffic he had in mind. A move to Toronto was inevitable. That city had all the seemingly necessary conditions Ottawa lacked: ample population, ethnic and thus musical diversity, industry and a broad economic base, extremes in income and aspirations. It is also the entertainment capital of Canada. Getting there was easy; breaking in was another question. And yet, only a month or two after leaving home, Kevan was spotted on some national television shows. "I remember that, when I first moved to Toronto, I got a call to sub on the *Bob McLean Show*. Most of the band was made up of guys from the Boss Brass. Those guys read flyspecks. Most of the music we played had to be sight-read live-to-tape. I remember feeling

Kenzie: Studio Star

a lot of pressure playing with those guys, but also a lot of pride when they kept calling me back."

Toronto is not really a town for specialists—say, Andy Newmarks—who are called upon to add their signature sounds to album projects. You can't live too long in a single niche, because you won't work. Kevan had done his homework. "I've always striven to be a versatile player. In this business, people tend to try to bag you, so if you want to be known as a player who can do more than one thing, you have to pursue different situations." Kevan has covered most that Toronto has to offer. "Rob McConnell [Boss Brass] is a real joy to work with; he's a musicians' musician, and he's also one of the funniest guys I know. Anne Murray's a real professional; she knows exactly what she wants. That always makes my job easier. One of the toughest things in any situation is when you get the feeling that the person you're working for really doesn't know what he or she is after. Working with Gene Simmons was an interesting experience. I was still living in Ottawa at the time, and Kiss was playing in town. Gene had written a song, and he wanted to demo it. So he laid down all the parts, and I played drums on it. He told me I played like I had a size 13 shoe! I took that as a compliment. Adapting stylistically to these different situations is only one of the things you're faced with. The pace of sessions varies a lot. For example, when I first moved to town, I noticed that jingles and television work required that you play the part perfectly and immediately. But with records, that attitude is more lenient. The rhythm section can take its time to experiment with different types of grooves to get a song really working properly. It can be very nerve-racking if you're not able to work at the same speed as everybody else on the session—whether it's fast or slow.

During the interview sessions, I queried Kevan about his conception of time and feel. Surely the notions have changed radically over the past decade to the point where it is no longer a question of a drummer and an ensemble carrying the time, but of the same drummer and ensemble trying to make it sound as if they were not working with a click track or drum machine.

"From a metronomic point of view, there is no variation. It is constant, but when you're playing with a band, you're dealing with people and you have to be flexible. Being very consistent is extremely important, and if you're able to do that, I think that's more important than being machine-like. People talking about 'laying back' or 'playing behind or ahead of the beat'; to me, that's just playing *with* people and locking in.

"I was always groove oriented. When I found myself in playing situations where the time wasn't happening, I was very uncomfortable, but I didn't know why I felt uncomfortable. It was just really hard to play. Subsequently, after analyzing it and playing with people who were really time-conscious, I realized that certain situations felt great while others were like having two tons sitting on your shoulders."

It is a very rare occasion when you can turn on your radio and hear a song recorded without the aid of a drum machine or click track of some sort. These days, devices like the Linn have created a whole set of imperatives in the production world. Ironically, we have drummers chasing after prerecorded and programmed, machine-made drum tracks, trying to give them a shred of human feeling. There are various ways of doing this. One is to erase a drum machine track that has been recorded as an aid to the composer/arranger completely; thus, the job becomes an effort to keep up with the Linn. The other is to take the drum machine track and overdub a specific element, say a ride cymbal or snare, that was too stiff sounding. But the blunt fact is that the benchmark for rhythm section production nowadays is the rhythmical precision of the imperturbable drum machine with its inherent denial of human shifts in note value.

While all drummers must accommodate drum machine technology to the extent to which they are involved in recording projects, players like Kevan must come to some sort of working relationship. "Until a couple of years ago, my entire concept was to be the most versatile drumset player that I could possibly be. The whole electronic thing turned that around for me. I stopped practicing. I started to find myself thinking, 'What's the point of developing

my technique to the point of being able to play some rhythmical thing precisely, when some person who knows absolutely nothing about drums can sit down at a machine and do it—better—or program something that's unplayable and have it sound great?' It really turns your head around. But now that I've gotten involved, I'm not intimidated by it, which is a major step that a lot of drummers have to get past. When you know nothing about something, the automatic reaction is to feel intimidated and be negative, and to want to have nothing to do with it. I've never agreed with that attitude. In the past, certain players put down various styles of music for the same reason: They just were not familiar with those styles. Now that I'm involved really heavily—I'm not sure of how much percentage-wise; it might be 50/50 electronic/acoustic—I know that I wouldn't be doing a lot of jobs if it were not for my adapting. I feel comfortable now, and I enjoy it."

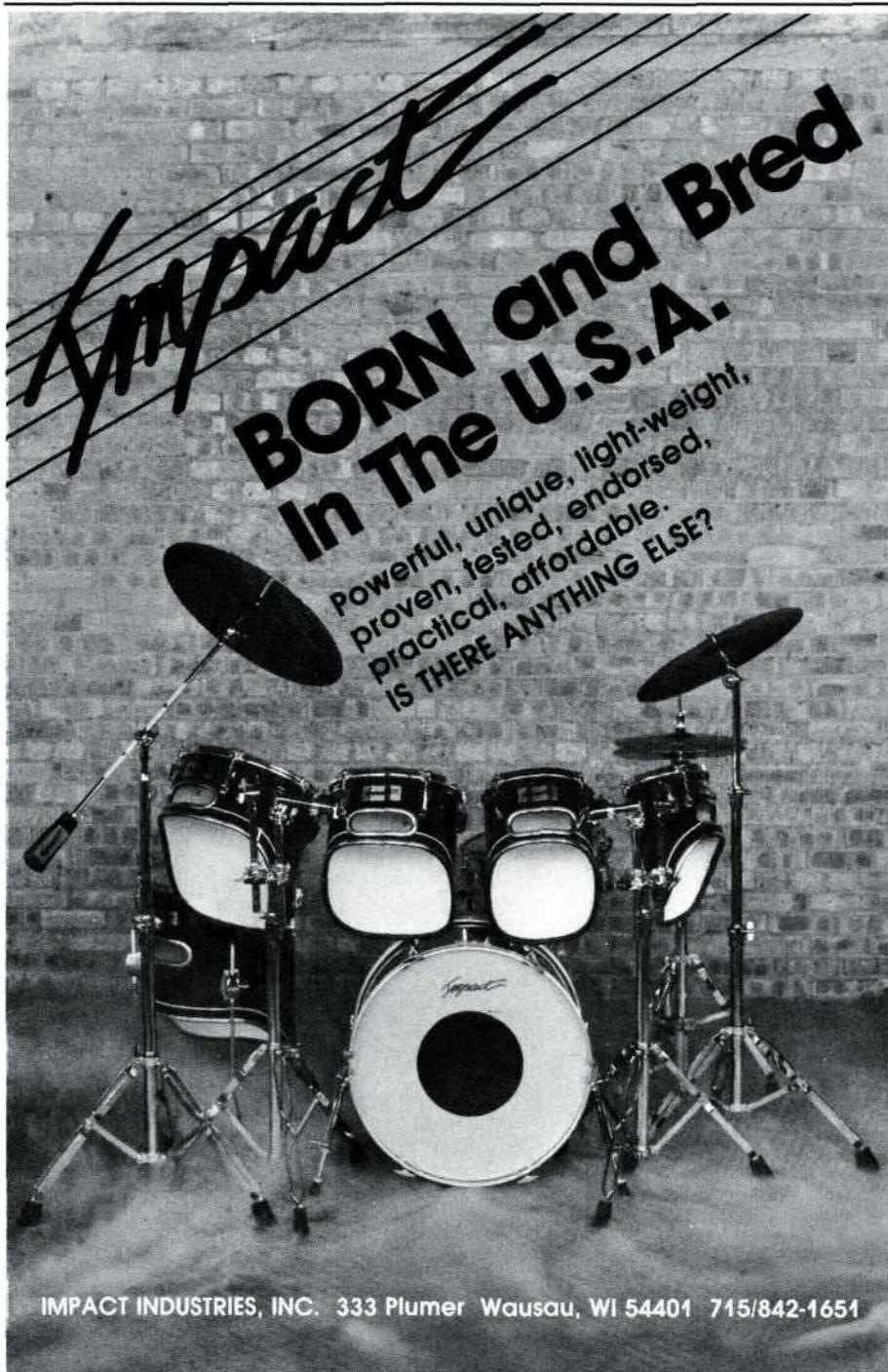
But what of the expense, given the ordinary working drummer trying to make inroads into the electronic realm. I recalled Steve Schaeffer's comment that it would take a newcomer in town \$50,000 to compete for work: "First of all, Steve Schaeffer's situation is unique in that he's doing television and motion picture work, so his setup is specific to that work. He's working in situations where large orchestras are the norm, so it is essential for him to be able to send the engineer a stereo mix. In Toronto, that is not nearly as common. Most of the major studios have a multi-cable setup where you can plug in 16 or 20 outputs for the Linn, Simmons, etc. It's not a big deal. You go right into the control room and do it. A lot of sessions are not large orchestral situations where all the inputs are taken up and all the tracks taken up. The \$50,000 figure is not out of line though. With the new Linn, you're looking at ten grand, with all the options. The Simmons is six or seven. Then you've got the *MXI*. I mean, add up the price of the cords alone to patch all this stuff together! Then four months later, they come up with something hipper, and all this stuff is obsolete. If you really want to be in competition on that level, you've got to keep up with it. I've got an EPROM sampler, which is another thou-

sand bucks. And this is apart from all my drum stuff, which is four or five kits; I've got about 30 grand invested in acoustic drums. Obviously, nobody goes out and buys all this stuff at the same time. But if you were starting from scratch and wanted to compete with Steve Schaeffer, then the 50 grand figure would not be out of line.

"As for 16-year-olds starting out, they're probably going to go directly to Simmons and to sequencers, because they won't know any differently. The point is, how are the young players going to get an across-the-board perspective? They're going to ask, 'Why should I learn all this traditional drum stuff?'"

Perhaps the answer to that is that, in a

sense, the new digital sampling feature has been a blessing. It has transported us through the Moog Era, from analog synth drums into a realm limited only by the imagination. And curiously, as of late, the creative imaginations have been blowing into chips sounds that are strongly reminiscent of Purdie/Hawkins/Bonham snare sounds of the past. These are sounds that the average garage band can replicate with very little expense. According to Kevan, "I see the young player more involved in live things. That is, I would say that something you are actually *playing* would be more appropriate. In a live context, it's just not visually exciting to see a machine reel off its program."



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The move from analog to digital technology has served to revitalize acoustic sound generation, if only long enough for sampling purposes. Being able to produce a given sound when time is at a premium has become an important rationalization for the use of digital chips as opposed to real drums. The stress on sound, per se, is inevitable when machines exist that can produce any rhythm desired. As in the past, a player is distinguished by his or her own sound. "Sound is very important, and it's such a variable thing. We all have our own concepts of what good and bad sounds are. Experience will tell you what an acceptable sound is and how to get it in the shortest period of time.

"What a lot of people don't realize is that just getting a good sound in itself is not necessarily the bottom line. You can have a great tom sound by itself, but then you play the track, get guitars and keyboards happening, and it gets lost. That's why sometimes, say, a single-headed tom will work better because it will cut through, rather than a double-headed tom, which I would prefer to play by itself. You have to analyze the situation. If something is not working, then the intelligent thing to do is change it. Being able to sample sound digitally, store it in an EPROM or disc, and alter it or change it is what I'm interested in doing. A lot of my thing is to offer sounds and create individual sounds; that's as much a part of me as taking a snare drum, setting it up, putting different heads on it, and having people say, 'I recognize that drummer—that sound!' You can do that in your sampling."

I asked Kevan if he noticed any decline in the use of electronic drums and machines as has otherwise been noted in certain areas of the recording industry. "The electronic thing is out of proportion right now. The techno-pop thing has fallen into line. Anything new gets overused; Syndrums are a perfect example.

"I don't think the point of the *Linn-Drum* is to take the place of the drummer. Maybe it has in certain situations but not in general. I'm the first person to listen to a track and say, 'If you want a machine-like feel on this, use a machine.' The thing I think is out of proportion is the use of machines indiscriminately. I'll be programming, and people will ask for various shifts and nuances—things a real drummer might do. To me, if you want it to sound like a real drummer, *use* a real drummer! Use the machine for what it does best. Obviously, you can't say that to somebody who's just hired you, but I think that's what it's moving towards."

Kevan touched upon another subject relating to studio playing. "I've contracted a few sessions recently, and it really opened my eyes. One thing I realized is just how important it is for studio players to have some sort of answering service. If you're contracting a large session, you

want to get an answer from somebody fast. As for who gets the call, you obviously want somebody who can do the job well, but you also want to *have* somebody. It's your responsibility to make sure everybody shows up. It's really nerve-racking not knowing if somebody's booked or not. It's eleven o'clock in the evening before a nine A.M. session, and you don't know if so-and-so is booked! It's a fact that most contractors are keyboard players, and it's also a fact that keyboard players rush the tempo a little. Who *wouldn't* rush the time with all that stuff to worry about? No wonder they're hyper!"

As far as the tools of his trade are concerned, on the acoustic side Kevan uses a fairly basic drumset. For a while, he tried the Steve Gadd setup, starting with a 10" tom. "You go to the 10" first, and if you count the marks on that head, you go to that tom more than any other tom, and it's too high. If you put that tom in a 10", 12", 13", 16" combination, it adds that high end to give a full sound; if you put the 10" in place of the 12", sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't. I use a 20" bass drum on a lot of sessions because it's punchy, but maybe for general purposes, the 22" is bigger sounding. I use RIMS on most of my toms."

For cymbals Kevan endorses Sabian—perhaps a natural choice since he was the first local boy to use the old K.s years before they were fashionable in rock. Most of his Sabians are the hand-hammered variety, including a set of sizzle-hats (rivets in the bottom cymbal only). "When I did a recent telethon, I brought my Sabian cymbals, knowing the drums would be on camera constantly; otherwise, you would have seen the Paistes that were supplied with the drumkit. I mean, when it comes down to it, how many people watching would have noticed or known that Kevan McKenzie, Sabian endorser, was using Paiste cymbals on the gig? But I want to be associated with a company like Sabian, which has an attitude of mutual respect. I feel strongly about that. And of course, I love the cymbals; the ones I have feel sort of 'softer.' They seem to have more flex to them."

"Bob Hughes from Grooves Drumsticks is a really nice guy, as well. I got maybe 40 pairs of drumsticks in the mail that I didn't ask for and that were made to my specifications. That's a nice touch!"

At the end of his day, which can be incredibly long and varied, Kevan reviews the events and tries to learn from his mistakes. "As for attaining whatever it is you want to do, every day you have to make decisions. You're given choices, and the ones you make define your destiny. If you don't realize that, then you're extremely naive. People talk about getting breaks and opportunities: *Everybody* has opportunities. I can remember being in Ottawa and thinking that certain people had more experience. There I was, sitting in school

practicing however many hours per day, while other people were out playing. I felt envious of that, but I knew that what I wanted to do required those hours. I knew that the approach I was taking would pay off, and it has.

"I love playing live, but if I had to make a choice, I'd have to choose the studio. I enjoy the freedom of being able to go into a session and work with great people, have the respect of my peers, get paid well, and then leave. I'd also like to have wider recognition, but it's definitely not the most important thing to me."

Kevan certainly has respect and recognition in Canada. He has an identifiable style—sort of loose and funky. (One news-

paper review called him "Canada's answer to Steve Gadd." He is *not*, however, a Gadd clone.) Kevan has worked hard on his particular way of clobbering. "I remember talking to Larrie Londin. He told me that you can be an imitation of a great player and you will be successful in a certain environment—maybe in a certain city. But if you want to go beyond that, you've got to be unique and offer something different. What it comes down to is that, if you play like somebody else, people are going to hire that person, not the imitation. It really made me think about trying to be myself and feeling good about it, instead of always trying to play like whoever I might have been listening to." ♣

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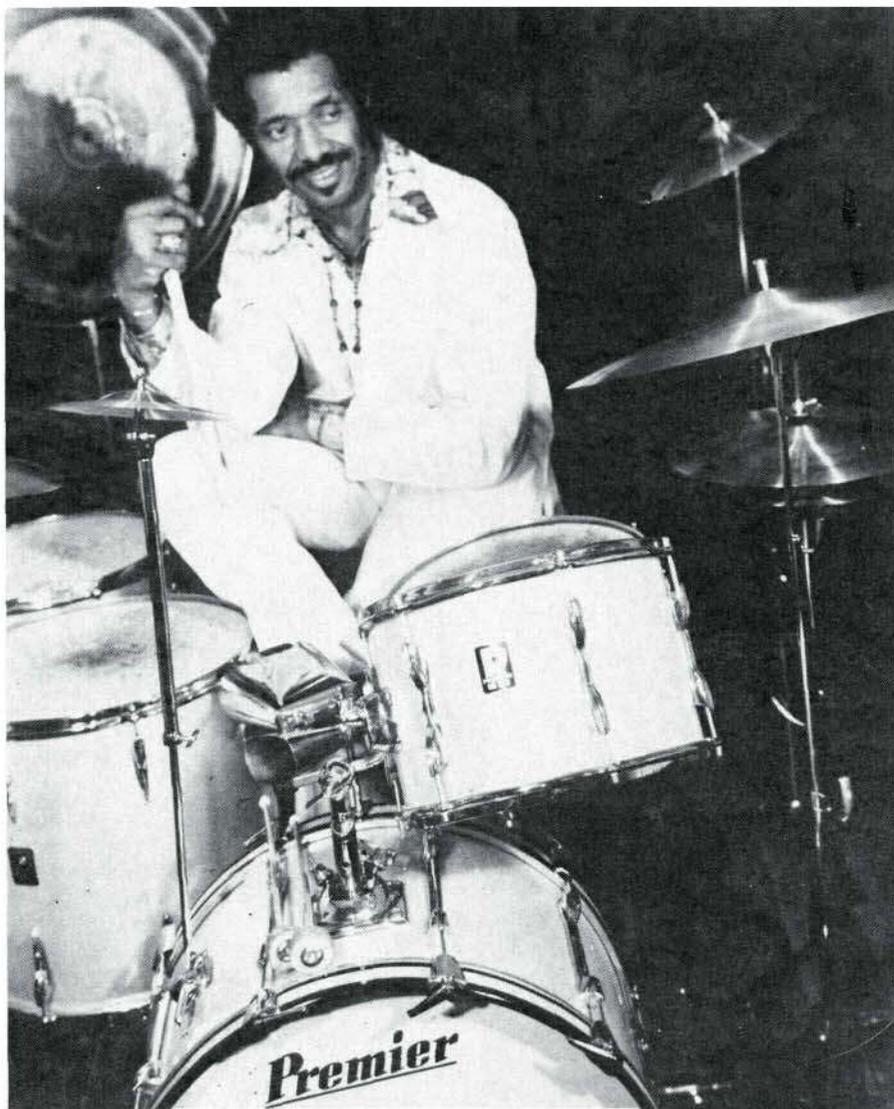
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IN MEMORIAM



The drumming community was saddened to learn that jazz great Philly Joe Jones died of a heart attack on August 30, at the age of 62. In recent months, he had been working with vibist Bobby Hutcherson, and with his own group Dameronia.

Joseph Rudolph Jones was born in Philadelphia, PA, on July 15, 1923. He began piano lessons at an early age, but his real love was for the drums. At the age of 15, Jones would sneak into a club to listen to a local drummer named James "Coatesville" Harris, the man who first taught Jones the mechanics of drumming. Jones entered the army at age 16, and although he wasn't able to pursue formal study during that time, he occasionally had the chance to sit in with army bands. When he got out of the service, Joe took a job in Philadelphia as a streetcar conductor, and with the money he made at that job he bought his first set of drums.

Jones spent a few months practicing,

and then began working with a band at night. During this time, he met such drummers as Max Roach and Art Blakey, who would ride with Jones on the streetcar during the day. He began making trips to New York to study with Max Roach, and also spent time working with Sid Catlett, who helped Jones with his brush playing. Kenny Clarke was another important drummer who befriended Jones.

In 1947, on the advice of Roach and Blakey, Jones moved to New York. But the next couple of years were spent primarily on the road with rhythm & blues bands led by such people as Joe Morris and Bull Moose Jackson. In the early '50s, Jones decided to stay in New York and freelance. One of the gigs he took was with Tony Scott, who would introduce his drummer by saying, "This is the Joe Jones from Philly," in order to avoid confusion with Jo Jones, who was known for his work in the Basie band. Eventually, Joe

Philly Joe Jones

requested that Scott refer to him as Philly Joe Jones, and he subsequently had his name legally changed.

Philly Joe then began getting some big band work, first with Tadd Dameron—who left a strong impression on Jones—and then with Buddy Rich, during a period when Rich was fronting his band as a singer. Rich would play a feature drum solo each night, but Jones would play the rest of the show. In order to get his reading ability up to par, Jones began to study with Cozy Cole. During this same period, Jones became the house drummer for Prestige Records, and became one of the most-recorded drummers in New York.

In 1954, Jones joined the Miles Davis group. In a 1982 *MD* interview, Jones referred to that gig as "my greatest experience in the music business." It was no secret that Jones was Miles' favorite drummer, and stories are told of Davis telling other drummers, "Try to play like Philly Joe." Jones was with the Davis group off and on for the next several years, and they recorded a number of classic albums, including *Milestones* and *Round About Midnight*.

After leaving Davis, Philly led his own group, and continued to record and perform with a variety of jazz artists. He moved to London in 1967, and then to Paris in '69, where he taught at Kenny Clarke's drum school. He returned to Philadelphia in '72, and alternated between leading his own groups and working for other leaders, notably pianist Bill Evans. In 1983, Philly Joe assembled a group called Dameronia, dedicated to playing the music of Tadd Dameron. The group released two albums, both of which were praised by the critics.

In 1962, Leonard Feather suggested that Philly Joe "may well be the most controversial drummer in the history of jazz." He was often criticized for overpowering the rest of the rhythm section, yet no one could deny his sense of swing and his ability to handle complex rhythms. Philly was also an acknowledged master of brush playing, and he even authored a book on the subject. In addition, Philly was an

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Papa Jo Jones

One winter night about four years ago, Scott Fish, my wife, and I went up to the West End Cafe, on Manhattan's Upper West Side, where Papa Jo Jones was holding down a regular Wednesday night gig—his last steady job. When we walked in, the first set had already begun, and there sat Papa Jo behind the drums, smiling and swinging. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I had met Papa Jo a few months before, when Charli Persip had taken me up to Jones' East Side apartment. The man I met in that apartment was elderly and weak; the man who was playing drums at the West End Cafe looked 20 years younger.

During the next hour, we were treated to a display of everything that made Jo Jones great: the deft hi-hat work, the smooth sound of his brushes, the classic licks, the humor, and most of all, the swing. Even the things that would have sounded corny if someone else had played them sounded right when coming from Jo, probably because he had created them to begin with. At the end of the set, Jo stood up, and through pantomime thanked the audience and gave credit to his sidemen. And then, as the stage lights dimmed, a startling transformation took place: Jo Jones suddenly turned back into a feeble old man who had to be helped off the stage and into a chair.

Born in Chicago on October 7, 1911, Jonathan David Samuel Jones was best known for his work with the Count Basie band from 1934 to 1946. He also worked with Jazz At The Philharmonic, Illinois Jacquet, Lester Young, Billie Holiday, Teddy Wilson, Lionel Hampton, Benny Goodman, Ray Bryant, Milt Buckner, Coleman Hawkins, and his own trio. Jones, more than any other single drummer, paved the way for modern jazz drumming by playing with a smooth 4/4 feel, rather than the two-beat feel that had been standard.

As important as he was as a musician, Jones was also a father figure to other musicians—although his "lessons" were often harsh. Charli Persip tells a typical story: "I first met Mr. Jones in the summer

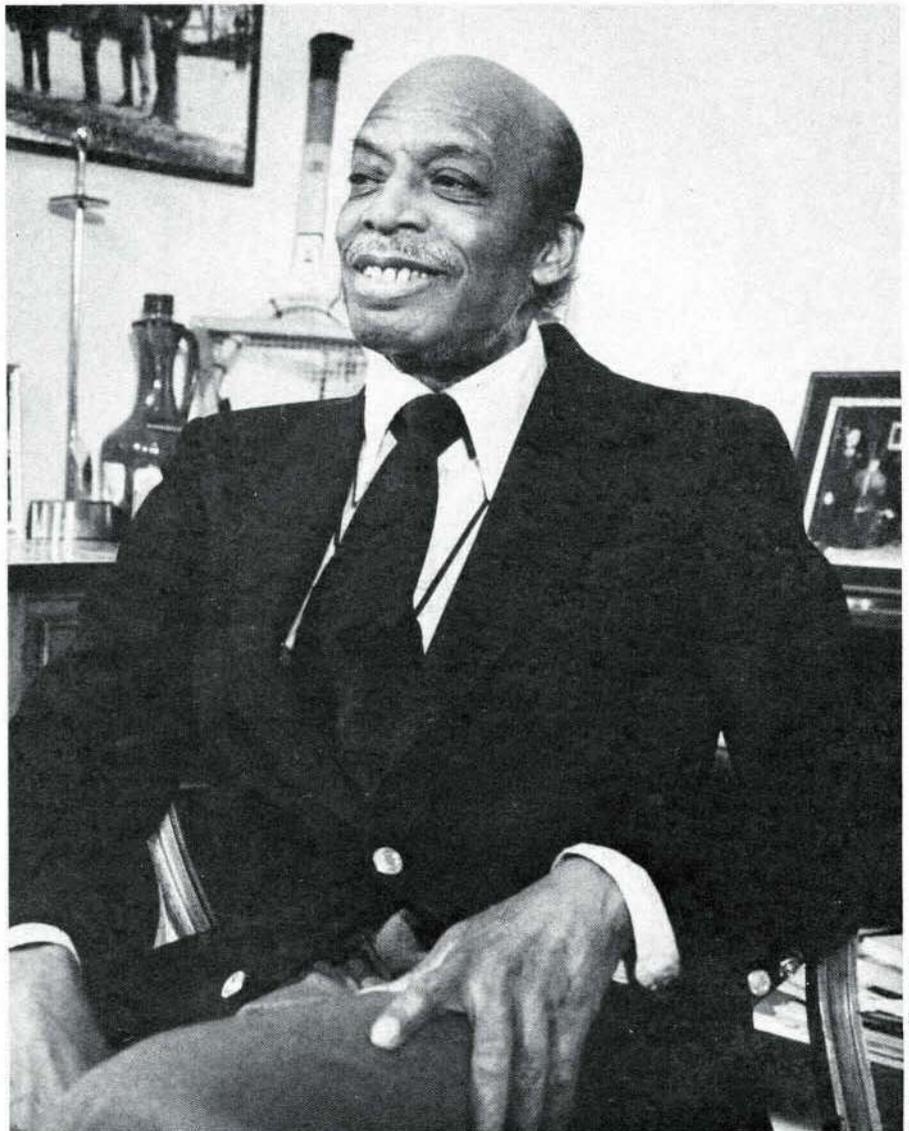


Photo by Rick Mattingly

of 1953," Charli remembers, "and it was quite an experience. I had taken over the drum chair with the Tadd Dameron band, and we were playing in Atlantic City. I looked up one night and there stood Mr. Jones. I was both thrilled and terrified. During this time I was experimenting with two bass drums. After the show, Mr. Jones approached me, and his opening statement was, 'How can you try to play two drums when it takes a lifetime to master one?' He went on to criticize other facets of my playing, as he continued to do throughout his life. But I was always thrilled by his criticisms, because for an artist of Mr. Jones' talent and wisdom to listen to my performance enough to be critical was the greatest of compliments."

No matter how well people thought they knew Papa Jo, he could still be counted on to surprise them. For example, going back to that night at the West End Cafe, I

thought I saw Papa Jo sprinkling salt on his drumheads before using brushes. I recently asked Max Roach if he ever knew of Jones salting his drumheads, and Max roared with laughter. "That old codger," Max said. "He had more tricks . . ." Mel Lewis had a similar reaction: "I never saw him do that, but it's a great idea, isn't it? When those plastic heads get too smooth, you need something to create a little friction."

Everyone who knew Jo Jones has a story about him. My favorite comes from Joe Morello, who was on a European tour with Jones during the '60s. It seems that the tour had been winding its way through Europe for about two weeks. The musicians arrived at an airport in Berlin one morning for an early flight. Everyone was running around trying to find something to eat, but none of the restaurants were open

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Philly Joe Jones continued from page 38

active teacher, and his students included such notables as Mel Brown and Andrew Cyrille. Perhaps Joe's interest in teaching came from his own attitude, which he expressed in a 1982 interview: "I've never been too proud to ask. Even today, if I see a young drummer do something, I'll say, 'Man, do that again. Let me see that.' I learn by doing that. If you get such a big head that you think you're the greatest, then something is wrong with you. There is always somebody for you to learn from." A lot of people learned from Philly Joe Jones, and through his recordings, his teaching will continue. —Rick Mattingly

Papa Jo Jones continued from page 39

yet. The only person who was unconcerned was Jo Jones, who was sitting on a bench in the middle of the airport, smiling and shaking his head. "The young talent don't know how to take care of themselves," he told Morello. With that, Jo opened his trap case and produced a package of fried chicken, wrapped in aluminum foil. As he opened the package, musicians came running. "Jo! Where'd you get that chicken?" they asked. "I brought it from home," he replied. "But Jo," they answered, "We've been on the road for two weeks! That chicken will have worms." Jo gave them one of those looks of his. "I put plenty of salt and pepper on this chicken. Ain't no worms going in there."

Jo Jones suffered from a series of illnesses over the past few years. Three years ago, he survived a bout with throat cancer, and last year, he spent several months in the hospital with a broken hip. He also had a stroke, followed by pneumonia, in the spring of '84, but in June '84, he performed at the Kool Jazz Festival tribute to Count Basie. It was another of those magic performances. As Nat Hentoff wrote in the *Village Voice*, "Jo, alone on stage, started slow and uncertain. But he was using both arms, even though the left arm had been hanging almost useless since his stroke. Then, his eyes shining, Jo got it together." In August of this year, Jo was inducted into the International Jazz Hall Of Fame in Kansas City, MO. Two weeks later, on September 3, Jo Jones died.

On the surface, Jo Jones was not the type of person that one would refer to as being "lovable." But I'm reminded of that line from *The Wizard Of Oz*: "The size of your heart is not measured by how much you love, but by how much you are loved by others." Judging by the crowd who showed up at Jo Jones' funeral, and by what was said that night by musicians, writers, and friends, Jo Jones' heart was as big as they come. Somehow, no matter how harsh his manner, those on the receiving end of his wrath knew that, if he didn't care about them, he wouldn't bother trying to set them straight. Papa is gone now, but the children must continue.

—Rick Mattingly



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Thompson continued from page 13

I played better than Roy . . . rest his soul. He just passed away recently. He used to study with Billy Cobham.

CS: That's right, Billy Cobham comes from that area in Jamaica, Queens, where you grew up.

TT: Yep, out on Springfield Boulevard. That's where all the cats grew up. Springfield Gardens High was jumping with musicians—Omar Hakim, J.T. Lewis. J.T. played in one of the best bands

in my high school. It was a three-piece band called Freight Train, and they would play Led Zeppelin tunes to death.

CS: All you've been talking about so far is rock: *hard* rock. You haven't said a thing about R&B.

TT: Oh, man, I never listened to R&B at all—maybe just a few tunes where I could get with the groove, like Marvin Gaye on "I Heard It Through The Grapevine." But all of my record collection was geared

towards rock n roll. I had to have every new rock album that came out, even if I never heard of the group. My ambitions were always geared toward being a rock drummer. They still are, but I've incorporated a lot of other elements over the years. CS: Many black drummers have talked of an interest in rock, but because of type-casting, black rockers were discouraged from pursuing those directions. You made a name for yourself in R&B. How did you get involved?

