

# MODERN DRUMMER™

The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers



\$2.50  
(In USA)  
MARCH 1986



## JERRY MAROTTA

**BUDDY  
WILLIAMS**

Tears For Fears'  
**MANNY  
ELIAS**

**MARVIN  
SMITH**

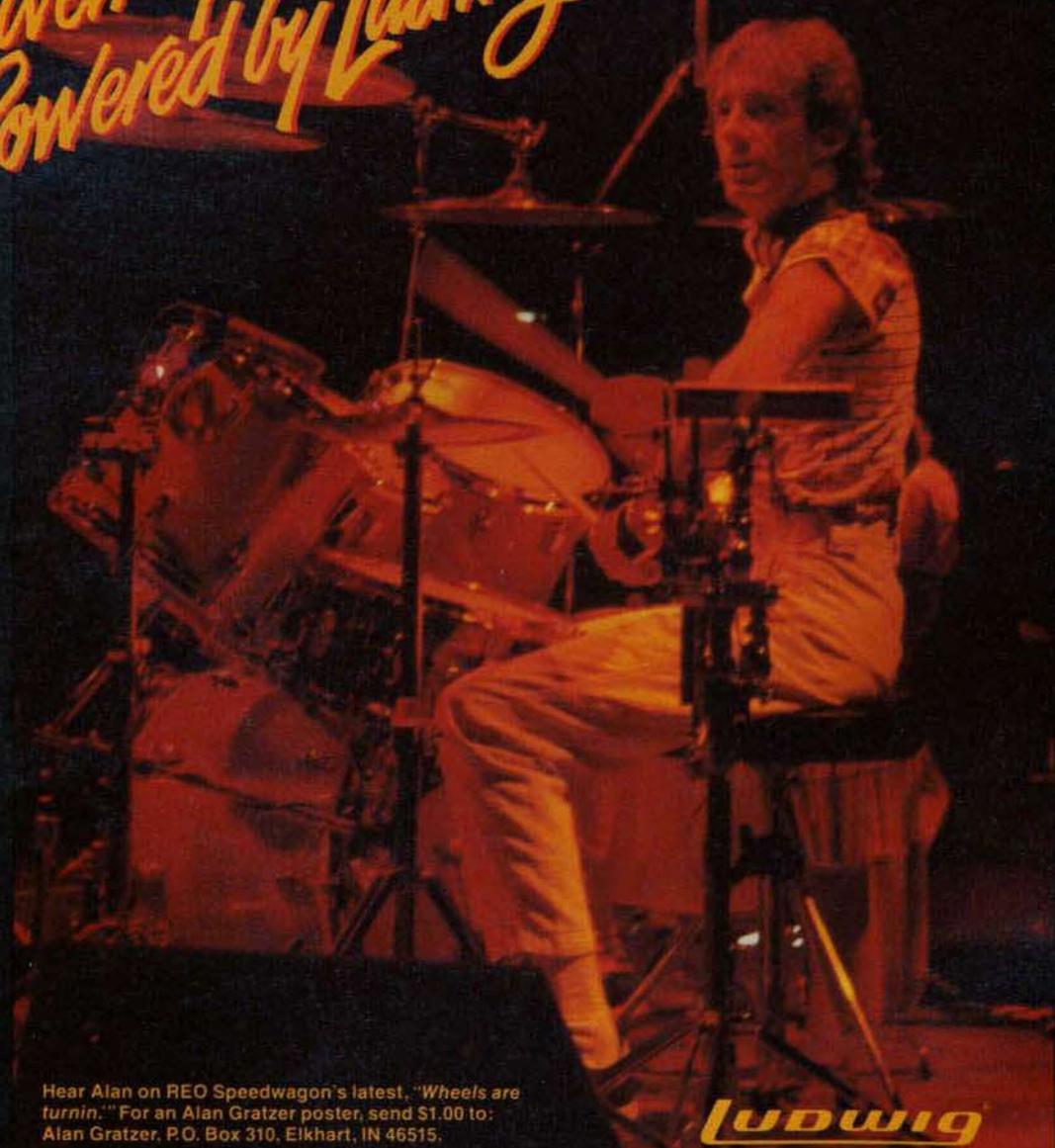
**Plus:**

**Some Paradiddle Funk • Tips Toward Effective Practice  
Steve Ferrone Transcription • '86 Readers Poll Ballot**

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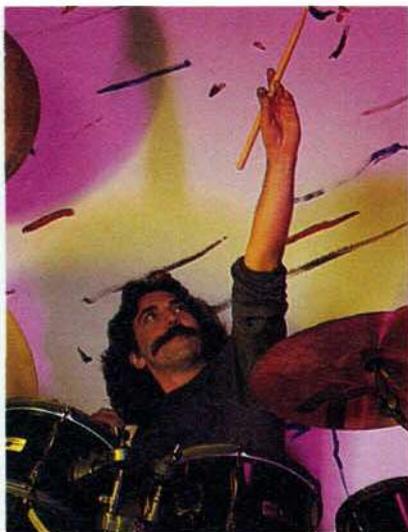
L U D W I G

# Features

Cover Photo by Leslie Burke

## JERRY MAROTTA

Photo by Leslie Burke



He is highly respected for his drumming with such artists as Peter Gabriel and Joan Armatrading, and yet there seems to be an air of mystery surrounding Jerry Marotta. Who is the man behind the drumming? *MD* found out.  
by Robyn Flans . . . . . 16

## MARVIN "SMITTY" SMITH

He has recently come to national attention as part of a new generation of jazz players, but Marvin Smith's ideas and techniques are based on some very old traditions,  
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## CHRIS BRADY

While a number of manufacturers refer to their drumshells as "solid wood," Australian drum maker Chris Brady has taken the idea a step further, with some very interesting results.  
by Rick Van Horn . . . . . 26

## BUDDY WILLIAMS

Buddy Williams is well known as the drummer on the television show *Saturday Night Live*, but what is not generally known is that he also has performed and recorded with a multitude of prominent artists.  
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## MANNY ELIAS

Although Roland Orzabal and Curt Smith are the most visual members of Tears For Fears, the drum sounds on such hits as "Shout" and "Everybody Wants To Rule The World" were created by a very talented and innovative musician: drummer Manny Elias.  
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# From Top To Bottom



Once again, it's time to cast your vote for your favorite artists in *Modern Drummer's* eighth annual Readers Poll. You'll find the official ballot in this issue, ready for you to fill in the names of those top drummers who you feel deserve recognition in their respective fields. As usual, the results of the voting will be presented in *MD's* July '86 issue.

Please note that we've added a new feature to the poll this year called the *MD* Honor Roll. The achievement of Honor Roll status will be presented to any drummer who has won in any musical category for a total of five different years. In essence, this will now be our way of honoring those artists who have gained notable popularity among the readership and general listening audience, and who have made an outstanding contribution to the art of drumming. If an artist has been placed on the *MD* Honor Roll after winning in the *same* category for five different years, that drummer will no longer be eligible in that particular category (with the exception of Recorded Performance). We will, of course, continue to recognize all Honor Roll members by paying special tribute in each July poll-results issue.

Our first Honor Roll members, each of whom has won for five years or more, are Steve Gadd for studio and all-around drummer, Neil Peart in the rock drumming category, Buddy Rich for big band, David Garibaldi in the area of R&B/funk, Airto for Latin percussion, and Vic Firth in the field of classical. For further details on this new feature of the Readers Poll, refer to the ballot in this issue. Our congratulations to the six outstanding players who have been named to *Modern Drummer Magazine's* 1986 Honor Roll.

\*\*\*\*\*

Over the years, *Modern Drummer* has made a huge effort to cater to the needs of drummers in the various specialized areas of performance through our diversified column departments. However, one area that we have inadvertently neglected has been the presentation of information geared solely for the young or old beginner to intermediate-level drummer—the novice who is simply not equipped to jump in at the level of much of our current column material. Thus, we are happy to announce the creation of a brand-new *MD* department called *Basics*.

As the name implies, this new *MD* department will deal with the basics of drumming from a number of different aspects. It's here where we'll be touching upon everything from the basics of reading, coordination, and technique, to the initial selection of drums, cymbals, accessories, and electronics, all from a beginner's point of view. Once again, *Basics* has been designed not only for the young student, but rather for anyone at the very early stages of development. Our lead-off article, "Tips Toward Effective Practice" by Mike Myers, premieres in this issue. Hopefully, teachers, students, and even self-taught players will benefit from the information we plan to present through this department.

From *Basics* at the bottom level to the Honor Roll at the top, it appears as though *MD* has managed to cover both ends of the drumming spectrum in this March '86 issue. Enjoy.

RS

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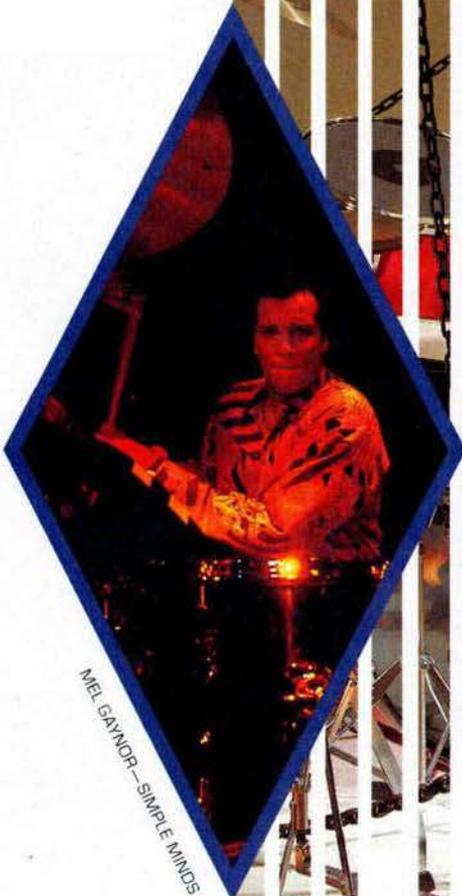
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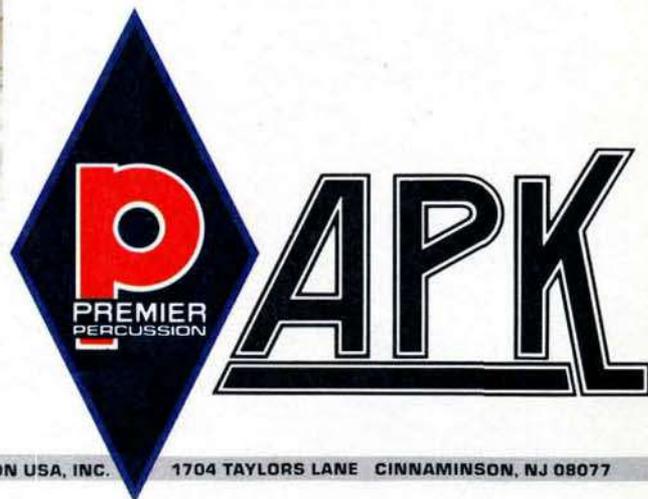


MEL GAYNOR—SIMPLE MINDS

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## TONY THOMPSON

I just got through reading your great cover story on my favorite drummer, Tony Thompson. [December, '85 *MD*] There isn't enough space to describe how influential and exciting Tony is to me. I haven't heard 2 and 4 sound so cool and so strong since John Bonham. Tony's playing is the most energetic drumming in pop music today, and I want to thank *MD* for ending the year with the best cover story ever!

Alan Cornett  
Silver Spring, MD

## MORE THAN A TIMEKEEPER

I've read your magazine for several years, and have noticed many professionals saying that their job in the band is to be the timekeeper above all. I think this is a sad thing. Keeping time is very important, but I feel that drums are made to enhance the melody. This is why drummers have so many sounds, textures, and colors in their instrument. Drums can inspire mood changes in music because of their sound or rhythm alone.

If musicality is to be second to keeping the band together, then the band doesn't need a drummer. It only needs a metronome. I think the drummer's job should be that of a musician above all, and *then* a good timekeeper. This way, it may be easier for all of us to think more musically.

Steve Korn  
Scottsdale, AZ

## GEORGE LAWRENCE STONE

Regarding the statement I made in the George Stone article [September, '85 *MD*] on "practicing tight," the following is what was intended: George had you practice paradiddles and ratamacues using two-inch and 12-inch stick levels. He wanted you to begin the rudiments with tight grips and snap the sticks up to the 12-inch level. He didn't want your grip loose enough to allow him to pull the sticks from your hands at this point.

As the speed increased, the grips would have to loosen in order to achieve any controlled bounce. George also had an isometric exercise for the left hand, where tight grips were used. He'd have you bear down with the index finger against the stick while pushing up with the ring finger.

The misunderstanding lies between "general" practicing and "specific" methods Stone used for the strengthening of hand muscles. I didn't mean to suggest that every time you open a book to practice, you should use tight grips. I hope this clears up the misunderstanding.

Les Harris, Sr.  
Boston, MA

## ISSUES KEEP COOL

I am a 17-year-old drummer who, like many others, values each and every issue of *MD* that comes each month. However, recently, I thought all was coming to an end. While I was practicing to tapes downstairs, a fire was emerging upstairs. I wasn't aware of it until I saw fire engines coming up the driveway. I couldn't realize what was happening to my bedroom and all the things in it, including every issue of *MD* I owned.

I don't know exactly what happened, but in the midst of the ruins I managed to save each issue. Some were torn, but none were burned. All I can say is, God does work in mysterious ways, and recovering my *MD*s brought a little light to a very dim day.

Dan Scott  
Shawano, WI

## RIDING THE ROLLER COASTER

I'm writing this letter to compliment Rick Van Horn on his article, "Riding The Roller Coaster" [Oct. '85 *MD*], which I think really tells it like it is. I've been playing music professionally since 1965, and I can surely attest that the "Roller Coaster" can indeed be very frustrating, if not downright brutal. I'm still riding my own coaster, but the dips don't seem to be as low as in my younger days.

I believe that doing what you want—playing music—should not be taken for granted. I almost lost that great privilege once, because of a serious motorcycle accident. Once again, thanks to Rick for this and many other good articles in a great magazine.

Randy Saunders  
Jackson, MI

## THERE'S NOTHING NEW . . .

It seems we can't read an issue of *MD* without some drum authority writing an article on the merits of matched grip. We are also aware of the drummers who do not cross their hands to play the hi-hat, and consider themselves innovative. Did we forget that, in the back of Henry Adler's Buddy Rich book, we were instructed to redo the book with matched grip? Did we forget that the preface to Jim Chapin's book told us not to cross our hands to play the hi-hat? Both of these books were published over 40 years ago! I know that *MD* has done good articles on both of these men, but in view of the fact that every serious drummer has studied the concepts of Jim Chapin and Henry Adler, I think a little more limelight is warranted.