TT: Well, my first big gig was with Labelle, which certainly split the distance between rock and R&B, and I was introduced to Nile Rodgers by the guitarist in the group. At that time, I was also playing with this guy named Jamshid Almarad, who was like a Persian Tom Jones; he needed a guitarist, and Eddie Martinez gave me Nile's number. So Nile came and played, doing all this slick chord-melody stuff, but he hated the gig and split. It was all this Vegas-type stuff, and he just read it down cold like it was nothing. And I thought, "Damn, here's a guy I'd like to play with." Months later, when Nile was looking for a drummer, Eddie put us back in touch. I got the gig, and we've been together ever since—going on about eight years now.

When I first made that audition with Nile that turned into Chic, I had chops coming out of the wazoo. I was studying with Narada Michael Walden at the time, and he was a very, very important influence on me. Michael was the only teacher I ever had who analyzed my playing from a musician's point of view. He would never show me things on the drums; he'd play piano and analyze my playing from that perspective. He'd play different time signatures and grooves. Then he would criticize my tempos, point out that I was playing too much, or let me know that the groove was fluctuating. I dug that because it wasn't just about drumming; it was about music.

CS: Michael Walden was one of the first drummers to bridge the stylistic gap between hard rock and hard R&B.

TT: Oh man, Narada is a monster. I'll never forget the first time I saw him with Mahavishnu. I was just in awe of the cat—still am. He's a beautiful, beautiful cat, and he taught me a lot—not just about music.

I remember the first time I heard Billy Cobham. I didn't want to play for a year; he scared me to death! That was a time in my life when I was just getting into *Bitches Brew* and that new kind of electric jazz, and I was at the point in my life where I didn't want to play rock 'n' roll at all, you know?

CS: Sure. Everybody goes through their jazz-snob period.

TT: That's right, but I didn't even want to play fusion, let alone funk or hard rock. I hated *Bitches Brew* the first time I heard it.

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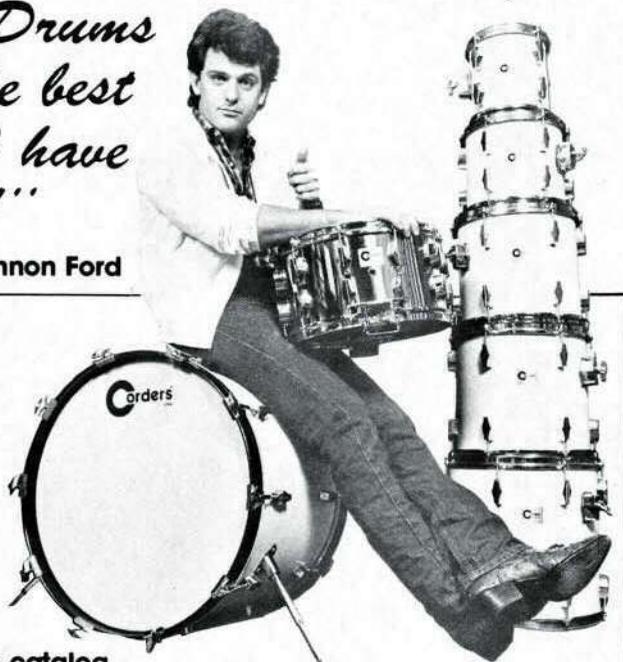
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But my friend kept hitting me with it, and all of a sudden, I got the message. Then I got into Weather Report real heavy, copped some bebop records, and really tried to swing—tried to swing from the roots.

CS: That's a hard transition when all you've played with are electric rockers.

TT: Yeah, but I had a friend who was an upright bassist, and we'd played in these rock 'n' roll bands together. His name was Billy Cole, and he had a big influence on me. He felt he'd mastered electric bass, so he took up the challenge of acoustic bass. He mastered that and sort of led me into all this new music, which really opened me up. We were swinging our asses off, and I began taking lessons to tighten that up. And from there I got into fusion and Billy Cobham.

CS: He seems to loom rather large in your memories.

TT: The man just blew me away. I'd met John McLaughlin at this church on Fifth Avenue, and John invited a bunch of us to his concert; Mahavishnu was opening up for John Lee Hooker. I didn't know what to expect. Billy was just checking out some sticks to see which ones were good or something. He did this open roll that was soft and so even, and his arms were *this* high! I said, "What?" Then they broke into "Meeting Of The Spirits," and I was just flooded. I didn't want to play for a year. I saw every concert they did. Back in '72-'73—WHOOSH! He was just the

greatest drummer in the world. His albums got a little self-indulgent after a while, and maybe I wasn't into chops so much as I got older, but I was then. Man, he just passed through those toms like butter.

But I'll tell you who really tore me up back then: John Bonham. He was my major influence, and that's who I've been trying to gear my playing back to lately. Bonham was so solid. I've listened to a lot of old rock albums, and there were plenty of cats who had chops. With Bonham, when it was time to really play, he was out there, but mostly he was a timekeeper. He had that ability to stretch and explode, but mostly he held it together. That's how I like to think of my playing. At least, that's what I hope I'm doing. I just lay it down and make it a song. I'm not playing for myself. I mean, I sit in my parents' basement on my old Gretsch kit and just knock myself out, but that's where that kind of drumming should be kept.

CS: At Live Aid, you actually filled Bonham's chair for the Led Zeppelin reunion. Can you tell me how that whole thing came about?

TT: Yeah, I was on the road with the Power Station in Virginia, and Robert Plant called. He said that he and Jimmy Page were listening to the Power Station album, and they really enjoyed my playing. He wanted to know if I would consider doing Live Aid. I kind of told them no at first, because I was really worried that we

weren't going to have a rehearsal. I was kind of leery about going on stage in front of a couple of billion people and messing up. I went to Sarasota, Florida, after that, and they kept calling. Phil Carson, who manages Robert or something like that, said that they were willing to come to Sarasota to rehearse with me. It finally worked out that we rehearsed the day of Live Aid in a recording studio about an hour before we went on.

CS: Are there any words to describe the feeling of sitting in Bonzo's chair?

TT: For me, it was just a dream come true. It's as simple as that. They could have called any drummer in the world to play with them, and they called me. So it was an honor. It really was. I had such a good time in rehearsal. It was amazing. I just wish that Phil [Collins] would have come to rehearsal, because a lot of people just assume that it's easy to play that kind of stuff. It really isn't. There were a lot of those Led Zeppelin tunes I had played in bar bands, and when I finally got to play with the real guys, it was like the way I had played them was totally wrong. They just showed me little things that Bonzo used to do, and it was just amazing.

CS: As a matter of fact, I read an interview with Plant where he was talking about when Phil Collins asked if he could sit in. Plant tried to discourage him a little and said, "Have you ever played any of those tunes?"

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TT: It's not easy to play that stuff. And I really found that out in rehearsal. But that was the best time. We sounded so much better in rehearsal than we did when we hit the stage—so much better. I had a really good time. It was an honor, and all the guys were sweethearts. It was really great.

CS: There have been some rumors that the group might do some more dates.

TT: I'm hoping. It would be great. Believe me, I won't hesitate at all if they do call. It would definitely be a dream come true. It was a gas playing with them on stage, but to go on tour with them would be great.

CS: Getting back to your drumming, to me, you have a really unique sense of the

beat. It's almost an afterbeat feeling, as if you were playing the tail end of the beat. So sometimes it sounds like you're playing way ahead . . .

TT: And other times way behind.

CS: Right. And just the way you lay with Bernard gives it a certain gravity and stability.

TT: When I play on records, I try to keep myself happy by not adhering to the norm. I know that, if I have to lay down the 2 and the 4, I can't vary too far from that. But see, there's a certain way *offeeling* it that can give it another kind of lift. I don't even think I do it consciously, but just because it's 2 and 4 doesn't mean you have to play

it that one way.

I think that Bernard has had a tremendous influence on me as far as locking in is concerned, because when you lock in and have that foundation, it's amazing the difference you'll hear on a record. You have a solid band, and *you can hear it*. A lot of people can't hear what I'm trying to do at all, and one of the rarest compliments I've ever received is that you can hear that at all. I don't even think Nile and Bernard are aware of what I'm actually doing.

CS: The most logical antecedent for that kind of displacement of the 2 and 4 you and Bernard get is what Benny Benjamin and James Jamerson did on all those old Motown records. It's almost as if neither of you was playing the 2 and the 4. It just sort of came out that way. Bernard might go 1-e-and, and then you'll go -a and complete the phrase.

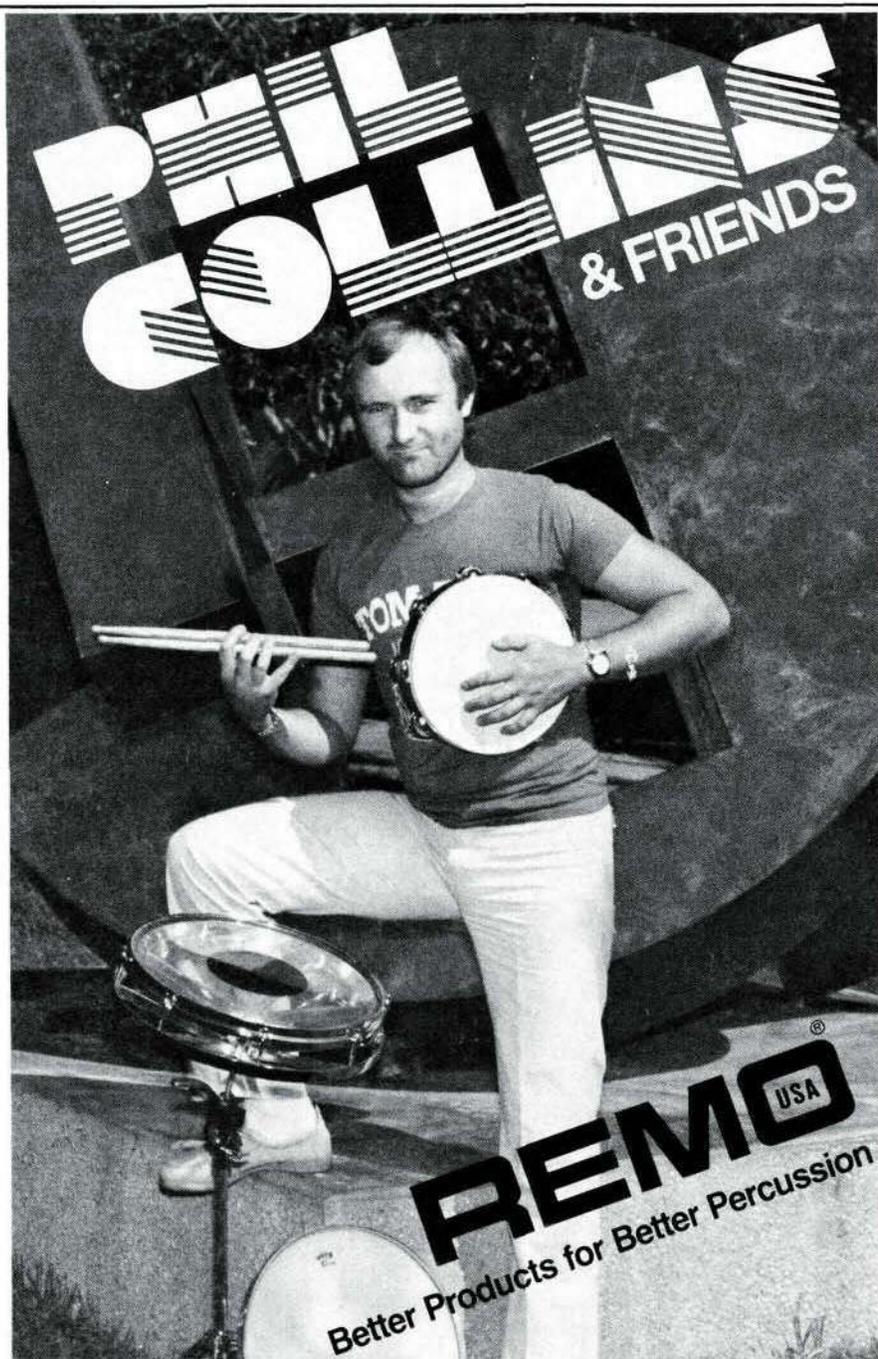
TT: Sure, but that's never conscious. That's a result of caring for each other as human beings—respecting someone not only as a player but as a person. You can't get that kind of genuine musical feeling unless there's some real respect. When I first joined Chic, I had chops but I didn't know where to place them.

CS: So they edited you.

TT: That's exactly what they did. And when I mention that in interviews, the cats will say, "Look Tony, you had the talent to do it. If you hadn't we'd have put you out on your ass." Nile and Bernard gave me a musical perspective, just like Narada did. I mean, I respect Bernard so highly that, whenever it comes time to do a record, it has to be perfect—has to be. I won't even hear overdubs—never. Anything you've heard with Chic has been right on the spot, live—just the three of us and BOOM! That's it. Bernard and Nile have the opportunity to go home, think about it, and then lay on some overdubs, but not me. There'll be two or three takes, max, and they won't allow me more than that.

That discipline has really helped me on other recording projects: listen, play it down once or twice, then BOOM! I guarantee there's no more than two or three takes, and that's conditioning. With those Diana Ross songs "Upside Down" and "I'm Coming Out," it sounded similar to the final versions, but Bernard stopped me in the middle of the take, said something funny to me, and just really pissed me off. I went back to the drums and played right through it, and he was smiling at me. He said, "See, I knew I could get you to do it." That's the type of relationship it is: He felt something was lacking and knew just how to drag it out of me.

What Bernard had asked me to do for that session was write a song: piece something together with a beginning, a middle, and an end. He told me, "I want it to be like a song going into another song," and that's where the transition in "Upside



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Down" comes from: from Bernard forcing me to get a structure together and not just flash around.

CS: Chops are nice to have, but they're overrated.

TT: Sure, like with Nile and Bernard. Nile hears this rhythm, and he's so precise that he's like a metronome unto himself—a great timekeeper. When he's playing this rhythm, he'll maybe throw in a little grace note and I'll feed off of that—do a little fill and take it back inside. It works perfectly, because we're listening. Those two really got me serious about listening, because they don't play any wasted notes. Everything counts, so you have to make sure there's a reason for every beat—no B.S.

CS: Getting back to your kits, how do Yamahas compare to other drums?

TT: I don't know, because I haven't played everything. I've been playing Gretsch all my life, and recently, I switched over to Yamahas. They're excellent drums, too.

CS: So that set in your basement is old?

TT: About four years old.

CS: So those are the thicker-shelled Gretsch, which are more like Ludwigs.

TT: Right, but I have some of the old Gretsch kits, too. I have a house full of Gretsch here in Queens, but in the City, I have lockers full of Yamahas. It's weird, because I like both kits. I heard a cat in concert recently with a set of Sonors, and

they sounded really nice, but I never played Sonors. I never played Tamas, either. I was a Gretsch man. I just got spoiled by that sound and refused to play anything else. Then I heard Steve Jordan on this small Yamaha kit at Seventh Avenue South, and it made my nose bleed. I said, "That's it." The first time I ever played a Yamaha kit was at a Bowie rehearsal at S.I.R. The Yamaha reps brought me a set to try with frosted *Ambassadors*, and they sounded great right out of the box—sounded good and felt good.

One thing that particularly impressed me was that sometimes bigger drums tend to lose tone, but these drums kept their tone and definition. They just sing—really speak right out. When I sit behind a kit, I want to feel like I'm behind a powerhouse. But I'll tell you, the small Yamaha toms I'm playing now, compared to the huge toms on my Gretsch kit, are louder and give me more to work with. So maybe the answer isn't bigger drums, but I want that bigger sound.

I don't know what it is about the Yamahas—the wood, the plies, the shells—but they give me a lot more *response*. My kit has an 8x10, 8x12, 9x13, 12x15, 16x16, 16x20, and the 26" bass drum. That's what I've been using on my recording and concert work since Bowie. I space them really close, so that they ring together

and don't sound far apart. The next step would be to order the same kit in the power tom configuration. I would imagine that they sound seriously great.

CS: How do your tastes in cymbals run?

TT: Oh, man, I remember that was the hardest thing when I was a kid, because when I started out playing I didn't have my own drums, so I had to borrow. Then when I saved up enough for a kit, I couldn't afford cymbals, so I had to borrow those, too. And I'd go to drummers' houses to practice, but they might be busy or gigging, and they couldn't lend me their cymbals that night. I vowed that, once I began working seriously, I'd have a whole bunch of cymbals for different applications. Now I do, and Lennie DiMuzio and the Zildjian people have been absolutely great to me, especially during the Bowie tour. When we needed anything, all I had to do was call, and they were behind me all the way.

CS: What do you look for in a cymbal?

TT: I like paper-thin crashes, so that when I hit them they'll cut out right away. I hate ringing or overtones. It's the same thing with ride cymbals, where I tend to like a jazz ride sound. I've been to concerts where the drummer's cymbal has a real nice tone without a lot of overtones to it, and it *sounded* like a ride cymbal. It had a style of its own: It thought for itself; it helped out whoever was playing it. It

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sounded special to me, and the cymbals most rock cats use don't impress me that way. When jazz cats pull out a ride cymbal, you can tell they really spent some time on it.

CS: It identifies you.

TT: Right, and that's the quality I'm looking for: not too heavy, with a touch of spread and a bit of personality to it. Ultimately, it probably doesn't even have anything to do with the cymbal make: It's the right cymbal and the right cat hitting it with the right touch in the right spot. But I love the response of Zildjians. They're lively and there's a reserve of sound.

CS: So what are your main ride sounds?

TT: I switch around a lot. I have a pair of 20" and 22" Zildjian Pings that I use on the majority of my projects, and a hammered-out Paiste—a 22" 2002 Ride. It has a nice personality, and that's the hardest thing to find in a ride. For me, a ride cymbal has to be heard in relationship to the entire kit, not as something separate. I hear a lot of cats who'll play the drums, then play the cymbals, and it sounds like two different kits.

CS: They're not in tune with each other, and everyone notices it but the drummer.

TT: It's weird. After all, it's a percussion instrument—it's a kit—and everything is supposed to work together perfectly, like in an orchestra. You have different cymbals for different purposes, and a lot of things people don't hear me do in public, I do in my basement, just like all the rest of the drummers. I use K. Zildjians here, where I wouldn't use them on tour with Bowie, Chic, or the Power Station.

CS: It's a more intimate sound. It gives you more to work with—more personality. Whereas the A.'s would give you more presence and projection.

TT: I've noticed that I could buy countless 18" A. paper-thin crashes or go through a box, and they'll all sound roughly the same with some subtle differences, but the K.'s have some serious personality happening. There'll be a big difference in sound, even within one size range.

For hi-hats, I've been using Zildjian *Quick Beats*—the ones with the flat bottom cymbals and the holes. I'll switch between 14" or 15" socks. I like them because they're fast, strong, and cut offright away: They give me a lot of swish opened up, and the closed sound is tight. On all those Chic records, I used an old pair of 14" *New Beats*, and I didn't need to go shopping for cymbals because I was happy with the sound I was getting in the studios. With Bowie, we were having trouble getting the right sound on tour, and nobody knew why. Bowie didn't know either, and thought it might be my kit and my cymbals. So he asked me if I would mind trying a set of Simmons; he wanted me to perfect them at rehearsal and use them at show-time. And I said, "Whoa! You've got to spend some time with those things to get

the right sound." That's when I started using the *Quick Beats*, and for those kinds of arena conditions, they worked great.

CS: How long have you been playing?

TT: Since I was about eight or nine years old. I was born November 15, 1954, so we're going on about 20 years now—a long time.

CS: You started out with certain aspirations as a drummer. Do you feel you've achieved them yet? Have you gotten to what was inside your head?

TT: Do you mean when I was younger? I just wanted to play music and be in a popular band, but I never thought I would accomplish anything that people might turn to as a reference for funk or whatever, like they did with Chic. I never thought I'd be in a band like that, let alone play with bassists or guitarists like Bernard and Nile. But what I always, always wanted to do was play rock 'n' roll. That was always in my heart since I began. That's the whole reason I'm so excited about what may come of the Power Station. But hey, getting to play with Jeff Beck, Mick Jagger, and David Bowie was a great feeling. That's in my heart, because I grew up in an all-white neighborhood playing rock 'n' roll and listening to the people I've just gotten to work with. I never thought I would play with anybody—maybe just have my own band—and now I'm playing with *the cats* and they enjoy my playing. That's why I was so thrilled to hook up with Jeff Beck. I seriously studied every record he used to make. In Munich recently I met up with Cozy Powell, and that gassed me because he was a fan of mine and told me how much he enjoyed Chic. I'd been a student of his playing on *Rough And Ready*. That record was like a bible to me, because it was a meeting of the funk and rock 'n' roll thing that I was always after. Beck was doing that ages ago, way before it became fashionable. It had that Motown feeling, but it was still rock 'n' roll, and he was blasting.

CS: So your ultimate ideal for your own playing is to combine the funk and the rock sensibilities into one coherent style.

TT: I've always loved funk, and I've always loved rock 'n' roll since I was a kid. Being a black person, of course, and listening to Ginger Baker and John Bonham, I wouldn't play it exactly the way they did, even though they had a funky feel. Bonham's thing was basically that 2 and 4 thing where you couldn't blow him off his stool. He played simple grooves, but his ears were so open. When he did a certain fill in just the right spot, it was like Wayne Shorter to me. Wayne is like the greatest musician in the world to me, because I've seen him stand there like a rock with Weather Report, and maybe towards the end of the song, he'll play some little snatch of melody—maybe only a couple of bars—and it'll blow you away because it's in exactly the right spot at the right time.

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CS: That's interesting, because Bonham was a blues cat and Baker was a Dixieland-swing-African drummer. They brought that sensibility to rock, whereas you're basically a rock player bringing that feeling to R&B and jazz, when the occasion arises.

TT: I like the jazz openness—the flow of the music—and I'd love to play with people that way outside of my basement, but my time has been so limited. Let me tell you something: On the Power Station record, I'm beginning to approach what I originally had in mind. My drums sound bigger than life, and I'm getting to play so much—really blasting off but still working that funk groove. That's what I'm shooting for. There are a lot of drummers who can play that fancy Billy Cobham stuff—play the chops, pull off odd meters, and deal those polyrhythms—but when it comes down to laying that 2 and 4 in there, some of them are not *convincing* enough.

CS: Their hearts aren't in it.

TT: Bingo. And it shows. My heart is in anything I play. I *like* playing 2 and 4. Sometimes you have to bust loose—that's normal—but settle things for everybody else first, and then go for yourself.

CS: That would be the Tony Thompson style: disguising the 2 and 4, playing around it and making it more buoyant, without necessarily abdicating the groove entirely.

TT: That's what I get hired to do, and

apparently I do it well enough to get rehired. But I have to have something to keep my interest while I'm doing it. I believe in what I'm doing and I like playing solid, but when I started, I was anything but solid. I had a lot of technique, but I didn't know where to put it. Playing with Chic taught me the value of solid time and careful listening; I love to listen. Before, if I heard a bass player play a lick, I wanted to play it too. Now, I let the other players breathe. I don't necessarily have to echo everything they're doing.

I feel that I'm growing more as a musician to be able to play with that kind of restraint and still get off on what I'm doing. When I listen to these records, I can picture everything as it happened and realize that, by *not* playing something, the music came alive. Five or ten years ago, I would have been all over the place.

CS: Discretion is the better part of valor.

TT: And not that many cats can do something like that—just let the music come alive. It should sound like a band; everybody wants to be an individual, but first you have to be with the band. When you make records like I do, you have to be a team player. Nile and Bernard taught me the meaning of the drums. I'd bring them records with Tony, Billy or Gadd, and they'd listen without being blown away. They'd look at me and say, "Tony, you've got your own thing, and you don't even know it. Be yourself, and we guarantee

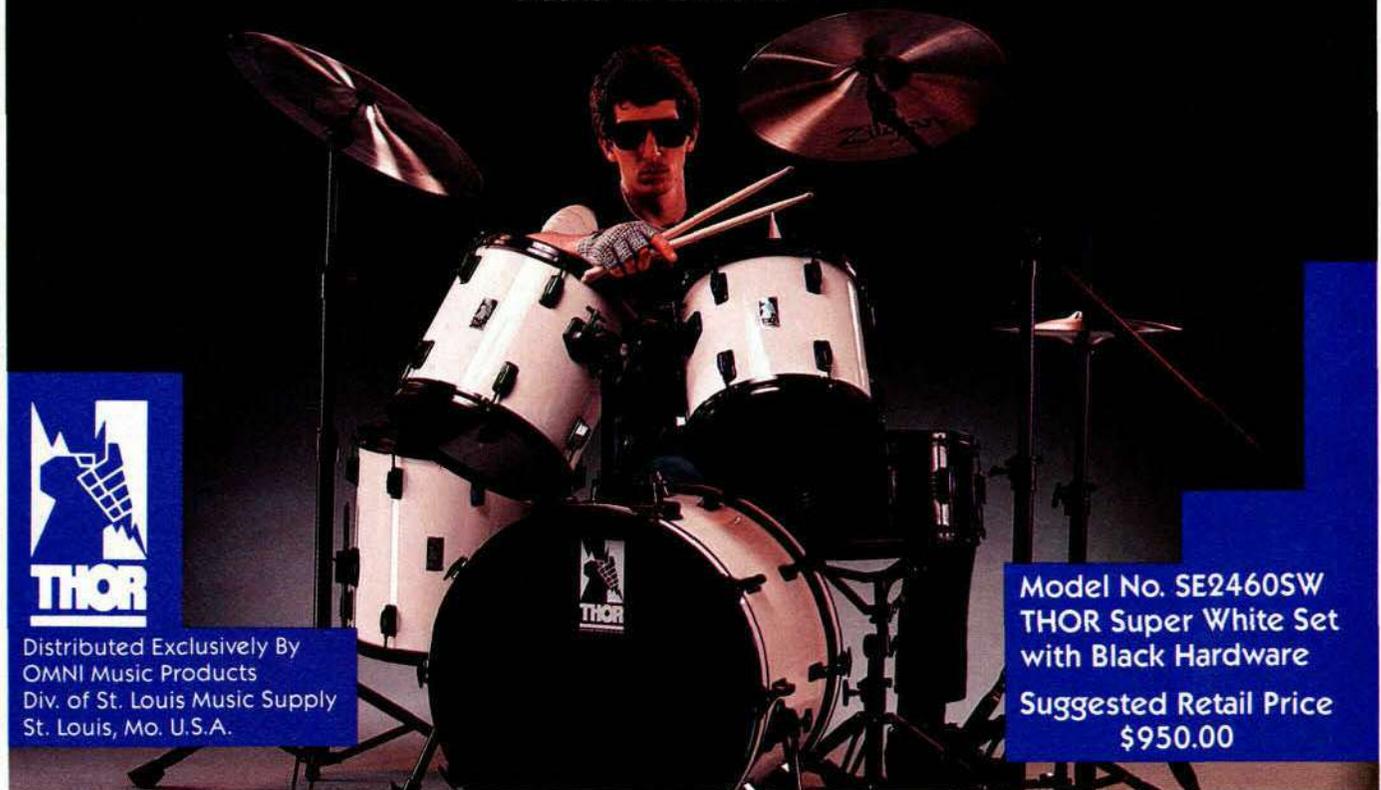
that these cats will be talking about *you* someday."

Lenny White stopped me when he heard what I did with Diana Ross and Material, and that made me feel so proud, because he's the kind of cat I looked up to for so long. I'd be at all his gigs, and now to have his respect is so satisfying. I never imagined it would be this good, because all I ever wanted to do was play.

CS: I hope you're able to keep the *idea* of Chic alive, because what you guys have is so simple that it's complicated; it's so structured that it's loose. Everybody is playing the backbeat so strong that it sounds like nobody is playing it.

TT: Exactly. That's just the way I always thought of it. Not too many people are hip to that, and I'm still working on expanding that feeling. I'm not the player I want to be now; I'm still studying and practicing. I'm still searching for the right teacher. I copied a few lessons from Sam Ulano, but then I was off on the road again. There are so many things I'm trying to get to. Like when you're playing backbeat with 16th notes on the hi-hats, they don't just have to be 16th notes; they have to groove. Why shouldn't they? Accent them in some unexpected place; find those offbeats and weird syncopations; slap down the 2 and 4; bring in that bass drum, and you have a groove and a half. If you want to get to that, and you practice it—if you *think* about it—it *will* come out.

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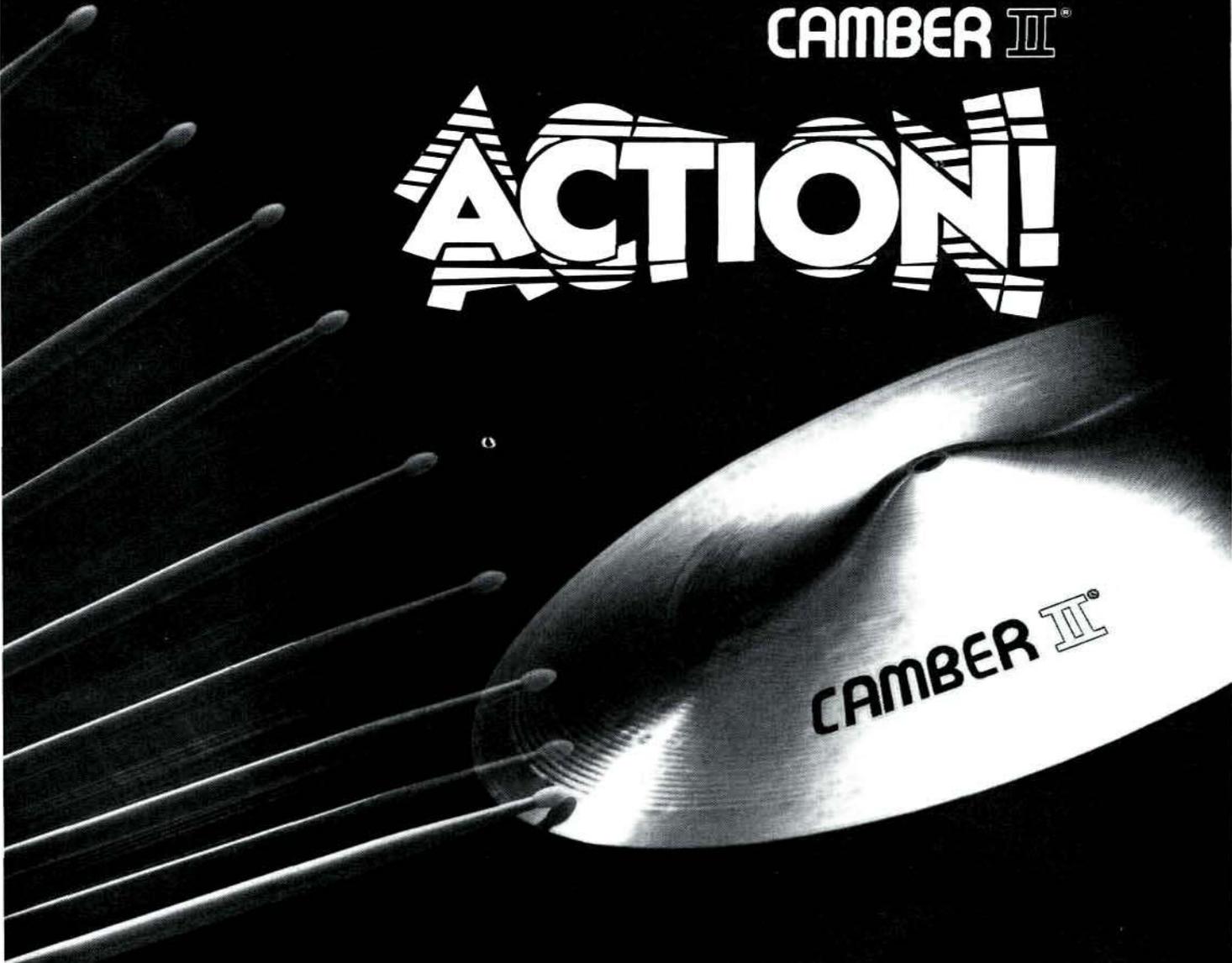
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Drum Pickups

Electronic drums have many advantages, such as direct sends to the PA, a wide variety of percussion sounds, and easy portability. An acoustic set merged with an electronic set makes a formidable array that requires a long reach to play. Some of this clutter can be reduced by equipping ordinary drums with transducers to trigger electronic drum channels. A drummer can build inexpensive drum transducers for this application and other applications described further on.