Marc Andes  
Brooklyn, NY

## PAULA SPIRO

Congratulations to Anne Raso on her fine article, "Paula Spiro: Teaching The Beginning Female Drummer," in your December issue. I applaud Paula Spiro's efforts, and feel that she raises many good points for both female and male drummers. It is fantastic to see coverage of female drummers in this magazine! While I understand that the policy of *MD* is to cover innovative and outstanding drummers (regardless of gender), there is certainly much that can be done to promote acceptance, discourage prejudices, and change provincial attitudes toward female drummers. Women are good drummers. Fellow musicians can help us become innovative and outstanding drummers by creating an environment where we are *allowed* to succeed. With Raso's article, *Modern Drummer* has made a very positive contribution toward this goal, and I would like to see more of these supportive articles. Many thanks, and keep up the fine work!

Jill Reynolds  
Fort Collins, CO

*Editor's Note: The response to Anne Raso's profile of Paula Spiro was overwhelming, from both male and female drummers. Drummers wishing to contact Paula may write to her at 370 W. 35th St., New York, NY, 10001, or call (212) 239-8173.*

## IRISH ROCK

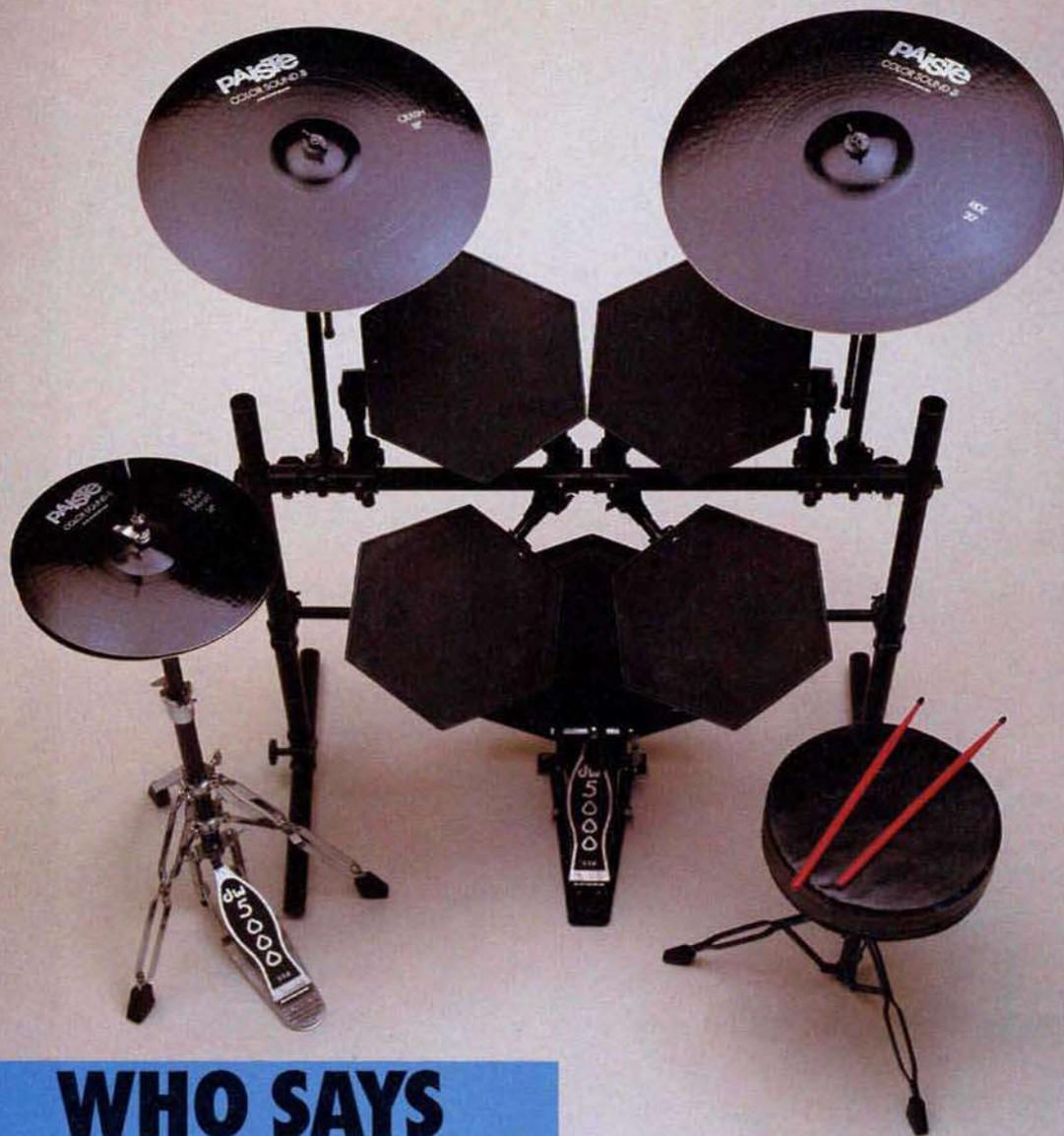
I wish to congratulate and compliment you on an excellent magazine. It's so complete and detailed that it's unbelievable. Here in Ireland—as you can appreciate—there are very few sources of information for rock drummers. However, let me say that you remedy that with such a definitive magazine.

Tom Hayden  
Dublin, Ireland

## MD COVER ART

An underlying impression, which struck the surface last month upon unwrapping my first subscription issue of *Modern Drummer*, has hit compellingly as I view the present issue: That is the outstanding cover art. Whether it be the sky slate smoky lavender blue abalone of December's Tony Thompson cover, the sunlight and subtlety of the Purdie cover in November, or, from October, the wheat grey ultramarine that graces the Chris Parker cover, *MD* radiates life, color, and composition unequalled. In fact, the layout throughout your magazine is surely in a superlative class of its own. Congratulations and thanks to David H. Creamer and his compatriots in visual aestheticism.

S. Tanya Kolson  
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You're going to be hearing a lot from **Mark Edwards**, who is one of heavy metal's important newcomers. Not only does he lead a band called Lion, whose first LP (produced by Ronnie Montrose) is due out soon, but Mark also has his own solo album out on Metal Blade Records.

"The solo record came about partly out of the frustration of the Lion album taking so long," Mark says. "Since half that band is British, we've had some difficulty with Immigration and such. Plus, I found myself in an interesting position where I knew a lot of great players who had gone on to do big things. Everyone was very supportive of what I was doing. I found myself in the position to do this project and have contributions from all these people who were more famous than myself," he says, referring to the fact that on *Code Of Honor* such musicians as Claude Schnell (Dio), Tim Bogert (Vanilla Fudge), and Eric Scott (Alice Cooper) play with Edwards. In fact, on a remake of a prior Cozy Powell hit, "Dance With The Devil," Gregg Bissonette plays electronic drums also.

"Gregg's being on the record is an interesting twist. I've known Gregg since back at North Texas, and he's always been real supportive of what I'm doing. I was really the only serious rock drummer there. Somehow this myth came about that, to be in jazz, you really have to work at it, play, and develop the craft, but rock 'n' roll drummers are just

bashing around. I think a lot of people are coming around to realize that it's a technical endeavor, and there is just as much artistic input as in jazz. You have to be good at it to get up there and do that. The funny thing about heavy metal is that it gets put down as being the least musical form there is, but as far as drummers are concerned, heavy metal is where you find the most technical and drumistic things happening in rock 'n' roll. Look at the difference between, say, drums for Bryan Adams and Van Halen.

"In Lion, I don't play a great deal of double bass. It's a very groove-oriented thing, like Power Station. That's one reason why I did so much stuff that was off the wall on my solo album. My left leg was in danger of falling off," he jokes. "The tracks are so uptempo and kind of outrageous in that way, but I still wanted to keep it musical at the same time. I'm young, I'm aggressive, and I think that was expressed in those tracks. As I grow and mature, that's something that will calm down a bit. Even on the next record, I intend to go for more mainstream grooves. This was a once-in-a-lifetime thing. Lion is my first love, though. I want to make music that people are going to know about. Unfortunately, doing things as a drummer, like my solo project, which is instrumental, is only going to appeal to a certain number of people." —*Robyn Flans*

**Gerry Brown** has been keeping busy while not on the road with Lionel Richie. In addition to East Coast clinics for Sabian and Remo, Gerry performed at the Percussive Arts Society Convention last November. "Ed Shaughnessy and I each did three songs with the Cal State Northridge big band. That was really nice for me. I imagine that some people are not familiar with the fact that I've done big band things in the past. That was an integral part of my training from high school and college. The PAS performance gave me the opportunity to showcase myself in another setting. It's always good to have a challenge." Early '86 projects for Gerry include a writing and recording collaboration with



Stanley Clarke, and rehearsals in May for a U.S. tour with Lionel, scheduled to begin in June. — *Rick Van Horn*



**Bill LaVorgna** is celebrating his tenth year with Liza Minelli. Until 1976, LaVorgna had been a very successful studio player, recording with the likes of the Four Seasons, the Happenings, the Toys, James Brown, and the Lovin' Spoonful, resulting in a long list of pop hits. His work also included jazz albums with such notables as Phil Woods and Gary Burton, and film scores such as *Midnight Cowboy* and *The Wiz*.

"I got pretty bored in the studio, and the record business changed drastically, to the point where self-contained groups became the thing," Bill says. "Also, when I was recording in the '60s and early

'70s, they didn't give nice credits like they do now, except when you did an album with Pat Williams and were featured on it. But for the most part, you could play Tuesday's parts on Friday, and nobody would know the difference. It gets pretty damn boring. I knew Liza from having done the Carnegie Hall album with her mama when I was young, so although I didn't really want to go on the road, I said I'd work ten days with her, and I've been with her ever since.

"Playing in the studio and playing live are completely different experiences. First of all, you have to play the piece from top to bottom every time, live. I think studio players are some of the better players in the world, but it got to the point where the brass players didn't play an eight-measure phrase anymore. They'd stand and play two bars, and punch in again. Live playing is so much more exciting."

Not only is Bill the drummer for Liza, but he is also the musical director in charge of conducting the band. "No matter what show you see, if there happens to be a rhythm section, the conductor can flag away all he wants, but the band is going to play what the drummer plays. There are a

*continued on next page*

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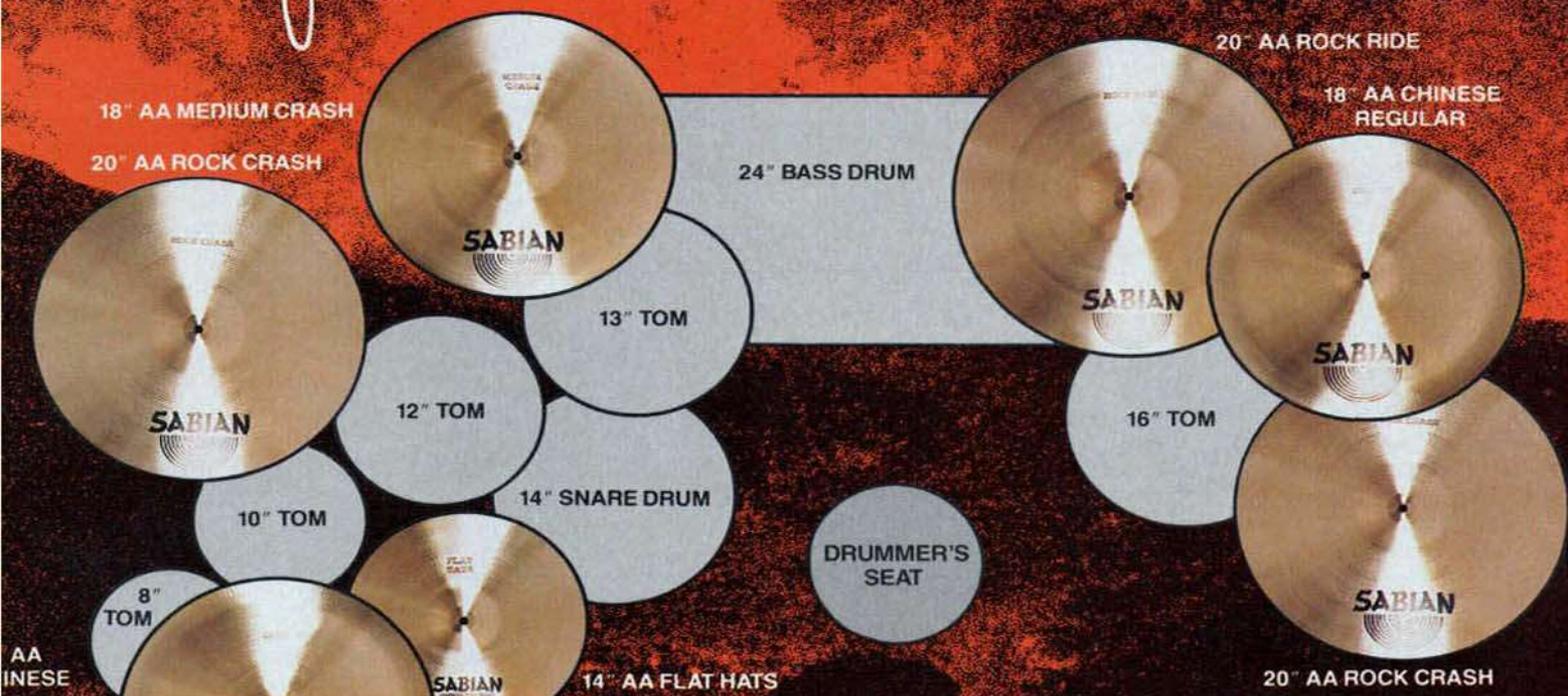
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*Vinny Appice*  
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billion arguments between conductors and drummers as to where the pulse lies. There's no argument in this case. When there's a rubato, meaning out of the meter, I conduct it and take them where I like. Then I drop my hand on the downbeat, and it's a super way to

conduct the show. It's just very hard physically until you have done it awhile, because in order to play drums, you need both hands and both feet. The sets are built so I am strategically located, and all the musicians in the band can see me at all times." — *Robyn Flans*

**Jeff Porcaro, Jim Keltner, Steve Jordan, and Lenny Castro** are all on one track for the new Toto LP. Porcaro can also be heard on Sergio Mendez's forthcoming album, as well as on albums by Lionel Richie and Dionne Warwick. Porcaro and **Rick Marotta** are on Donald Fagen tracks. Also in the Porcaro news department, he and Paul Jamieson were granted the U.S. and Canadian patent on the *Drum Rack*. **Jerry Marotta** has been working with Peter Case. **Andy Newmark** worked with Dan Fogelberg. Andy and **Russ Kunkel** are playing together on one track. Kunkel has been working with Jackson Browne. **John Robinson** did some work with Bob Seger, and he also did Peter Cetera's first solo album. **Steve Jordan** played on Neil Young's upcoming LP. **Doug Clifford** is working on his own project. **Matt Frenette** is on tour with Loverboy. **Mike Baird** did some work on Animation's current release, as well as a track on Peter Cetera's album, David Foster's solo LP, and the recent Smokey Robinson single. **Ricky Lawson** is on Jeffrey Osborne's latest release. **Jay Schellen** has been working on tracks for Lita Ford's upcoming project, as well as Stone Fury's latest LP. **Roxy Petrucci** is now with Vixen. **Jim Blair** is on Lisa Lopez's LP. **Larrie Londin** has been working with The Girls Next Door, Holly Dunn, Billy Crockett, Dan Seals, Ronnie Milsap, and Louise Mandrell. **Stu Nevitt** is working on a Shadowfax album due out in the spring. Percussionist **Bongo Bob Smith** has been working with Mark Isham, Narada Michael Walden, Charlie Peacock, Debora Iyall, and Sylvester. **Mel Gaynor** on drums and **Sue Hadjopoulos** on percussion with Simple Minds tour. **Mickey Curry** on a few tracks of new Elvis Costello record.