Just about anything that will pick up sound can suffice as an electronic drum trigger. Cheap tape recorder mic's will work, as will splitting drum mic' lines going to the PA. However, contact pickups are less sensitive to adjacent drums, and thus minimize the chance that a hard stroke to one drum would inadvertently trigger another drum channel.

With multiple pickups wired in parallel, several musicians on stage could simultaneously have access to the same electronic drumset. Almost any object equipped with a piezo sensor can become a drum trigger. How about a bust of Beethoven for a *Clap Trap* driver? Simple interface circuits allow analog keyboard synthesizers to be triggered by contact pickups, and some drum machines can be driven directly. Additionally, lighting controllers are easily interfaced to drum pickups.

Although contact pickups have many uses as drum triggers, they usually cannot replace drum mic's for direct sound. By carefully placing a contact pickup, retuning the drum, and heavily equalizing its PA channel, one can get good direct sounds out of some drums, but then the free-air or natural sound of the drum is spoiled. In my experience, pickups sound best on *Roto-Toms*.

Constructing The Pickup

Two Radio Shack piezo buzzers make good pickup raw material: the #273-069 and the #273-064. Both units have similar properties, can be used interchangeably, and sell for under \$2.00. To convert a buzzer to a pickup, cut away the plastic shell and remove the metal disk inside. Then attach shielded wire and an output connector to this disk. Small-diameter wire is less likely to tear from the pickup or drag the pickup off the drum. (The buzzer would function without removing it from its case, but would be much more susceptible to unintentional triggering if not intimately attached to the drum. It would be functioning as a microphone rather than a contact sensor.)

In order to make the most mechanically reliable pickup, one should remove the tiny wires originally attached to the transducer and solder the new cable directly to the pickup. (See Figure 1.) Twelve inches of cable will suffice in most applications.

The piezo disk is a metal disk with a ceramic layer baked on it. A thin layer of metal coats the top of this ceramic. You must be careful when soldering to this layer to avoid burning it off. Remove the wires from the pickup with a light-duty soldering iron, and add just a little more solder to the pads where the red and black wires were connected. Dress an end of your cable so a quarter inch of shield extends perpendicular to the cable, and three-eighths inch of center conductor is exposed, with an eighth inch stripped. Tin the exposed ends. (Tinning means heating a wire and soaking it with solder.)

Heat the blob of solder on the pickup

where the red wire was connected, and set the cable's center conductor in place, holding the connection still until the solder joint cools. Follow the same procedure to attach the shield where the black wire originated.

Cover the connections with silicone rubber sealant to provide electrical insulation and strain relief. The pickups are more attractive if they are painted. *Rustoleum* enamel holds nicely.

On the other end of the pickup cable, you can put an eighth-inch or quarter-inch in-line phone jack, an RCA phono jack, or a balanced mic' connector, depending on what your electronic drums require. If in doubt about wiring, simply disassemble one of your electronic drumset's patch cord connectors and copy it.

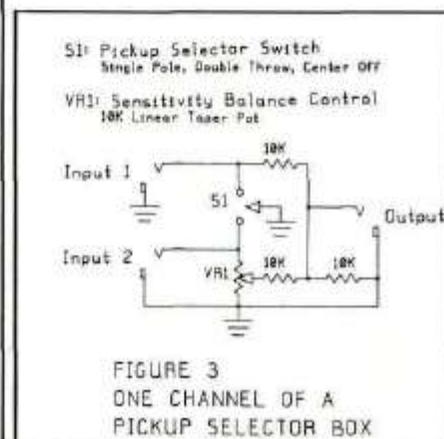
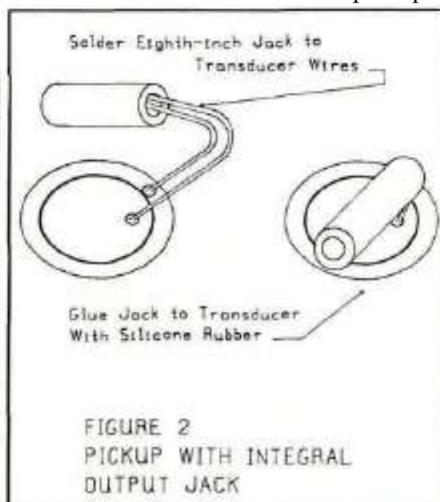
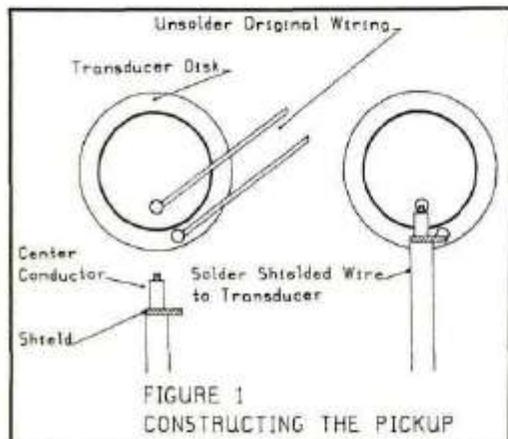
Drum Installation

One good temporary adhesive for pickups is connector sealant tape (such as Radio Shack #278-1645). Spread an even coat of this putty on the pickup, and press it into place. It should stay in place indefinitely until you wish to remove it. The best place to mount the pickup is either on the drum rim or on the head itself. A neat installation can be done by mounting the pickup to the drum, routing the cable to a convenient drum lug, and attaching the jack to the lug with a nylon wire tie (Radio Shack #278-1632 or equivalent).

To avoid any cabling on your drum, an eighth-inch phone jack could be glued to the back of the pickup with silicone sealant. (See Figure 2.) That way, you would plug in right at the pickup.

Alternate Controllers

Rather than the conventional polygonal controllers (drumpads) available from



Tama, Simmons, and others, drummers can construct custom controllers to express their own personalities. Alternate controllers can be constructed of plywood cut into fanciful shapes. Sheet rubber is available in hardware stores to serve as a striking surface. Contact cement will glue rubber to plywood; silicone rubber sealant will hold the pickup on the controller. Novelty applications are limited only by your imagination. One could even trigger drums with a toy cap pistol.

Practice pads also make good controllers. Interfacing a full set of practice pads to a digital drum machine could make an

impressive and cost-effective electronic drumset. A small block of wood with a pickup functions as a foot controller. A pickup pasted to the lower hi-hat cymbal makes a natural-feeling *Clap Trap* driver.

Controller Assignment

Using a switching system, drummers can share their electronic drums with other performers. A simple switch box is shown in Figure 3. This box will allow two controllers to simultaneously trigger a drum channel when the switch is in the center position. Toggling the switch up or down disables one or the other controller.

Since it is very unlikely that two drum controllers would have the same output level, the sensitivity balance control is adjusted to attenuate the loudest pickup (plugged into input 2). When using this selector box, the sensitivity control on the electronic drum "brain" will probably have to be set a little higher than normal, but most electronic drums have plenty of excess input gain.

Driving Analog Synthesizers

Keyboard players are abandoning their older monophonic synthesizers as they get new high-tech polyphonic units. Many of these older synthesizers can produce a

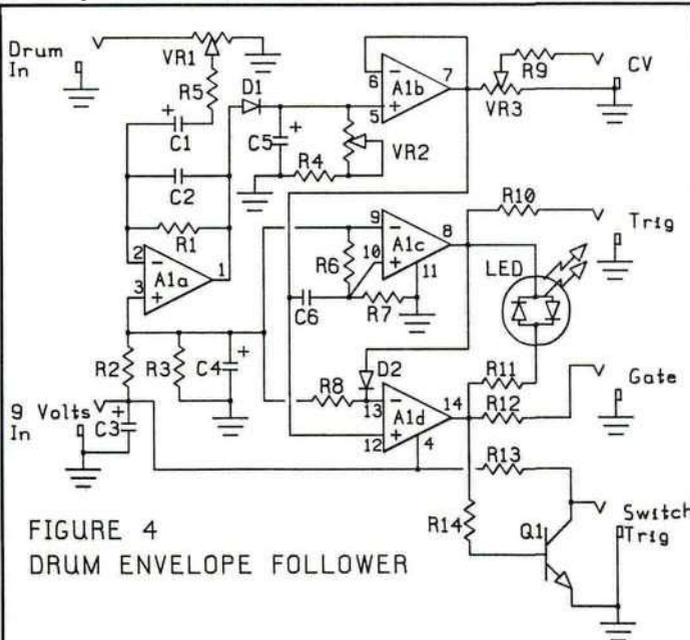


FIGURE 4
DRUM ENVELOPE FOLLOWER

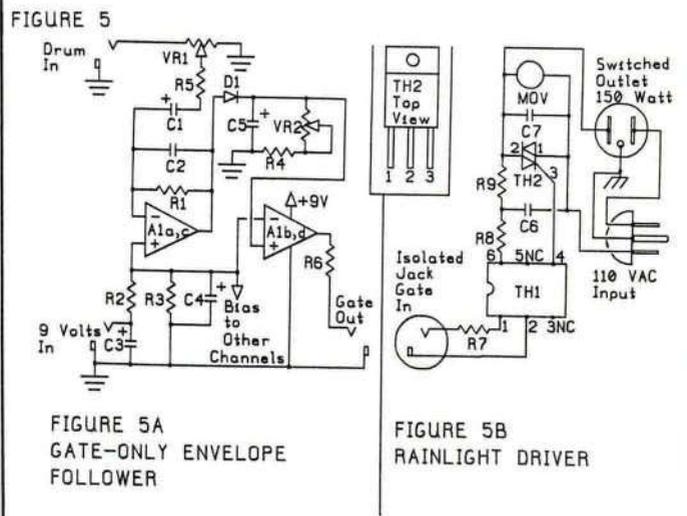


FIGURE 5A
GATE-ONLY ENVELOPE FOLLOWER

FIGURE 5B
RAINFIGHT DRIVER

PART	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	RADIO SHACK PART NO.
Misc.	1	Chassis	270-286
Misc.	1	Wall Transformer, SVDC	273-1455
Socket	1	IC, 14 Pin DIP	276-1999
Circuit Board	1	Perfboard or Printed Circuit	
Knob	3	Control Knob	274-415
Jack	1	DC Input Jack	274-1565
Jack	5	Quarter Inch Phone	274-280
VR1,VR3	2	Linear pot, 10K	271-1715
VR2	1	Linear pot, 100K	271-092
R1	1	Resistor, 1 Megohm	271-1356
R2,R11	2	Resistor, 1K ohm	271-1321
R3	1	Resistor, 100 ohm	271-1311
R4	1	Resistor, 4.7K ohm	271-1330
R5,R6,R8,R14	4	Resistor, 10K ohm	271-1335
R7,R13	2	Resistor, 100K ohm	271-1347
R9,R10,R12	3	Resistor, 470 ohm	271-1317
C1	1	Capacitor, 1uf	272-1434
C2	1	Capacitor, 4.7pf	272-120
C3	1	Capacitor, 100uf	272-1028
C4,C5	2	Capacitor, 10uf	272-1436
C6	1	Capacitor, .1uf	271-1069
D1,D2	2	Diode, 1N914	276-1122
A1	1	1C, LM324 Quad Op Amp	276-1711
LED	1	Tri-Color LED	276-035
Q1	1	Transistor, 2N2222	276-0009

(Note: Radio Shack parts are listed as a suggestion only; these parts would all be available at any well-stocked electronics store.)

PART	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	RADIO SHACK PART NO.
Misc.	1	Chassis	270-282
Misc.	1	Wall Transformer, SVDC	273-1455
Socket	1	IC, 14 Pin DIP	276-1999
Circuit Board	1	Perfboard or Printed Circuit	
Knob	2	Control Knob	274-415
Jack	1	DC Input Jack	274-1565
Jack	2	Quarter Inch Phone	274-280
VR1	1	Linear pot, 10K	271-1715
VR2	1	Linear pot, 100K	271-092
R1	1	Resistor, 1 Megohm	271-1356
R2	1	Resistor, 1K ohm	271-1321
R3	1	Resistor, 100 ohm	271-1311
R4	1	Resistor, 4.7K ohm	271-1330
R5	1	Resistor, 10K ohm	271-1335
R6,R7	2	Resistor, 470 ohm	271-1317
R8	1	Resistor, 180 ohm 1/2 watt	271-014
R9	1	Resistor, 1.2K ohm 1/2 watt	271-024
C1	1	Capacitor, 1uf	272-1434
C2	1	Capacitor, 4.7pf	272-120
C3,C4	2	Capacitor, 100uf	272-1028
C5	1	Capacitor, 10uf	272-1436
C6,C7	2	Capacitor, .22uf 250 volt	272-1058
D1	1	Diode, 1N914	276-1122
A1	1	1C, LM324 Quad Op Amp	276-1711
TH1	1	MOC 3010 Opto-triac	276-134
TH2	1	Triac, 6 amp, 400 volt	276-1000
MOV	1	Metal Oxide Varistor, 220V	***
110 VAC Plug and Cord			***
Grounded AC Receptacle			***
Electrical Box			***

wider variety of percussion sounds than commonly available drum synthesizers, including gongs, chimes, and all sorts of "space" sounds.

To drive keyboard synthesizers from a drum transducer, you need a device called an envelope follower. Moog synthesizers and some Japanese synthesizers such as Korg require a switch-trigger, which is a switch closure to ground. Other synthesizers such as EML, Arp, SCI and Oberheim require a gate, which is a positive voltage pulse of five to 15 volts. (Constructing an envelope follower is a bit more complicated than the simple pickup previously described. If you have experience with electronic circuits, the diagram and information provided should be sufficient for you. If you don't have such experience, be sure to seek assistance from someone who does.)

Figure 4 shows an envelope follower that will supply the needed signals from a drum transducer. VR1 is an input gain control. VR2 controls the decay of the CV output after a drum stroke, and also controls how long the gate will stay on. VR3 will adjust the amount of pitch bend caused by a drum stroke. With VR3 set at maximum, a hard drum stroke will drive the synthesizer pitch quite high. Lower CV settings yield more controllable pitch ranges.

Gate duration can be adjusted from

about 100 milliseconds to two seconds. Each drum strike will cause a trigger whether the gate is high or low. Each trigger will cause the gate to fall for about one millisecond. The two-color LED will flash red when the gate is high, and momentarily flash green with each trigger. For long pitch falls, adjust VR2 high, connect CV out to synthesizer CV in, and the Trig output to gate in. In this mode, the synthesizer's envelope generator RELEASE control would control duration of the drum sound.

Some digital drum machines have direct trigger inputs. A few of those, such as the Oberheim, can be driven directly by pickups; others may require envelope followers for reliable triggering.

Light Controllers

Lighting sequencers (chasers) can normally be driven directly from pickups. A chaser driven by the bass drum gives dramatic effects. Conventional theatrical voltage-controlled dimmer packs can be driven via envelope followers. A bank of envelope followers could be diode-summed with a light board, so your light technician could trigger stage lights from the drums at the flick of a switch.

"Rain Lights" are nice for drum illumination. These inexpensive (about \$30 or \$40 apiece) sealed beam lights project a tight, bright beam and consume little

power. Rain lights can spotlight a single drum from a throw of ten to 20 feet. With a bank of rain lights driven by sensors on all your drums, you can illuminate each drum as you strike it.

Since having four or eight full-featured envelope followers driving dimmer packs becomes expensive, a schematic for a rain light controller is shown in Figure 5. Once again, for safety, get someone experienced in electronics to assemble this circuit for you if you are not familiar with such devices.

Figure 5A shows one channel of a stripped-down envelope follower. VR1 and VR2 have the same functions as described previously. Four of these can be constructed with only two ICs. The rain light driver in Figure 5B will safely drive one or two rain lights or up to 150 watts of par bulbs. The triac TH2 does not need heat sinking in this application and should be mounted to the circuit board. Do not bolt TH2 to the chassis, because the tab is electrically hot.

The 220 volt MOV is not available at Radio Shack but is commonly available from local electronics distributors. The MOV is needed to protect the triacs from the transformers in rain lights. It is probably not necessary if you only intend to drive par lights. If triac TH2 is replaced with a heavier-duty type and properly heat-sunked, this circuit can be used to drive 1,000-watt pars or banks of aircraft landing lights. I would suggest putting four or eight of Figure 5A in a small chassis mounted near the drums, and using 5-pin din cables or Amp plastic twist-on multipin connectors to feed the signals to the light driver box, which would be mounted on the light rigging near the lights.

Any readers who would like to contact me for more specific information or guidance may do so; inquiries should include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Send your correspondence to James Chandler, Jr., 204 California Avenue, Chattanooga, TN 37415.



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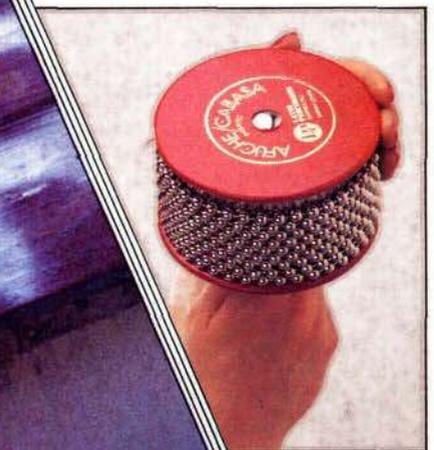
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by Anne M. Raso



Photo by Laura Friedman

Paula Spiro:

Teaching The Beginning Female Drummer

It takes a special instructor to help beginning female players get over their initial fear of taking up an instrument that many musically inclined women shy away from. Paula H. Marian Spiro, an experienced instructor as well as session player, has the magic touch of putting aspiring female players at ease in her Westside Manhattan studio, known as The Female Drummer's Workshop. Spiro keeps the size of her classes between four and ten students, and finds that the average student is not very average at all. She has taught females from all walks of life, from 16-year-old high school students to 50-year-old housewives with grown children.

Although she has taught both males and females, Spiro enjoys having an exclusively female workshop; she empathizes with her students who have previously been discouraged from playing simply because they were female, or who have experienced male instructors who didn't take them seriously. According to Spiro, "The instructors are mostly men. The role models are mostly men. Let's put it this way: They're *all* men. And if those men don't have nice or very progressive attitudes about women, they're not going to teach women the way they should be taught—which is how they'd teach any other male. Many times, they don't treat us seriously. For example, I went to an audition two years ago. Eight men lined up, and one at a time, they went into this room and played for five minutes or so. When it was my turn, the woman in charge just totally overlooked me and went on to the next male player. I said, 'Wait a min-

ute. I'm here for an audition.' And she said, 'Oh, I thought you were somebody's girlfriend.'

"So these are the assumptions in our industry. Some of it is changing; I'm so happy to see some female players coming up in the ranks. There are still so few of us. We not only have to be good; we have to be *great*, and practice like hell. It can work as an advantage sometimes—like the group Fanny in the early '70s. They were sort of a phenomenon in that they could actually play well and they had lots of gigs, but they never went mainstream because of how our industry pigeonholes people. 'You have to sound like this. You have to look like this.' For female players, it's not enough sometimes even to play well; you really have to look a certain way. You have to look sort of Barbie dollish; that's really the look for women in the music business. A lot of vocalists, especially, really have to look the part. It's like Hollywood in a sense. You may see a female face, but she's usually the one wearing the low-cut T-shirt advertising somebody's cymbals. She can't just be a regular 'hanging out' sort of woman with a pair of jeans on. I find that there is a lot of prejudice in that way. But as the quality of female playing gets better and better, people are going to become more receptive to women. And it starts with the instructors. If instructors don't teach women the right way and prepare them for what this industry is going to ask of them, there are just going to be fewer of us."

Spiro, who herself has been the student of such noted instructors as Al Duffy of the old Professional Percussion Shop and Armand Santorelli (a former student of Joe Morello), takes a very basic approach with her new students. "The first class is a total introduction into beginning playing. We discuss how to buy the basic equipment needed, which is a set of sticks, a pad, and sheet music. I prepare people for their first walk into a music store; the person behind the counter is usually impatient and doesn't have much time to spend. I teach

my students that they only have a few moments to pick out sticks; I tell them to ask for six or eight pairs to find one useful pair. I tell them to roll the sticks out to see if they're warped, and then to play them to see if the sound is the same.

"Often what happens is that, with beginners who don't go to see instructors or who have instructors who don't teach them this, their first purchase is already a waste of money. They'll go home looking for an even sound, and no matter what they do, they won't be able to get one. I try to teach people what to look for, so that they can go in prepared.

"I begin students on 5A oak sticks, because this is a nice balance between the 7A and the 2S marching stick. This is the mid-range. I tell them what I think is the best pad to buy—one that will last them all their lives if they take care of it—and that their initial investment is going to run about \$4.25 for the sticks and maybe \$15.00 for a drumpad. If they don't have money, they can even buy music paper by the sheet, so that they don't have to spend \$10.00 or \$12.00 initially for a whole package. I keep in mind that everyone has a budget. I think that everybody can begin to play drums. Money is not an issue, because once you've made that initial investment, you're on your way."

Also in her introductory class, Spiro discusses the psychological side of being a female player. "First of all, I find that with a lot of female players there is not all that much encouragement. When girls or women say that they want to play drums, people usually don't take them seriously. This is a shame. A lot of times, people don't take a female band seriously. We're working in an industry that is predominantly male: the producers are male; the players are male; the studio owners are male; the promotion people are male; the DJs are male. We're perhaps in the most male-dominated art industry."

So where does the female player begin? "Well, she's going to have to put up with some tough times, unless she can gravitate

to some male musicians who are very cool, who have very great attitudes about women, who aren't very competitive, and who would love to play with a woman drummer if they could find one. But it's hard to find these people in our business. That is why, when I was getting started, it was very hard."

Spiro first picked up a snare drum—while no one was looking—as a teenager in the mid-'60s, at a "time when girls didn't play drums." She elaborates, "My start was in drum & bugle corps where you learned open, very rudimentary drumming—and all of the drum lines were boys. The only progressive drum lines, really, in the drum & bugle corps of the '60s were Canadian; they actually had girls and women in their drum lines. So what I had to do was carry a flag! I graduated to twirling a rifle, but I didn't want to do that either. I wanted to play *drums*. So, I'd have to wait until everybody piled out of rehearsals, and while the equipment manager was loading all the drums in the truck, he would let me sling a snare over my shoulder, and I'd play for maybe a half hour on my own after everyone had gone home. That was my first exposure to playing drums, and I think that some of that has not changed."

Spiro's first inspiration came a few years later when she studied with Jackie Brown of Delaware, who showed her the outstanding technique that she teaches to her

classes today. She says, "He showed me that my size didn't matter [Spiro is small-boned, 5' 3 1/4" tall, and 100 pounds]; what mattered was the level at which I held the sticks above the drum, which is where the power comes from. The further you put your sticks up in the air, the more power there is when you come down. Power doesn't come from having muscle and brawn."

When Spiro first sits each of her students down at her kit—which she describes as "an all-purpose Ludwig kit, purchased in 1973 or '74"—she doesn't worry about how they're actually playing. "I'm not worried initially about whether they're banging or making noise; I'm more interested in whether they can hear rhythm. Can they pick out the beat? When they come upstairs in the studio to hear music, can they pick out the 1—where, in fact, the first beat of the first measure starts? There are some people who *can't* hear that, and those are the people I'm going to have trouble with. If they can hear time, if they can hear the beat, if they can sing or tap their feet to a basic four beat in whatever piece we're listening to, then I know they are drummers.

"I think that all people are born with a sense of rhythm; it's just that in some families it's encouraged, and in some families it's really not. I also think that some people have exceptional prowess at learning music. I don't think it's all learned in this

life: I really think that some people bring that knowledge with them. But it *can* be developed."

In Spiro's beginning classes, she discusses "the relationship of the limbs and how it all works together in one particular common beat. I say, 'Sit down and watch what I'm doing. I'm going to take every note apart for you, and you're going to see what it looks like.' This enables the students, for the first time, to break down each thing that I'm doing and to reproduce it in a way that makes sense to them.

"The lesson might sound something like this: 'What we're doing now is keeping a basic four quarter-note count on the bass drum [demonstrated with foot]. Then with the hand, which would be playing the ride cymbal, we should be playing double that, which would be 8th notes. There is a relationship already. Then, when the snare comes in, it's on 2 and 4. I'm keeping count—1, 2, 3, 4—so that my hand would begin to come in on 1, 2, 3, 4. Then, I have a foot over here that plays a 2, 4 'chip' . . . and you have four things working. But there is a relationship, and it's one of the most basic. That in particular—working with quarter notes on the snare, 2 and 4 on the sock cymbal—is a very basic intro, but it shows you that there is a relationship. It gets a little more expansive from there, but everything isn't just doing totally independent things. I'm not playing totally different things off each limb; there

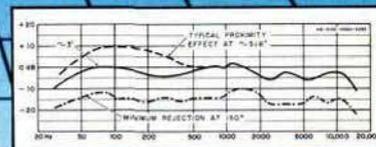
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is one particular time signature that one keeps in mind. Patterns are created by the notes played and not played—the spaces and the upstrokes and downstrokes. That's when things get a little more complicated.' "

Although Spiro has had a couple of her female students move on to the point where they're preparing to become professionals, she also has had a few slow students who have required extra help. Fortunately, Spiro's students are very supportive of each other, and will stop and help each other out. Strangely enough, it wasn't during her current beginner's classes that she experienced "trouble" students, but when she taught intermediate classes at Creative Music Studios on Staten Island. Spiro remarks, "It was very frustrating to me. I found that they had a lot of bad habits. The students were lazy or had created impassés for themselves. I feel more comfortable with the beginners. I want to start female players off right, because I think my techniques are among the best. I've pulled all my instructions from some of the greatest instructors walking around, as well as from some books—Buddy Rich, George Stone—which I consider to be the very best, where technique is *it*. I feel very comfortable about what I'm doing. There isn't any instructor or drummer alive who would come into my classes and say, 'You're really not teaching right.' Any drummer who came would see that it's very progressive."

But just how does Spiro assist a student who's frustrated? "What I've tried to do—because we work in small classes—is take that particular student aside and really study what her hands are doing. And it usually is that her technique is falling short of the others. It's hard because students only come here once a week. When a whole week goes by, a lot can happen. Students can develop bad habits but think that they're doing it right. I just have to spend more time with the individuals who have problems. So I'll leave the other students—they have the chart written out, they have the metronome there, and they have each other for support—and I'll take the student to the other side of the room and work with that person."

When Spiro is teaching her third

through sixth classes with one workshop group, they start "working with the elements of single strokes, double strokes, and paradiddles. When we're up to the sixth or seventh session, we're working out of the George Stone book, and we're doing a lot of repetition. This is the stuff that a lot of people say they can't do because it's boring: doing things over and over again, working with single and double strokes, working with slower and faster tempos on the metronome, working with and without the metronome.

"I want to teach people very good rhythm, and the metronome can help give a structure to that. I have the kind with a light that you can both hear and see. People sometimes think that they're right on the beat until they start playing with a metronome. I don't like to spend *too* much time with the metronome, because for beginning students, this can be *so* frustrating. But it's good that they can hear what perfect time sounds like."

In the eighth and ninth classes, students brush up on the previously taught techniques and get ready for the introduction of hand-foot coordination. Spiro explains, "I want people to get comfortable with singles, with doubles, and with paradiddles. Then I introduce the feet. That way, people don't have to think about their hands as much as they would if they were starting with hand-foot coordination right away. There's plenty of time for that.

"I encourage people to go home and practice their theory and their meditation; those are really the roots of beginning playing. I ask that they practice for a half hour a day without interruption. The reason I don't say more is because people don't have the attention span for more than a half hour. If the student wants to play more, I'll say, 'Go with the half hour for your lessons, and then turn on the radio and play 8th notes or quarter notes in hand-to-hand single combinations with the radio.' That way, they're practicing good time while hearing music. All my students make a commitment to themselves and to each other; they say aloud that they will practice their lesson for a half hour every day. I can tell when students have been practicing; I'm attuned to the fact that they're progressing. I have charts that I keep on file, and I might make a note, 'Mary did not practice this week. Her hands looked horrible.' And then I can keep tabs on who's progressing and who isn't: 'Mary showed up. Her hands are looking better.' "

Spiro is pleased with the commitment to playing the drums that even her newest students have shown. "What I try to find out is what kind of commitment they have in terms of the longevity of their wanting to play. Is it something that they decided last week because they heard this really great beat on Prince's latest single and they want to play it, or is this a heart-felt feeling they've had since before high school

maybe, where they weren't allowed to play drums because 'girls don't play drums; they play clarinet'? That is what I try to find out over the phone. I don't really want to deal with people who will be in and out, or who'll stay only a couple of weeks. I'm looking for the player, whatever her age, who is going to make a commitment—whether it be for a hobby or a profession. If they're going to come and they're going to practice, they're going to have a hundred-fold reward coming back to them."

Although Spiro encourages her students to practice and spends extra time with them if need be, she doesn't push them to become professional. "So far, I've had two students who have shown particular strength. I will talk to them in terms of 'when you're playing out,' rather than 'when you're at home practicing.' My philosophy is that I'm reaching for the highest level for my students. It isn't 'you play out.' It's 'when you play out, when you get your drums, and when you audition.' "

Spiro also doesn't push students to purchase a drumset until they're good and ready—both talent-wise and finance-wise. "You can spend as little as \$300 on good used pieces, or you can spend as much as \$1,000. I think that, when students start to ask about buying drums, they are ready to buy them. I find that they're the ones who key in on it. They know what kind of investment it is. I'm a very student-oriented instructor. I'm not into this business of pushing people. If they're not practicing, I'll say, 'Hey come on, you haven't practiced this week.' But pushing people into getting a set? No. When they ask, it's time for them. That's the way I've viewed it thus far, and so far, it's worked. About half of my students *will* say something. The other half will still be plodding away with singles and doubles and paradiddles for quite some time. I think the students know when they're becoming a little more advanced."

Spiro sees her main function as promoting "quality playing and support" among female players, but her feminist side has a different motive. "I would like to baffle the people who say that women can't play drums. Women can swim the English Channel, but they can't play a straight-ahead set of rock 'n' roll? They can quote me around the world: It's a ridiculous myth, and hopefully some of my students will help break that myth someday."

For females who have not yet found a reliable instructor or haven't really motivated themselves to take action when it comes to their interest in drumming, Spiro has these encouraging words: "Everybody's got to have a starting point. My students had to start somewhere; the greatest drummers in the world had to start somewhere. One day they said, 'Okay, I start today.' So far, my students are really pleased; attendance is up, and they're practicing. They're getting better and they love it."

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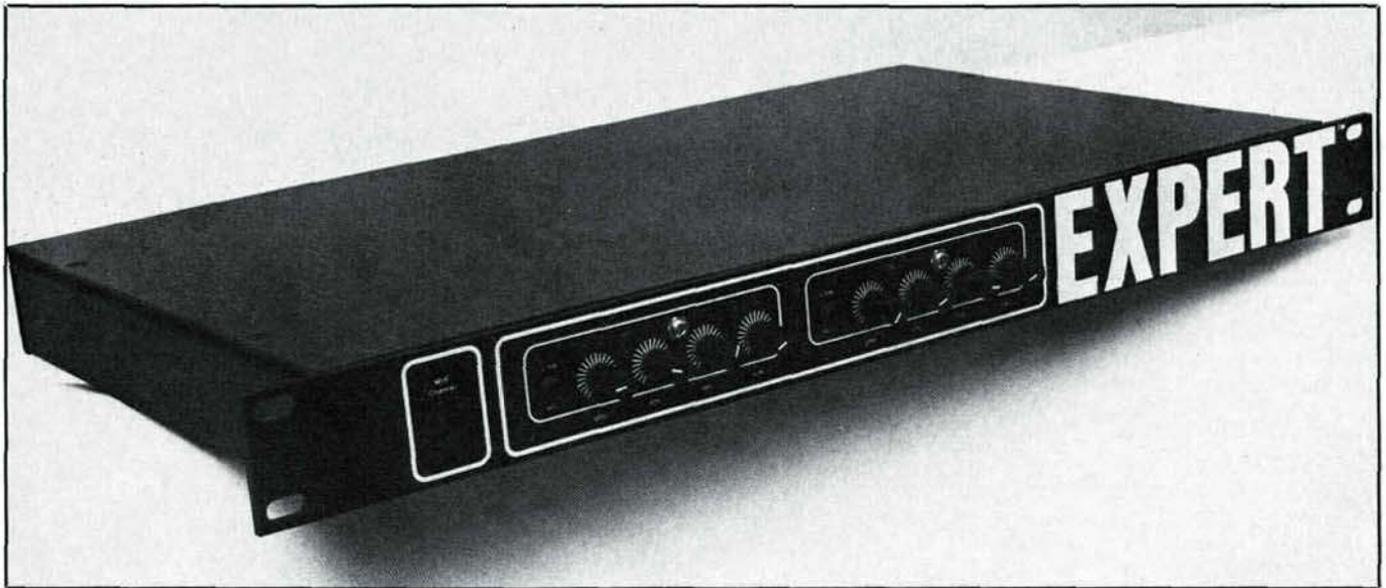
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Drumming And Electronic Drums

Drummers have different ideas and attitudes toward electronic drums. For example, I have heard drummers say, "The electronic drums are great; I don't need acoustic drums any longer." I have also heard the comment, "Those things sound awful. I refuse to play on them." Some drummers have said, "They may sound interesting, but they just don't feel good when you play them."

Tim Root, a resident of Houston, Texas, has probably done more clinics on electronic drums than any other drummer in our industry. Tim also plays acoustic drums with great skill. I talked with Tim at length when doing research for this column, and we both feel that the term "electronic drums" is misleading. A more precise term would be "electronic percussion instruments." For example, all electronic keyboards cannot be adequately described as "electronic pianos." They are different from, and in some ways much more than, electronic pianos. The same is true for electronic drums: They are very different from their acoustical counterparts.

Tim makes the point, "Why spend a lot of extra money for an electronic drumset if it sounds exactly like acoustic drums? You'd be better off miking your regular set. The appeal of electronic drums is that they offer possibilities that acoustic drums cannot." If you are considering buying an electronic drumset, Tim suggests that there are certain attitudes the average drummer must overcome in order to get the best results.

1. Don't drive yourself crazy trying to get your electronic kit to sound exactly like your acoustic kit. Although I've heard some electronic kits that come pretty close on certain sounds, why limit the kit and yourself? Music is sound. The electronic kits are tools that offer a newer and wider range of sounds; be prepared to experiment and to be creative.

2. Electronic "pads" feel entirely different than an acoustic drum. Some pads are softer than others, but even the softest

ones do not truly feel like a drumhead. Adjustments have to be made. For example, since the sound comes from a speaker, there is no need to hit the pads extremely hard. Use a lighter touch and allow the electronics to work for you. Brute strength is not needed on an electronic kit.

3. Think creatively in terms of sound. Experiment with new possibilities. Electronic kits can be programmed to produce bass lines, string sections, and any number of special effects. You must not only *play* differently, but also *think* differently in order to get the most out of your electronic kit.

4. If you are considering studio work, you will need an electronic kit as a part of your equipment. Producers who want electronic sounds will hire a drummer with an electronic kit. If they can't find one, they will probably ask a keyboard player to program a drum machine. The point is that, if you are going to be a drummer in pop music or studio work, you will need the equipment to do the job. An electronic kit is one of those tools.

I have seen a number of drummers combining acoustic and electronic drums in the same kit. In some cases, the acoustic drums are set up to "trigger" electronic drum sounds as well. With state-of-the-art equipment, the possibilities are somewhat overwhelming. Drummers such as Harvey Mason have used a drum machine along with acoustic and electronic kits. If you are interested in electronic sounds and possibilities, a drum machine is as essential as an electronic kit. The drum machine can also be used to "trigger" electronic drum sounds.

One of the criticisms I've heard regarding electronic kits is that all the drummers who play them sound the same. This doesn't have to be the case. Many electronic kits can be programmed with your own individual sounds. Also, the way in which you combine sounds allows for individual expression. Another critical comment I've heard is that, if you play quickly

on an electronic kit, many of the beats get lost or run together. I think that this is the result of playing acoustical-style patterns on an electronic kit. Such kits *do* respond differently, and not all patterns will be interchangeable. You don't have to play as hard on electronic drums, but in some instances you may have to choose your patterns and fills carefully for maximum effect. This will require becoming familiar with the new instrument.

Will electronic drums replace acoustic drums? Tim feels that they will not, because electronic sounds do not fit all types of music equally. As Tim says, "If I get a call for a jazz trio gig, I do not take my electronic kit. If I get a call for a rock trio concert, I do not take my little jazz set. I try to pick the equipment that will be appropriate for the music and the situation."

Some drummers seem to have the attitude that, if they ignore or refuse to acknowledge electronic drums, they will simply go away. I feel that this is not the case. Electronic drums are here to stay. We can't turn the clock back. Music is always changing—sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse, depending upon your point of view.

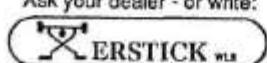
I personally would not care to hear an electronic drumset in a Count Basie-style big band. However, there are musical situations where the electronic sounds will be more appropriate. In fact, if we use the *music* as a guide, there is no controversy. There is no need to reject the future or to reject the past. Think creatively and put the *music* first. Use the tools and equipment that are at your disposal. Listen to music and sounds with an open mind, and solve musical problems in an imaginative way.

Drummers have new tools, now that electronic possibilities are with us. We have more options with which to create music than ever before. This should be good for music and for drummers.



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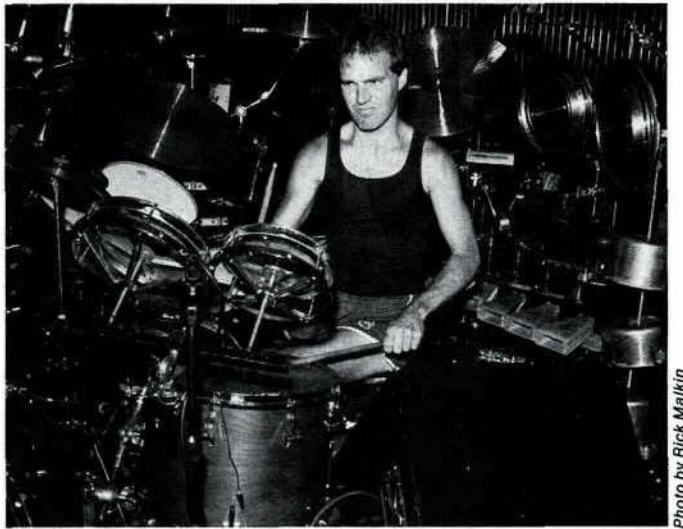


Photo by Rick Malkin

Vertico continued from page 17

friend can say, "You really meant this" That's what the bass player is like almost. I've been very lucky.

RF: How does the music with Pat evolve? Are you presented with the tunes finished or incomplete?

PW: In every variation you can think of. Pat and Lyle have a basic idea of what's going on, but before we record it, we might tour with it. With *The Falcon And The Snowman*, Steve and I just flew out to London. They had written some music and we just did it. There are never any drum charts. There are just lead sheets, and we find out what works and what doesn't.

RF: When Pat first started, he was taking his music out on the road for quite a long time before recording it. Does he still have that luxury?

PW: We try to. Ideally, it's nice to do a tour with a tune, because if you play 40 or 50 gigs, you can pretty much center in on what's going to work and what's not going to work. It's not always an option, though. We hardly rehearse. We get together five days before a tour. Before this last fall tour, we hadn't been together in seven months. We got together and most of the time was spent fixing equipment from its coming back from Europe trashed. So we played half the set—some of the hard tunes like "Jaco" and "San Lorenzo"—cold on stage after not playing for seven months.

RF: Is the recording process a very creative environment?

PW: Oh yes, and very quick. We recorded *the First Circle* album in a couple of days and some of those were first takes. There, it's almost better to have a few mistakes and keep the live fire. We literally played live, even though we were in booths and all that. We just came off a tour and played. I think a lot of people like that album for that reason. It's funny, but a lot of things I really like on records are mistakes. Steve came over once. I played some of my favorite tracks of other drummers for him, and he said, "Paul, do you realize that 80% of what you pointed out were mistakes?" I didn't even hear that it was a mistake. I love Keith Moon. If you really listen to his time and what he played, it was crazy, but he had this energy force. Listen to a lot of rock drummers, especially from that era—Ringo, Charlie Watts. I love those guys. I don't like listening to drummers who sound like drum machines. It's interesting to see what is happening with music, because in today's society, it's sort of computerized, and that's what people are relating to. I'm not saying music ended with Traffic, but there's a different attitude today. It's going to be interesting to see where music will go. People are getting into television. Why are videos so popular? I can't really watch a video, because the picture is in my head. Now they're force-feeding the image. Once you see a video, that pretty much says it for that tune. When you take it from that perspective and then you take it back to trying to play dynamics within a phrase on a cymbal, that's so far back there that it's almost subliminal.



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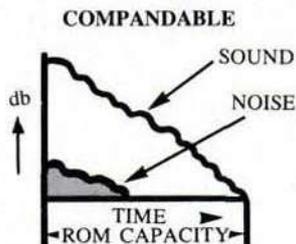
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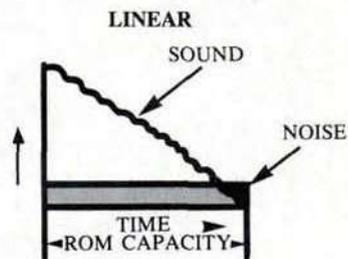
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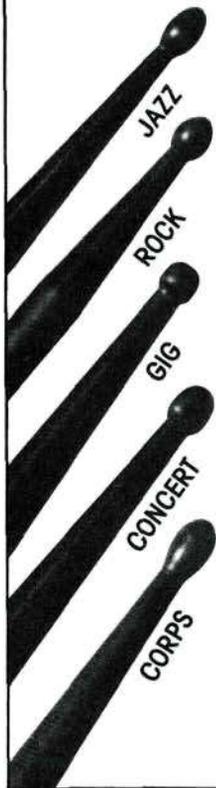
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RF: What about the heavy improvisational experience you have with Ear Wax Control?

PW: That's obviously a very ESP type of band. It's a great band. We just did our first movie score, *Interphase*, and we nailed 40 minutes of music in four hours. It was amazing. The director just dipped. I really realized how good we are when we did this. That kind of band is a growing band. We basically start with no preconception of anything. We just improvise. The music is a language. How many beats you play or how fast you play can correlate with how many words you know or how eloquent you are. Once you start the conversation, that stuff comes into being. The magic happens when you can use those words to think of ideas that are new or at least unique for the people around you. That's where language is great, too. If you know a lot of big words, great, but if you say something that's really profound in five words rather than one hundred words, that's when it really makes a difference. Playing with Ear Wax Control, we can take free improvisation and really nail it down so it doesn't sound free. That's what I'm really proud of. The album sounds like tunes, yet it was all free.

As soon as we first played together, we knew that was it. We had something. That was November of '73. We all had the same vision. It's important to find good people you can carry on a conversation with. If you're doing studio work, jingles, soundtracks, or stuff like that, it's more craftsmanship. Everybody knows what his or her job has to be for the particular result. That's not improvisation, though. Members of Ear Wax Control listen to a lot of ethnic music, and once you do that, you increase your vocabulary. That way, when you improvise with other people, you have so much more to choose from. It keeps your mind really free, and the more people you play with, the more you will be on your toes. Every night when I play my drum solo, it's totally different, and if I play something really good one night, I'll try never to play that again. Sometimes I fail miserably, but that's my approach.

RF: What are your thoughts about soloing?

PW: I take a couple of different solos during the course of a show. I've always loved to play drum solos, because when I play, I feel like I have a lot to say on the drums. Whether anybody else likes it or not, I don't know. When we play the Ornette dedication, I just play. I have this *Memory Man* electronic device, which is an ancient device—a dinosaur. It's a chorus/echo/delay unit, which kind of plays itself. I never know what it's going to do for sure, because there's no exact setting. I also have it hooked into a Maestro remodulator, which is one of the ugliest instruments ever created, and there are Barcus-Berry banjo pickups on some of the toms, which they don't make anymore. During the course of the solo, I get into using it. I set it wherever I feel like setting it, and it just does these things. Then I start controlling it, and it starts feeding back and making noises. It's like wrestling with this weird animal with my left hand, while I'm trying to play a solo with my right. That gives me some ideas, because I'm dealing with the immediate and not dealing with any preconceived thoughts. Obviously, I do have a set vocabulary, but I don't play paradiddles around the kit to try to figure out a pattern. I just play what I do, so I never know what's going to happen, and I'm real good at playing off my mistakes. I'm sort of an expert at doing that, because when you play like I play, you have a tendency to do some strange things. They're not mistakes, necessarily, but since I might play a fill when I haven't worked out the sticking, I might come out backwards. I know where I'm at, though, because I'm counting all the time, and I don't ever lose the beat. If Pat's solo is sculpted, I'll use his thing for a launching off point to at least make a cohesive statement. I also do that "Straight On Red" solo, which is a duo with Pedro Aznar [percussionist], but it also becomes a solo. That's with a drum machine and it's a samba-type groove. I'm playing sort of samba figures, but not really. I'm playing what feels good to me at a certain time and what I think is going to make the tune happen.

RF: Let's talk about equipment.

PW: It's very important to have good equipment. When I joined Pat, we rehearsed five days, and I had to learn all the music by heart. We had a week off while they mixed *Travels*, we rehearsed a

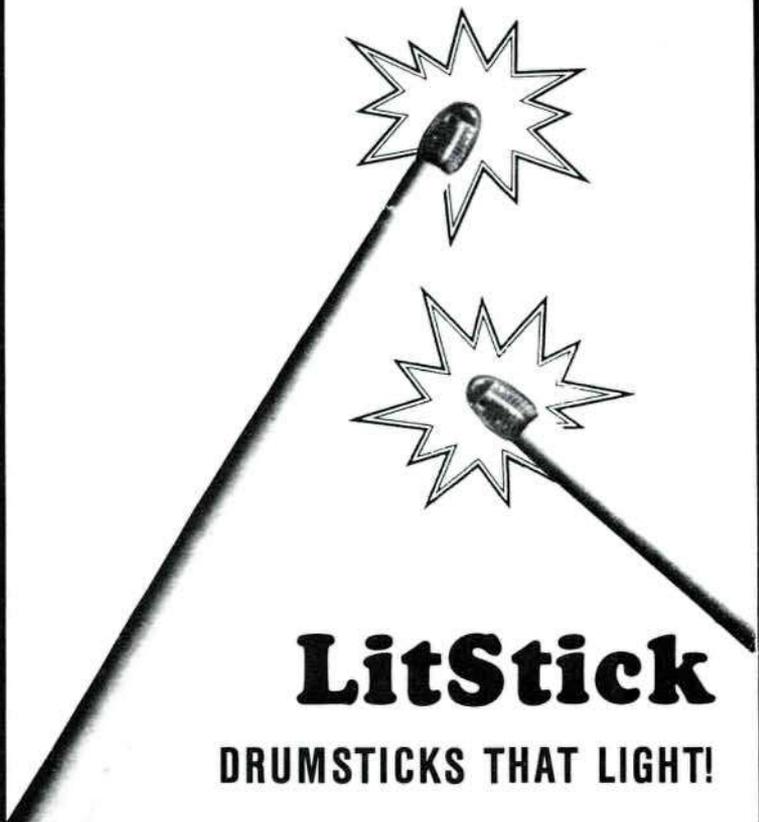
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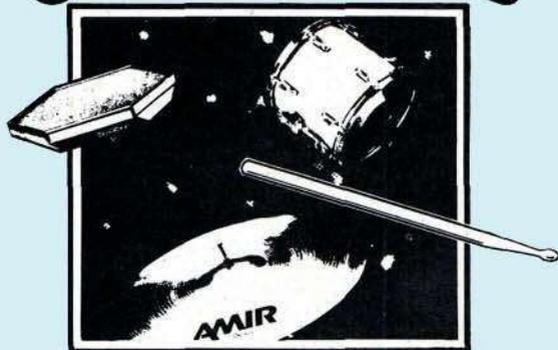
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little at soundcheck, and I had to play. I barely knew what section belonged to what tune, but we made it through the gig. On the second tune, though, my snare drum fell apart. This was before I was with Yamaha, and I was using the kit I used in Chicago. I literally taped the snare strainer to the bottom head for the rest of my first gig with Pat. I wanted to commit suicide. I had enough problems without having that happen. I had the five or six Paistes they gave me, but I was also using a couple of K.s and all these weird cymbals, so it was a big mess. Yamaha had called right before I went on that tour and they wanted to give me some drums and stands, but I was kind of afraid to use different drums at that point. I thought I had enough problems without using something new. In retrospect, I wish I had done that. I had these drums that just didn't sound good at all. On the first European tour, I was sure I would be fired. Pat dug some of the stuff I was doing, but basically I was still learning the music and the drums just weren't up to concert class. Before the second tour, I called up Paiste again, and called up Yamaha and talked to Jim Coffin. The drums sound great, and the hardware is fantastic. Finally, for the second tour, I had some good cymbals and some good hardware. At the first rehearsal, Pat said, "Man, these sound 100 times better." The drums I had before were fine for Chicago, and they recorded great, but they just weren't good enough for what this was. We toured a couple of times, and I just endorsed those two companies. Then when I was at the NAMM Show last summer, I talked to Pro-Mark, Remo, and Latin Percussion, and started endorsing those companies. They've all been fantastic. There isn't one company I deal with that isn't nice. I deal with RIMS now also. I just started using them on this tour, and immediately the drums sounded 25% better. Now I'm using the Aquarian cymbal springs, because that helps to prevent the cymbals from breaking. Any rattle from the stand is isolated as well. I'm also using the LP *Claws* on the tomtoms to hold the mic's.

RF: Let's talk about your cymbals. Were you always so enamored of cymbals, or has that happened since working with Pat?

PW: In Chicago, before Pat, drummers used to call me Dr. Cymbal. I didn't have as many cymbals. I couldn't afford it at that time, but when I got with Pat I borrowed some Paiste cymbals because I didn't have enough. They're just perfect for me. I play really hard and the cymbals usually don't crack, except the crash cymbals because I really nail them. When I crack one, no matter where I am, there's a new one there. They're so consistent, and it's always close to the one I broke. They're the cleanest cymbals. There's not a lot of low end or undertones. It's hard to get sloppy on those cymbals because they're so exact. Rhythmically, they kind of tell you where you're at. If you have a cymbal that really spreads a lot, you can sort of "woosh" your way through it. For Pat's music, they're perfect because his guitar, with all the digital stuff, reverbs, and delays that he uses, has this clean, crystal sound. I think that, if you used cymbals that were sort of dark, they would cover up some of his sound.

RF: Would you detail your cymbals?

PW: I use two flat rides, both 22". The one on the right, which is the main ride cymbal, is a 2002, and the one on the left is a 602 thin. I put two sizzles in there, one Paiste and one Zildjian, because I experimented and that got me the sound I wanted. It sizzles for like 30 seconds. When I got the cymbal, I turned the cymbal around about 30 times to figure out the weight, and then I put two sizzles on the lighter side so they never get in the way. It's a fantastic cymbal. I do a lot of double rides. On a lot of things, I won't play the snare; I'll play two cymbals instead. I play two different ride beats at the same time, so each has its own shape. They correlate, but they can also be very independent. The two cymbals have to blend, but still be distinctive in sound. I use a bunch of splashes, crashes, and *Rude* cymbals, and I also use the *Color Sounds*. I use a 20" ride, an 18" crash, and the hi-hats. They almost sound like cymbals with just enough tape on them to get an interesting sound. They work really well for the electronics, too. They don't have the same contour as the regular cymbals. They cut off faster. I use that ride for the out chorus of some tunes where I'm really bashing, and



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it builds, but not too much. It has a rock sound, but since it's a little deader, it feels real good and comes across the PA really well. Since I play melodically, all the cymbals are paired off, so I can play melodies. I find the pitches that are interesting for me on the crashes, so when I play around the kit, I can hear where the highs and lows are. Then I can really contour the shape of what I'm doing to those specific cymbals. That's why it's important that, when I crack a crash, Paiste can give me one that's almost identical.

RF: You're also using the DW double-bass pedal. Why do you prefer that to using an actual double-bass setup?

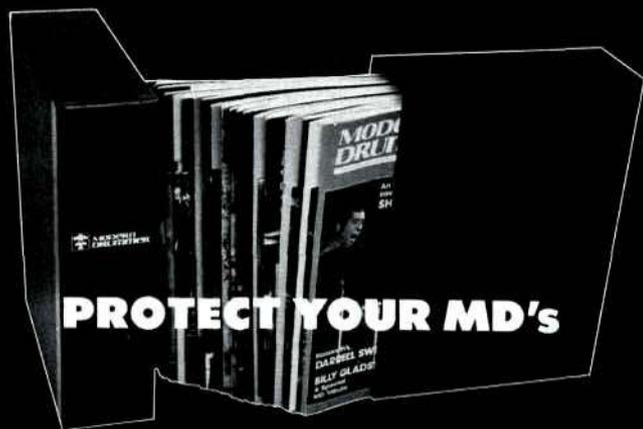
PW: I like my hi-hat in close. This way, I use the pedal on the left side of the hi-hat, so the hi-hat can be right where it is. It sets up much better, it mikes much better, and I like the sound of one drum. There's a pitch difference, just because of the placement of the beaters, but it's much better because I can set up the way I want. Now I'm using their new cable hi-hat. The pedal is where it normally is, but I can put the cymbals anywhere I want. The action is fantastic. They gave it to me because I like to use two hi-hats. In fact, with Ear Wax Control, I use a Low Boy and a regular hi-hat. I have three pedals already on my left side. I have the timp tom, which is the Yamaha tunable floor tom. I've got the left bass drum off the DW 5000, and I've got the hi-hat. I was trying to figure out where to put this other hi-hat, because I wanted to use both. I cut the top off and attached it to my snare drum stand, so now I can play both hi-hats or any combination, and I've got it on the right side. I'm really going to be experimenting with the double hi-hat thing a lot, because it's really incredible with brushes. If you're playing a ballad, you don't really need to play the bass drum that much. The way I have this second hi-hat, I can get to the bass drum in a second and go back to the hi-hat. If you're playing brushes, you can get these double swishes, and over the PA, it's stereo. It's really fantastic. Also, if you're playing with a drum machine, you can program the bass drum and then play the different grooves on the ride cymbal, snare, and the two different hi-hats. It's really easy to play bass drum beats on the second hi-hat, because your foot is accustomed to doing that. The effect is incredible. You have these two different opening and closing swishes in stereo, but you can also ride and get those barking effects in different spots, against each other. It's like overdubbing your own hi-hat part, live. Even with simple beats that would sound normal on the drumset, if you play the bass drum part on the second hi-hat, it sounds ridiculous. All you have to do is cut off that top part of the second hi-hat, and clamp it onto your snare drum stand, and you've got it right there. You can play it with either foot. DW also came up with this new bass drum pedal that triggers Simmons, so I've got one of those. I've got six pedals on my drumset, which is almost as many as Lyle has. I'm also using the DW hi-hat. I love the Yamaha hi-hat, but the DW hi-hat is great and the legs turn, so it's easier to get all those pedals in there. On every tour, we add new tunes, so sometimes I have to have a new cymbal or a new drum, and the companies are very supportive.

RF: Have you any advice for young drummers?

PW: One of the most important things a drummer can do is to play for the other musicians and try to make them feel good. I think a lot of drummers become obsessed with this sort of inner-circle club, thinking about drums and reading drum ads. That really has nothing to do with playing music. If I'm, say, backing up Pat's solo, I'm never thinking, "Where can I slip in this really hip lick?" Never. I'm listening to his solo, and I'm laying down as much of a good groove as I can. I'm listening to where I can sort of kick him in the butt or give him space. I do that with all musicians. I'm always listening to everybody else, trying to figure out what I can do to make it better than it is. With the exception of the really great drummers like Vinnie Colaiuta, a lot of times nobody will want to deal with the really fancy drummers. They become so technical that they lose the idea of what it's all about. We're also at odds with computers now, so we feel that we have to do all this amazing stuff. But why does Charlie Watts feel so good? It's really just getting the message out.



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by Rick Van Horn

Stocking Stuffers

Since we've arrived at the Christmas season (and also because it's been quite a while since I presented any useful-product tips in my column), I thought that this might be a good time to offer a few suggestions for what I like to call "stocking stuffers." These are small, generally inexpensive items that might be given to a drummer, without the gift-giver necessarily needing a drumming background to select them. In other words, where drummers might prefer to pick their own sticks, heads, or other performance-oriented equipment, just about anyone could purchase these items, and the drummer who receives the gifts could use and enjoy them. I've made a point of selecting items for this list that are reasonably low in cost, and that in many cases are particularly useful to club drummers. I have used—or at least tested—most of the suggested items myself; a few have been included on the recommendation of other club players whose opinions I respect.

So if you are the wife, girlfriend, hus-

band, boyfriend, mother, or father of a working drummer, here is a list of possible gifts you may wish to consider for "that special person" in your life. (If you are that working drummer, either consider purchasing some of these items as a well-earned gift for yourself, or leave your copy of *MD*—opened to this article—in a conspicuous place around the house.)

\$10.00 And Under

Catalogs And Posters. These could range in price from free to around five or six dollars. No matter what a drummer's personal equipment preference may be, I've never known one who didn't love browsing through the colorful catalogs of other companies as well. You can often obtain these from local drum stores or by writing directly to the company. Some charge for catalogs, but others do not. Poster-sized copies of ads or posters of endorsing artists are also available from many drum companies. Ordering information is usually included on the ad itself;

check the pages of *MD* for examples.

Cough Drops. Candy is a traditional stocking stuffer; make it a bit more practical and toss in a few packs of Halls, Vicks, Smith Brothers, or other non-medicinal throat lozenges. These are very soothing to the throats of drummers working in smoky environments—especially those who do a lot of singing. You should be able to get several packs for a couple of dollars.

Lug Locks. These are a useful item to maintain tuning on drums—especially snares. They come four to a package, at a retail list of around \$1.75 in most music stores.

Earplugs. If volume is a consideration, earplugs should also be. There are several types available, ranging from firm plastic shooter's plugs available in sporting goods stores to those designed especially for music. Two popular models are *Noise Hushers* (small foam pads that look for all the world like miniature marshmallows and list for \$1.00 per pair) and *Sonic IIs* (which are plastic baffles fitted with a diaphragm, and sell for around \$10.00).

Drum Muffling Devices. There are many available, but for this purpose I'm only suggesting fairly low-cost, quick-removal types that a drummer may choose to use or remove on a given tune. These include *Zero Rings* (made by Noble & Cooley and available in stores at \$3.95 per package of three), and *Flat Rings* from Groove Tubs, which are heavier, rubber rings that have more of a deadening effect. Contact Groove Tubs at P.O. Box 4753, Sylmar, CA 91342, (818) 362-1554 for price and ordering information.

Beato Tips. These are nylon-rubber cylinders that fit over the tips of drumsticks to mute them. They're ideal for anywhere-anytime practicing, and very interesting as a "mallet" effect on cymbals. They are also recommended for some electronic drumpads. They sell in stores for around \$3.00 per package.

Cymbal Polish. There are several brands available, all of which are very good. Each of the major cymbal manufacturers sells its own, and it's not a bad idea to get the type corresponding to the cymbals to be cleaned. Two other brands that are also excellent are Buckaroo (around \$6.95 in stores) and Slo-Beat (my personal favorite, which sells at \$4.25 per bottle). These are highly recommended as a gift choice, since today's emphasis on the look of a drumkit is creating a new interest in shiny cymbals.

Drumstick Tape. For drummers who have problems with stick slippage, there

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are *Powergrip* and *Stick Handler* tape wrapping products. Each sells for around \$6.00 per roll, comes in colors, and is effective at helping sweaty hands hold on to drumsticks. Also available is a powder product from Pro Mark, called *Stick Gripper*, which is applied to the hands instead of the sticks.

Speedball Drumkey. There are several high-fashion or decorative drumkeys available, but this particular key is also exceptionally useful. It's a two-directional ratchet drumkey featuring an oversize ball handle, similar to a popular design in screwdrivers introduced a few years ago. It does make head changing quick and easy. It's from Peterson Percussion, and lists in stores for around \$7.00.

Trak Shoes. These are little metal "cups" that attach to a drum riser (and could be attached to a stiff-backed drum rug with a little ingenuity) into which the legs of stands and bass drums fit to prevent "creeping." They're small, inconspicuous, and very effective. They sell for \$8.95 a pair, and are especially desirable for bass drum and hi-hat legs.

T-shirts. Most drum, cymbal, and stick companies offer T-shirts (and in some cases other fashion items) to allow drummers to proclaim their preferences in no uncertain terms. These can generally be ordered directly from the company in question; get the company's address from *MD's* ads or from a local music store. (And don't forget that *MD's* own tasteful T-shirt makes a great gift.)

\$10.00 To \$20.00

Drum Gloves. There are several on the market, probably the best known being the Beato drum gloves, which are available in regular or cut-out models at around \$19.00 per pair. Gloves are also available from Universal Percussion and some other distributors; check with your local music store about prices and models. These are excellent items for hard-playing drummers who have problems with stick slippage, blisters, etc.

Pro-Caddy Rax. I once wrote a column called "Creature Comforts," in which I said that anything that drummers could do to make themselves more comfortable on the job was to their benefit. This item is a combination drink and towel holder

designed to clamp onto a stand right on the drumkit, thereby keeping necessary refreshment items close at hand. It's not going to fit into a stocking, but it might be a very thoughtful gift, nonetheless. It retails at approximately \$20.00.

\$20.00 And Up

We've gone a bit out of the realm of "stocking stuffers" at this price, but I did want to include a few items that might make major gifts that working drummers would especially appreciate.

MD Subscription. For drummers who pick up *MD* only occasionally, a subscription will provide *MD's* information on a regular basis. I know it sounds like I'm blowing our own horn here, but there simply isn't any other publication that provides the type of coverage of the drumming profession that *MD* does.

Pro-Fan 707. This is an item that has just appeared on the market. I've tested it and found it to be a wonderful addition to my kit. It's a small but powerful fan, with a plastic blade that stops instantly when touched. It's been adapted to fit onto the end of any cymbal stand, and thus to be mountable right on the drumkit. This provides a drummer with circulating air whenever needed, to keep the hands dry and the body cool. The fan may not be available in stores by the time of this article's release, so contact Ideas International, P.O. Box 236, Whitby, Ontario, Canada L1N 5S1. The selling price should be around \$40.00.

Gig Rug. From the L.T. *Lug Lock* people comes the *Gig Rug*, which is a very durable, yet very portable, drum rug that features a bass drum barrier built in. The rug folds up to a size that fits in most trap cases, yet is large enough when opened to accommodate most club-size kits. The rug is available in some stores, or you can contact L.T. *Lug Lock*, Inc., Box 204, Tonawanda, NY 14151, (716) 695-5881. The list price is around \$50.00.

My purpose in this article is not to advertise any of the products I've listed, but rather to give you some idea of the amount of useful accessory equipment available on the market to make a drummer's life easier or more comfortable. Drop by your local music retailer for even more suggestions, and be sure to have a very merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year!