He is on Marshall Crenshaw's most recent release and four tracks of *Honeymoon Suite*. That was Curry also on Bryan Adams' Christmas song. Polygram recently sent out a press release pertaining to the soundtrack of *A Chorus Line: The Movie* that is worth reprinting: "Drummer 'Bad' **Steve Gadd** was among the top session players recruited for the album, and he was called upon to produce some last-minute heroics for the project. It seems the track containing the tap dance sequence for 'I Can Do That' was not up to the digital standards of the rest of the recording. The cast and most of the LP's participants had gone home by then, so Brooks Arthur (producer) put out an all-points bulletin to those left in the studio. Gadd coolly answered the call with a reminder that he was an ex-tap dancer, and once given the go-ahead, he ran out and picked up a pair of red tap shoes for his dancing LP debut! You might say Gadd traded in his sticks for clicks." **Dave Weckl** also on the *Chorus Line* soundtrack, in addition to his recent studio work with Michel Camillo and Chick Corea. Dave will tour with Corea next month. **Boo Boo McAfee** is recording with Atlanta. **Dave Mancini** on soundtracks of *Missing In Action*, *Invasion USA*, and *The Silver Bullet*. **Gina Schock** appears in Feargal Sharkey's video for the tune "A Good Heart." **Brent Brace** is currently touring with the Gene Krupa Orchestra. **Charles Petrus** was recently selected to be the drummer for Crush, a rock band created from the winners of a talent search conducted among high school students in Phoenix, Dallas, and Fort Worth. The band is being sponsored by Crush soda, a subsidiary of the Procter & Gamble Company. — *Robyn Flans*

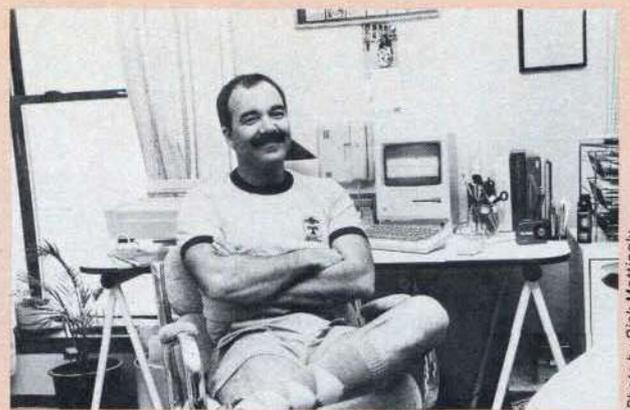


Photo by Rick Mattingly

It looks like it will be a good year for **Peter Erskine**. He began 1986 in L.A., where he recorded with Weather Report. "A couple of months before," Peter says, "I got a call from the Weather Report management, asking me to come out and work on the new recording, because Omar Hakim was busy with Sting and would only be able to record with Weather Report for a couple of days. I had been looking forward to working with Joe Zawinul again, and it felt like coming home."

Erskine feels that the time away from the group gave him a chance to mature a little bit and to bring something fresh into the relationship. "When I first joined the group," Peter explains, "I basically felt like a sideman. But on this record, I felt that I was participating on a different level. Zawinul even asked me to be coproducer of the album. So I was very involved in the record, and now we're talking about taking the band out."

So where does this leave Steps Ahead? "When Victor Bailey began working with Steps Ahead," Peter answers, "we knew that we were going to have to work around Weather Report's schedule, because no one was going to lure Victor away from Weather Report. So in terms of scheduling, we were already looking at that situation anyway. I phoned the guys in Steps and said, 'This is something I have to do. The atmosphere is very charged and very creative. It's like being with Hemingway in Paris or something like that.' "

Meanwhile, a new Steps Ahead album will be out

shortly, and the group will do some touring in the coming months. "All I can say about the Steps record," Peter says, "is that it's really great. The tunes are well thought-out, and the sound is very unique. A lot of the things that I've developed with Steps in regard to the sound of my instrument came in handy on the Weather Report album. So I see myself doing both projects, and bringing what I learn from one project to the other."

Yet another big event for Peter in 1986 is the publication of his drum book. "It started originally as a series of articles I did for a Japanese jazz magazine," Peter says. "Then, I hooked up with a guy named John Cerullo, who has a company called 21st Century Publications. I believe my book fills a niche in the study of the instrument, in that it addresses basic timekeeping and conceptual musical applications in a manner that I know works, based on the teaching I've done. So in spite of the jokes about 'Just what the world needs: another drum book,' I really feel that my book helps fill a gap in the available drum material."

In addition to the records with Steps Ahead and Weather Report, Peter also recently recorded two albums on the ECM label: one with the band Bass Desires, with Marc Johnson, John Scofield, and Bill Frisell; and one with the John Abercrombie Trio. "I hope to do some playing with all four groups during the coming year," Peter says, "and to do some composing when I'm not busy with other stuff, because I really enjoy that." — *Rick Mattingly*

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## SIMON PHILLIPS



Q. On Michael Rutherford's first solo album, *Small Creep's Day*, you played a double-bass time feel during the latter portion of the title track, which, when written out, looks something like this:



My question is, on a pattern such as this, when you are riding with your left hand, do you begin the double-bass pattern with your right or your left foot? Currently, I am more comfortable starting the pattern with my left foot, but feel awkward when playing a cymbal crash on the downbeat of any given measure, because that note is played with my left foot.

Cliff Arthur  
Miami, FL

A. I naturally tend to lead with my left foot, even if I am riding with my right hand. I quite agree that it is uncomfortable either leading with the right foot or playing accents with the left foot. My philosophy is: "If you can't do it, do it." Just get used to playing accents on that left foot, and when you play a rhythm like "Small Creep's Day," try leading with your right foot. It's really a question of balance between the two sides of you.

## TERRYBOZZIO

Q. Could you explain in more detail the technique you use when playing on hard surfaces (i.e., electronic drumpads), which you mentioned in your December, 1984 *MD* interview? Also, would you add any other advice on how you deal with tension when playing?

Tony Lamberti  
Des Moines, IA

A. The basic concept for playing on hard surfaces is a combination of relaxing the grip of the stick upon impact and snapping back with the wrist to accelerate the rebound action. Keep in mind that this is a very intricate and complex technique, which takes hours of careful study

and practice to master with the guidance of a teacher who has been trained in these techniques. By no means is the above explanation all one needs, because this is a case in which a little knowledge could do more damage than help.

Regarding dealing with tension, I find that a good warm-up of 20 minutes or so before playing, using rudiments or Stick Control exercises, helps me. However, you should find your own way, as some drummers do physical exercises such as calisthenics, while others use yoga or meditation to release tension before playing. The more you play, practice, and perform, the more in condition your mind and muscles will become, and the less tension you will have while playing.

## JOE FRANCO

Q. Could you please give some suggestions on developing endurance for double-bass playing? I would like to know if you have any specific exercises that you work on for that purpose. Also, what are your thoughts on pedal tensioning, seat height, etc.? Your double-bass playing is exceptional, and any pointers you can give would be appreciated.

Will Fredericks  
Lincoln Park, NJ

A. If you're looking strictly for an endurance exercise, I'd suggest practicing a single-stroke roll. It's the most straightforward way of giving each foot an equal workout. You can start by playing a single-stroke double-bass roll, together with a simple ride and snare pattern, working to a metronome or a record. By marking the tempo and how long you keep it, you can measure your progress. Practice

at different tempos—not just your peak tempo. This will help you to develop better control as well as endurance.

To make things more challenging, once your double-bass roll is locked in with a ride and snare pattern, try soloing over it. For example, you might try playing paradiddle variations over a single-stroke double-bass roll. Practicing things like this will develop independence as well as endurance, and will keep your practice interesting. You'll be concentrating more on locking in with your hands and feet. Try to establish a daily workout, and stay with it. As your endurance improves, so should the length of your workout.

In regard to your other questions, I keep my pedal tension and bass drum heads pretty loose, and I sit as low as most drum seats go. But these are things that should be adjusted for your own comfort.

## BERNARD PURDIE



Q. In the November, 1985 issue of *MD*, you stated, "If you learn to play flat-footed, it's easy to come up on your toes when necessary. If you learn to

play on your toes, there's no place else for you to go." First, I want to say that, if a guy like you says that I should play flat-footed, I'm going to! But I do have a problem. I'm a pretty small guy, so when I play flat-footed at fast tempos on my 20" bass drum, it's really not loud enough for my usual situation. I use a wood beater and very little dampening in the bass drum itself. Can you give me some advice?

Mike Balistreri  
Dousman, WI

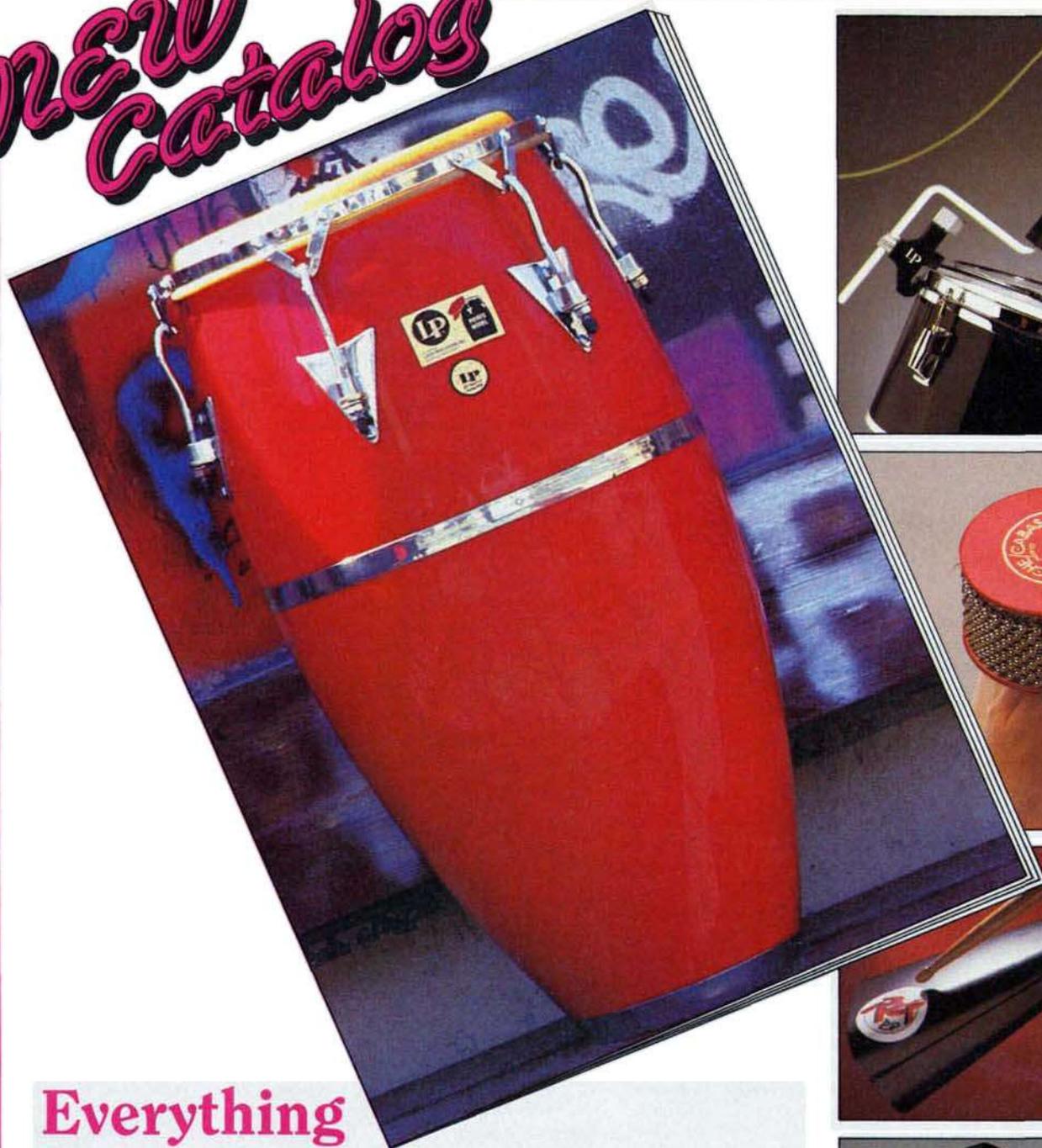
A. I think it's great that you're going to try playing flat-footed, and I do understand your volume problem. Did you ever think of playing half as many beats, when playing at a faster

tempo?

Using a wooden beater does not solve the problem. A felt beater would be better, if you leave both heads on the drum and use a felt damper (or dampers) on the outside, instead of damping on the inside. Using felt dampers (or blankets or pillows) inside the drum means cutting the volume. Using felt dampers on the outside will increase your volume and still give you depth. Where you place the felt dampers is just as important—but that's up to you to experiment with. I recommend a felt strip about six inches from the bottom of the drum.



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# IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. I am a senior in high school and have been playing drums for seven years. I have previously played in rock bands, but I just ran across them by luck. I am in the middle of forming a new band, but I'm having trouble finding good musicians. Can you give me some ideas on where or how I could look?  
J.B.

Arlington, OH

A. A lot depends on what level of the business you are in, and what type of musicians you are seeking. If you are looking for other young, semipro or amateur musicians, you might check the bulletin boards of local music stores and record shops. Also, check the musical section of the classified ads in your local paper, and especially in any music or entertainment specialty paper that might exist in your area. You might also consider placing a "wanted" notice in all of the places mentioned above. In addition, you can go to clubs or dances where other bands are playing, and ask the musicians in those bands for referrals to other musicians who might be free. Put the word out through music store employees, club managers, and anyone connected with the local entertainment scene that you are trying to put something together.

On a more professional level, if you are contemplating joining the musicians union (the A. F. of M.) or are already a member, you can contact the office of the nearest union local. They can put you in touch with other union musicians. There are also several musicians referral services across the country, some of which advertise in MD's Drum Market classifieds. These organizations generally charge some sort of fee to put you in touch with other players. Be sure to get complete information before enlisting their services.

Q. I recently purchased a Tama twin beater pedal to fit on my electronic bass drum. My problem is that, instead of having the remote pedal (the one without a beater) on the left, I would like it to extend to the right side. Is there a simple way to modify this, or is there another manufacturer who makes a double pedal that goes to the right?

J.T.

Sandy, VT

A. Although your existing Tama pedal cannot be modified, Tama does make a version for left-handed players that would suit your purposes. It's the 6945L double pedal. A spokesman for Tama suggests that you get in touch with your dealer, who might be willing to arrange a swap for you. Additionally, both of Drum Workshop's double pedals (the 5002 and a model specifically designed to clamp onto electronic bass drums called the 5002DE) come in left-handed models.

Q. I have a problem when I clean my cymbals. I use Slobeat powder and cold water. I do the usual procedure (wet the cymbal, apply the cleaner, rub with the grooves, etc.), but after I clean the bottom side (for example), by the time I finish the top side, I see some yellow stains starting to appear on the bottom. The only way I solve this is by re-rinsing and quickly towel drying the cymbal. Not only is it clumsy, but it's also tiring. I asked another drummer about this problem, and he said it could be the chemical agent in the Slobeat polish, the water temperature, or some other variable. I'm confused. Is there anything I can do to solve this problem? Additionally, the yellowing is only evident on my Zildjian cymbals, and not on my Paistes. Is there a difference in their coatings?

M.J.

Los Angeles, CA

A. We checked with Mike Stobie, President of Slobeat Percussion, who commented, "I've heard about this problem once or twice, although I've never been able to duplicate it myself. My only comment is that it sounds like you aren't rinsing the cymbals enough to begin with. The chemical in Slobeat polish is a bleach, and we don't have that much in there. Even so, the polish itself is very concentrated, so a little goes a long way. If you don't have a really filthy cymbal, you don't need to use very much. You can sprinkle it on a wet sponge, rather than on the cymbal, in order to prevent the

bleaching agent from working in an uneven manner when it's sprinkled on a wet cymbal. You also need to begin the "scrubbing" process immediately after you apply the cleaner to the cymbal. Don't let the powder simply sit on a wet cymbal. I would further suggest that you use a different sponge for the cleaning and the final rinse. In other words, use a sponge that has had no cleaner on it at all to rinse the cymbals. Use warm water—not cold, not hot—to rinse the cymbals, and then dry them. As for it being a tedious chore to rinse and dry the cymbals, I'm afraid that that's part of cleaning; any cleaning product will require some effort."

As for a difference between the "coating" on a Zildjian versus a Paiste cymbal, Zildjians are not coated at all, while a new Paiste cymbal comes with a special wax coating, which is designed to repel tarnish and fingerprints. It's very possible that, if your Paiste cymbals still have the coating intact (it does wear off eventually), it may be repelling the cleaning solution, and thus preventing the yellowing you are currently experiencing.

Q. I recently purchased a 16" cymbal at a garage sale. The name "Ludwig" is stamped on it, along with the Paiste name and insignia. It has four holes, equally spaced (which I presume were for rivets that are no longer there). I would like to know how old this cymbal is, if it is worth anything, and if the line is still made.

K.H.

Culver City, CA

A. According to Paiste's Steve Ettleson, the Ludwig/Paiste cymbals were made during a period from 1963 through 1967. Thus, they do not have any particular antique or collectible value. However, any cymbal's resale value on today's market is determined by its condition and sound. If your cymbal looks and sounds good, you might get a good price for it on that basis.

Q. On every metal-shell snare drum I've ever seen, the drum has had no paint or coloring on the shell. Why not? It seems to me that, if you can paint cymbal stands and other hardware black, you could do the same on a snare. D.F.

Phoenix, AZ

A. It is, of course, possible to apply paint to a metal-shell snare drum. The question really is, would it be desirable? Two major factors must be considered before answering that question: (1) cosmetic appeal and durability; and (2) acoustics.

Most metal-shell snares are in fact plated, and many are then coated with a protective clear lacquer. "Chrome" snares are generally steel shells plated with a combination of copper, nickel, and chromium. Chromium itself is clear; it basically gives a glossy shine to the nickel layer underneath, as well as providing protection against scratches and chipping. There is also something known as "black chrome," which is a different plating process by which chromium is applied over a black anodized surface, resulting in a shiny, black finish. The problem with applying any form of coloring material—from a cosmetic point of view—is that there is no paint, no matter how hard, that is as durable or as resistant to scratches as is chrome plating. It is for this reason, primarily, that drum manufacturers have stayed away from paint finishes on their metal snares.

From a purely acoustic point of view, the effect of layers of paint would probably vary with the type of drum. Don Lombardi, whose company, Drum Workshop, Inc., makes both wood- and brass-shell snares, gave us the following information. "A 'metal-shell' drum—which usually refers to a steel shell plated with chrome—is generally considered to have less natural resonance than a solid brass shell, and thus would tend to be affected less by layers of paint than would a brass shell. But the resonance of both would be reduced by the number of layers that would be necessary to achieve a deep, durable painted finish. Why go to the expense of having a steel or brass shell in the first place, if you are going to apply a finish that will detract from the shell's natural sound?"

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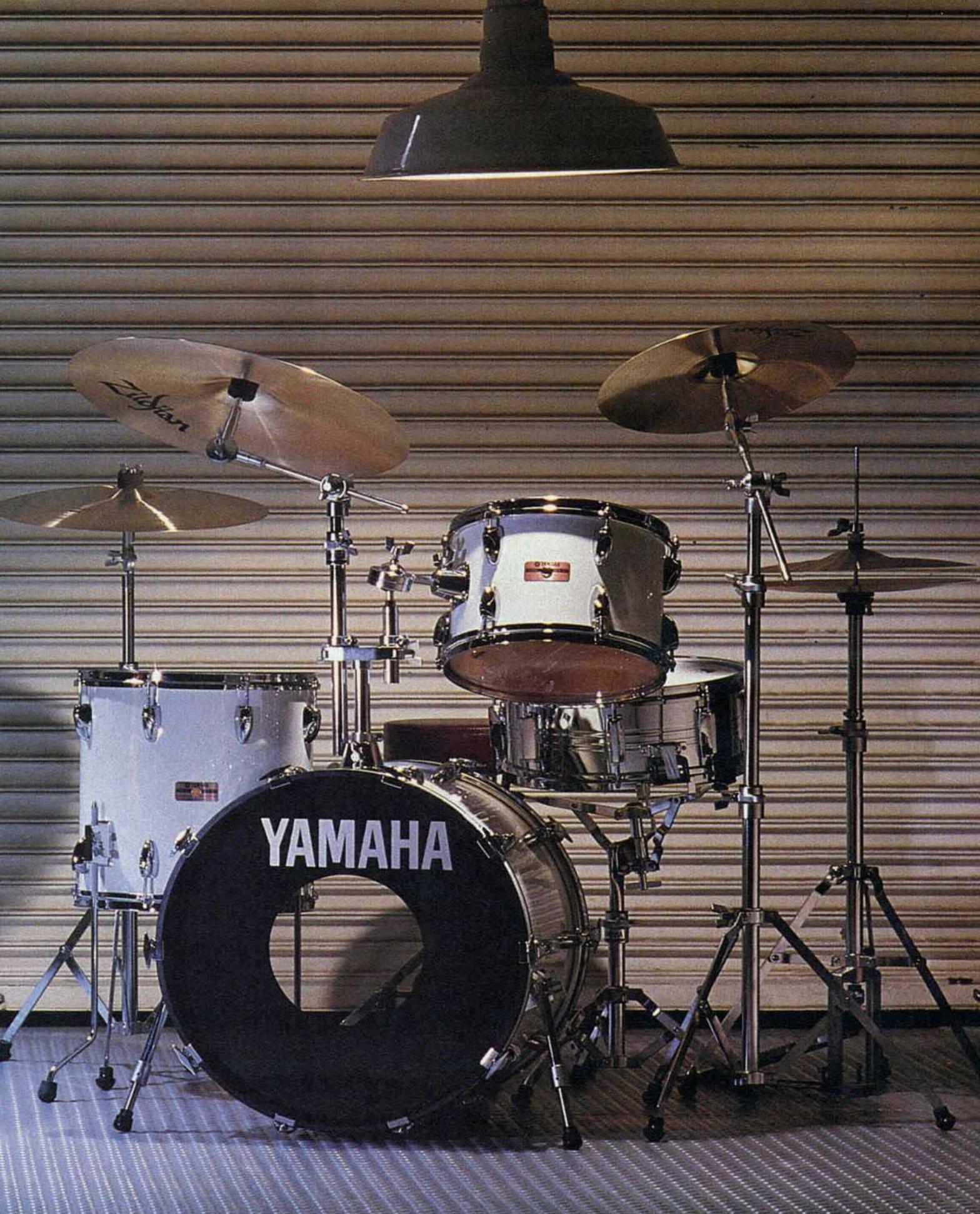
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jerry m



by Robyn Flans

# Marotta

*I*F Jerry Marotta had his way, we'd still be doing this interview. That's not because Jerry's particularly enamored of interviews, but to continue means to never conclude. He'd much rather keep experimenting and trying to obtain the perfect interview than allow me to write it. But that shouldn't have surprised me, for that's how Jerry is in the studio: willing to try anything and explore every option.

It's true that portions of many musicians' personalities can be detected through the way they approach and play their instruments. Jerry Marotta becomes visible through his philosophies and his work. If you listen to his tracks with Hall & Oates, Joan Armatrading, Tears For Fears, and his mainstay Peter Gabriel, you can uncover many facets of him that his interview should confirm.

One thing is certain! Jerry's talent is in great abundance. If Jerry was ever concerned that he would forever be known as drummer Rick Marotta's little brother, those fears should have been put aside long ago. At 29, he is not only one of the most revered drum innovators of current times, but he is also a respected saxophone player, keyboard player, and singer, doing all of these things constantly on record. Now Jerry has entered production, having his own studio in Long Island City, New York, called Wigtown. Recently, he produced the debut record of a German band called 12 Drummers Drumming. No matter what he does, Jerry excels at it.

Most people are unaware of the warm, communicative, sensitive, and deep side of Jerry Marotta. There seems to be a mystique surrounding him, and little is known about him. During a recent trip to L.A., Jerry sat down with me, and we talked for hours.

Photo by Leslie Burke; Drumhead art by Robert Harding; Production Direction by Lorraine Schaffer

**RF:** What made you decide to become a drummer?

**JM:** Actually, originally I didn't think about being a drummer. I took saxophone lessons when I was very young. It sounds strange, but really, if it weren't for Vietnam, Rick and I would not have been drummers. Rick had a friend who was drafted. His friend had a drumset, and Rick told him he'd take care of it for him. The drums went up into the attic of our house, and they certainly got a lot of use. Rick was either just finishing high school or in his first year of college, and I was about ten. That's really how the whole thing started. We had this little record player, and we just played to records.

My brother got very good, very fast. By the time his friend got back from Vietnam two years later, Rick was already in a band with a brand-new drumset. The old drumset was moved to my part of the attic, and finally, I was playing with musicians around school. I had no aspirations to become a professional musician, though. I didn't even know what a

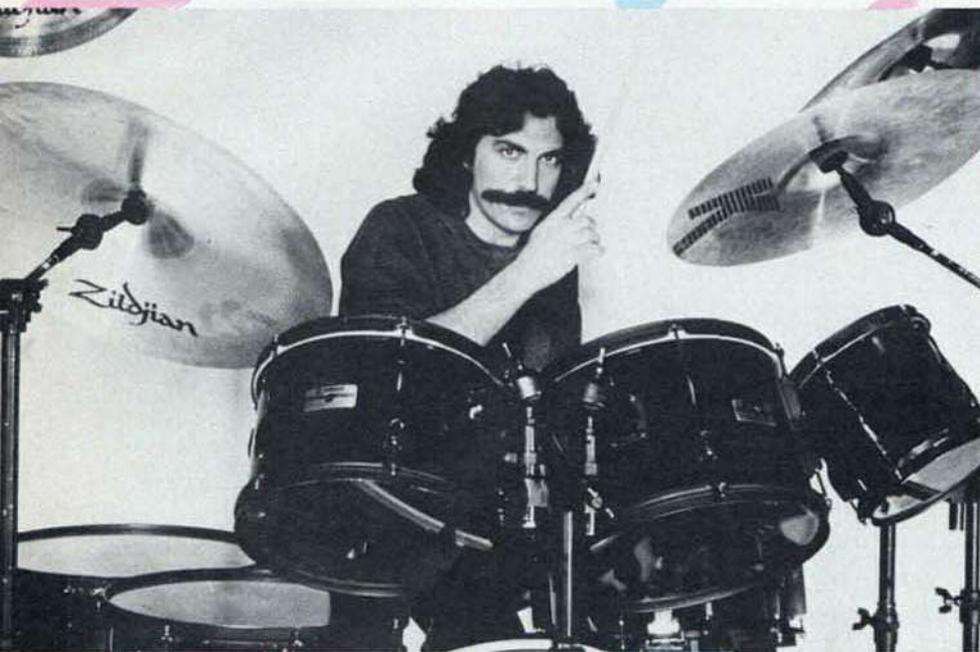


Photo by Leslie Burke

professional musician was when I was 12. I wasn't aware that that was an option. Of course, at that age, I wasn't thinking of becoming anything.

**RF:** So what changed?

**JM:** As I got older, I realized more and more that I enjoyed playing drums, and as my brother became successful, I realized more and more that you could make money playing drums. I just saw what was going on with Rick's career.

My brother took a lot of stick from my parents, because they didn't want him to be a musician at all. They wanted us to become doctors or lawyers, which we wouldn't have become anyway. They were very tough on my brother and gave him a lot of trouble until he started making a really good living. Then they changed their tune.

My brother really paved the way for me. He definitely got his ass kicked a number of times for me and for himself. I think my parents knew it was out of hand by the time I was ready to make the decision. My parents and I have a fantastic relationship, and I think that they believed in me a lot. They believed that I would be good at whatever I felt I wanted to do, and it would be okay. They believed in my ability to make decisions.

**RF:** Was there any rivalry when you were growing up together?

**JM:** Not at all, because we were so far apart in age. My brother was really working by the time he was 22 or 23, four or five years after he started playing the drums. He was very happening. When he was 24, I was 16 and certainly not a threat to him. I was as into playing soccer as I was into playing drums. I had a job, I was into sports, and I was a very well-rounded child.

**RF:** It's often difficult for two people who are close to one another to be in the same business. For two brothers, each one must have experienced busier or more successful times than the other in his career. How did that affect your relationship?

**JM:** To be successful as a musician, you have to be competitive. It's all competitive, but then again, so is life.

**RF:** Are you competitive by nature, or do you think this business has made you competitive?

**JM:** I think by nature I am very competitive, so much so that I play down rivalry because I think I'm more competitive than a lot of people and it makes me feel uncomfortable. I've always done well at everything I've ever done, and it comes easily.

Both my brothers are musicians—my brother Tom is a bass player—and that can create a problem, but I don't feel competitive with Rick. If there's any difficulty between me and my brother, I bow out. We don't get in each other's way, and we don't do one another's gigs. Rick plays with Linda Ronstadt, and I play with Peter Gabriel. The two just don't go together. When we were growing up, I was always Rick Marotta's little brother, because he was very successful when I was just a kid. Then, I developed my thing. I got my own jobs and my career started happening. Since then, I've never really had a problem with it. I guess you'd have to ask Rick how he feels about it. We're supportive of one another. If there was ever a competition between us, now it's worse than it's ever been. I guess my brother and I are each going through our own stage right now. We've always had our differences. We see each other and talk to each other all of the time, but we argue most of the time. We bug each other a lot.