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PRODUCT CLOSE-UP



TEMPUS TE-3 TUNNEL DRUMKIT

Tempus is a new name on the drum scene, having recently bought the Canadian Milestone drum company. The company remains based in Canada, and is presently manufacturing a wide range of drum sizes and drumkits. The Tempus shells are built from fiberglass with a gel/resin compound. All drum lugs are die-cast zinc. The inner lug nuts are brass, and are backed by rubber tubing to eliminate rattle. Three different series of drums are available: *Classic* (standard sizes), *Power* (extended depth sizes), and *Tunnel* (super-extended depth).

Components of the *TE-3 Tunnel kit* presented here include: 18x22 bass drum, 12x12 and 12x13 tom-toms, 17x15 floor tom, and an 8 x14 snare drum. No hardware is included, except for the Collarlock tom-tom holder.

Bass Drum

The *Tunnel* bass drum has 20 lugs. There are no T-handles; all tuning rods are drumkey-operated. Even though it's a bit more tedious for tuning, I like the idea, since you do not have to worry about a T-handle being in the way while setting up or packing into a case. The hoops, like the shell, are made of fiberglass, and the color is impregnated into the hoops. The batter hoop is slightly deeper than the audience side hoop for easy pedal mounting. The

hoops are more flexible than standard wooden ones (which may enable them to conform better to the shell and head hoop). Collarlock universal clamp brackets hold external *W* steel spike spurs. The clamps are drumkey-operated, and enable the spurs to fold right up against the shell. There is no provision for spur height adjustment, but that's okay, because it seems that the spurs are mounted at an ideal position anyway.

A smooth white head is fitted to the batter side of the drum; the audience side has an *Ebony Ambassador*, screened with the Tempus logo. A felt strip is included for batter head dampening. This super-sized bass drum has great attack and volume. Being fiberglass, it has a somewhat hard, "modern" sound, and excels in depth and definition.

Mounting System

Tempus has chosen to fit Collarlock equipment on its drumkits, and the tom-tom holder here is a double-mount, single post version. (For a complete review of Collarlock systems, see *MD*: June '85.)

Mounted in the center of the bass drum shell is a large die-cast aluminum plate with a split circular clamp, which accepts the 1" down tube. A cross bar is welded onto the top of this tube, forming a "T." This small bar is used for the large individual Collarlock L-arms, which are also

New Fiber Drum

encased in circular split clamps mounted on the bar. Each L-arm mates with an external block clamp bracket on each tom-tom. (All adjustments on all the clamps are done via a drumkey.) The L-arms also have wedge-shaped memory locks fitting right up underneath the drum brackets.

This double holder is one of the strongest I've seen, and is absolutely free of sinking, twisting, or shaking—which is especially amazing, considering the large drums it is holding. It's also quite versatile, giving a good range of angles. My only regret is that a drumkey must be used so often in setting heights, angles, and security. Nevertheless, the holder is a tough little monster and would be a welcome modification for any kit.

Tom-Toms

The 12x12 and 12x13 toms have 12 lugs each, and 2mm stamped steel hoops (made by Remo). The 17x15 floor tom has 16 lugs, plus three 1/2" steel legs, which are flared at their bottoms. These legs have neoprene caps at the tops, and locate into Collarlock universal block clamp brackets (again, secured with key screws and with wedge memory locks). All three toms are fitted with coated *Ambassador* batters and coated *Diplomat* bottoms. There are no mufflers installed.

As with the bass drum, the toms have nice volume and definition. They have a "live" sound, which for playing in miked situations could be better dealt with by changing the heads to a *Pinstripe/clear Ambassador* combination.

Snare Drum

The 8 X 14 fiberglass snare drum with this kit is just one of five different sizes that Tempus makes. It has 20 separate lugs and no muffler. A Pearl center-throw strainer is utilized, along with 20-strand wire snares held by plastic strips at both throw-off and butt sides. This is a no-nonsense strainer that works well. The drum comes equipped with Remo *Ambassador* heads: coated batter and clear snare side.

Even with its 8" depth, this drum is quite articulate and crisp. A deep sound can easily be obtained by changing the batter head type and its tuning. Its rimshot sound gives

by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

glass kits

a good crack, but a little dampening could be used to ease the overtones.

Tempus' finishes are not a laminate or veneer, but are actually part of the shell. The "Ferrari Red" color I saw was flawless and had a nice gloss. A total of seven different colors are offered: black, white, yellow, red, grey, blue, and dark green. Each drum has a steel logo badge with its own stamped serial number.

Altogether, Tempus makes 12 bass drum sizes, 17 tom-tom sizes, 12 floor tom sizes, and five snare sizes. Some of these dimensions are quite un-standard—I might even say "exotic"—and I'm sure you can find whatever drum size you have in mind (within reason, of course). The *TE-3* kit reviewed here is one of five available configurations in the *Tunnel Series*, and retails at \$1,481 for the five drums plus tom-tom holder.

I've been waiting to review one of these Canadian kits ever since they were first christened "Milestone," and I'm happy I finally got the chance to. The Tempus drums are constructed very well, and have a great appearance. Even though the current trend is "back-to-wood," the fiberglass shells have a pleasing sound to my ear, and are adaptable to any musical situation. For more information, or a brochure, send \$2.00 to Tempus Instruments, Inc., 3-12320 Trites Road, Richmond, B.C., Canada V7E3R7.

IMPACT NITRO KIT

Every once in a while, a new drum design pops up, causing people to look twice (i.e., Trixon, North, Staccato, Migirian). After being in business for 11 years, Impact Industries has recently entered the drumkit market, utilizing a unique shell design and sound concept. Impact's shells are made of "high-tech" fiberglass and are extremely lightweight. What sets Impact off from all the conventionally styled drums is the shape of its drumshell—sort of a hybrid between Slingerland's *Cut-A-Way* toms and North toms. If you can visualize cutting the horn of a North drum straight off, what you're left with is basically what Impact has designed.

All the Impact tom-toms have rectangu-



lar frontal sound holes cut out, which aid in quick sound displacement—the main idea behind Impact drums. (The bass and snare are of conventional design.) The sound holes and shell bottoms of the toms are finished in chrome stripping and have rubber/vinyl gaskets surrounding the edges. The drums feature lug-tunable Remo *PTS* heads as standard equipment; the lugs are similar in shape to the V-shaped Yamaha *Stage Series*.

Two different kits are available at present: the *Nitro* and the *Blast*. Components of the Impact *Nitro* kit I tested are: 13x24 bass drum, 13x12 and 13x14 tom-toms, 22x16 floor tom (yes, that's right!), and a 7 x 14 snare drum.

Bass Drum

The 13 x 24 bass drum is one inch shallower than normal, and has 16 lugs with T-style rods, which enable fine-tuning of the *PTS* heads. The drum, of course, lacks normal hoops, as the *PTS* bass drum heads have their own hoops built right in, with chrome inlay. External two-piece telescoping spurs are fitted to the shell. These have threaded convertible tips, and are adjustable for forward angle and height. Both batter and audience sides of the drum have *PTS/CS Dark* heads. Since its shell is fiberglass, the bass drum has a certain degree of brightness to it. It does produce a nice thump, with ample volume. The lug-tuning capability can enable the *PTS* heads to be tuned to a higher pitch if desired.

Mounting System

Impact's tom-tom holder uses separate tubular arms that locate into their own holes in the base plate. The arms are adjustable for angle via a connected ratchet, and have key-operated memory locks at both ends. The bass plate holes and drum bracket openings all have nylon bushings inside, and use T-screws pressing against the bushings to secure the arms. (The arms pass through the drums.) The holder is a duplicate of a widely used mount system, introduced by Pearl. It is easy to set up and gives enough height for the toms. The arms did twist a bit under pressure until all the screws were torqued down hard.

Tom-Toms

The two single-headed rack toms have 13" depths, and head diameters of 12" and 14". Their lugs have tiny bass drum-like claws mated with the tuning rods, which, again, assist in fine-tuning of the *PTS* batter head. The 12" tom has five lugs; the 14" has six. The floor tom has a 16" head, and it measures 22" at its deepest point. It has seven lugs, plus three legs that locate into T-screw brackets. All three toms are fitted with *PTS/CS Dark* heads.

Being only single-headed, the toms have a wet, "thuddy" sound, but have great projection. One immediate difference in the power of these toms can be heard by covering the sound hole with your hand and striking the drum. Removing your

hand to "open up" the sound hole results in a great increase in volume and attack (hence, the reason for these ports). For a more live sound, coated *PTS* heads can be used.

Snare Drum

The 7 x 14 snare drum is of conventional design, and has 12 double-ended lugs, a laminated chrome finish, two ventholes, and a parallel-action strainer with a reinforcing rod inside the shell. The strainer is lever-operated, and has large fine-tune knobs at both ends. Twenty-strand wire snares extend past the shell and directly connect to the strainer. Both throw-off and butt sides have steel guard gates attached

onto the neighboring tension rods. The strainer worked well, without choking the drum's tone. The drum has an internal muffler, similar to Tama's, in that it is knob-operated, and has a "one-touch" stop ring around the knob for instant on/off. (The muffler on this particular drum refused to tighten up for some reason. I'd be happier with no muffler at all; I'd prefer to use an external damper instead.)

The batter side has a regular 12-hole steel hoop, and a conventional coated *Ambassador* head, while the bottom has a *PTS* snare-side head held onto the drum via tiny claws and key rods. The drum had a crisp, bright sound and a good rimshot. Response was even all around the playing

head.

Hardware

Impact offers two lines of imported hardware. The *Deluxe* hardware included with the *Nitro* kit has double-braced tripods with memory locks at the height joints. (The *Standard* line features single-braced and no memory fittings.)

The *Deluxe* bass drum pedal has a split footboard with toe stop, plus a single expansion spring stretched upward from the frame. Tension is adjustable at the top of the spring strut. Pedal linkage is done with a flexible synthetic strap, the length of which is adjustable. (It could be a bit longer, though.) There are two sprung spurs at the base of the frame, and the pedal clamps to the hoop using a long angled T-screw set off to the left, which pushes down on the hinged clamp plate. The action was a bit stiff for me, but the pedal was efficient and noiseless.

The straight cymbal stand has two adjustable tiers, and the boom cymbal stand has one (plus the adjustable boom arm with counterweight). Their tilters operate on concealed ratchets. Both stands give ample height and will easily hold the largest of cymbals. The snare stand has the common basket design with carriage nut. The angle is set by a concealed ratchet, and the stand holds the snare drum quite securely.

Like the bass pedal, the hi-hat has a split footboard with adjustable toe stop. It has a chain linkage and an externally housed spring. Tension is easily adjusted by a threaded cap atop the spring chamber. The stand has the usual screw cymbal cup tilter, plus one sprung spur at the frame base. The hi-hat stand had nice, silent action, but was a bit too bouncy for my taste.

Impact has five laminated colors available: black, white, chrome, red prism, and blue prism. For easy packing, all the toms can stack into the floor tom. (Impact has plans to manufacture cases for its drums, as well.) Add-on toms are also available in 13x8 and 13x10 sizes, as are 4 1/4" and 6" depth snare drums.

One thing to remember while using *PTS* heads is that the head is the sound *maker*; the shell is merely the sound *projector*. Impact has used a sensible design to get the sound out quickly, and since fiberglass is a harder, more reflective surface than wood, there is, of course, increased projection. If the drums are *too* loud for a particular musical setting, you could either stuff up the sound ports with foam, or turn the drums so the openings are facing you, instead of the audience!

The *Nitro* kit as reviewed retails complete at \$1,190; the *Blast* kit retails at \$995, and has a slightly smaller bass and snare drum, plus lower-line hardware. If it's volume and easy portability you're after, check out the Impact line. For more information, write: Impact Industries, 904 Sumner Street, Wausau, WI 54401. 



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Hunt continued from page 20

heads infrequently. As for durability, the Evans heads seem to outlast other heads, on or off the road.

JP: What is the typical setup schedule for a major show on tour?

AH: Well, for me, that's the beauty of being a part of what is known as "the country-club crew" or "champagne crew." That's the band crew. When you work on something that big, the show carries its own lights and sound. Most of the time, the system is flown [suspended from the ceiling] in the house. In Europe, that can change, because many of their houses aren't capable of flying anything of that weight.

The normal procedure is that the rigging goes in, and they "drop their points," which involves figuring the distribution of weight. We bring a rigger with us, who works out with the house people how to distribute the weight most safely. They go in at 7:00 or 8:00 in the morning. Then the lights come in from 8:00 to 9:00. The set has to go up after that. There are lots of local union people on every call. So as a band crew, we don't get the stage until about noon or 1:00. Right there, we get two more hours of sleep than everybody else, so we get the rib-poking from the others: "the champagne crew." Between the four members of the band crew, we need about two and a half or three hours to

shoot for a 5:00 sound check. As a crew, we have our different areas, but we really overlap and that's something that develops after working many shows together. It's the team effort. You have to do the best you can, and relate it to the other crew members, the sound and light crews, and the union house stagehands.

Dealing with the union hands is another part of touring altogether. There's a way of dealing with the union house locals to get the most out of them without our crew coming off as a big hot-shot crew on the road with Billy, which is an attitude they sometimes expect immediately. Taking care of the drums is such a particular thing. It's not like placing amplifiers. There are so many intricacies of hardware and positioning, and I would spike-mark everything on stands and the carpet. Because of this, it can be very difficult to work with the union crews.

I found the union rules to be stricter here in the States. It can even get to the point where putting a hand on a case could bring a bad look from someone. Some areas are known for being especially strict: Cleveland, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles. Cleveland is probably the toughest one that I've run into. Again, you have to build a rapport. They would always want to have one union person working with you to handle the equipment. For me to stand there and supervise someone as to how to do it

would take two or three times as long as it would for me to do it myself. In some places, they don't even want you to *handle* the equipment; they want someone union to do it. With all my custom-marked settings, this is too difficult.

So I would sometimes have to relate to the union helper and say, "I know that your boss is watching, and your boss wants you to help me out. So, I will help you look busy, but you can let me do most of the work." You must also remember that you are the guest in their house. You should feel honored that you're invited. You can't walk in with [cocky voice], "I'm Billy Joel's drum roadie, and *this* is the way it's going to be." That's not the case. *They* have the upper hand on *you*. You have to be able to walk into each house and leave all your problems outside the door, because you can make or break the day if you can get everyone to work together to make the show go.

Overseas, it's not as big a union problem as it is an "American problem." In addition, you have to deal with language barriers. They can sense a bad attitude, more than here, because they're apprehensive of it. If you show them that you're not the pushy Americans that they've heard so much about, then you've won points in your favor.

JP: Are there any particular drum brands that you favor for the road?

AH: In general, when endorsing a particular company, a drummer will find that product to be great, [laughs]

JP: What special precautions were needed for the drums when flying?

AH: I was told all those little bits of advice about dehumidifying and detuning drums, so that when they went through different pressure changes, the wood wouldn't warp. I didn't see any evidence of those problems, but I took the precautions to be safe rather than sorry. Drums are heavy-duty. They seem to be able to take it.

JP: Liberty really attacks the drums with his whole body. Was onstage head breakage a big problem?

AH: The head he would go through fastest was the 10". We were using Remo CS Black Dots on the rack toms. On the floor toms, we would use white Remo Ambassadors. I would have to change the 10" every other show, if not every show. The snare head was a white Remo Emperor. It seemed that the more the head wore in, the better it sounded to the engineer out front. So we tried to keep it on as long as we could without jeopardizing things. I would say we easily got ten shows out of it.

One thing that we couldn't really do much about was his cymbals breaking. His rides lasted the whole tour. But he alternated between medium and rock crashes, and he would go through four or five of them in a 50-date tour.

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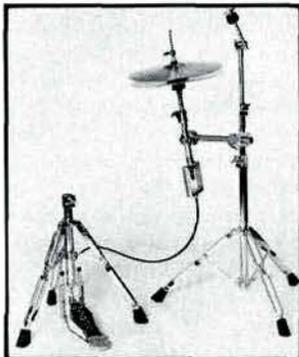
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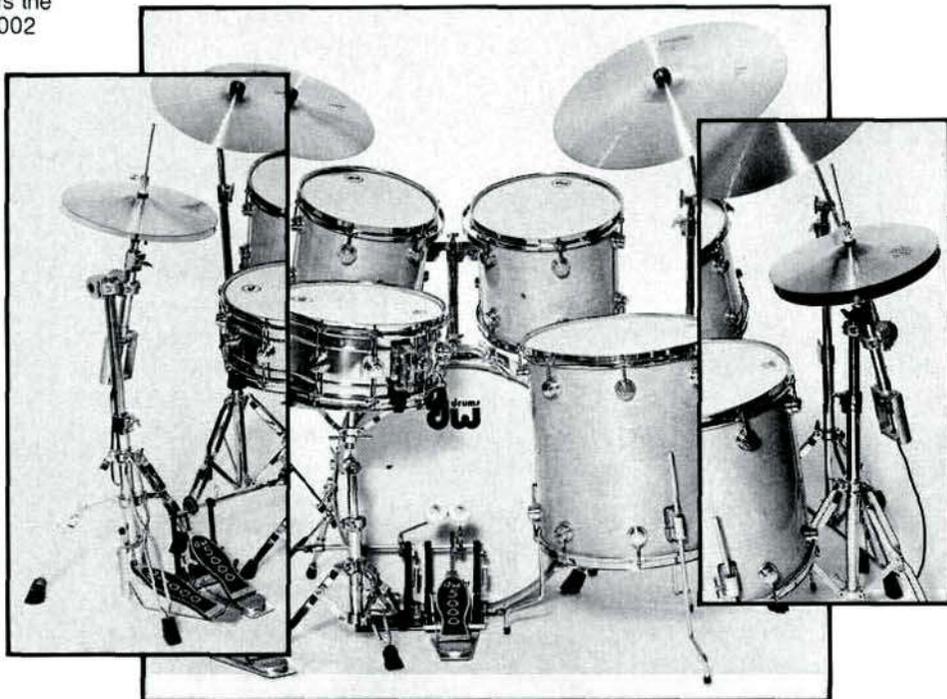
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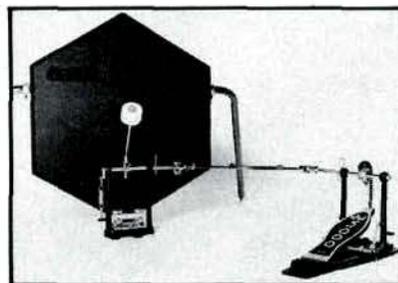


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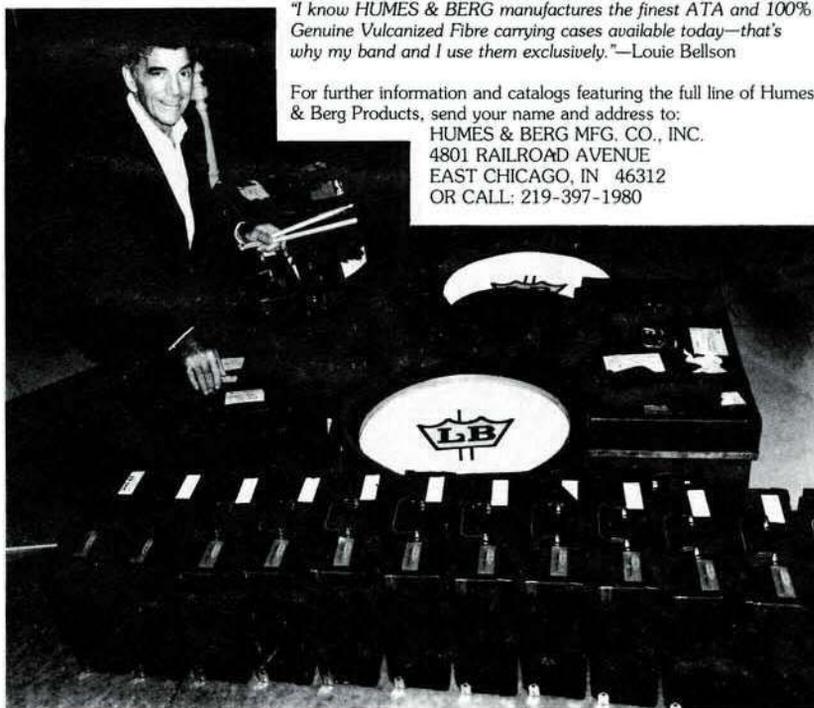
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pine tar on his hands, like baseball batters use.

JP: Will your new duties with Night After Night Productions take you away from the road?

AH: Oh, I'm not going to be getting away from the road doing this at all. In fact, I will be facing more pressures, because of the complexities of a production job. After about five years, there is a bug that gets in your blood. You get out there on the road for a few weeks, and then you want to come home for a couple. You're home for a couple of weeks and it's, "Let's get back out there again!"

Smith continued from page 21

sive drum, which fundamentally sounds great in a room, will sound terrible. For that booth environment, they might take a 6 1/2" metal drum tuned down to nothing with a wallet taped on it that fundamentally sounds terrible, but sounds like a million bucks back in the control room. So, there is a certain deception. Once you get to know and recognize those situations as such, then you might have to leave your super-expensive snare at home. As a result, I tend to bring 6 1/2" metal snares.

In California, the studios don't usually own equipment, and people cart their own. But in New York, studios generally have their own drumkits. The studio norm here in New York is a metal Ludwig 6 1/2" snare. That drum works well in isolated booths.

JP: I was recently in the studio audience at the *Late Night With David Letterman* show and was more interested in seeing the band than the featured guests. To my disappointment, I found the band sound mix to be lacking. Is the sound tailored just for broadcast?

AS: Their primary concern for getting a sound is for air. They can't fit millions of people in the studio, [laughs] The presence of the audience helps motivate things, but what's coming across the air is what it's all about. For TV, there are usually three different mixes: an air mix, an audience mix, and a foldback or monitor mix.

JP: Is there a hardware line that you commonly use with your own rentals?

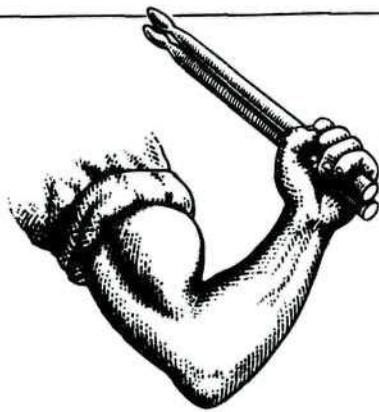
AS: Yamaha hardware. I deal with their stuff practically seven days a week, and their hardware holds up and stays in place. They happen to make a not too shabby drum line also, [laughs]

JP: What heads do you commonly use for the studio?

AS: When using my own kits, I often try to get in touch with the drummers and ask them what they prefer. For the most part, a commonly used head in the studios is the Remo *Pinstripe*. It all depends on what your sound is.

JP: Tell me about some of your specialty snares.

AS: I have a snare made by Frank Wolf, who had a shop on 48th Street in New York, for years. They have a design of 12 lugs for top tuning and six for the bottom.



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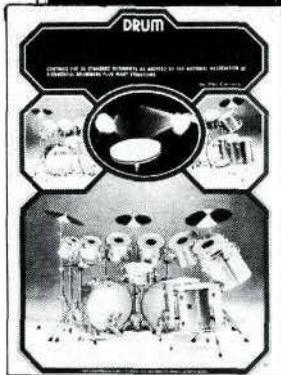
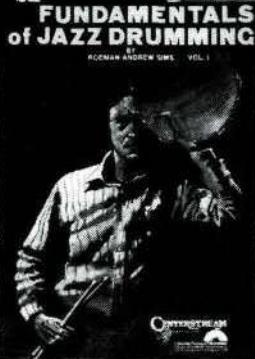
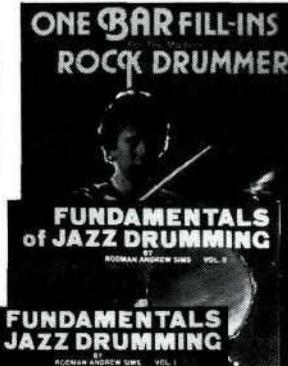
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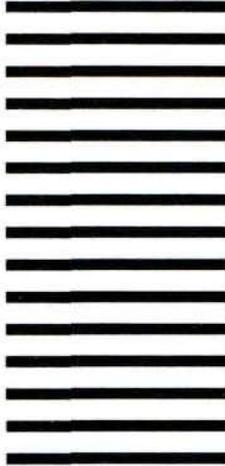
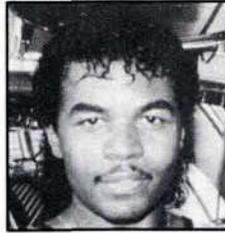
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JP: Why were they designed that way?
AS: I have no idea! I've been trying to find that out. But apparently, they were made long ago for drummers who just played concert snare drums—the Gladstone and *Super-Sensitive* drums.

I have certain snare drums tailored for certain situations. There's a particular Slingerland *Radio King* that Jason Corsaro [engineer for Power Station, Madonna, Duran Duran, et al.] is fond of that I make available to him at any time. I try to match a snare drum to an engineer's likes. On the Honeydrippers album, we used a 4 1/2 X 15 Pioneer for certain tunes and an old WFL for another. It's hard to tell the difference sometimes once the sound has been processed.

The *Radio Kings* are very desirable snare drums. A lot of people are gassed by some of the *Radio Kings* that are mahogany—the ones that aren't the single-piece shell. On one date, I brought a parade drum, which is a good overdub drum. Kid Creole sampled that one. Because it is 12 x 15, it is hard to play, especially if you sit low. I had a stand made for it, but the bottom head comes too close to the floor. What always happened was that the frequency range of the tom would set the snares off. So we used it only for overdubs and sampling. I have an old Leedy parade drum that sounds great.

I also have an old brass engraved-shell, tube-lugged Ludwig *Black Beauty*. I went through the whole trial-and-error process with heads. I ended up using a Canasonic black head with a white dot and a donut on it. The drum is a *killer*. A lot of engineers still prefer the deep drums for ballads.

JP: What are some of the snares that you use for the deeper sounds?

AS: *Radio Kings*, old WFLs. One of my clients has a Frank Wolf oak snare that I like. The less expensive Pioneers from the '20s and '30s have their own distinct sound. If you want something with a "cheap" sound, some of those old snares that feel like they're made of pig iron will work. I recently got a snare made by a company called Noble & Cooley, which is actually a toy company! It's a single-ply wood shell similar to *Radio King* shells with lugs similar to the old Gladstones. The list price is \$600.

JP: I've been asking you about your most commonly used equipment. How about uncommon setups?

AS: I assisted Steve Jordan for a video he did with Jessie Rae. We used a double-headed cocktail drum. It's one of those old, long conga-shaped drums with a pedal that hits it underneath. You may remember The Tokens using that in the early '60s. The bottom head is the "bass drum," and the top head is a snare. We ran the bottom and top through a trigger and into the Simmons *SDS5*. Two Simmons pads were on a separate stand, and a 3 x 13 pancake piccolo snare was miked on top and bottom with gated reverb on it. Then, an old Chinese cymbal that we attached was triggered to a Simmons hi-hat. It was wild. ♣

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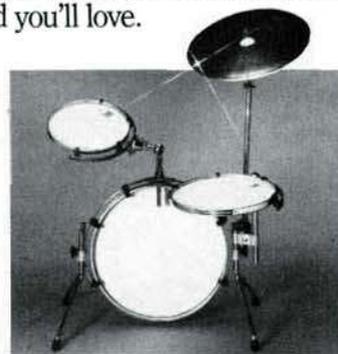
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Chart Reading: Part 2

In the last article in this series, I explained some of the responsibilities a drummer has when sight-reading a drum chart. I stressed that time will always remain the drummer's primary function. Time-related issues (time signature changes, tempo changes, cutoffs, holds, etc.) will always be more important than the figures. I also explained some common road signs (time slashes, first and second endings, repeat signs, etc.) along with some practice hints for developing control. This time, we shall look at another chart with more road signs. We will examine some of the aspects of preparing for your reading career, including chops, concentration, and time feels.

The following drum chart shows more of the features you will commonly encounter on a typical drum chart. Some of the features (rehearsal letters, repeat signs, time slashes, etc.) were explained in the last article and are used again. Figures appear in letters A and C that I will explain in my next article. First, let us examine the road signs (form).

Medium Jump

Open Rhythm Vamp

The chart is written in 4/4 time. It begins with an "Open Rhythm Vamp" section consisting of two measures of a cymbal pattern (marked with 'x') and a repeat sign. This is followed by rehearsal letter A, which includes an ensemble section (marked "Ens.") with a cymbal pattern and a drum solo section (marked "Solo") with a specific rhythmic figure. Rehearsal letter B indicates a trumpet solo section ("Trpt. Solo") with a "Play 8" instruction and a "4 times" repeat sign. Rehearsal letter C begins with a dynamic marking of "mf" and a "cresc." instruction, leading to a "ff" section. The chart concludes with a "Vamp and fade" section starting at "mf" and ending with a "Fine" instruction.

The words "medium jump" describe the tempo and time feel you play on this chart. The word "medium" refers to tempo (quarter note = approx 138-160), and the word "jump" means a swing feel. The rhythm written in the first two bars (one quarter note followed by a dotted 8th note and 16th note) confirms that your cymbal pattern should be a swing rhythm. The repeat sign is written within two measures and means to repeat the two previous measures. The words "open rhythm vamp" tell you three things. The word "open" indicates that the length is not predetermined and that the four-bar section within the repeat signs will be repeated indefinitely. The word "vamp" tells you to play time until cued into rehearsal letter A. The word "rhythm" means that the entire rhythm section will play the vamp.

Letter A tells you to continue playing time for 16 bars with the whole ensemble (Ens.). The numbers that are written above measures four, eight, twelve, and sixteen [(4), (8), (12), (16)] serve as points of reference. Figures are written in the eighth and sixteenth bars. The last two bars of letter A are a drum solo that must end with the same figure written on the "and" of beat three. Letter B indicates that you should play time ("Play 8") for eight bars during a trumpet solo (trpt. solo). This section should be played four times (4x) for a total of 32 bars. Letter C indicates eight more bars of time with figures in the fourth and eighth bars. Begin at a moderate volume ("mf") and gradually increase ("cresc.") to a very loud volume ("ff") at the end of letter C. The chart ends with a vamp, which should immediately drop back to a moderate volume, and continue to get softer and softer (fade) until the end (fine).

Sight reading a drum chart properly entails more than simply knowing how to play a few fills and/or figures. All too often charts are ruined due to improper preparation rather than mistakes in reading. Before we begin any discussion regarding reading specifics, I would like to emphasize the role proper preparation plays in a sight-reading situation.

By proper preparation, I mean knowledge and control of the following: (1) *Your instrument.* Your technique (or lack of it) will always affect what you play and how you play it. (2) *Your mind.* Your concentration must always be keen in order to deal with the time, time feel, and chart simultaneously. (3) *The time feels* (swing, Latin, rock, etc.). You cannot afford to blow a repeat sign or a second ending because you are preoccupied with the independence necessary to play the time feel. (4) *Your abilities versus limitations.* You also cannot afford to blow an easy figure because your attempted fill was too much to handle.

Your technique (chops) plays a crucial role in any reading situation you encounter. For our purpose here, I will define chops as "control of your instrument." Whether you are playing rock, swing, Latin, country, or any style, you need control of your instrument. Over the course of an evening's gig, you might be called upon to play the entire range of the dynamic spectrum from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. One tune could be swing, the next Latin, and the next funk. You might play with sticks on one tune and brushes on the next. If you also have to read while doing any or all of these things, the strain becomes even greater.

The more control you possess, the easier it becomes to read a drum chart, because that control allows you to focus more attention on the chart. Technique allows you to stop struggling with the time feel and begin making music rather than noise. The chops you develop will not always be used (and should certainly not be flaunted), but will always be at your disposal when needed. Try to envision them as a reserve from which you can draw when the need arises. Chops are simply one of many aspects representing the proper preparation on your instrument.