**RF:** And yet, you're close.

**JM:** We have to be. We have the same mother and father.

**RF:** So? There are lots of siblings who aren't close.

**JM:** You're right, but somehow we are. We'll have to see what happens in the future. I've always felt that Rick's a much better player than I am, anyway. He's much more of a drummer than I am.

**RF:** Why do you say that?

**JM:** He just is. I don't compare myself to him. I don't think we're in the same league. He's a better drummer. There's no doubt about that. I don't feel bad about that or uncomfortable. There are things I may be better at. He's a great drummer, though. He's influenced so many players, and I don't look at myself as being that way. I don't feel that other musicians would be influenced by the way I play drums. I think my brother has been doing these things for so long and really has been creating a style

**"DON'T GET BOGGED DOWN WITH THE IDEA THAT YOU HAVE TO BE ST EVE GADD OR THAT YOU HAVE TO HAVE TONS OF TRAINING TO EVER WORK."**

that nobody else had.

**RF:** Here your brother was playing for Linda Ronstadt, which is a completely different style from what you ended up going into. However, there is a similarity between you and Rick. There's a kind of behind-the-beat feel that both of you have.

**JM:** There are similarities because I learned how to play from listening to my brother. I continue to love the way Rick plays. I think he is in a class of his own with a small group of people. There are a lot of drummers out

there, but not a lot of drummers like my brother.

**RF:** If you learned a lot from listening to him play, why didn't you go into the same kind of thing as he did?

**JM:** I tried to and I had every intention of doing that, but I started working with Gabriel. That had an incredible effect on my style, because I tried all sorts of different things. It was hard at first, because Pete writes these songs that you can play very conventionally—funky or rock—and he made me understand that, if we do it that way, it's going to sound like everything else. That's what is great about Peter. Working with Peter can almost be like a group therapy session, where these sessions go on for hours and hours, breaking down people's defenses—where you exhaust people and they start to drop their guard. You're trying to get beyond the surface and layers of years of conditioning. We get pissed off a lot and crazed working with Pete. I think that helped me to take a left turn, stylewise.

**RF:** When I suggested that there were similarities between you and Rick in your playing, you agreed. What do you see as the similarities?

**JM:** My brother plays rings around me, first of all, so that's not similar. I honestly think that. I'm not trying to stroke my brother.

**RF:** Don't you see this as a lack of confidence?

**JM:** No, not at all. I know exactly what I'm talking about. I don't think I'm *not* good. I just think my brother is *that* good. I think I'm less interested in the drums, also.

**RF:** What exactly do you mean by that?

**JM:** I love the drums and that's what I play, but I really don't consider myself just a drummer. Drums are a vehicle for me to participate in a conversation. I think about songs, the singer, and all of it. I could just as easily be playing guitar or keyboards, and I think I'd be just as happy, but it was fate that I became a drummer.

**RF:** Seriously, why did you even choose to play the drums when you were already playing sax?

**JM:** I don't know why. I think the drums may have been a better release for a ten year old than a saxophone. You had to sit still to play the saxophone. What I loved about the drums was that you could practice and still carry on an argument with your mother at the same time.

**RF:** In your opinion, what are the attributes of a great drummer?

**JM:** I think the attributes of a good drummer would really be the attributes of any good musician. This is a hard question for me to answer because I never sat and analyzed what it takes to be a good drummer. I have never premeditated anything about my life or anything I do. I think first and foremost in terms of ideas, really, with a capital "I." Chops don't mean anything to me. Most of the musicians I love play like they don't know how to play their instruments. I suppose it's good to know how to play, but



Photo by Leslie Burke

don't get bogged down with the idea that you have to be Steve Gadd or that you have to have tons of training to ever work. In England, I work with a lot of people who do not know how to play at all. I'm not sure why that is.

**RF:** It might be because a lot of musicians over there have never had any training. Have you ever had any formal training?

**JM:** No, never.

**RF:** So how did you get so good?

**JM:** Probably because I never learned someone else's bad habits. I just listened to records and copied what I heard.

**RF:** What records were you listening and playing to?

**JM:** Sam & Dave, Otis Redding, James Brown—soul records, Stax, Memphis, Motown. I don't even know who played on some of those records. This was when I was ten. I wasn't into rock at all.

**RF:** In retrospect, are there things you wished you had learned, or do you feel completely content with the way you learned?

**JM:** I'm happy with the way I learned. It's hard for me to talk about formal training because I haven't had it, although I did study the saxophone. With drums, I would go as far as I possibly could without being formally trained. I never had a lesson to learn. Sometimes that becomes a *limitation* to me. I did as much as I could and never felt the pressure about practicing, so I practiced a lot and I enjoyed it. Now, I do wish I could do more and had more of a vocabulary on the drums to draw from. It's one of those ques-

tions I could spend the rest of my life debating with myself. If I had more ability, would that make me a different kind of player? Would I not play the way I do? I'm not a very flashy player at all, not having those chops.

**RF:** That's one of your assets.

**JM:** It is. That made me concentrate a lot more on being solid, just supporting the song, and not being a virtuoso. When I was younger and I did club dates in a piano trio with a singer, they used to love me because I never played very much. I never got in the way, and they loved

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## "YOUR ONLY CONCERN MUST BE DOING WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING, NOT THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HOW TO WORK WITH THE ARTIST, PRODUCER, OR THE ENGINEER."

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that.

**RF:** Are there drummers who fit your definition of great?

**JM:** Jim Keltner, who is a very unconventional player. When I listen to him play, I don't know what the heck he's doing, but it's great. When I was growing up, I liked Keltner's playing and Russ Kunkel's. Then there are other types of people like John Tirabasso who used to play with Warren Marsh. I used to listen to a lot of jazz when I was growing up. Recently, I've heard this guy Steve Jansen, who is a good drummer from England. He used to play with a group called Japan. He's the brother of an artist I like a lot, David Sylvian. I also like the guy from Tears For Fears, Manny Elias. As drummers, we're very similar in approach, and I hope we'll do a project together one of these days.

The dancer George Ballanchine has been more of an influence on me than have most drummers. He is probably the most famous classical choreographer of modern times, and he has been an inspiration to me because he has had a very different approach to a very conventional thing, rather than just conforming. Seeing something like *The Four Temperaments*, which is a ballet that Ballanchine choreographed, I think, in the 1930s, is more influential to me than other players. Van Gogh is an influence. Mark Rothco is another example. What I try to do with my playing is what those guys have done with what they do. I think dance is the purest

*Photo by Leslie Burke*



expression of one's feelings, because it's what people do with their own bodies. They don't need anything but themselves to create that. After that comes painting and then music.

**RF:** So back to your life, what would you consider your big break? Was that Orleans?

**JM:** Orleans was certainly a big break. I had been out of high school for about a year and a half. Orleans was great because they were my favorite band at the time, so it was like being asked to be in the Beatles. I loved them. They were the hottest playing band. They were funky, white rock 'n' rollers, and I think we all had the same musical influences.

**RF:** How did you get the gig with them?

**JM:** They were auditioning drummers, and I had been working up near Woodstock, in Bearsville. It was 1975, and my brother was producing this project with a girl named Allee Willis, and John Hall was somewhere around the studio. He spoke to my brother, and the next thing I knew, I had an audition to play with them, which I was excited and very nervous about.

**RF:** What did you have to do in the audition?

**JM:** They had been rehearsing in a barn in Bearsville. They had all the equipment set up and we just played. We played some new stuff that I wouldn't have heard, to get an idea of what I'd be like playing on something I hadn't heard before, and it was great. Of course, there was another drummer in the group, Wells Kelly, so there were going to be two drummers. I didn't like the idea of having two drummers, and I still don't like it, really, although, the two of us playing together was okay. It wasn't great, but it was great to have two drummers and both of us were able to play other instruments, because Wells was a very good musician. He played keyboards and guitar, and he sang. Everybody in that band was a multi-instrumentalist and played everything well. On some songs we played double drums and it was kind of fun, but we always sort of got in each other's way. Wells was much more of a personality player, and I would inhibit him from doing whatever he wanted to do. I'm much more of a straight-ahead solid player, and he had much more of a style than I do. He was a great player, especially back when I heard those first Orleans records. I hadn't heard anybody play like him.

**RF:** Was Orleans your first recording experience?

**JM:** I had done a little recording before but not much. That was certainly my first recording experience with a band. We did a song called "Still The One," which was a big hit, and I played drums on that. It was exciting to have done that at the age of 19.

**RF:** What happened after the two years you were in the band?

**JM:** John Hall quit the band. It's really a shame, because I think that, if the band had stayed together, it would have continued to be a very popular band. When the band was first formed, John was the only writer, but all of a sudden, Larry Hoppen and Wells were writing, and even I was trying to throw in a song or two. It just flipped John out, because he wanted to have eight or nine on the record. So, John Hall just called everybody and said he was quitting the band. I spoke to him at the MUSE concert a few years after that, and I asked

him about it. He got tearful when he was thinking about that time, and he told me that, when he called everybody, I was the only person who tried to talk him out of quitting the band. He said that everybody else kind of wanted him to leave.

About a month after the band broke up, I came out to L.A. just to relax and visit my brother, who was working out here. I was only out a couple of weeks, and I was asked about doing a Peter Gabriel gig. It was in the fall of '77 that I started working with Peter. I didn't know who he was. I had never heard of Genesis or Peter Gabriel. But I listened to his first solo record.

**RF:** What did you think of it?

**JM:** I love that record. That's my favorite Gabriel album. I didn't know where he was coming from, though. I had never heard anything like it before. I had no way to categorize what I was listening to. I had been listening to the Doobie Brothers, and then I heard a barber shop quartet with a tuba intro. I really just did it for the job. There wasn't anything tremendously artistic about it. It was just a job, and it paid a lot more money than any job I had ever had before. Peter had listened to a record I was on. I think it was an Orleans record, but I have a funny feeling that he listened to a record I hadn't even played on. Some other drummer out there should have gotten that gig. So they flew me to England.

**RF:** As you said, the music is very different, so what do you feel is needed in the Gabriel gig from the drummer?

**JM:** It's always very different, even unto itself. Peter never does the same thing twice, although now he's settled into more of a groove, I guess, than before. The first four albums were very different from one another, and I imagine this new album will be very different from them. I don't know much about the new album because I didn't work all that much on it. I think Stewart Copeland played on a couple of tracks, and a French drummer played on some of it. I played on as much of it as I could, but when Peter was recording that record, I was working on the Paul McCartney album.

A lot of patience is required in the Gabriel gig and a good, solid croquet mallet. We actually spend as much time playing croquet or Risk as we do working. He's usually pretty untogether about what he's doing. Then there are all sorts of equipment problems. It's gotten a lot better than it ever was, because he's got his studio more together now, but he's still very unsure about specifics. He gets these vague ideas for a concept for a song or a drum pattern, and that's the whole song. That's what we have to work with. There's a lot of input on everybody's part. I enjoy having that input. There's always the idea of trying to do something different with Pete, which opens up a big area for a player, like doing this thing with no cymbals. I don't know how many players could handle that. Just take all your cymbals away and play. That was on the third Gabriel album.

**RF:** Why did that come about, and how did you feel about it?

**JM:** I think it made a lot of sense to do that, because basically, you have your drums, which sound a certain way, and then you have these metal crash things that don't sound anything like your drums. I guess the way I look at it is as if you were trying to record a voice and a guitar solo with the same microphone on the same track. You'd never do that. What we wanted to do was pull out those unexpected crashes. We wanted to



Photo by Leslie Burke

set up the drums in a room and get this incredible sound based on drums, not on cymbals. We never thought, "We'll never put cymbals on here." We just thought, "Let's not hit them right now and wait for a separate track." As we went through the record, we felt less and less that we wanted to have them, and it worked. It made a lot of sense, and I do that a lot now. Being able to go with things like that is important in the Gabriel situation. When Tony Levin first brought the Chapman *Stick* around, he was having enough trouble just making sense of the instrument, and Peter came in one day with all these thimbles. He wanted Tony to put thimbles on all his fingers to play the *Stick*. Enter patience. On this past record, Tony and I did some takes where Tony fingered the bass, and I played the sticks against the bridge of his bass. That was already done about 40 years ago by Gene Krupa, where he actually played sticks against the strings of an upright bass while the bass player fingered the bass. That's the wonderful thing about playing with Peter, which makes me a bad sideman when I work with other people. I like to set stuff up around the drumkit—it could be anything—as if I'm not going to use it, and then during a take, I'll take a shot at something.

**RF:** Like what?

**JM:** Anything! Snares lying on the side, chairs, producers—anything. I like doing that kind of stuff. It's not miked up, and nobody's expecting it. It drives engineers crazy.

**RF:** Do you recall any tracks where you did stuff like that?

**JM:** Sure. We did a song with Peter called "Games Without Frontiers," which was a pretty big hit. We must have recorded one full reel of tape where we did this song in six minutes, which left nine minutes of insanity. We started banging snare drums together, and I was throwing things around the studio. I held an

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MARY  
" SMITT  
SMITH

Photo by Laura Friedman

WIN  
"Y"

# drum history

in

# transition

by  
Chip  
Stem

**W**HILE it is perhaps a touch premature to bestow upon Marvin "Smitty" Smith the historical mantle of greatness, it's readily accepted by the musicians and fans who've seen him in action that a talent like his flashes across the sky only a few times in a generation. When Roy Haynes lovingly dubbed him "Mah-velous Marvin" during singer Jon Hendricks' gig at Manhattan's Blue Note jazz club, and urged Smith to sit in with his ex-employer, there were no arguments to be heard. Clearly, the torch was being passed to a new champion.

Stories about Smitty's remarkable stature preceded our first experiences—particularly drum connoisseur Stanley Crouch's laudatory storm warnings in his Village Voice column—but nothing prepared us for his epic voyages with bassist Dave Holland's daring quintet at Sweet Basil. Affable, gregarious, and inquisitive, Smitty projected the kind of radiant enthusiasm and love (of people and music) off the bandstand that is the visible beacon of a soul at peace with himself—and confident in his craft. Seated behind his Rogers drumset and his array of percussion effects, Smitty became a lightning rod for the band's diverse energies, roaring through the music as if he'd written it himself—all this after only one brief rehearsal. But as a beaming Dave Holland noted admiringly after the first set, "That's all he needs." (This comment came from a man noted for his ability to sight-read anything down cold and then play it as if his life depended on it.) Smitty's concept was oceanic: a constant rolling and crashing of the waves in the form of cresting tom-toms and whirlpools of snare drum foam; thundering bass drum accents to steady his ship of swing as it burst through the waves; and the wind-soaked hiss of his cymbals swirling above the surface, rising and falling with the ship, crackling ominously and lighting up the sky in contrapuntal bursts of contrary motion. But just as suddenly, everything was becalmed, the fury was gone, and Smitty's rhythms moved with stately grace and restraint, delicately punctuating the flow with elegant simplicity—sometimes playing next to nothing, yet making it swing as hard as his elemental outbursts of energy.

Smitty Smith's drumming radiates strength, sensitivity, and class. Yet for all his energy, it is his ongoing love affair with the history of the instrument and his disciplined approach to music that animates his creativity. It is precisely this reflective, reverent point of view that sets him apart from his energetic percussive peers, enables him to fit instantly into challenging and difficult

musical situations, and will carry him past the first frenetic blush of youth with visions and dreams intact—ready to carry forth the history of the drums to the next generation of players. It is a big job to be sure, but Marvin "Smitty" Smith is ready.

**CS:** You sound as if you're trying to play two or three different drum styles simultaneously, like a cymbal style and a drum style. Some jazz drummers tend to lean predominately on the cymbal to carry the groove, and everything else is secondary, but you have a very strong bottom going, particularly in your work with Dave Holland's band.

**SS:** I feel that there's a need for something fresh in what is being termed as "jazz." That's not to say that I'm going to be the one to break the ice, because I don't know who's going to be the one out here to strike the next spark. I'm just going to experiment with my own ideas and see what I come up with. The end result is to make beautiful music. I can see that this quest has led me into some new directions, particularly in my music with Dave. Dave is open enough to encourage me to bring in tunes or any viewpoint that will add to the music. I've added this conga drum to my kit and this percussion setup I've used with Ron Carter and Hamiet Bluiett; it gives me all these nuances of sound within the band, and it's fresh, because I don't have to play the drums all the time. I can go to the congas or percussion, create different textures of sound, or sometimes I don't play. That can be very effective, too. I let the horns carry the rhythm.

**CS:** It creates a certain anticipation.

**SS:** Right, but I still try to keep that foundation from all the drummers I have learned from: Max Roach, Philly Joe, Art Blakey, Art Taylor, Ed Blackwell, Billy Higgins, Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette and a few more, too. I mean, I checked out some Big Sid Catlett on this old Louis Armstrong record from Symphony Hall in Boston....

**CS:** You mean with "Steak Face" and "Mop Mop"?

**SS:** Yeah, those are the only two tunes where he opens up in a solo. And I heard Max, Philly Joe, Klook [Kenny Clarke] and some hints of Art Blakey in there. It flipped me out, because there were the seeds of all of them in Sid Catlett.

**CS:** The cat-and-mouse aspect sort of suggested where Philly Joe would come from, while the chops episode was a taking-off point for Max.

**SS:** That really had me going: I knew I had to pick up some more



recordings of Big Sid. Baby Dodds is another one. Plus, Cozy Cole had some hip coordination happening between the snare and the bass drum—a lot of syncopation patterns that are a part of today's vocabulary. And Papa Jo definitely annihilated all hi-hat players for all time. Plus, he did all sorts of things with textures. But I relate what I would like to do with percussion back to drummers of the '20s and '30s, and the bands of Fletcher Henderson and Duke Ellington. Take a cat like Sonny Greer: He wasn't just playing drums; he was playing percussion. Look at those old band pictures. He had all sorts of woodblocks, temple blocks, chimes, bells, triangles, timpani—you name it. And he was using them, man. It wasn't just for show. I'm not trying to say we should bring that back, but I like to include it in the music I play. I love the whole family of percussion, not just the drumset, because it's much broader than that. I love a great-sounding marimba, and I'd love to use one in band situations just as soon as I'm able to deal with the economic obstacles and the responsibility of learning to play the instrument.

**CS:** Well, you did some things during your drum solo with Dave where you were incorporating all sorts of tom-tom patterns, and syncopating them around bass and socks. Most "modern" drum-



Photo by Laura Friedman

mers wouldn't employ those kinds of patterns or such a deep tuning. They'd feel like archivists or something. But that Chick Webb-Gene Krupa vocabulary can fit very readily into contemporary music. It isn't necessarily dated.

**SS:** Drummers have to look at the approach and not get hung up thinking that they'll be corny if they are up there going boom-boom-boom a-booma-boom, or that they have to play the toms that way. The point is to utilize it in a musical sense and adapt it to your particular situation. So, I utilize it in an appropriate tune and try to deal with it thematically. You mentioned in the *Village Voice* article you wrote that I was dealing with "suite-like improvisations," and that's an aspect of what I'm trying to achieve.

**CS:** Well, speaking of working thematically, there are schools of drumming where that's the whole point and timekeeping is like the lowest form of slavery, while there are other approaches where the beat is paramount. But there's a mid-ground you seem to be approaching, where you play through the time, not just the beat, but the beat is strong—not just digging coal.

**SS:** That's why I'm excited by the possibilities of percussion. That's why I try to listen to more music—period. Just try to get all the different points of view you can, and see how much of that you can bring back to the musics you are playing.

**CS:** Do you hear the extended drumkit as one phrase? I don't really detect any separation between the instruments, like a pianist wouldn't hear a separation between the left hand and the right.

**SS:** Correct. Snare, toms, bass, cymbals, and percussion are integrated to make one sound. That's why you've got two legs and two arms to make a group sound and play independent parts.

**CS:** But you were reversing those patterns a lot, putting the ride cymbal part down on the bass drum, etc. It was a front-line approach, without dominating the ensemble, yet there was always something in motion at all times—a very wet, surging approach, particularly with your ride cymbal. That way you could come up to it or down to it.

**SS:** The point you made about it being a part without sounding like a drum solo, per se, is an accurate description of what I'm trying to do.

**CS:** But then the best jazz soloists have always sounded like drummers. Perhaps you'd want to call it rhythm music, like the way Charlie Parker plays.

**SS:** I understand what you're saying, like the way Bird would play a line and Max would feed it back to him—communication, man. Interplay—they were talking to each other musically.

**CS:** Right, but they weren't just playing time. They were making music.

**SS:** The thing about players like Bird, Bud, Dizzy, and Mingus is that they had a strong sense of time within themselves, which is the problem with some of the young musicians today. Because they don't have that strong, individual sense of time, they tend to lean on the drummers, which hampers the drummers from venturing out into other approaches of playing the music, so they have to sit there and go ding dingading. If the drummers stray from that, the other musicians will turn to them and say, "Hey, don't change up on me. Keep that ding dingading going." If you throw in a little syncopation, they get scared and tell you not to do that, because you're throwing them off. That's frustrating when you're trying to make music; you're not about messing somebody up. That's frustrating for me, because I am sincerely trying to make music. Being held back because they want the drums to dish it out so they can ride over it is a *drag*. Bird's rhythm was a mile long.

**CS:** He sounded like he was playing the rhythm section.

**SS:** Dizzy, Monk—all of those cats had that. It was expected. When I first started playing with so-called "new music" cats, like Bluiett and subbing for Henry Threadgill—playing the so-called avant-garde—I thought it would be really difficult, because I'm not the type of cat to take any music for granted—especially in the "jazz" idiom. I knew there were cats who had been involved in that aspect of the music for a while and who had really studied it. So before I started to play with Hamiet Bluiett, I checked out all of the "new music" cats. I always loved the Art Ensemble of Chicago and their drummer, Don Moye. He's been an inspiration to me,

because he's advanced the art of "total percussion" and brought that idea into the music he plays. I would love to take that even a step further and utilize mallet percussion, even though Moye does play balafon. But I would love to add marimba and xylophone, and really play that. I also checked out Andrew Cyrille, who was a very nice person and who would talk to me about the music. I asked him to tell me about some approaches to playing this music, because it seemed kind of hard to me. He said, "It's not really hard. You're dealing with *sound*: sound on sound, sound against sound—sound as a whole and the different colorings, shadings, and nuances that you can employ musically." He was a great help to me; sometimes he'd even come down to my gig without my knowing about it, just to scope me on the sly. Talking with Muhal Richard Abrams, Henry Threadgill, Bluiett, and a number of other people hopefully prepared me to approach this music in an intelligent way.

**CS:** Well, that's a disciplined, respectful way of approaching any music. Along those lines, when did you first realize you were a drummer?

**SS:** I truly feel it was a natural inclination, because my dad's a drummer. He's 56 now, and he's still playing. I'm originally from Waukegan, Illinois. I was born on June 24, 1961. Waukegan is about 50 miles north of Chicago. When I was growing up, there was always a lot of music in the environment. That's a funny thing, because when my dad was growing up, his parents would not let him play music. They didn't want him to pursue a musical career. He wanted to play drums *bad*, too, way before he got a drumset; they resisted for a good while, but they finally let him get a drumset when he was 17. My dad would tell me how he used to sneak into the city to see cats play, hang out, and then try to sneak back home. His mother would always catch him, you know. Parents are sharp. You might think you're getting away with something, but they're right on your case—but for the love of music he went through it all. He'd been practicing before he got his drums, but then it was like he could start working on them. And he worked with some territorial bands: big bands and combos—all sorts of gigs.

**CS:** What's his name?

**SS:** He's Marvin Smith, *Senior*. He did one record with this pianist Don Walker in a group called Complete Expressions. Of course, they financed the project themselves, and you won't find it in any stores, but we have a copy at home. When I was a little kid, it was just a terrific thrill for me to hear *my* dad on a record.

So, getting back to the point, you can see that it was a natural thing for me to play drums. In fact, he told me stories about when I was six months old, and we lived at his mother's house, next door to where our house is now. He would have his drums set up in the living room, and there'd be this big rocking chair set up in front of his drums. When he'd start practicing, they tell me that I would crawl over to that chair, and sit and watch him practice. I would fall asleep watching him practice. Then he would finish, and go out to the kitchen to get a drink. All of a sudden, they'd hear someone going BOOM, BOOM, BOOM on the bass drum, and they'd come out and it'd be me! Of course I was too short to do anything else. Then I'd crawl on out into the kitchen and start beating on the pots and pans. Every Christmas he would get me a toy drumset, and I must have gone through about ten of these things. I couldn't wait, because every Christmas I knew I was going to get a drumset. And Christmas Eve, I couldn't sleep; I'd go down to the living room trying to tap them lightly so as not to wake anyone up.

I remember the first tune I could play. I played with this old James Brown record "Song For My Father," Parts I and II, which was one of his instrumental records on Smash. Also, there was a straight-ahead record of Jimmy Smith with Donald Bailey doing "I Cover The Waterfront," which used to knock me out too. So those were the first tunes I covered, when I was about three. That's when my dad started teaching me formally, but it got too personal and emotional: "You're playing that wrong. Try it again!" I'd be so nervous that I'd drop the sticks, and he'd start in yelling at me. I'd go, "Waaaaahhhhhhhhhhh." So after a while, we both concluded that it was getting too intense. He took me to a friend of his named Charlie Williams, and I'll never forget this cat. He could



play double bass drums, and he had chops up the wall. I studied with him for one year, and then he moved out to New Jersey. I've been trying to find him ever since, because this cat was *bad*, man.

Then after him, I went to another friend of my dad's named Donald Taylor, and he was very important in terms of hooking my thing up. He loved to play along with records, and we got into reading and checking out other cats. He'd throw on some Elvin, some DeJohnette, some Max—all of the cats in a nutshell. Then, he'd send me home with some records and have me *really* check them out. I'd try to learn from them. On the other hand, he gave me a basic approach to the kit, and always emphasized that I should not try to play like these cats, but instead just to understand their approaches and how they came to make the music they did. I think that's the key. A lot of cats get hung up trying to play another cat's licks, and they're missing the point. Understand how they approached their music, and how that can help you bring out *your* ideas. That's the approach I'm taking. So it comes down to how I'm going to approach the music I play based on what *I* hear. Of course, we all have our influences, and that's cool, because the past and the present lead to the future.

**CS:** Well, it just lets you know that something can be done or that it had been done—building blocks.

**SS:** Right. Of course, the influences will always be there, but you develop them into your own personal statement based on the music you're involved in. Then, it becomes *your* vocabulary, and not simply a collection of someone else's quotes.

**CS:** So, were you playing your dad's kit all this time?

**SS:** No, he bought me my first kit when I was five. He showed me how to set it up and tear it down, but I usually kept it set up because I would be practicing every day for like ten hours. Of course I was so young, so I had all this time. I'd get home from school and shed until ten at night. It didn't bother my mom because it was a musical house, and my dad would be practicing or holding rehearsals with the Complete Expressions. Unfortunately, my dad had a family before his career got off the ground, but I definitely respect him for accepting his responsibilities, taking care of business, and not looking back. He still plays music, but who knows? Maybe he could have gone to New York. But he said, "I have a family, and that's my priority." Plus, he saw my inclinations and figured,

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# A NEW APPROACH



# TO DRUM MAKING

## Chris Brady

by Rick Van Horn

**C**HRIS Brady is a combination of many things. He's a drummer, interested in the sound and construction of drums. He's a woodcraftsman, interested in the potential qualities of various types of wood. He's Australian—a resident of Perth, the capital city of the state of Western Australia (and the most isolated capital in the world—the nearest major city being 1,700 miles away). Chris also describes himself as one thing more: "curious."

Chris's curiosity led him to combine all the other things he is into one more identity: drum manufacturer. Chris actually lives up in the hills behind Perth—in the forest. Western Australia contains an abundant supply of some of the world's most unique woods—most of which are found nowhere else on the face of the earth—and out of those, Chris Brady makes drums that are unlike any others in the world. Those unique drums are made of single, unjoined, unbent cylinders of solid wood—literally bored out of the trunks of trees. He also makes drums of what he terms "block" construction, gluing blocks of solid hardwood together in a barrel-stave fashion, much like conga drums are made.

It all started with drumsticks. In 1978, there was a terrific shortage of drumsticks in Australia, and Chris thought that, with so many trees there, there must be some that drumsticks could be made out of. To his surprise, he discovered that he couldn't just get a book that revealed the things he wanted to know; no research had been done. Chris had to obtain the information he needed by actually doing the work himself. In this way, he gathered a tremendous amount of personal experience with the exotic hardwoods of Western Australia—woods with names like jarrah, she-oak, wandoo, and others. Chris explains how this knowledge got him involved in making drums.

"A few years later I was talking with Don Schleisman, a very well-known drum

inventor in Australia [profiled in the Oct. '80 MD]. In that conversation, he mentioned to me that he didn't think a drum could be made out of solid wood. So I thought I'd try to help him make one, utilizing what I had learned about Australian woods by making drumsticks."

From that relatively humble goal, Chris has gone on to undertake a personal challenge that might daunt many a musical craftsman. He wants to make and market his unique drum line worldwide, while retaining his handcrafted quality and expanding his already extensive area of research into the structural and acoustic properties of the unusual woods at his disposal. Obviously, Chris Brady is also energetic and ambitious, as this interview—conducted while Chris was on a whirlwind promotional visit to the U.S.—will attest.