The process of developing your technique is long and time-consuming. It requires a tremendous amount of discipline and concentrated effort. You must spend long hours in the woodshed working on strength and coordination exercises. In order to benefit most from the constant repetition of those exercises, you must also develop and maintain a high level of concentration. That concentration becomes invaluable when you direct it toward reading a drum chart.

When you are sight-reading a drum chart, you have many responsibilities and many things to think about. You must play rock-solid time, or the band will not be able to function. If you also have to control a musician who is rushing or dragging, your job as timekeeper (difficult as it is) becomes even harder. You want to play a hip groove that will build a fire under the band and add intensity to the performance. You want to respond to the soloist (or possibly take a solo yourself) in a creative fashion, while still keeping your place in the chart. Any chart you encounter may have one or more (possibly all) of the following: (1) figures you must set up and play as musically as possible, (2) repeats of one or two bars, a phrase, or the entire chart, (3) large sections of "time" backing a soloist that require you to improvise and count simultaneously. You must always concentrate on thinking ahead. You also must always know what is coming (figure, repeat, coda, etc.), in order to prepare and execute properly.

Doing all of these things in a musical and creative fashion demands that you develop independence of mind and body. It is vital that you develop your ability to focus intently on your time, your groove, and the chart simultaneously, never allowing yourself to be distracted. Concentration is one of the most important tools you will need to help you control your mind and body, as well as to fulfill your obligations.

The time feel you play and the way you play it will both be major influences on your concentration in a sight-reading situation. If you are uncomfortable with the groove you are playing, it is likely that your concentration will be diverted away from the time and the chart. Playing will become a chore, the time will begin to falter, and reading will become impossible. However, when you are comfortable with the groove you are playing, you are better able to concentrate completely on the chart. Your comfort will be reflected in your ability to keep accurate time, and consequently, the entire band will benefit.

Similar problems are also possible even when you play a familiar groove. A "busy" or intricate time feel, familiar or **not**, will require a degree of independence that might tax your concentration unnecessarily. A simpler groove would undoubtedly enable you to focus more of your concentration on the time and the chart. Don't ever hesitate to play simply in order to maintain unity with the band.

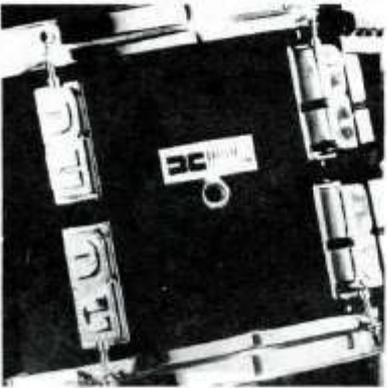
As I stated before, sight reading entails more than just fills and figures. The preparation I discussed in this article is an ongoing process that will continue throughout your career. The point I wish to make is that the road signs on a drum chart are only a small part of the whole picture. In my next article, we will look at a new chart with figures and different time feels. I will explain how to play the figures and give some examples of the two different time feels.

(Gil Graham has been on the faculty of Berklee College of Music for eight years. He is actively involved in the percussion department's lab program, preparing students for ensembles by strengthening their time feel and sight-reading skills. This article is taken from his book, Beginning Drum Chart Reading, written specifically for those labs.)

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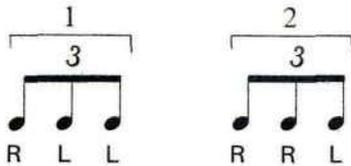
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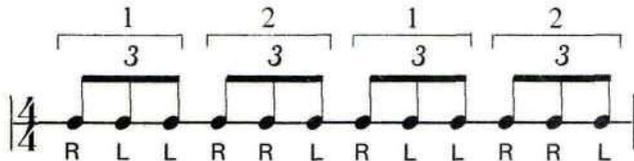
A Sticking Code For The Creative Drummer

The ability to apply sticking variations in a natural and musical manner is very important in drumming. The Sticking Code can be of great benefit in developing or expanding this skill in your own playing.

The Sticking Code uses numbers to identify certain sticking patterns, not unlike the rudimental system, which uses specially formulated word symbols to designate each rudiment. The basic idea is very simple: A number "1" placed above the triplet means to play RLL. A number "2" above the triplet means to play RRL.



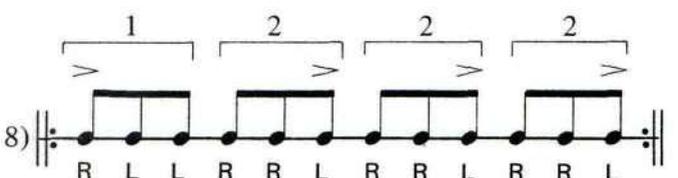
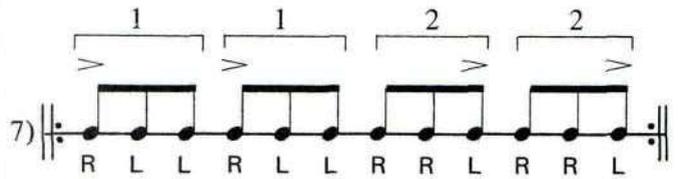
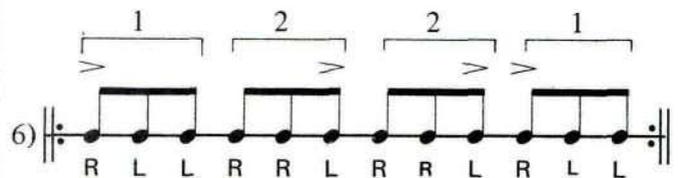
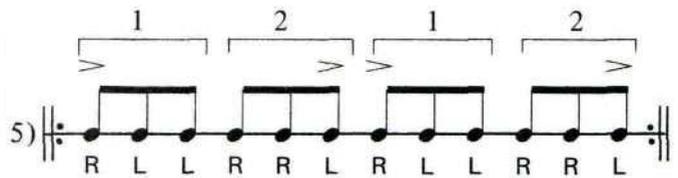
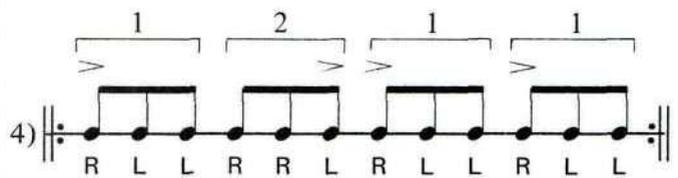
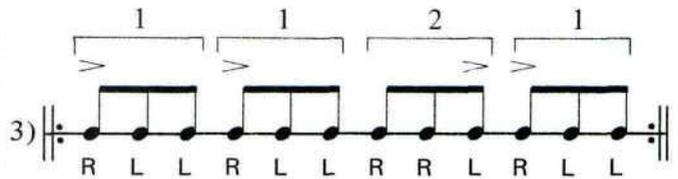
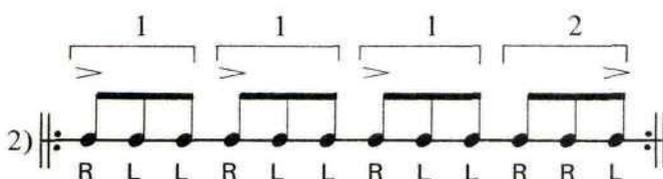
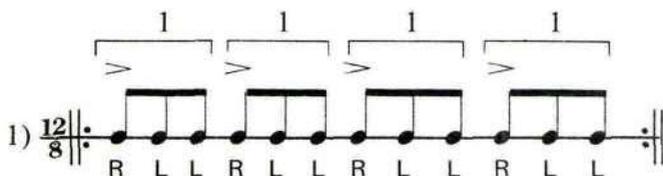
A (1-2-1-2) pattern, very simply, would refer to this:



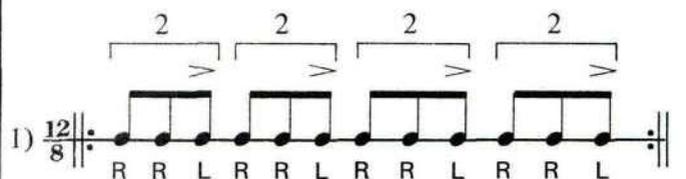
You will note that the code numbers refer to the sequence of beats that the right hand plays within the pattern. Think the numbers in your mind, and focus your attention on the right hand as you study each sticking. Soon, you will naturally associate the numbers with each pattern, just as you now associate "paradiddle" with a certain sticking.

Below you will find the eight possible patterns when starting with the right-hand "1" sticking, and the eight possible patterns when starting with the right-hand "2" sticking. Be sure to practice each exercise at the drumset with the bass drum on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, and the hi-hat on 2 and 4. Practice without accents at first, and strive to associate the numbers with the corresponding patterns. Add the accents only after you feel comfortable with each exercise. Read downward and play through all of the right-hand "1s" before proceeding to the "2s." Practice in phrases, repeating each pattern eight times, then four, then two, and then in sequence.

Right Hand "One's"



Left Hand "Two's"



2)
 3)
 4)
 5)
 6)
 7)
 8)

Other Applications

Practice the various code patterns as fill-ins, preceded by three bars of the jazz-time beat.

A)

B)

The code numbers also provide the stimulus for exploring the many applications of each pattern to the drumset. For example, the (1-2-1-2) can be played between tom-toms.

Or the "1s" can be played on the snare drum and the "2s" on the toms.

Or use the (1-2-1-2) sticking for total movement around the set.

As you can readily see, the possibilities are limitless, and you should experiment with as many uses as possible. All of the above exercises are useful for hand development, but the true intent of the code is as a tool for applying sticking variations more effectively and for making them an integral part of your performance.

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Payne continued from page 23

OP: No, I can't say that I have. But I don't think anything can beat a real drum sound now, do you? It's the same with the piano. You can have an electric piano, but nothing beats a real piano sound—an acoustic sound. I think it's hard to swing those electronic fellas. I don't hear any feeling coming out of them. Is a drum machine good for the blues? Well, how can it be? I already told you that the blues is an emotional music. A machine doesn't have any feeling. You can't shade or change accents with a human touch on a machine. Pull the plug and the sideman stops.

RS: What were your experiences with Muddy Waters?

OP: When I met Muddy and played with Muddy, it was a weird thing. A lot of people based their style around what they heard coming from Muddy. I played with him, but I never was close with him. There was a certain amount of rejection or something between the two of us. I don't know what it was, actually.

RS: I believe you also played for Chuck Berry.

OP: I did. That's right. But I know more about you than I do about Chuck Berry. We were in the Chess studio one time, and in he walked with a girl on each arm. I was setting up my drums. He walked over and didn't even say hello. He never said anything to anybody. He did his own thing.

We never talked.

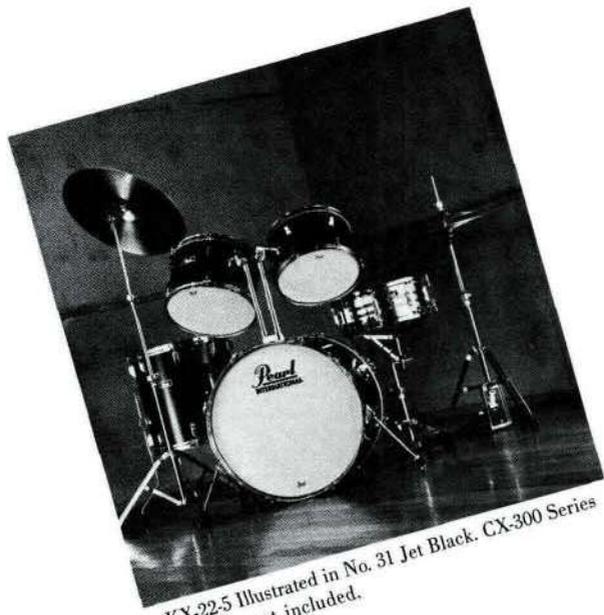
RS: Of all the people you played with, I guess you stayed the longest with Elmore James. Would that be correct?

OP: Yeah, I think so. I was with James for a few years. My, those days playing "Dust My Broom," his strongest tune, were good days. Now, that man had a story to tell. Some people liked him and some people didn't. That's why the blues ain't for everyone. If you haven't experienced it, you don't know it. You can't know it. The blues tells the story of hardship, loss, and misunderstanding. I can show drummers the licks, but I can't show them the feeling. You've got to find your own place and your own feeling within the blues.

RS: I understand you were quite strict when it came to drugs and alcohol. They were all around you a lot, but you never indulged. Is that true?

OP: I had one bottle of beer in my life. A fifth of whiskey in my house might last five years. Drugs? Forget about drugs. When people wanted me to drink, I'd say, "Make it an orange juice." Sometimes they'd look at me funny or even take offense, you know. They thought I wasn't being sociable. But stimulants never interested me. I don't need anything to make me play the drums. Whatever I need, I've got already inside me. But the drugs and the booze were there all the time. Many a blues musician was destroyed by them. I

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could name a whole bunch, but I won't. That wouldn't do anybody any good.

RS: What has been your basic drum setup?

OP: My basic setup is one ride cymbal, a sock cymbal, one tom-tom on the bass drum, one side drum, a bass drum, and a snare—basic, real basic. I love my cowbell, though. I'm lost without my cowbell. But that's all I need. That's all anyone needs who's playing the blues. The rest of the equipment is for effects. You already have the basics. Some drummers feel that the more drums you have, the better you are going to sound. That might be for rock 'n' roll. I don't know. But it seems to me that

you have two hands and two feet, and you have a job to do. If you keep it simple, it means that you have a better chance of doing what you have to do and doing it well. That's always been my philosophy, and I think it's a good one.

RS: Aside from providing you with a pretty fair living, a lot of memorable moments, and the satisfaction of playing drums day in and day out, has being a blues drummer meant anything else to you?

OP: Yes. Blues, like I said, is an emotional music. That means it attracts people, because people are made up of emotions.

People from all over the place have emotions. It doesn't matter where they come from. So because of the blues, I got to see much of the world. I played all over Europe, in Japan, down South, out West, and up North. It's a funny thing though. All my traveling and playing over the years never got me to New York City. I don't know if it would matter or not at my age, but I would like to play there someday.

Jones continued from page 24

has got to understand the nature of the singer. I mean, playing with Albert Collins and playing with Little Milton—well, your whole approach has to be different—very different. You can't force drum patterns or backbeats in the blues. They have to fit like a glove. What you play when you play the blues comes from here, [strikes his heart] When you see me on a stage and I'm up there a-smilin', you know this son of a gun is playin' hard and tight.

RS: What kind of kit are you currently using?

CJ: I'm using a Ludwig kit. I've got a 20" ride, an 18" crash, two rack toms, a bass drum, a snare, and a floor tom, and that's enough. Having a lot of drums looks good for flash and show; I know that. But you can't play all of them at once, can you? Not when you're playing the blues, anyway. I got my Ludwig set on February 11, 1961. I remember that day as if it was yesterday. Hmmm, those drums sound just as good today as they did in 1961, too. I play my snare fairly tight on stage, and boy, I get a pop worth talkin' about, let me tell you.

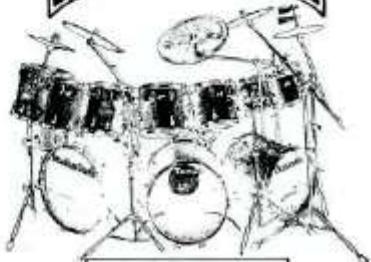
RS: Is it difficult to make a living as a blues drummer these days?

CJ: Playing just the blues? Well, let's say it's not like it used to be here in Chicago. You might starve if you were only a fair drummer. That's why I learned to play all kinds of blues-related music. I love playing funk and would like to be recognized as a versatile drummer. See, people hear you as a blues drummer, and they say, "Shoot, this dude can't play nothin' but the blues." But that just ain't so. The blues is a base for a lot of music forms. If you play the blues, you got the foundation down for funk, rock 'n' roll, boogie, disco, jazz—you name it. If you're called nothing but a blues drummer these days, that'll mess up your career real good.

RS: What album that you've played on would you say is most representative of your best work?

CJ: That's a hard question. I really like the things I do on the Johnny Winter albums. But I guess I'm most proud of my playing on a Lonnie Brooks album, *Bayou Lightning*. I'd have to give credit to Otis Rush, too, for helping me become a *good* blues drummer. I was young when I played with him, and boy, he showed me how to do it, if you know what I mean. He would play a song and keep it going for so long; it would

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be very tough to keep things right from my end. But eventually I got it right, and then it was no problem.

RS: You've been a Chicago blues drummer for quite some time. Do you have any particular ambitions that extend beyond what you've accomplished thus far?

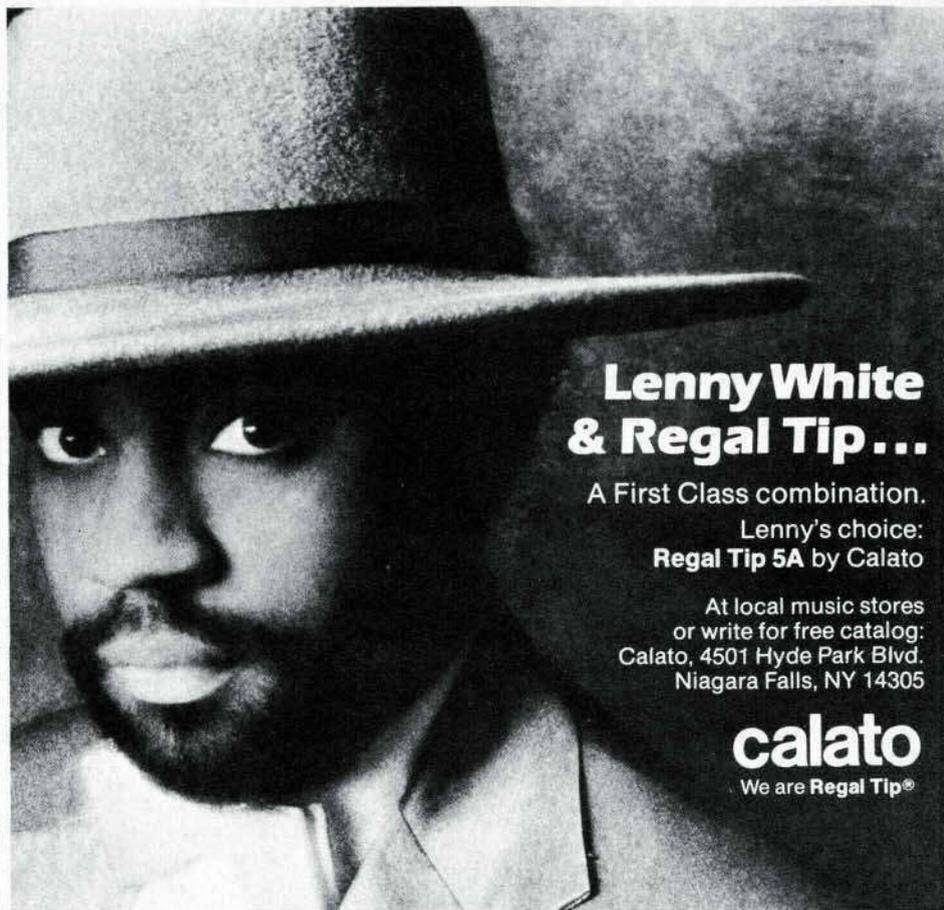
CJ: Yeah, I want to *play* the blues, not live them. Do you know what I mean? I want to make enough money so I can live comfortably and not have to scratch and scrape for everything. I'd like a hit record more than anything. I've got three kids. I want to give them the best.

Jennings continued from page 25

your own thing." Everybody would come to the studio with a fifth of this or a fifth of that in brown bags. Now, you'd never see anyone take a drink, but by the end of the session, all the bottles were empty, [laughs] Willie was real melodic, and I learned from him. It's funny how lyrics could be the key to a tune or the music in general. Willie's lyrics were always funny, so they were meant to be heard. Willie was the one who taught me all about the relationship of Gospel to the blues. He'd say that, if it weren't for the Gospel sounds, you wouldn't have the blues or jazz.

RS: What kind of drums were you using back then?

MJ: The exact same set I'm using right now, a 1964 Gretsch kit. It contains a small tom, a 20" bass drum, a 14" floor tom, a



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snare, and some cymbals. That era—the early and mid-'60s—was a good era for drum making. I've played Yamaha, Slingerland, Tama, and others, but nothing compares to what I have.

RS: What drummers did you especially admire in your formative years as a drummer?

MJ: Art Blakey, Max Roach—drummers like that. My early influence as far as drums go was jazz, not blues. In high school, I was taught the basics of jazz. I was leader of the marching band drum section during my second year of school. We were taught to read also. That enabled me to do jingles and, of course, lots of record

dates.

RS: How did you get involved with jingles?
MJ: Jingles came along when the Chicago music scene opened up, I guess, in the late '60s and early '70s. The people who wanted jingles recorded wanted the disciplined players to do them. Doing jingles is a whole different head trip; it's got what I call the "30-Second and 60-Second Syndrome," where you play for half a minute or a minute, and that's all. If you don't get out and play at night to surpass that syndrome, you become a weak player. You lose your creativity. So when I do jingles, I always play out, too.

RS: You've managed to make yourself versatile enough over the years so that you play the blues and other types of music as well. How would you compare the blues to these other music forms?

MJ: The blues is the black man's country & western. It depicts hard times, broken relationships, and heartache. A lot of times, people think the blues is a downer because of this, but it's not. The blues is an amazing music form. You can trace its roots from here in Chicago to the plantation all the way back to Gambia in Africa, if you wanted or cared to. Your *insight* into the blues, as a drummer, becomes the most interesting thing. One thing about playing the blues: You have to give. You also have to understand the lyrics. It's just as important for a drummer to understand the lyrics as it is for a guitar player or keyboards player.

RS: Does it bother you that many young black kids have rejected the blues—won't listen to it, won't appreciate it? Instead, whites, especially in the '60s, practically adopted the music as their own. And now, with Stevie Ray Vaughan, a whole generation of whites and blacks, who grew up in the '70s, when the blues was nowhere to be found in mainstream markets, are being introduced to the music. But they're being introduced to it not by blacks, but by whites.

MJ: It's certainly disappointing, yes. Blacks have always been proud of jazz. But blues, I guess, was too close to the plantation. I think, however, things are starting to change. As more and more

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black kids are becoming better and better educated, they're looking back to their cultural and musical heritage, rather than running away from it. That wasn't done in the past, because there wasn't time for it, people didn't have the educational tools to do it, and finally, because the past reminded them of bad things. Nowadays, things are more open.

RS: If someone who never heard you play drums before asked you to describe your style of playing, what would you say?

MJ: I'd say that I play drums the way I was taught to play them—melodically. I'm also what you might consider an on-top player. Some drummers play right in the

middle of the beat; I usually play right on top. The way I got my confidence as a drummer was playing with an organ trio. An organ is a very dominating instrument, and that affected me as far as being strong and solid goes, especially in the studio. Finally, I think that, if you heard me play and heard my approach to whatever it was I was playing—blues, funk, jazz—you could hear my jazz background in my licks and how I keep the rhythm. My philosophy has always been to be seen and not heard—to be totally part of the music.

RS: The blues has to be one of the most constant of all music forms. It hasn't changed much, if at all, over the years, has

it?

MJ: The only thing you can do with the blues is come up with some new lyrics and some different sounding solos. The changes in the music will always be the same. It will not be the blues if you take it out of its context. I'm very glad to have been a part of the classic albums that were recorded in the mid-'60s with Muddy Waters, Albert King, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon, and the other Chess artists. I'm glad I'm part of history, because even though the music doesn't change, like we just said, the feeling of it does. And the feelings we captured in the studio back then are classic feelings.

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Breaking Sound Barriers

Tillman continued from page 25

Do you understand what I'm saying? Most blues bands are going to be in E, A, B-natural, and maybe once in a while B-flat or F. But the hardcore Chicago blues groups, because they use harmonicas, will play in E, A, or B. Jazz cats in Chicago and elsewhere use the flat keys.

RS: Does the fact that a majority of the great blues players in Chicago come from Mississippi have a great deal to do with what we hear, blueswise, coming out of Chicago?

JT: Well, yes. But there's another segment of Chicago blues players that came out of Memphis and another segment that came out of New Orleans. So Chicago blues is like a melting-pot blues. I learned a lot from Odie Payne, Jr., and Al Duncan about this—Morris Jennings, too. He and I graduated from the same high school—Dusable High School. He'd come back to the high school when he just turned professional, and play in the concert band. I would remember everything he would play and try to master it when I got home. He would say to me, "Man, you've got to learn how to play the blues before anything else." Then I met Casey Jones, and his style was completely different. I think he came from Mississippi. He played the blues with a rock 'n' roll feel. So everything was sort of mixed into a general Chicago blues style. But if you picked it apart, you'd find that there were lots of different roots. Casey played great shuffles; I always loved his shuffles.

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RS: It's funny that you should mention Casey's shuffles. I spoke to him about them.

JT: Well, people take shuffles for granted; they take the 12-bar blues for granted, too. But inside of them is the whole rudiment of African drumming that made its way to the States. The blues is African drumming or a drumkit with cymbals playing African drum patterns. It is not 4/4 time; it's 12/8 time. People count it in four, because it takes too long to get to 12.

RS: Talking about the combination of drum styles and blues types in Chicago, I've read somewhere that Muddy Waters' drummer, Willie Smith, was the perfect example of this.

JT: Absolutely. Check this out: He played drums unlike anyone I'd ever seen. He played backwards and inside out. He'd play his floor tom on the left-hand side; he'd also play left-handed drums. But the drumset would be set up in a right-handed manner. Looking at him play and then listening to what he was doing, you couldn't connect the two. He was the best when it came to delaying the beat but never dragging the tempo. Muddy had a style of playing whereby, if you listened to him and his band for a while, the sound just seemed to roll at you, like the Mississippi River. First a little ripple would come in, but as the show progressed, Willie would keep on coming up, and you'd never realize that the dynamics had gotten up there. Like

when Muddy called for "Rock Me," one of his great songs, Willie would pull that beat back, but he would never drag that tempo. It always would be right in the pocket.

RS: What about blues drum solos?

JT: Listen to Odie Payne, Jr., for solos. Now, I love to solo, but Odie can really do it right within a blues context. I learned to blues solo from him. A lot of blues drummers won't solo, but Odie would.

RS: When did you begin playing the drums?

JT: In 1959 at Dusable High School. I learned to read, play, and perform in big bands. I was born in Meridian, Mississippi. Down there I played washtubs, buckets, and things like that. It was just keeping a beat on the buckets. My first professional gig where I made some money was with Otis Rush.

RS: Would it be safe to say that you're somewhat of a blues drummer historian?

JT: That's pretty cool, yeah. I feel that someone has to keep the word and the information alive. The blues is our heritage. When people in other countries look for the first music that America has contributed to the world, they look to the blues. It stands the tallest and the strongest. It tells the story of black people through lyrics and song. To me, it's the most powerful music on earth. The blues is the truth. That's the easiest way to say it. It's the truth. Amen.

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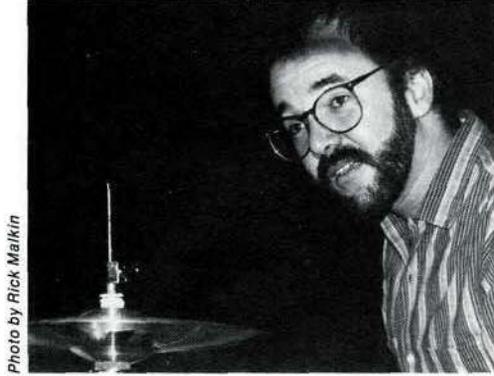
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DRUM SOLOIST



Peter Erskine: "Bring It Back Home"

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Open O R. Cym Cr. Cym

HH TT SD FT BD HH w/foot

Bell Bell

R LLRLL

Bell Bell Bell

LLR L R L R L

RLL LLR L R L R L

LLR L R R

L L

First musical staff with bass clef, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. Fingerings are indicated by 'x' marks above notes. A rhythmic pattern 'R L R L L R L R L' is written below the staff.

Second musical staff with bass clef, continuing the rhythmic pattern. Fingerings are indicated by 'x' marks above notes.

Third musical staff with bass clef, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with accents (>) above notes. Fingerings are indicated by 'x' marks above notes.

Fourth musical staff with bass clef, starting with a circled '17'. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with accents (>) above notes. Fingerings are indicated by 'x' marks above notes. The letters 'RL' are written below the staff.

Fifth musical staff with bass clef, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with accents (>) above notes. Fingerings are indicated by 'x' marks above notes.

Sixth musical staff with bass clef, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with accents (>) above notes. Fingerings are indicated by 'x' marks above notes. The letters 'R L R L' and 'R L R L L' are written below the staff.

Seventh musical staff with bass clef, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with accents (>) above notes. It includes triplets marked with '3' and '>'. Fingerings are indicated by 'x' marks above notes. The letters 'R R L R R L R R L L R L R L R L R L' are written below the staff.

LISTENER'S GUIDE

Rashied Ali

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

Album	Artist	Label	Catalog#
Moon Flight	Rashied Ali Quartet	Survival	SR-109
Interstellar Space	John Coltrane	Impulse	ASD-9277
Expression	John Coltrane	Impulse	A-9120
Swift Are The Winds of Life	Rashied Ali/Le Roy Jenkins Duo	Survival	SR-112
New Directions	Rashied Ali Quartet	Survival	SR-104B
Live At The Village Vanguard			
Again	John Coltrane	Impulse	A-9124
New York Ain't So Bad	Rashied Ali Quartet	Survival	SR-111
Infinity	John Coltrane	Impulse	A-9925
Meditations	John Coltrane	Impulse	A-9110



Photo by Laura Friedman

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

A. I don't really listen to other drummers for inspiration. The musicians I listen to most for that are horn players, such as the late Eric Dolphy, the late John Coltrane, and the late Booker Little.

John Densmore

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

Album Title	Artist	Label	Catalog #
The Doors	The Doors	Elektra	74007
Strange Days	The Doors	Elektra	74014
Waiting For The Sun	The Doors	Elektra	74024
The Soft Parade	The Doors	Elektra	75005
Absolutely Live	The Doors	Elektra	9002
Morrison Hotel	The Doors	Elektra	75007
L.A. Woman	The Doors	Elektra	75011
Alive She Cried	The Doors	Elektra	60269

Photo by Rick Malkin



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

Album Title	Artist	Drummer	Label	Catalog #
Coltrane	John Coltrane	Elvin Jones	Impulse	A-21
Coltrane Live at Birdland	John Coltrane	Elvin Jones	Impulse	A-50
Coltrane Live at The Village Vanguard	John Coltrane	Elvin Jones	Impulse	A-10
Spectrum	Billy Cobham	Billy Cobham	Atlantic	SD-7268
Outlandos D'Amour	The Police	Stewart Copeland	A&M	SP-4753
Axis Bold As Love	Jimi Hendrix	Mitch Mitchell	Warner/Reprise	6281
Aja	Steely Dan	Jim Keltner	MCA	AA1006
Silk Degrees	Boz Skaggs	Steve Gadd	Columbia	X698
		Jeff Porcaro		



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2B

Steve Allen
Blaine, MN
747

Ira Atkins
Brooklyn, NY
5A

Betsy Avila
Houston, TX
5B

Maurizio Boco
Italy
Jazz

Ed Booth
Forest, VA
9AN

David Crosser
Osage, IA
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Frank Degennaro
Holland
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Krista Koleske
Charleston, WV
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Kathy Leaser
Elizabethtown, PA
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Scott Lewis
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5B



Rich Long
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Switzerland
727



Joe Mattis
Spring City, PA
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The "Drop 2"

The "Drop 2" solo method is basically the concept of being able to play any combination of notes with the hands, and then "drop in" two bass drum notes evenly, at will. Carmine Appice, Neil Peart, Tommy Aldridge, and Simon Phillips use this concept in many of their double-bass fills and solos. The two bass drum notes *can* be played with one foot or two. However, in the following exercises, two bass drums have been used to notate the bass drum part. Be sure to practice these exercises slowly at first. These exercises sound the most impressive when they are played evenly and almost machine-like. All hand parts are written on the snare drum line, but can be moved around the entire set, once the basic rhythms are mastered.

In Exercise 1, follow the sticking patterns below the measure. Repeat each hand combination until it is mastered. Then combine any of the four stickings. Being able to play this pattern continuously, dropping in either hand on the first note of the triplet, will eventually allow you to move this pattern around the entire set more efficiently. Remember, try to play both bass drum notes on either one bass drum or on double bass, leading with the right foot.

①

SD
BD 2

R L R L R L R L R L

Exercise 2a is probably one of the most-played licks in double-bass drumming. The reason for this popularity is that the lick sounds very impressive, as long as the individual notes are evenly accented and spaced. Neil Peart has used this lick on many Rush tunes. The secret to developing Exercise 2a can be found in Exercise 2b. When attempting to play Exercise 2a, concentrate on keeping all of the right-hand and right-foot 8th notes evenly spaced, as in Exercise 2b. The "rights" evenly guide all of the "left" notes in. Don't practice these exercises by gradually increasing in speed from slow to fast. Start with a slow tempo, and maintain it for a while. Then stop, select a slightly faster tempo, and maintain that one. Continue to experiment with a variety of tempos.

②a

R L R L R L R L R L

②b

R R R R R R R R

Exercises 3 and 4 are basically extensions of Exercise 2a. Exercise 3 is a six-note pattern that, when written out as 16th notes, completes a cycle every three bars. Don't worry about how many bars are played; just concentrate on playing the four notes with the hands and then dropping in two bass drum notes. Exercise 4 is an 8th-note pattern that involves six hand notes and two bass drum notes. The goal of these particular exercises is to enable you to play any length of even 16th notes with the hands and then to drop in two bass drum notes at will, anywhere in the pattern.

③

R L R L

④

R L R L R L

Exercises 5 and 6 are eight-bar solos that are made up from the previous exercises. Both exercises have the same rhythm, but in Exercise 6, some suggestions have been given as to how to play the solo around the drums using dynamics. Remember, play these exercises slowly and evenly. Once you can perform these at a slow tempo without making mistakes, try playing them faster.

⑤

Solo Method



⑥

TT
SD
FT
B.D.1
B.D.2

mp ————— *f* *mf*

sub. p *mf*

p *mp*

mf *f* *ff*

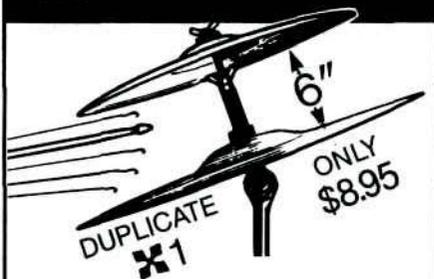
A challenging way to work with the "Drop 2" concept is by applying it to 16th-note triplets. Exercise 7 shows some of the possibilities. The "tricky" part to this exercise is in keeping the triplet feel within the meter, while dropping in the doubles from the bass drums.

⑦

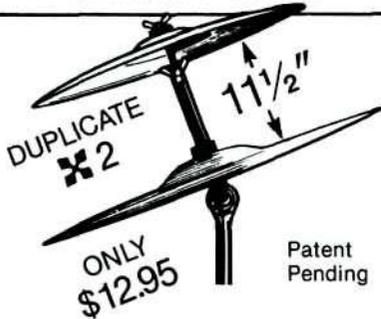
mf *f* *ff*

mf *f* *ff*

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McBrain continued from page 29

heavily chromed. A lot of people just dip it once in a zinc or a copper base, and then put chrome on that. That's what chips off. This is expensive stuff. This is the *Rolls-Royce* of drums and hardware—the cream.

Apart from the fact that the sound of these drums is amazing, I use a Ludwig *Super Sensitive* snare drum, which I bought in Manny's Music in 1974. I've had this drum for 11 years. It's brutal. I call it "The Beast." When you get it tuned right, it is a phenomenal drum. I've used a Ludwig *Speed King* bass pedal as well and always have. I will never use anything else. I've used different kinds of things, but I've always gone back to the *Speed King* and my Ludwig snare drum.

Anyway, Sonor at the moment is manufacturing a free-floating snare for me, because I tried out the Pearl free-floating snare system, and that was a brilliant drum. One problem, though, is that every time you use a Pearl free-floating drum, halfway through the show, the skin ripples very badly around the main beating area, no matter how much you tension it down. The more you do that, the more the tone goes up in the drum, which can become a problem. You can only do one show with that drum. I mean, on other drums, you can get three or four shows out of them before the tension of the skin is completely gone and it won't stretch anymore. But at the moment, Sonor is developing this free-floating snare drum, so I might go with that instead of "The Beast."

AR: And what about your cymbals?

NM: Cymbals—I buy Paiste. Cymbals are very, very personal to me. I play a combination of *Rudes*, *2002s*, and *Sound Creations*. So, I've got quite a variety of cymbals, a couple of which are really more or less for show. You see, I've got a couple of *Color Sounds* in the back, which are really just for visuals. Maybe once or twice, I'll

use the left-hand side one, and maybe eight or nine times I'll use the right-hand side one, because the left-hand side one's a bit hard to get around to. [laughs] I've also got a 40" symphonic gong. It's badly dented, because I've beaten the hell out of it. You don't do that. You're supposed to caress it; it's a symphonic instrument. Someone from Paiste said, "Let's send it back to Germany after the tour and get the dents beaten out of it for you."

There is a certain way to play cymbals if you don't want them to crack. If you want them to last longer, there is a certain angle of attack, and mine are towards me at an angle now. I've had to turn them a bit lower towards me over the years. I've finally got it to the stage now where I'm not cracking as many cymbals as I used to. It depends on the way you exert the initial force. If you strike against the edge and straight across it, the force is going to go right into the center spindle of the stand, and all the force will go down and be heated through the bell, back down into the edge. It doesn't let the cymbal wobble, which is how the sound is generated from a cymbal. It's got to have that movement. It's got to bend. If you hit it a certain way, it's going to put weird stresses on your cymbals. The cymbals work harder the longer you have them, and they'll tend to crack if you keep hitting hard. I'm still hitting them as hard as I was, which proves that the way you set your cymbals can make them last a lot longer, especially Paistes. They're not as robust as Zildjians. [Drum roadie Steve Gadd—no relation to the famous Steve Gadd, although he is a drummer—gives the complete details of McBrain's cymbal setup going from left to right on his kit: a 17" 2002 crash/ride, a 19" 2002 medium, a 16" *Rude* crash/ride, a 20" *Color Sound*, an 18" *Color Sound*, a 22" *Sound Creation*, a 20" *Color Sound* crash/ride, a 20" *Rude* crash, a 24" Novo (China type), two 18" China crashes, and a

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40" China gong.]

AR: What kind of sticks do you use?

NM: They're a Foote C. What we have in England are A's, B's, and C's. I was set with using this Foote C line 14 years ago. Before that, I used Olympic E's. Then I found these Foote C's, and I haven't changed since. I've tried other drumsticks, but these are *serious* drumsticks. They last a pretty long time. They'll actually wear out before they break. They're made out of hickory wood.

AR: How many pairs do you go through a night?

NM: About a dozen—an average of ten pairs to a dozen pairs a night. On a very good night, I go through more. I used to have this trick of bouncing them off my crash cymbals, but it's very dangerous, and with the way people can so easily sue you, you've got to be careful. There is always that one-in-a-million chance that it will spin through the air and knock someone's eyes out. I once hit a girl in the eye and cut her eye up. She could have made my life very unpleasant if she wanted to, but she didn't do that because it was a genuine accident. So, I've had to cool down on that. It looks great. Certain times, the lights will go out at the end of a song. The kids will see the drumstick flying through the air, think, "It's mine," and then—oops!—darkness. It's tricky.

AR: Going through that many drumsticks a night must be costly.

NM: I buy them in bulk. I don't have a free deal yet, so somebody out there better get sharp, lads! [laughs] These drumsticks cost around \$3.00 a pair, which is still pretty cheap, but I buy a thousand pairs at a time. So, I'm putting out three grand a year, and sometimes more than that. The drumsticks are the biggest cost I have to incur.

AR: What about your skins?

NM: I've used Ludwig *Silver Dot Rockers*. Bill Ludwig is a very good friend of mine, and he's wanted me to use Ludwig for years. Haven't you, Bill? We won't go on about why or why not, but he's always given me a very good deal with the skins.

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Anywhere I am in the world, Ludwig always makes sure that I get a good deal when I need skins. But I don't get free skins, and I don't get free drumsticks. I get free cymbals. Right now, I'm negotiating for another kit from Sonor, but they want me to do a couple of drum clinics, which is fair enough. If someone wants to hear me rambling on about nothing, that's fine, [laughs] I might be doing one in Tokyo, and I might be doing one in Melbourne or Sydney, Australia, just to reintroduce this line—my drumkit—back into the market. I think there's been a lot of interest. People always compliment me on my sound, but there are two *other* reasons for that: our sound engineer, Mr. Doug Hall—who happens to be an extraordinary drummer and who never touches the bloody kit—and a P.A. system called Turbo Sound.

AR: Do you treat any of your drum sounds?

NM: I don't treat any of my drum sounds. The only thing that we've done is gate the tom-toms. And all that means is that, as soon as I hit the tom-tom, I hear the note and then it closes off. It's only activated when I hit the drum, so the gate snaps in behind to stop any spillage of any kind. I don't get any snare leaking in the toms, I don't get any hi-hat leaking into the toms, and I don't get any cymbal through the tom-tom mic's.

AR: How are your mic's arranged?

NM: I can't go into the miking situation right now, because we've been changing them around. [An update from Gadd is as follows: *SM56* Shures are used on all the tom-toms and the snare drum. *M88* Beyers are used on both the bass drum and the gong. The overheads are *KM84* Neumanns. *RE20* Electro-Voices are on the tubular bells.]

AR: How much do you play when you're at home?

NM: Hardly ever, strangely enough. The only times I really get to play are when I go out and have a jam with my mates, or go out to the clubs or pubs with my friends and have a blow with them. I always have sticks in the house. I tend to sit down for maybe 20 minutes and just beat the hell out of the floors. But that's not very good, because my little boy copies me!

AR: Does he play the drums?

NM: Oh, he plays *everything*. He doesn't really play. He's only two years and two months. He picks up the guitar; he strums the guitar; he makes noises; he sings. He's got a little Casio keyboard that he plays and he makes all these different sounds on—the violin, the viola. Then he's got his little Smurf drumkit. I'm going to let Sonor put together a drumkit for him later on. They can convert a large floor tom or whatever.

My wife got him a guitar and she said, "Do you mind?" I said, "Of course I don't mind." Just because I'm a drummer doesn't mean that he has to be one. I don't care. I prefer him to be a bloody keyboard player, actually. That way he'll make more money than I ever will because he'll be able to write songs. Drummers never get the credit that's due to them in terms of arrangements and things like that. But to be a successful drummer, you've really got to work hard. It does help if you can write and sing. Phil Collins did it. He once asked me, "Would you ever get into singing?" I



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said, "I can't sing. I haven't got the voice." And he said, "Well, that's exactly the way I felt until I got into it and started singing. I can put all my ideas together and compose." And look at him now. He hasn't looked back, and I love the guy very much. Oh, this was way back in '76 or '77. In fact, it was before that. That was the last time I saw him and sat down with him. That was back in my Streetwalkers days. He had just done three nights at the Drury Lane Theatre in Covent Gardens. Genesis did three nights there, and he came out with an acoustic guitar. I don't remember what song he sang. He said that he never felt so nervous in his life. I couldn't believe it. It was my hero drummer sitting out there singing songs. And he told me, "That's what *you* should do." He established himself as a fine, fine drummer anyway, but if you're looking for financial rewards for something like songwriting, it's fine.

I think I'd encourage my boy to write songs if he wants to be in music. I think it does tend to make a little bit of difference in terms of discipline. But if he wants to be a drummer, he's going to be, and that's all there is to it. There's nothing in the world that I can say to him to change that. He's got to make his own way. Whatever he wants to do is fine by me. I'm not going to be mad if he ends up playing guitar, bass, flute, cello, or something. If he's got a talent for something, he's going to have it. 

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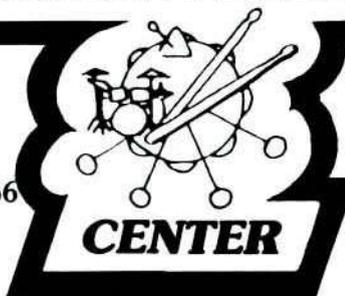
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DRUM TECHNIQUES OF RUSH

by **Bill Wheeler**

Publ: Warner Bros. Publications

265 Secaucus Road

Secaucus, NJ 07094

Price: \$9.95

Here's the book for all of you Neil Peart enthusiasts out there. In this 80-page work, Bill Wheeler has transcribed many of Neil's best recorded performances with Rush. The compositions transcribed include: "Between The Wheels," "Distant Early Warning," "Freewill," "Jacob's Ladder," "La Villa Strangiato," "Lime-light," "Natural Science," "New World Man," "Red Barchetta," "The Spirit Of Radio," "Subdivisions," "The Trees," "Tom Sawyer," "Xanadu," and "YYZ."

According to the author, all these drum arrangements were prepared under the supervision of Peart himself. It's obvious that great care was taken in preparing these transcriptions. All of Neil's subtleties are captured for you to analyze, including intricate stickings, meter changes, and specific instruments played (even down to the exact tom-tom played). Tempos as well as accents are indicated. These transcriptions reveal much of Neil's fine technique and approach to the drums. I recommend it. —*William F. Miller*

STUDIO & BIG BAND DRUMMING: INTERPRETATION OF CONTEMPORARY STUDIO AND BIG BAND DRUM PARTS FOR TODAY'S ENSEMBLE DRUMMER

by **Steve Houghton**

Publ: C.L. Barnhouse Co.

P.O. Box 680

Oskaloosa, IA 52577

Price: \$15.95 (includes cassette)

This is a 68-page book, divided into eight sections. Section one is an illustrated list of definitions of musical terms. The list is comprehensive, and the musical examples are very clear. Section two deals with four musical styles: swing, rock, Latin, and country. The author presents basic time patterns along with developmental exercises. The text helps to explain the proper approach to each style of music. Section three, Interpretation, has been subdivided, and covers the drummer's musical role, drumset articulation, fills/setups, singing of figures, "8th-noterule," and jazz phrasing. This section is replete with text and musical examples. Of particular interest is a couple of pages of triplet overlay. Section four, Common Figures, has ten pages of single and double accents. The author demonstrates the figures on the accompanying audio cassette. Each figure is played as a section figure and an ensemble figure. Section five deals with ensemble passages or "shout choruses." The author demonstrates three of the 15 passages presented. Each passage is clearly notated and musical. Section six, Studio Chart Reading, contains actual charts, reprinted by permission. There are a variety of charts included, in such styles as: rock, swing, movie cue, master rhythm part, radio jingle, samba, and a lead sheet. The cassette recording of these charts is good quality, and the combination of hearing and seeing the music is a very valuable tool for learning. Section seven is a drum bibliography. The author lists books for the development of technique, coordination and independence, and drumset reading as well as stylized books. Section eight is a listening discography. The list contains swing, big band, jazz, odd times, contemporary jazz, fusion, Latin, and reg-

gae.

This book is well suited for students eager to increase their understanding of chart interpretation. The Studio Chart Reading section of this book is particularly informative due to the author's "rundown" of each of the charts. —*Glenn Weber*

FAMILY DRUM PROGRAMMING (FOR ALL AGES)

by **Ian Taylor**

Publ: Fineline Productions

1858A St. Louis Drive

Honolulu, HI 96816

Price: \$6.00 (incl. postage & handling)

This is a clever little paperback created with a humorous approach to basic drum machine programming for the beginner. It's not necessarily just for drummers; in fact, it takes some time to explain basic drum technique and musical notation for people who have no background at all in those areas. Then it goes on to explore different ways to achieve usable drum patterns, variations in sounds, and other useful subjects. The book gets a bit technical as it goes on, but only at a rate that is logical and easy to follow, as one becomes more familiar with drum machine technology.

Although covering a high-tech subject, the book is definitely low-tech in production; it's produced completely by hand, with no typeset material at all. The author also includes cartoons to illustrate points, and inject more humor here and there. The overall effect is to put the reader in a positive frame of mind. This is definitely not a state-of-the-art technical manual; it's more of a comic-book approach to an otherwise dry and sometimes scary subject. It does present useful information, however, and could very well be a helpful item for those about to attempt drum machine programming for the first time. —*Rick Van Horn*

LINEAR DRUMMING: A CREATIVE APPROACH

by **Michael Snyder**

Publ: Belwin Mills

25 Deshon Dr.

Melville, NY 11747

Price: \$6.95

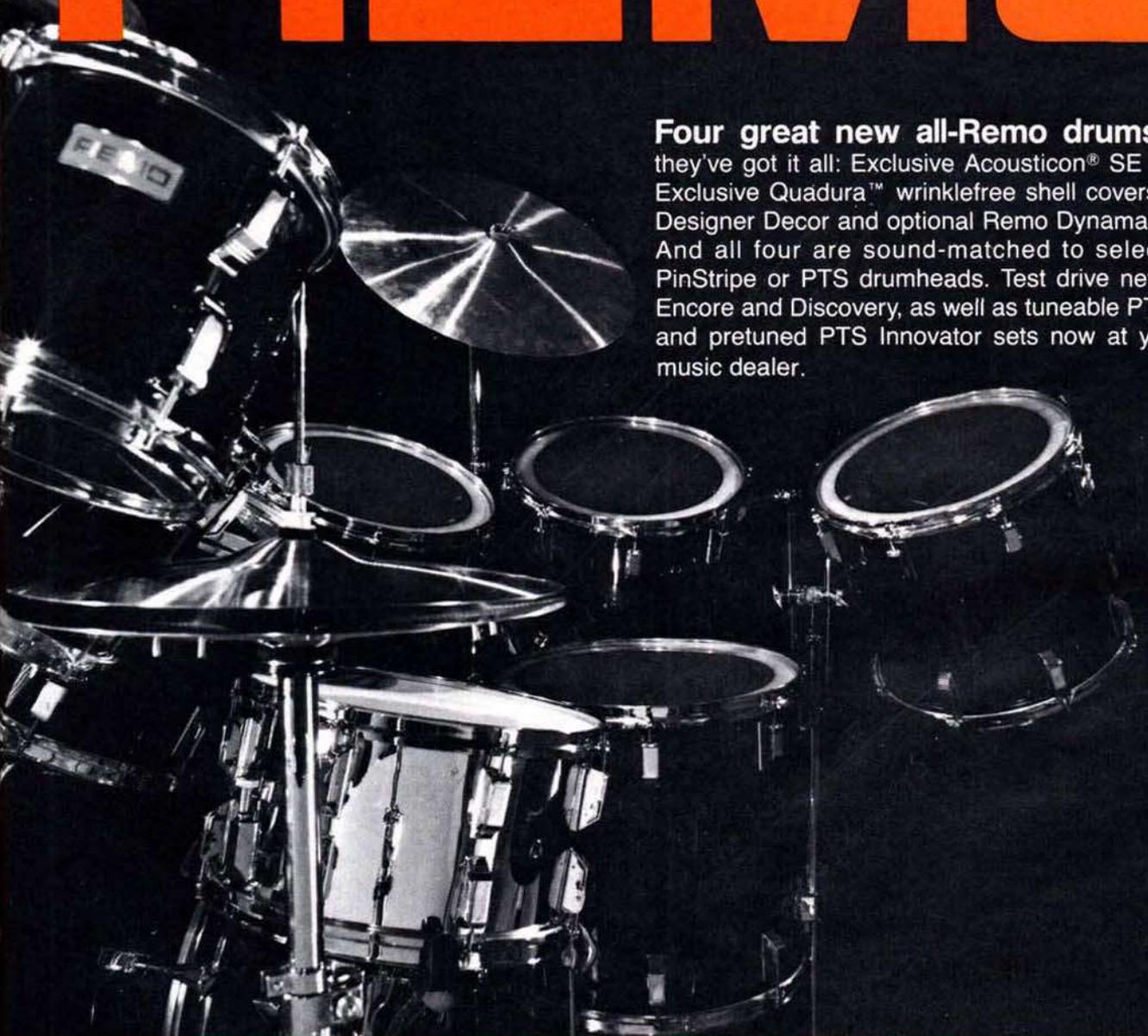
This 64-page book deals with the linear approach to drumset playing, as opposed to the more vertical approach. The author describes vertical drumming as that of layered and unison playing, an example of which would be the bass drum playing in unison with the hi-hat and then the snare playing in unison with the hi-hat. Linear drumming, on the other hand, is described as an absence of "layered" rhythm, with the pattern containing only a single horizontal line of drumset voices. The single line of voices gives this pattern a melodic sound.

The book is divided into two major sections. Section one deals with playing basic one-measure rhythm patterns with and without accents. Each page in this section contains 12 patterns in the linear style. Section two shows how one may mold a pattern from section one to fit one's own particular style.

Snyder's book is excellent. His approach is logical, and he uses transcribed beats of famous drummers to illustrate his points. The book is not just another book of exercises, and when practiced, this work will help to develop independent coordination, as well as a more versatile style of playing. —*Dave Black*

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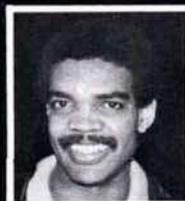
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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

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 like the looks of the new Paiste colored cymbals. How do they put the color on? And do you know of any company that could put this process on the market, for all of us who are already holding cymbals of the standard breed? Many of us have big bucks invested in our cymbals; is there any chance that we can color them up?

J.D.

Hemet, CA

A. According to Paiste's Steve Ettleson, the application of color is part of the actual fabrication process of the cymbal, rather than a process done "after the fact." The Colorsound cymbals are specially formulated to allow for the coloring material; any other cymbal's sound would be drastically—and negatively—affected by any application of a coloring material.

Q. I have a 10-year-old set of Pearl drums with a white covered finish. Over time, the finish that was once snow-white has gradually begun to yellow slightly. Does this simply happen with age, and if so, is there anything I can do to restore the brilliant white appearance the kit once had?

M.S.

Alexandria, VA

A. According to Al Duffy of Pearl, a certain amount of yellowing on a white drum finish may simply be a film of dirt and grease that can accumulate during gigs. (The film appears on any drums; it's simply more noticeable on a white finish.) Cleaning the drumshells may go a long way to restoring the "snow-white" finish.

On the other hand, you are right in assuming that a certain amount of yellowing is due to aging. This is specifically the result of ultraviolet light—from almost any source—which acts chemically on the finish material itself. Unfortunately, there is no way to reverse or repair this condition once it has appeared; prevention along the way is your only defense. If cleaning the shells does not restore the whiteness you desire, your only option would be to have them re-covered. You can order replacement covering material, precut to size, from Pearl. Al informs us that Pearl drums are particularly easy to re-cover, since their coverings are not glued around the drumshells and, thus, are quite simple to remove.

Q. A long time ago, before I knew what a good cymbal was, I purchased a 16" crash from a "hole-in-the-wall" music store. Stamped on this cymbal is a Turkish sword and the name "Zilco," in fancy letters similar to the Zildjian trademark. I hardly use this cymbal anymore, since it doesn't quite match the sound of my Zildjians. I recently showed it to a fellow drummer who thought it was a rare by-product of Zildjian—similar to today's Amir series—produced in the '60s for a short while. I would like to know just what I have and whether it is worth keeping.

D.B.

Sayre, PA

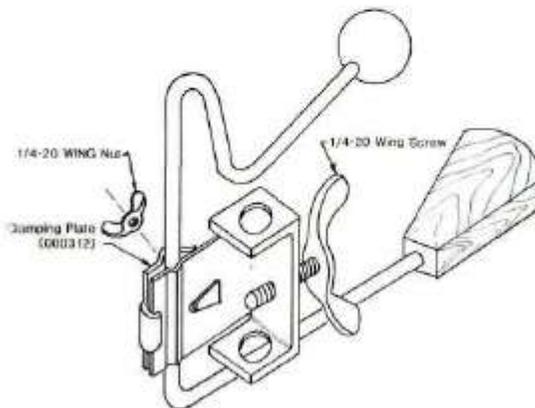
A. According to Zildjian's Lennie DiMuzio: "The Zilco was a second-line cymbal produced by the Zildjian Company for a time in the Canadian factory. It was a good-quality cymbal at a reasonable price. I'm not exactly sure as to the cost difference between the A. Zildjians and the Zilcos at the time; a Zilco might have been between 25% and 30% cheaper than an A. If the cymbal is in good condition, I would say that it does have some value. Although not as valuable as an A., you might compare it to a current intermediate-line Zildjian—perhaps an Amir—as a guideline. A 16" Amir lists for \$101.00. Remember, used cymbals of this nature that are not being made any more are only valuable to certain people. You would have to advertise in order to find out if anyone would be interested in purchasing your cymbal."

Q. I am going totally insane, searching for a way to make my LP Vibra-Slap fit as a permanent accessory within my drumkit. Is there any hardware made to enable me to use my Vibra-Slap on my set, hands-free?

R.P.

Forest Hills, N.Y.

A. Wayne Cohen, General Manager of Latin Percussion, informs us that the answer to your problem is the LP444 mounting bracket (shown below).



The bracket attaches the Vibra-Slap to a 3/8" rod. These rods are used by most makes of bass drum cowbell brackets, as well as the LP Claw accessory clamp (LP592B) or the LP Mount-All Bracket (LP236).

Q. I have the problem of being too loud when playing in churches. I tried using brushes and putting blankets on my drums, but I did not like the way it sounded or looked. If I set my drums on a king-size piece of three-inch convoluted foam, would this help cut some of the volume down? At a recent concert, I noticed that Tom Reeves of the Imperials had two pieces of what looked like Plexiglas in front of his drumset. At a DeGarmo & Key concert, I noticed that Greg Morrow had one big piece in front of his drums. Could you explain what the Plexiglas does, and comment on whether it could help me? If so, how would I design it? Could you offer any other suggestions on how I could play the way I want to without being too loud?

J.G.

Newark, OH

A. Putting your drums on a foam base would probably not do much towards reducing your volume, unless you are used to playing on hollow risers that act as sound chambers. Most of the volume of a drumset is produced by the drums themselves, which act as their own resonating and projection chambers. The Plexiglas panels you saw at the concerts are barriers used to contain the drum sound for two purposes. First, to avoid leakage of the drum sound into the microphones for vocals and other instruments; and second, to help isolate and contain the drum sound on stage for the benefit of the other musicians. The use of Plexiglas is simply so that the drummer can see and be seen. Such panels quite possibly could help you, although the degree of help would of course depend on how drastic your problem is. What you want to do, in effect, is create a portable "isolation booth" for your drums. Get in touch with a company that deals in and/or fabricates products of Plexiglas, and explain your problem. They should be able to give you some design suggestions. Finally, a number of excellent volume-reduction suggestions can be found in Simon Goodwin's article, "Adjusting For Softer Drumming," in the May '83 issue of MD.

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UPDATE

Never one to be idle, Bill Bruford has been keeping busy, as usual. One of his continuing projects is the duo with keyboardist Patrick Moraz. They recently released their second album, entitled *Flags*, the cover of which shows the two of them locked in a martial-arts embrace. Does this perhaps signify that the musical relationship between the two is based on challenging each other? "That would be an exact interpretation of it," Bruford agrees. "It's a formalized challenge, yes, but it's also a friendly sparring match. There's nothing competitive about it. It's just a friendly exchange of things."

The first Moraz/Bruford album was totally acoustic, whereas this one also includes electronic instruments. "We started off all acoustic for a deliberate reason," Bruford explains. "I feel that the quickest way for two musicians to get to know each other is to clap a rhythm or sing a tune together. But since you can hardly do an album and a tour with just that, the next step up is with just an acoustic drumset and a piano. If you can make music under those circumstances and find interest in each other, then I think you have earned the right to broaden the palette somewhat. So we added Simmons drums and synthesizer, but it's still primarily

piano and drums, the same as the first album. It's an organic growth, as opposed to any big change of direction."

One notable cut on the album is Bruford's rendition of the Max Roach classic, "The Drum Also Waltzes." Bill has been playing the piece for a couple of years, on everything from complete Simmons sets to complete acoustic sets. The version on the album combines the two types of drums. Recording the piece held special meaning for Bruford. "It has something to do with wanting to be connected to the tradition of drumming," he says. "I've admired Max for a long time and been listening to his stuff for years. But I'm just a little middle-class white kid from southern England; I have no rhythmic culture of my own so I've been borrowing from America's for a long time. I don't think that what I've done with the piece is an improvement. I just wanted to update Max's near perfect original idea, and show how a drummer of my generation would do it."

A few months ago, Bruford had the opportunity to explore a very different area of music when he was invited to perform a concert with the percussion section of the Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra. They performed Bill's composition "Beelzebub," as well as classical compositions by

Chavez and Xenakis. Bruford found the experience quite stimulating from a musical point of view, but there was something else that made quite an impression on him. "I was struck by the huge divide between what I can only call 'legitimate' percussion and 'illegitimate' percussion," he laughs. "For a week, I was a symphony musician and was treated with respect, as opposed to being treated as a pop star where people view you as being second to a juggling act. Quite interesting, I thought."

Looking ahead, Bill is excited about an upcoming ECM recording with guitarist David Torn, on which he wants to use Simmons drums. "So far, the Simmons technology has been used primarily in pop, rock, and dance music, but it has been used very little in improvised music or jazz. I might be in a unique position to get some of those sounds into an improvised context via this ECM recording. So I'm looking forward to that a lot."

Finally, doesn't Bill ever get worn out from all of the different things he's involved with? "Not at all," he says. "Time is short and there's a lot of music to play. I don't wish to play if I have no ideas, but I have a lot of ideas right now." — *Rick Mattingly*

Somewhere in England, **Dave** Mattacks is playing a job—maybe a North Country concert with Richard Thompson or a London jingle for BMW. It might be a film score, say *Time Bandits*, or a TV series with Leo Sayer. The point is that the man who told us five years ago that he wished to limit his calls to record dates has taken a full plunge into the session pool. However, his mainstay is the pop music session, on which he demonstrates legendary facility for making songs work properly. On that count, producer George Martin features chapters on both "D.M." (as he is known) and Steve Gadd in his book *Making Music*. Both players had been flown to Montserrat to record for Paul McCartney's "Tug Of War" and "Pipes Of Peace." Although D.M. gets little mention in the liner notes, he plays the lion's share of tracks on the latter LP. Later, McCartney called for D.M. for a tune on the *Give My Regards To Broad Street* soundtrack: On "Long And Winding Road," you can hear the trademark backbeat—fat, snarey, and always a touch of rim in there.

Prior to the McCartney jobs, D.M. had been at George Harrison's place recording the single "Blood From A Clone." Any harshness detected in this track might be understandable: It was recorded the morning after John Lennon was murdered. "I think George felt that working would be

better than sitting around thinking about things. I remember him saying, 'I can't believe it's come to this. All we ever wanted was to be in a band.' "

Other gigs followed—Alison Moyet, Bill Wyman, Jimmy Page, Chris Rea, Nick Heyward. Elton John's new album has D.M. on it: "I'd done demos with Elton playing piano before he was a fab pop star. Gus Dudgeon is producing it, and I'd done a lot of work with Gus, who is really enjoyable to work with: We cut two albums' worth of material. It's like doing the McCartney project: You do all this stuff and then wait to see if you're on the album."

Mattacks is particularly pleased with a recent association with engineer/producer Ken Scott while recording a new KA JA LP: "It took only about 20 minutes to get a drum sound. We did it in a big room—Sarm West, Trevor Horn's studio. Ken Scott's thing basically was putting wires in the bass drum and suspending an RE-20 inside, with only a little damping against the playing head. Then we put the other head on with no holes in it. He gates the RE-20 very slightly, but by the time you bring the room mic's in, you don't hear the gate working. All you hear is this gigantic bass drum sound!"