**RVH:** When you made the first solid-wood drum for Don Schleisman, what design did you use?

**CB:** I started with the tree-trunk design. But there are many different trees in Australia that nobody knows anything about, and I wanted to see what sort of different sounds I could get from them. It soon proved easier for me to experiment with sounds using the block-construction method. That's because, when you're making a solid-wood drum, you have certain limitations. The size of the tree is, of course, the biggest one; certain trees grow so far from where I live that it's not practical to carry those huge blocks in the summer. I have to travel three or four hundred miles sometimes to get certain woods. At the same time, I wanted to know what the timbers looked like, because with some of the woods, nobody knew. So I'd cut them up and have a look. Then I'd try to dry them out, stabilize them, and put drums together out of the resulting "blocks" of wood. A lot of our trees aren't very big, but that's another idea behind the block drums. If you've got a lot of trees that aren't big enough for solid-wood drums, they might be very, very good for block drums. I'm trying to utilize everything that's around in one form or another.

For the time being, I'm restricting the tree-trunk construction to snare drums. I need to develop my operation a bit; it's been a real shoestring affair so far. I make everything almost one drum at a time. Then the money from that drum goes into getting some improved gear. I probably will make toms out of the tree-trunk method as well. I made one 10" tom as an experiment, which I've since cut down to 4" and made into a special snare drum for the noted percussionist Trilok Gurtu.

**RVH:** How many woods are you experimenting with for the manufacture of

drums?

**CB:** Nineteen, at the moment. Each has its own individual properties, based on density and grain structure. That's an area I still don't really know a lot about. In the U.S., if you wanted to know anything about maple, elm, or birch, you could read up on it somewhere, because those woods have been used industrially for many years. But for me, it's a case where most people have never even heard of the tree I'm interested in, let alone know anything about it. I've gone through all the reports and research of our government's technology department. They'll list the names of a lot of trees, but when it comes to individual specifications, like density or modulus of rupture, nobody's got that information because nobody's used these woods for industrial applications.

Our woods are like tropical hardwoods, growing in a basically desert environment. They have a lot of unusual features. It's very difficult to see the growth rings in our trees. The densities are fairly uniform once you get out of the sapwood area, and even the sapwood on some of those trees is still much harder than maple, as well as being fairly stable. A lot of our trees don't have huge amounts of water in them, as yours do. For example, mallet, when it's green, weighs about 69 pounds per cubic foot. When it's dry, it weighs 61 pounds. There's not a lot of difference there, because the water weight is so low. But some of those woods of yours, like spruce, have up to about 140 to 150% moisture content. You're probably thinking, "How can wood have more than 100% water?" This is the difference in the amount of water against the dry weight of the wood, expressed as a percentage. So it's quite possible to have even 200% moisture content.

I'm fortunate in one respect to live where I do, because the humidity is so low. Although it's murder to work with, if you can control the dryness of the wood, you can take it virtually anywhere. The wood in my drums is already as dry as it's going to get, so you don't run the risk of cracking if you take the drum to a dry environment. For one of my drums to show any sort of degrade, you'd have to leave it in Death Valley in the sun for about a week. And that would probably only peel the lacquer off. So it's a curse to live where I do from a marketing point of view, because Perth is so isolated. But it's a blessing in terms of all the various woods available to me and the temperature conditions, which are so favorable to the wood.

**RVH:** Let's start in the forest. How do you select your trees, and how do you go about "harvesting" them?



**CB:** I do it in conjunction with the forest department. I tell them that I want a tree, and we meet in the forest. The tree has to be a certain size, because there's bark and sapwood that I don't want, before I reach the wood that I can use. Basically, for a snare drum, the tree has to be at least 16" in diameter under the bark. Usually I get one 17" or 18". Certain trees are pretty much elliptical—trees aren't perfectly round—and a lot of things come into that. If the tree is growing in a very windy area, you'll find a lot of heartwood to one side, where the tree has tried to compensate for the continual bending. You've got to get all that sort of thing down.

Once I decide, I buy the tree, and although I used to drop them myself, that's really too dangerous. On a windy day, I don't know where it's going to fall, and the last thing I want to do is have a two-ton tree fall on me. So I get somebody who knows what he's doing to cut it down. Then, we cut it into lengths—usually about 12". We have to move them pretty quickly, because our trees don't have a high moisture content, as I mentioned, and in the summer, our relative humidity is only about 8%, so it starts to suck out the moisture straightaway. American trees can take that, because they have such a high moisture content to begin with, and they don't run such a risk of shrinking and cracking. But the minute our trees start to lose water, the cracks start.

In some cases I can work on the site, and cut some of the surface material off and the central material out. But it depends on

what time of year it is. The bark helps to keep moisture in, and moisture can escape readily from the exposed end grain, so it's generally better to cart as much as I can back, wrapped up in plastic bags. It also depends on where I'm doing the cutting. The last tree I cut down was only three miles from my house, but the tree before that came from about 30 miles off. The day was about 100 degrees, with a very low humidity, and the water was just pouring out of the wood. I either have to carry water with me and slosh it over the wood all the time—and of course, all the time I'm driving, the wind is whipping over it and drying it even more—or decide to work on it on the site. I'm still in the stage where it's a one-off thing; I treat each tree differently. If my back is flaring up a bit and it's a hot day, I'll try to do more on the site; in the middle of winter, I'll throw them in the back of the truck and come home.

I use an axe, a chainsaw, and finally a chisel to remove all the material that I don't want from the inside and outside of the section. Then I use a lathe for the final shaping. And here again, I have to be very careful, because the section is still pretty heavy, and if it comes out of the lathe, it's like a racing car wheel coming at me.

**RVH:** And you do this all yourself, with no staff?

**CB:** I do it all myself. I do have an older chap whose hobby is making machines, and he has basically made the things I needed. Of course, he's limited to a tiny budget, so that sometimes makes things

difficult.

When the lathing is finished, the shells are dried, and I've learned different ways to do that. With the first ones that I ever made, I cut the bearing edges and did all the finishing work while I still had water running out of the wood! Then I shrunk the shell down to the size I ultimately wanted—and got it spot on! But I've since found what I think is a better way of doing it, which I can't really go too deeply into at this time. But the intriguing thing is that each wood requires its own drying formula. If I made some drums out of karri wood and applied the same formula I use for jarrah, I'd lose every one of them. The size of the drum makes things different; the size of the *tree* makes things different. That's basically one of the reasons I've gotten into the science of wood so deeply; if I didn't, I couldn't make drums this way. One goes hand in hand with the other.

Most of our woods can't be kiln dried, which is the traditional industrial way of drying wood. I can't use kilns at all; the woods would suffer collapse. "Collapse" is a technical term for cellular degrade due to too severe drying conditions. Most of our timbers are prone to collapse, so I had to start my whole drying operation from scratch. I didn't know anything about lathing, drying, or any of it at the beginning. I was learning as I went along, and I've discovered a lot of little things along the line.

**RVH:** How long does it take you to make a drum, from tree to finished instrument?

**CB:** About a month. I can do a few at a time. I cut 20 drums out of the last tree I took. I also tried a new way of drying them, which is a funny story. I was thinking that maybe, if this thing snowballed, I could make more than four drums a month, because let's face it, you can't live on four drums a month. So I put ten drums in to dry by this new way, which is not kiln drying, but a gentler commercial method that takes two months—and I lost the lot. The formula didn't apply. It would have been great if they were to have been 13" toms, but they were supposed to have been 14" snare drums.

I haven't made solid-wood drums larger than snares, and I don't think I'll make a bass drum in at least the next 12 months. But someday I will, simply because in the back of my mind I know I've never done it. My lathes are made to take up to a bass drum in size. But I'll have to take a *tow truck* out with me to get the wood, because the block I use to make a snare drum weighs about 80 pounds, and to make a bass drum, I'll need a block about 28" across by 19" in depth. That would be a *heavy* piece of wood.

**RVH:** After shaping and drying, how do you finish the drums?

**CB:** I try to leave the drums as completely natural as possible. I've made them with knots and gum veins in them. I think that

sort of adds to the uniqueness of the drums, so unless it's structurally damaging, I leave the knots alone. Of course, if it goes right through the shell, I discard that shell—or sometimes make the air hole there! I generally buff each shell and apply a clear lacquer for protection. I'd really like to make a drum out of a species that keeps its bark on; some don't lose the bark when dried. I don't think you could get much more natural than that.

**RVH:** How do your drums compare to plywood in terms of durability?

**CB:** As plywood shells became thicker and thicker, a lot of drum companies advertised that you could sit on their shells. I'd rather sit in a chair than on a bass drum; I really don't see that that had much pertinence—except to say that you could treat those drums rougher than somebody else's. But I think that the *sound* should be the most important thing. The grain in my block drums runs vertically, rather than around the direction of the shell, and although the drums will take as much as you want to give them playingwise, they're not built to be slung around. They're quality, handcrafted instruments.

**RVH:** Can you maintain that handcrafted element at a commercial production level?

**CB:** I really haven't thought of these operations from a mass-production aspect. I don't really think you could mass-produce my drums. Of course, someone once said that you couldn't mass-produce cars, and Henry Ford proved that theory wrong. I can't afford that kind of thinking. I mean, what started *me* off was someone saying, "You can't make a solid-wood drum." So I'm not going to turn around and say that you can't mass-produce them, because sure enough, somebody will. But I'm now set up to make drums in reasonable numbers.

**RVH:** You've obviously spent a great deal of mental and physical energy developing your design concept. What convinced you that solid-wood drums were the way to go?

**CB:** I made the first snare drum shell for Don Schleisman, who was going to put his own special fittings on it. I had the thing there, and I was going to send it to him, but I thought, "Hang on a minute. That was a hell of a job back there in the forest. Here the drumshell is; what would it sound like with ordinary fittings on it? Let's just see if there really is a difference between a ply shell and a solid-wood one." It was getting into an area of unknowns. So I put the fittings on it, took it out, and played it. It sounded great. The other guys in my band thought so, too. So it got me to evaluating the whole philosophy and history of drum construction.

The original drum, at the beginning of time, was a hollow log. Then drum design moved on to the ply thing—which goes back to the Egyptians—because man didn't have the technology to take the log design any further. Only primitive people



kept it up, in the tropics, where the high humidity is helpful. Drum makers went on to plies, and one bloke copied the next. That's the way they went about it to the present day. Now I've gone back to the most basic, fundamental beginning of drum design. Where everyone else went off in one direction—the ply direction—I'm going off in the other. There are now other options with solid-wood construction that weren't open at the beginning of drum making.

**RVH:** A lot of ads today talk about solid-wood construction.

**CB:** There's a terminology hassle going on today. Many people have advertised solid-wood drums that aren't solid wood. The old "solid-wood" *Radio Kings* were solid wood alright, but they weren't one-piece

construction the way mine are. They involved taking a maple board, steaming it, bending it—green—and then drying it out. I have a different terminology. What I call a "solid-wood" drum has been made from one solid piece, with no joins—which makes a big difference. My solid shells are still under tension, as it were. Then there is the "block" drum, which is a drum made of blocks of wood laminated together. To me, that's a good way to go, as long as you've got your drying down. Then there are the ply drums. To me, that's how they should be marketed, yet you see ply drums being advertised as solid-wood drums. That really sticks in my craw, because plywood is *not* solid wood. It's just thin veneers that have been glued together.

Drum makers—myself included—are

*continued on page 74*

# BUDDY WILLIAMS

by Robin Tolleson

**“THE** drum is a very spiritual instrument,” says Buddy Williams, “if you look at the African thing and communication and at the drum as being the second instrument, behind the voice.” Williams is a good one to talk about the roots of his instrument, since his own musical roots run very deep. He has a dozen “uncles” in the business—close family ties to some of the giants of jazz. Perhaps it’s been partly by osmosis that this drummer got the chops, taste, and instincts that have attracted artists like David Sanborn, Manhattan Transfer, Tania Maria, Grover Washington, Jr., and the Honeydrippers to use him on recent albums and tours, and enabled him to continue to hold down the drum chair in the house band at Saturday Night Live.

“Buddy and I have been good friends for about ten years,” says former Saturday Night Live keyboardist Paul Shaffer. “It’s always good to see him on a session, because we know the beat will be there.” Saxman David Sanborn agrees, “I think Buddy’s a great drummer. He’s a very musical drummer,” David says. “He really plays within the tune and he plays with you. He listens.” On the 1985 Sanborn tour, Williams was powering a crack unit that included keyboardist Larry Willis, bassist Tom Barney, guitarist Mike Stern, and Jumo Santos on percussion. The grooves were of recent Talking Heads intensity—rising, falling, and shifting—always moving. Look right in the middle of that, and you’ll find Buddy, content as a cat can be, playing precisely what’s needed, and pumping things up a bit more with a solid fill—yeah, Talking Heads with a touch of Trane.

Williams has sometimes been accused by listeners of laying back too much—of underplaying, in fact. The drummer shrugs it off. Oddly enough, he’s so busy doing tours, sessions, and jingles in New York that he hardly has time to think about it. Williams gets his ride cymbal rocking (literally), with a strong right hand to the bell as Sanborn’s unit cranks it up on “Run For Cover.” He smiles as bassist

Barney peeks in at him over his toms, all the while mixing it up with his left hand between the hi-hat and snare. As the song peaks, he’s got a wash of cymbals roaring as he bashes around the kit. The proof is in the pudding, and this pudding is hot.

Essential to the Buddy Williams discography is Luther Vandross’ Never Too Much, where the drummer and Marcus Miller team up on some of the fattest grooves yet slapped on vinyl. Listen to the hi-hat control on Sadao Watanabe’s Orange Express and the offbeat bells on “Bagamoyo/Zanzibar.” The drummer shines on Michael Urbaniak’s Serenade For The City, and does the job of two circus drummers on Bette Midler’s Live At Last. Herb Alpert’s “Rise” was powered by Williams, and he is featured playing and singing on Roberta Flack and Peabo Bryson’s Live & More.

Williams was born in Brooklyn, New York, 33 years ago, and grew up in the city’s Bedford-Stuyvesant section. His father was a professional singer, and the desire to be in music hit Buddy at an early age. His family arranged piano lessons for him when Buddy was three years old, but after a few years of that, he wanted to switch instruments. “I had a lot of energy when I was small; and I think the drums dispersed it more than the piano,” he says. “There were already enough piano players in my house. I just wanted to do something different, grow, and stand on my own.”

While in junior high school, Williams was playing with a group called the Packers, and when he was accepted at New York’s Music and Art high school, he had the chance to expand his knowledge to classical, big band swing, and other forms of music. Williams was, at that time, more interested in jazz, and was establishing a musical identity with the band Natural Essence, which featured Rasheed Ali, Nat Adderley, Jr., Noel Pointer, Earl McIntyre, Francisco Centeno, and Eddie Martin.