It is somewhat ironic that, while Mattacks was a pioneer in the use of Simmons

on record dates, he doesn't bother much now with electronic drums. "I'll probably continue to specialize in the acoustic side. I find myself slightly overtaken on the other side anyway. There are drummers rolling up to the gig with Simmons setups and racks, and half-a-ton trucks. On the other hand, I get calls, like from Trevor Horn, where they specify somebody with acoustic drums who knows how to tune them and play in time. I have a small but viable niche there. Soon, I may do the usual with the Simmons and burn my stuff onto chips."

While he doesn't have a lot of drum pads about at the moment, D.M. does have a collection of Yamaha keyboards. "I've done some jingles and helped out on some friends' stuff. On the new Fairport Convention album, I prepared all the keyboard parts at home and synced them off a Yamaha RX11 drum machine. We banged real drums on top once we got into the studio, except on one track, which is just machine."

All in all, D.M. is a little less busy thanks to the ubiquitous machines, but his session tally grows despite it all, and now threatens a whole page in the *Rock Record*. Besides clinic appearances for Yamaha and Zildjian, it is rumored that D.M. can be seen in certain Sussex pubs playing modern jazz. — *T. Bruce Wittet*

continued on next page



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The Rhythmattest, an extended-play video by **Stewart Copeland**, was a year in the making. About this video, which was released during the summer, Stewart says, "I think the main difference between this and a feature film is that, in order to make something repeatable, you have to dispense with the plot. When a film depends on a plot, it's fine to watch it once, but when you watch it again and again, the plot loses its value completely. Also, to support a plot, you have to have lots of backup shots of conversations and interiors and such, which are boring visually. *The Rhythmattest* has imagery all the way through that is attractive and worth watching. It's more like an LP in pictures than a documentary or feature film." Copeland and crew spent two and a half months shooting in various parts of Africa to create this project, which stars and is narrated by Stewart himself.

While he was in Africa, Stewart began to fulfill yet another interesting assignment. He composed the score for the San Francisco Ballet's *Lear*, which played during the spring. "I was amazed, really, that they should approach me at all," Stewart says. "But I didn't think twice about it. I immediately said, 'Yes, sure, of course, absolutely.' So I did it. It was very interesting to work in this way. Usually, my main instrument is a recording studio, and I can build the music up layer by layer, hear it as it goes down, judge it, and make decisions. Further creativity happens while I'm still recording. In this case, I had to conceive it all in my brain and didn't get to hear a note

until the first rehearsals. I had a *Fairlight* approximation of how it was supposed to go, but nobody had any idea of how it sounded until I met the orchestra. I had to have it all correctly down on paper for 60 musicians, which was quite challenging," he says, adding that it was an interesting experience in many ways.

"I thought I was hallucinating," he continues. "There was this beautiful old opera house in the center of town with marble pillars and floors, and everybody was in black tie. There I was, this rock 'n' roll drummer, being taken seriously by these people. The fun part was the apoplectic rage of some of the creatures there, though. We definitely drove a few bats out of the old opry house, and I'm not talking about rodents. Most of the people were pleased. The audience certainly loved it and it was packed every night, but I was gratified to see that one journalist, at least, was apoplectic with rage. The sacred ground of ballet was being invaded by this rock 'n' roller! It was just like scenes out of *Amadeus*."

Most recently, Copeland has contributed nine songs to Lucasfilms' *Star Wars* cartoon series and a score for a 12-part TV series, the name of which he couldn't divulge at the time. But keep your ears and eyes open, for it seems that Copeland has only just begun to take this field by storm.

"I really enjoy working with visual media. Music usually supports a song and a lyric, which is very entertaining. I like working with songs, but I like working with pictures even more, because you can

do less and achieve more since the picture is so powerful. You can get a huge dramatic effect from the music with just very, very distilled music. For instance, two little notes on a flute can be very effective against a picture. If you were supporting a lyric, you'd need a lot more than that.

"I think it's important for drummers to appreciate that they shouldn't just think of themselves as drummers, but as musicians," he stresses. "Drums are really fun to play, like a good game of tennis, but to be a really good drummer, you have to be a musician. If you're going to be a musician, you should expand your horizons, compose things, and work with other instruments. It will improve your conception of rhythm and your playing on the drums. People's worst enemy is their own lack of confidence. I never would have dreamed that I could have done *Rumblefish* until I had actually done it."

As for the Police, Stewart says they will definitely work together as a unit again. "We don't have any plans about what and when, but we know that we will. We worked too hard on the Police and have too much admiration for the group, ourselves, to let it go. And all this other work that we do is for the better of the group, anyway. There are only three of us, and if we were only to work with each other, we'd use each other up and go stale on each other's ideas. It's really important that we go up against other talent and get other ideas, so that when we come back together again, we have new ammunition." — *Robyn Flans*

Most recently, **Michael Huey** has been keeping busy working with Glenn Frey. He can be heard on both of Frey's solo albums, as well as having done both tours. He hooked up with Frey in 1979 when his band, Blue Steel, was opening the Eagle's *Long Run* dates. "Glenn said that, when the tour ended, he'd be doing a solo album and he wanted me to play drums. I thought, 'Sure, buddy, you'll really remember to call me!' But he did."

Before that, and after Blue Steel disbanded, Michael worked with Juice Newton. "It was hard to leave Juice because it was more than leaving a job. I was separating from a real family situation. When

Glenn called, I felt that it was a step, career-wise, into a circle with some of the incredible players like Russ Kunkel and Bob Glaub."

Running the gamut of musical styles, Michael also works with Lindsey Buckingham. They met when Huey supplied the drums for Walter Egan's big hit, "Magnet And Steel," which Buckingham produced. Michael can be heard on Buckingham's *Back To The Future* contribution "Time Bomb Town," as well as his upcoming solo project. "He decided to go with real drums and bass this time, and he's going to play all the keyboards and guitars. It was a lot of fun. We triggered a lot of the drums,

so it still sounds kind of techno, but it's human rather than machines.

"The stuff with Lindsey was very techno. He's kind of off the wall with this stuff. He's a bit eccentric, but it's a lot of fun because he's really an amazing musician/guitar player/songwriter, and he's really in tune with a lot of the techno sounds. If you keep your eyes and ears open when you're around him, you can learn a lot." Huey is also testing the producing waters with Katie Maxwell, as well as getting into writing these days. — *Robyn Flans*

Larrie Londin on Journey's upcoming release, as well as Rodney Crowell's latest. **Craig Krampf** keeping busy working with Dwight Twilley, Crazy Horse, San Francisco band Trak, and some tracks with Stevie Nicks. Craig has also been doing various TV shows and videos with Kim Carnes, as well as cutting three tracks with Bernie Taupin. He also worked on half of Jane Wiedlin's album, produced by Vince Ely, the ex-drummer for the Psychedelic Furs. The other half of the album was coproduced by **Russ Kunkel**, who played

on that half. In the past two-and-a-half years since leaving the Charlie Daniels Band, **Jim Marshall** has been doing freelance studio work in Nashville, as well as working with his own jazz band. He has recently relocated to the San Francisco area. **Steve Smith** can be heard on Jeff Berlin's recent album. **Neil Peart** also plays on the record, and Smith and Peart both play on one track. Steve has also been working on his third *Vital Information* release. Percussionist **Tom Roady** has been working with Paul Anka once again.

You can also hear Tom on records by Emmylou Harris, Marie Osmond, Linda Clifford and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. **Aynsley Dunbar** has joined Whitesnake. **Tony Coleman** has left B.B. King and is doing some gigs down in Florida. Congratulations to Rhonda and **Jonathan Moffett** on the birth of their son, Julian Ryan. Congratulations also to **Richie Morales** who recently married Carole Ehrlich—aboard a yacht, no less! **Kenwood Denard** has been working with the Harry Belafonte Group. — *Robyn Flans*

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INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

ALAN DAWSON HONORED

Jazz drummer Alan Dawson was recently presented with a special award from the Avedis Zildjian Company at a testimonial dinner held in his honor by the Jazz Society of Boston. A special plaque was presented to Mr. Dawson by Armand Zildjian (President) and Lennie

DiMuzio (Artist Relations Director) of Zildjian, in recognition of his contribution to music and to the art of drumming. The plaque also commemorates Alan Dawson's 20-year relationship with the Avedis Zildjian Company as an endorser and consultant.

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nician to the Gretsch family of endorsers. David is currently a member of renowned saxophonist Nick Brignola's quartet, with whom he has toured and recorded extensively. He is also a member of the Doug Sertl Jazz Menagerie Big Band, and continues to free-lance with various jazz artists. David is available for clinics/performances by contacting Mark Richards, Gretsch Drum Co., One Gretsch Plaza, Ridgeland, SC 29936.

The Gretsch Drum Co. recently announced the addition of David Calarco as an artist/clinician.

CALATO DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Calato Mfg., manufacturer of Regal Tip products, has opened a distribution facility in Niagara Falls, New York, from which the company is distributing top-quality percussion products. Included in the growing line of products are Aquarian cymbal springs, Danmar and Drum Workshop products, Remo drumheads and *Roto-Toms*, and the full line of Sabian cymbals. One year ago, Calato opened a similar distribution facility in Niagara Falls,

Ontario, for the Canadian market. According to Joe Calato, "The immediate success of our distribution facility in Canada made us realize the need for a similar percussion specialty house in the U.S.

For more information contact Peter Cicero, U.S. Sales manager at (800) 828-1601. In New York State, call collect: (716) 285-3546. In Canada, contact Bill Filek at (416) 357-2680.

MCAFFEE, REBBOAH JOIN PRO-MARK

Pro-Mark Corporation recently announced the addition of Boo Boo McAfee and Laurent Rebboah to its roster of artist endorsers. McAfee, well-known Nashvilledrummer currently on tour with Atlanta, has also played with acts such as Lobo, Donna Fargo, the Bellamy Brothers, and Cristy Lane, as well as recording with his own group, McAfee's Breeze. In 1981, Boo Boo also set a Guinness world record for continuous drumming. With a six-man support crew and a plan laid out by army psychologists, he began playing at

Winkler's Drum Shop in Madison, Tennessee, on July 31, and didn't get up for 738 hours—over 30 days of continuous drumming!

Laurent Rebboah, drumset teacher and driving force behind the West Coast power rock band, Boa, decided to take the record even further. He is now listed in the Guinness Book as the current world's record holder for continuous drumming with a staggering total of 42 days! Both Rebboah and McAfee are currently featured in Pro-Mark's "Marathon Men" ad campaign.

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Moderately priced, Maxtone also specializes in providing contemporary finishes, like the techno-sleek black grid, the dramatic all black, and the stark contrast of black and white, all available with the smooth ebonized *Black Beauty Series* stands, and on-shell rims, lugs, rods and holders. Maxtone and On-Site are committed to presenting a complete and professional line of percussion gear at affordable prices.

DROUBAY ENDORSES BEATO

Drummer Mark Droubay has recently signed as an endorser with Beato Musical Products. Droubay plays with Survivor, whose song "Eye Of The Tiger" won them a Grammy award, and whose current

album *Vital Signs* is receiving wide airplay. Currently on tour in support of the album, Droubay will be using Beato Bags, Kirkwood Canadian maple drumsticks, and other Beato products.

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thus is totally safe. The two-speed fan gives a large volume of air movement in an ultra-quiet mode, thereby eliminating leakage into microphones. The unit is guaranteed for one year and is rated 110V, 60Hz. More information is available from Ideas International, P.O. Box 236, Whitby, Ontario, Canada, L1N 1S5.

NEWM&K PRODUCTS

M&K has announced the addition of five new instructional videos to its line. These are: *Basic Music Reading And Commercial Beats*; *Playing In Odd Time Signatures*; *Drum Refinishing And Custom Construction*; *Drum Setups And Tuning*; and *Electronic Drums—Playing & Understanding*. These one-hour videotapes will be available at retail drum shops or direct from M&K Productions.

Also new from M&K are

Slipstoppers, extremely lightweight foam rings that can easily be slipped on and off any pair of sticks to prevent slippage. The attachment is towards the back of the sticks, so that they ride behind your hands in order not to interfere with your playing. For more information, contact Kevin Gazzara, Director of Marketing, M&K Productions, Dept. Just Drums, 601 Bunker Hill Road, Harleysville, PA 19438, or call (215) 368-9102.

NEW PRODUCTS FROM BEATO

Beato Musical Products has recently introduced a new line of its Beato Bags for electronic drums. Designed to fit all models of electronic drum pads, the bags are made with the same superior materials and craftsmanship as the acoustic drum bag models. With the exception of the kick drum bag, all bags come with compartments to keep drum pads separated from each other. The bags all feature waterproofing, flame resistance, and *W* thick padding. Available in black Tolex II with red handles, the bags are available in four sizes: kick drum,

double, quad, and quint,

Beato is also now a major distributor of Canasonic drumheads. Made of fiberglass and available in several colors, Canasonic heads are noted for their durability and controlled sound. According to Fred Beato, President of Beato Musical Products, "You just won't believe these heads until you try them. There are just *no* overtones. They sound great!" For further information on Beato products, write P.O. Box 725, Wilmington, CA 90748 or call (213) 775-1513.

CB-700 BY SIMMONS



Kaman Music Distributors and Simmons Group Centre recently introduced the new CB-700 by Simmons electronic drum line, offering flexibility, performance, and technology at user-friendly prices. The line includes three separate outfits.

The *SDS800* is a complete four-channel kit that includes bass drum, snare, and two tom-tom channels. All of the drums have new injection molded pads that incorporate "float-

ing" heads, designed for comfort and accurate dynamic response. Also included is a resonance control on the snare, a "second skin" control on the toms for double-headed tom sounds, and a fully programmable run generator in the first tom pad that creates multi-tom fill effects using a single pad. The unit's brain offers completely flexible sound programming, and has both line and headphone output jacks.

The *SDS400* and *SDS200* are add-on units of four and two tom-tom pads, respectively, with features similar to those of the *SDS800* in their electronic brains. The CB-700 by Simmons is designed to use *7000* and *8000* series CB-700 *Gibraltar* stands, featuring the new black chrome finish. The pads are available in black, white, red, yellow, and blue.

BARCUS-BERRY PRODUCTS FOR DRUMMERS

Barcus-Berry, Inc. has introduced a new series of pickups and dedicated electret microphones for use with drums, cymbals, and other percussion instruments. These transducers provide a practical means for obtaining high-level sound reinforcement with a minimum of feedback problems and a virtual absence of unsightly hardware. New transducers in this line are the *Model 2050* drumhead pickup, the *Model 2061* cymbal mic', and the *Model 2063* hi-hat mic'. Also available is the *Model 2070 Drumkit Pickup System*, which includes six drumhead pickups, two

cymbal mic's, one hi-hat mic', appropriate connecting cables, and the *Model 101* ten-channel mixer. In addition, the company has announced the development of a drum transducer interface device—the *Model 2001 Sure Shot* trigger—which makes it possible to utilize traditional drums for controlling the operation of drum machines, keyboard synthesizers and sequencers. This trigger is compatible with a wide range of products from many leading manufacturers. Contact your dealer, or Barcus-Berry, Inc. at 5381 Production Drive, Huntington Beach, CA 92649.

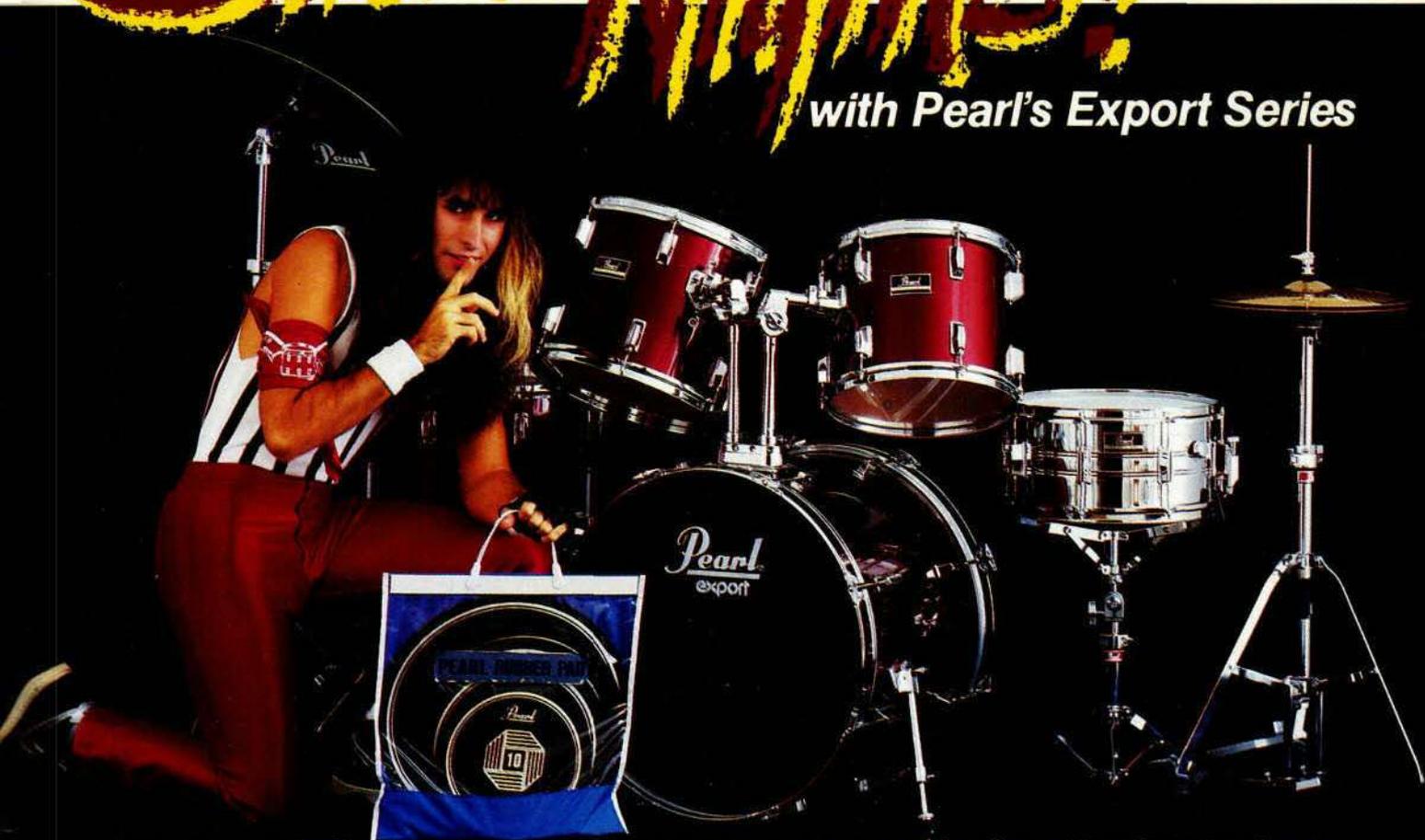
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ZILDJIAN PLATINUM SERIES CYMBALS

The Avedis Zildjian Company recently introduced its new *Platinum* series of A. Zildjian cymbals. The unique, high-gloss silver finish of these cymbals is the result of a special plating process developed by Zildjian craftsmen, and offers drummers an alternative to the regular and *Brilliant* finishes. The *Platinum* series possesses extraordinary reflective properties, which maximize the effect

of dramatic stage lighting and effects. The look of these cymbals is a perfect complement to chrome hardware or custom-finished acoustic or electronic drums. The cymbals clean up to their original luster with Zildjian Cymbal Cleaner. All models in the A. Zildjian line, including drumset and field cymbals, will be available with the new finish,

LUDWIG EXPANDS ROCKER II LINE



Ludwig has added *Power Plus* drums to its popular, affordable *Rocker II* line. Originally introduced in late 1984, *Rocker II* outfits were available only in a five-piece configuration. Ludwig dealers can now offer seven-, nine- and ten-piece out-

fits. The new *Power Plus* drum additions to the line include six power toms, a power snare drum and a power bass drum. The new drums are available as add-ons to enhance the power of the basic five-piece outfit. Outfits are available at a wide range of prices, depending on the customer's selection from three hardware groupings: *Modular II*, *Rocker*, or *Rocker II*. Other equipment recently added to the Ludwig line includes double tom-thon stands and two drum thrones. Outfits and literature are now available at Ludwig dealers.

GARFIELD ELECTRONICS MULTI TRIGGER

Garfield Electronics has recently introduced *Multi Trigger*, an economical drum triggering system that interfaces drum pads, pickups or audio sources to trigger inputs on drum machines, synthesizers, and arpeggiators. Each of six channels provides a trigger for Linn, Oberheim, E-mu, and MXR drum machines, and can

also provide non-dynamic triggers for Simmons, Dynacord, *Techstar*, and *Fightman* kits. In multi-track recording, an existing drum track can trigger drum sounds, which then can be recorded and mixed with the original. Contact Garfield Electronics, P.O. Box 1941, Burbank, CA 91507, or call (818) 840-8939.

ROLAND ELECTRONIC PERCUSSION

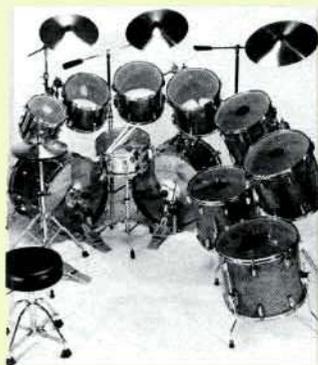
Roland is entering the percussion market with a series of electronic drum products. Roland's Digital Drums System consists of the *DDR-30 Digital Drums Sound Module* and two kinds of drum pads designed exclusively for use with the *DDR-30*: the *PD-JO Bass Drum Pad* and *PD-20 Snare Drum/Tom Pads*. The rack-mountable *DDR-30* features six drum voices (bass, snare, and four toms), 32 drumkits (plus an optional *M-16C* memory cartridge to store an additional 64 presets), MIDI (In, Out, and Thru), and can be used as a drum sound for a MIDI sending unit.

patible pad controller and further expands the possibilities of Roland's Digital Drum System. The *PAD-8* features eight touch-sensitive pads, each transmitting separate MIDI signals. The *PAD* is fully programmable with four memory banks.

"Drummers are now able to use MIDI to trigger melody or drums, they can play chords and bass lines by hitting pads, or they can use the *DDR-30* drum sound module as a drumkit for MIDI," said Eric Persing, Product Specialist at Roland. For more information, contact Roland Corp US, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA 90040, (213)685-5141.

The *PAD-8*, also new from Roland, is the first MIDI-com-

R.O.C. INNOVATIONS



R.O.C. Drums has introduced a series of new kits. Included are power-shell versions of R.O.C.'s popular 11- and 13-piece *Concert Pro Series* kits, at a surprisingly small increase in price over the standard size drums. Also new is the *Goldfinger* kit, a limited-edition 11-piece stage kit featuring 11-ply shells with African bubinga burlwood exteriors, heavy-duty gold-plated hardware, and a gold-plated 6 1/2X14 studio snare.

The firm has also established a custom service facility, by which the consumer is directly involved with details of his or her drumset and is given complete service in cooperation with the dealer. According to factory spokesman Glen Quan, "We provide in-depth service to all our customers. We don't do heavy advertising or have famous artist endorsers, because the expense for those programs is paid by all the non-famous, working-class drummers. We deal in low overhead, so that we can offer our customers 11- or 13-piece kits for about what our competition charges for a five-piece. We are the industry's equivalent of the 'no-frills' approach. Our success is largely due to 'word-of-mouth' advertising by our customers. We've earned their respect, and we'll continue to design affordable pro-quality equipment for working drummers."

AUDIOPHILE IMPORTS

Audiophile Imports is a mail-order company specializing in jazz/fusion recordings and videos from Japan. The company offers albums featuring Steve Gadd, Dave Weckl, Peter

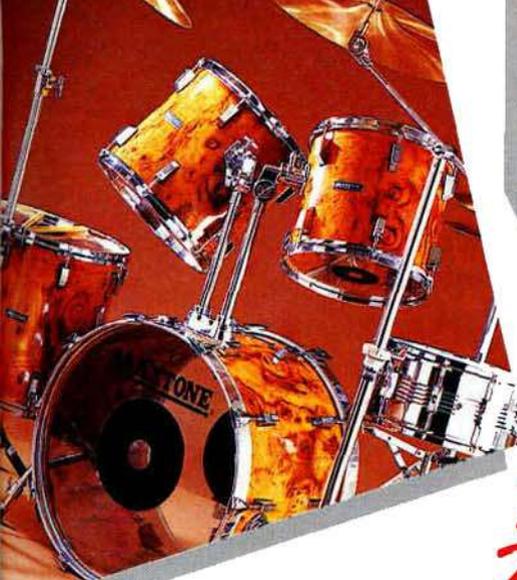
Ersikine, Chris Parker, and other renowned drummers on Japan-only releases. For a free fall catalog, write to Audiophile Imports, P.O. Box 32247, Pikesville, MD 21208, or call (301)484-7752.

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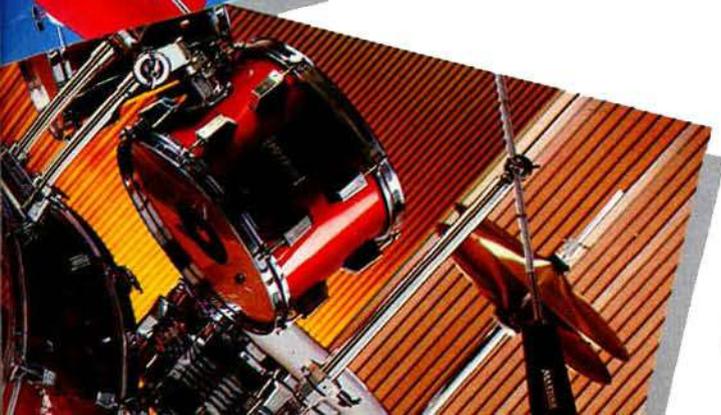
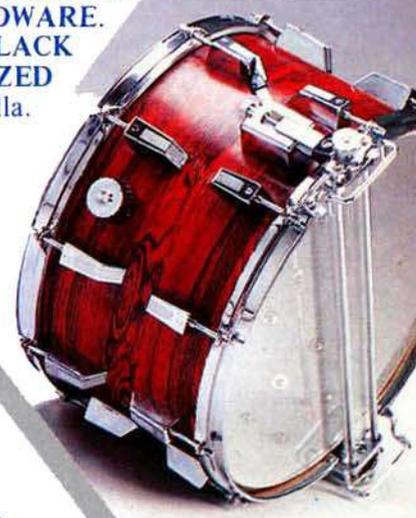
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Flatride cymbals were created in 1968 by **Robert Paiste** for drummers who wanted clear defined ride sounds without over-blowing and interfering with other instruments.

Flats do not build up overtones that absorb the ride beat.

Danny Gottlieb, currently touring with **AlDiMeola**, has favoured Flatrides for a long time now, because... "You can really have control of those cymbals. For loud playing I like them and they have a really beautiful sound. I use Formula 602 Medium and Heavy Flatrides, a 2002 Flatride and a special 26" Sound Creation Dark Flatride!"



Danny Gottlieb

Paul Wertico, who replaced Danny in **Pat Metheny's Group**, says... "they are vital for the Pat Metheny sound. The light airy-type cymbals go really well with the textures of the music. These cymbals stay out of the way of the overtone range of the guitar." Paul uses a 22" Flatride, 2002.

Although **Rod Morgenstein** uses **RUDES** on stage, he reveals... "I always end up using one or two Flatrides on records. Whenever there's an ethereal, esoteric, spaced out section I think 'Ah Gottlieb' - and grab a Flatride. That's one of the most beautiful cymbals there are."

Flatrides are available in Formula 602 Thin, Medium and Heavy as well as in 2002 and Sound Creation series.

For further information please contact

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Marc Droubay
Survivor



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"The first thing that I really noticed when I played them was their projection. You know, it's real hard to get that punch and definition out of most drums, but when I set up the Gretsch drums, and I played them,

they just exploded, the sound men went crazy. That was about a year ago...and I've been playing them ever since.

"I really like the workmanship and the detailing. Their new line of hardware is right 'up to date'...it's taken a lot of wear and tear. It's real sturdy.

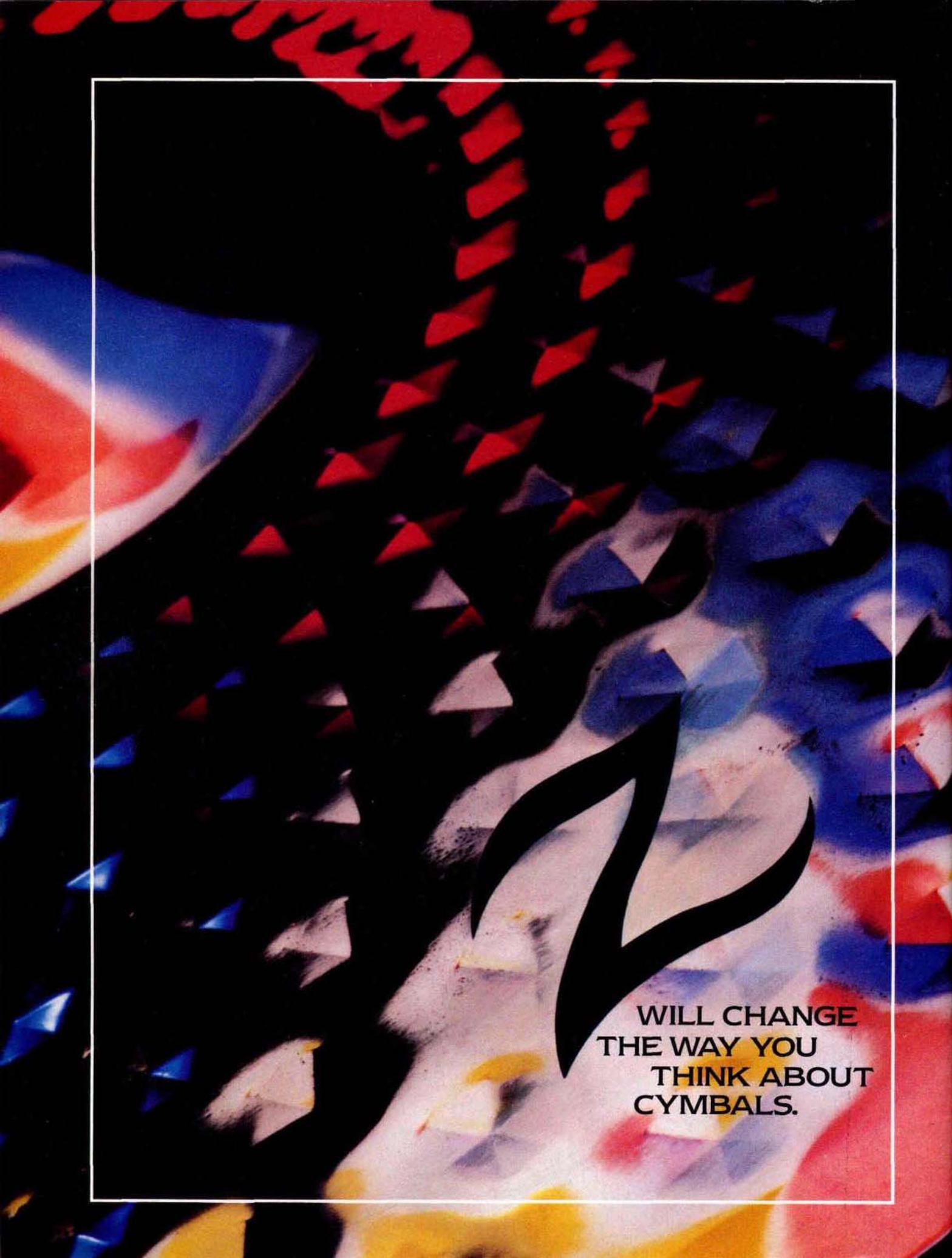
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