**RT:** Tell me about Natural Essence.

**BW:** We used to rehearse at my uncle Walter Booker’s house in Manhattan after

school and on weekends. I met a lot of guys like Herbie Hancock, Joe Zawinul, and Sonny Rollins at Uncle Bookie’s place. It was called Boogie Woogie. That was like my teething ring. But my life has always been music. My father was a singer in the ’30s and ’40s with a group called The Charioteers. They used to sing on Bing Crosby’s Kraft Music Hall, which was big-time radio in the old days. My father died recently; he was 75. I’m just an extension of him in terms of music. That’s all I ever saw—ever heard. I could name guys who came to my house that were Uncle This and Uncle That. Everybody says, “How come you had so many uncles?” It’s because the way people are in this kind of business, you just don’t want to call them Mr. This and Mr. That. They’re always at your house, hanging out, exchanging thoughts and ideas, and playing music. So that’s all I ever saw. I had no choice in the matter. My great uncle, Eubie Blake, lived only three doors from my house. I played piano from the age of three because of my father. He wanted me to play that music, and I saw nothing but piano. I started taking lessons, reading, and all of that.

The drums came later on, because in Brooklyn they have what is known as Brooklyn Day. There was a parade in front of my house every year. There were marching bands, and those guys were steppin’ like you see Florida A&M and Grambling, and playing the hip tunes. That just caught my ear. My folks took me to the islands when I was very small, and I heard a steel drum. Today I know that it was a steel drum, but I just remember being under this instrument when I was very small and hearing those sounds come out of it. That’s what kind of attracted me to that piano. Again, that piano was like the whole solar system to me almost. Every Saturday, the other guys would be playing baseball and basketball, and I would be going to piano lessons. My family wanted me to play that piano so bad. My grandmother was a minister at my church, and they would gear me towards playing in the church. But I like all music, so I wanted to

G O I N G F O R T H

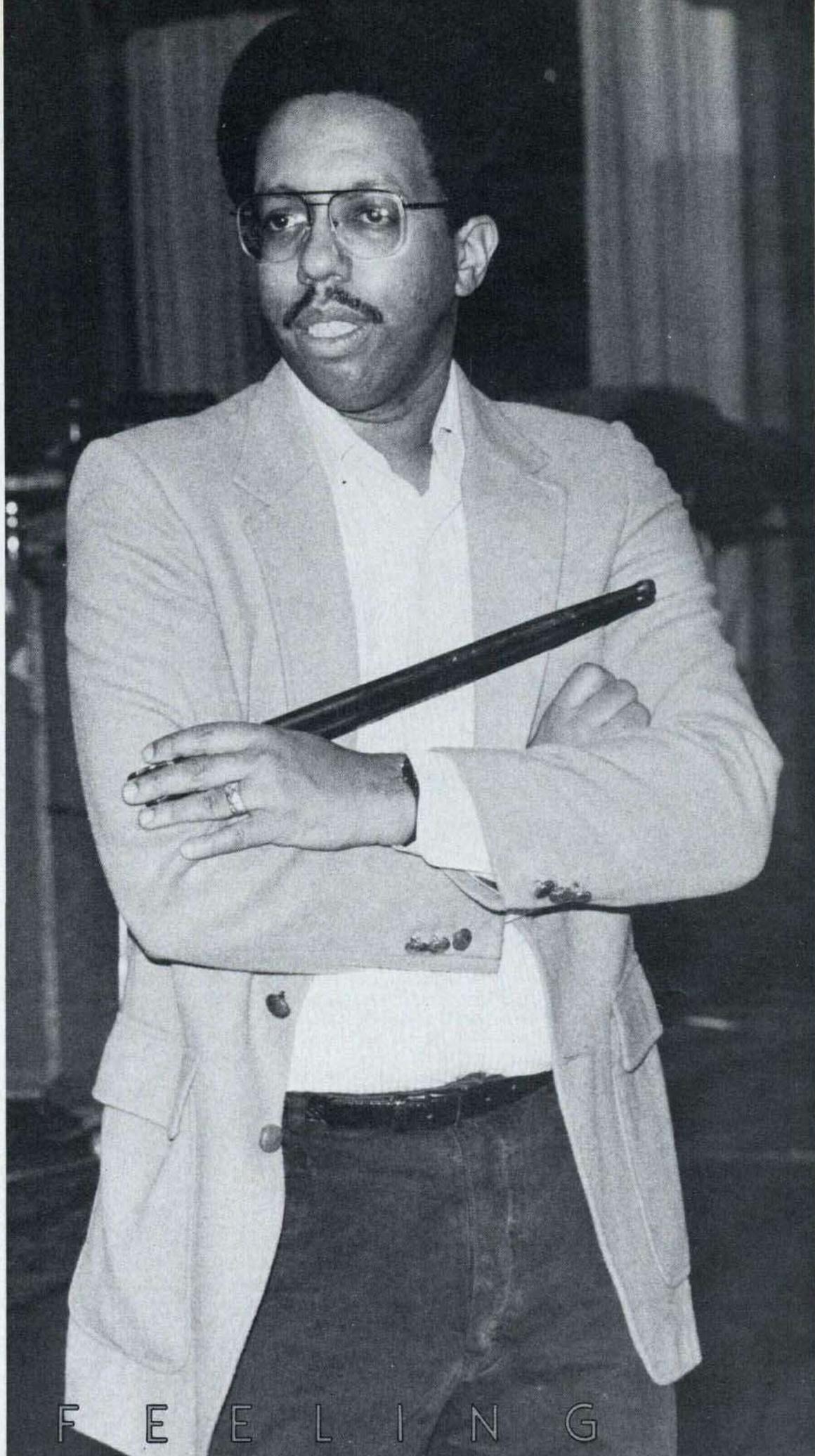


Photo by Laura Friedman

E F E E L I N G



play more than just hymns. Now I see some of those hymns that I used to play and I go, "Wow, I really used to play this?" They're really intricate. That's why it's so important for kids to get into music as early as they can, because then it doesn't seem like such a task.

Then the piano stuff really started getting to me. I wanted to back off it and get into my own thing. So when I was nine years old, I started playing in parade bands. I went to my great aunt's house in Lakeland, Georgia for the summer, and I used to hear those blues guys. It killed me, man—killed me. So I got into that and started listening to those guys. The next summer I remember going to Illinois, and staying with my cousin Chris Brooks. His mother used to make me go with him wherever he went. He played in this garage band, and I'll never forget that he had a white set of drums. I think they were playing "Satisfaction." They were learning it, and they played that record about 30 times. Meanwhile, I was out in the yard. They took a break to go get some pop, and I sat down at Chris's drums and played the

song with the record. They said, "He's got it!" From then on, it was over. I wanted a set of drums. My father said, "Oh yeah?" But instead of doing the typical father thing—going out and buying me a set of drums—I worked for a summer, saved my money, and I bought my set of drums. It was a Ludwig *Standard*. So I got that set and played. I rehearsed in my attic and practiced on the roof. Every day, I would practice with Will Tilghman and some other guys. We just played and practiced. I was lucky. All through my life I've been lucky. I'm not going off on a trip, but God is really good, man. I can't explain a lot of things: Why did this happen? How come I got that. I was just lucky. This business is like that.

Do you know who gave me my first sticks? My dad took me to Lionel Hampton's house one day, and Lionel gave me these big 3S sticks. Those things looked liked logs to me. I think I've still got them somewhere. I got in trouble, because we had this big mahogany door, and I started beating on it. The dents are still there. Boy, did I get my butt beat for that. But it

sounded like a drum, and I was playing—what is it, the Gene Krupa beat? I remember that beat, because I got beatings for that beat. [laughs] I heard Hampton play that on his drums in his house. That just impressed me. From then on, the drum thing kept dropping in there. I didn't start drum lessons until I was in junior high school, but from the age of eight, I was listening at home. I was into everything. My favorite was Jimi Hendrix. I liked the drummer who was with him, Mitch Mitchell, for a lot of reasons. He had a lot of stuff going on. I mean, he was hittin' it.

So then I went to this junior high school in Queens, and they had a good music program. I played as much as I could there. I had to play classical, and I got into timpani and percussion. The timpani is so powerful, but it's such a soft instrument, too. You can play stuff on there that's so warm and intimate within the music. They had a little jazz band in junior high, and I converted the school's concert drums into a drumset.

My family would speak to people in my neighborhood about different music schools, and two of my friends had gone to Music and Arts high school. A lady named Ann Bryant, who is a big-time producer and writer in New York now, was a phenomenal whiz kid when I was small. Her parents told my parents they should send me to Music and Arts. My dad checked it out, and I got an audition. Later, I got into the school. I really had to knuckle down on the classical thing, so that was great. I played in the school's jazz band—Glenn Miller, big band stuff like that—but we were already beyond that. I guess this was around the "Right On" period in the '60s, and there was a heavy black awareness thing going down. We were into Trane and Eric Dolphy, Cannonball, and all those guys. I loved jazz band so much that I would miss my lunch. I would go there during lunch, because Music and Arts really didn't smile on jazz. They felt it was an after-school program. Even at the university I went to, the Manhattan School of Music, they really didn't like jazz then. Now it's chic to be into jazz. But it's too late now; we were already in and out of there. So Rasheed came in and started playing these chords. He sounded like McCoy. He said, "Check these chords out. Do you want to do something like this?" And we got a group together. He named it Natural Essence. We used to practice at Uncle Bookie's place. He was very open to us. I was there almost every day, because I lived in Brooklyn, and it was very hard to go back and forth with my drums from Brooklyn. So I'd leave my drums there and practice, hang out with him, and he introduced me to so much music, man. It was like that was my school—like the African folklore thing, where they pass it on. School gave me the opportunity to meet a lot of people who

transmitted a lot of knowledge, and if you just listened you heard a lot of stuff. But God bless Uncle Bookie, because I wouldn't have known of a Sonny Rollins or a Thelonius Monk on the level that he introduced me to them. He was playing with these guys. He'd sneak me in there to hear Monk play that stuff. You can hear it on the records, but if you heard and saw this guy—people said he was weird and wacked out, but he was no weirder than Boy George. Now *that's* weird. Monk was an innovator, and he was just different. You know how people are. If they see anything different, they want to mess with it, and not only poke fun but make it like it's not cool. You've got to be the same old thing. And with music like that, you've really got to do just what you feel. Look at Arthur Blythe. It took him so long. Finally people came around to his way of thinking. Even Jimi had to go to London to really get over and then come back. Then he was cool, even though he was doing the same thing. So luckily, I was introduced to a lot of different stuff at an early age, and I understood just what things there were, instead of just bubblegum music and the basic soul and rock stuff.

Natural Essence was an original group playing our own music. We got with Cannonball Adderley because of Nat, Jr., and Cannonball produced an album for us. He recorded our tunes, but it took them a long time to release it. Finally, it came out on Fantasy Records. It's called *In Search Of Happiness*. There is a lot of good music on it. If you find that one, let me know.

Anyway, we had good tunes. We were young, not even seniors in high school. We released it, and it didn't do too hot. It did well in California, but California's more open to jazz and new music anyway. In high school, we would back up acts like Leon Thomas. I remember that one day we did the Jackie Robinson jazz concert at his estate in Connecticut. We played with Roberta Flack, Benny Powell, Grover Washington, Jr.—all these people who I



ended up playing with later. I'm on Grover's album that's out now, and he teases me about that. He says, "Oh yeah, I remember when you used to be real skinny and small." I think my first gig in high school was with Herbie Mann. Bruno Carr had split from him to play with Sarah Vaughn, and Herbie had some gigs. He called me up and had me come to his house to audition. I had to bring a trap case on the train from Brooklyn to Central Park South. He had this fancy apartment overlooking the park. He played some tunes, and he had this joke. Every time you'd ask him what to play, he would always say, "brushes," because he's a flute player and he didn't want the drummer bashing all around. He had Sonny Sharrock, Miroslav Vitous, Steve Marcus, and Roy Ayers in his band. Those guys were playing—I mean *playing*, man. And Herbie would always tell me to play brushes. They would

always look at me, shake their heads, and say, "Don't listen to him, man. Go for it. You know how to play. You know what you're doing." So I got to the point where I wasn't so scared that I would die if I messed up. I got to Herbie's gig, and Sonny Sharrock was one of the very outest—a very avant-garde guitar player. He played the chords to Herbie's "Memphis Underground" and all Herbie's hits. Then when it was time for his solos, he'd just take it out. Now, how are you going to play brushes with that? I would take it right out there with them. I said, "This is great. I can stretch out with these guys and then come back in, and we got that flow together." Hugh Masekela opened a show for us, and I met my good friend Larry Willis. He said, "Man, you've just got to go for your feeling." So I got a good concept, and started playing with more and more people.

With the Natural Essence thing, we tried to do another album. We got away from Cannonball. It was nothing personal, but he was just too busy as an artist. We needed somebody who wanted to do us, and Billy Cobham was interested. He really helped us a lot. We did an album on Atlantic Records and had a single come out, but you know the music business. But Billy loved me. I didn't see him too much, but he knew me and I knew his brother. Natural Essence played a lot, but we all got busy. From college to now, I've played with a lot of people. The list is silly, but it's all kinds of different stuff, from Roberta, to Bette Midler, Grover Washington, Herbie Mann's stuff, Herb Alpert's stuff, Masekela's stuff, and Jean Pierre Rampal.

**RT:** You've done albums with all these people?  
**BW:** Yeah, eventually it got around to



# MANNY ELIAS

by Bill Wolfe

**E**VERY year produces its musical surprises and success stories, and *Tears For Fears* was certainly one of 1985's most pleasant. Their second album, *Songs From The Big Chair*, managed to please intellectuals, audiophiles, and teenyboppers alike with angst-ridden tales inspired by the traumatic childhood experiences of leaders Roland Orzabal and Curt Smith, and psychologist Arthur Janov's controversial book *The Primal Scream*. This may seem like pretty heady stuff for the Top 40, but Orzabal, Smith, keyboardist/writer Ian Stanley, and drummer/percussionist Manny Elias also produced a collection of songs with infectious rhythms and tenacious pop hooks—an album you could both think and dance to.

Not surprisingly, *Songs From The Big Chair* was a major worldwide hit. The LP hit the top spot in virtually every country, propelled there by three of the year's best singles: the grooving "Everybody Wants To Rule The World," the tribal "Shout," and the complex love song "Head Over Heels." The first two were worldwide Number Ones, while the last was a Top-10 hit. *Tears For Fears'* eight-month world tour was an SRO success, as well.

While multi-instrumentalist/vocalist Roland Orzabal and bassist/vocalist Curt Smith are the core (and the visual focus) of the band, Manny Elias and Ian Stanley give TFF's distinctively moody songs their power and grace. What is interesting about *Songs From The Big Chair*, from a drummer's perspective, is that Elias is a traditional, feel-oriented drummer, fond of, and inspired by, the likes of Bernard Purdie, Steve Gadd, and Andy Newmark. Yet here he is anchoring a thoroughly modern, electronic band more inspired by art-school types like Peter Gabriel and Roxy Music. But it is the interplay of man and machine between Elias' drums and the electronic percussion and keyboards that makes listening to the album so fascinating.

**BW:** Did you expect *Songs From The Big Chair* to be such a big hit when you were recording it?

**ME:** When we were recording this album, we were told by very important people whose opinions we respect that, if it wasn't out by September of 1984 at the latest, our careers would be over. But there was just no way we could have rushed it and put it out any quicker. So it's pleasing in that respect to now find ourselves in this situation. We said, "Listen, please. We can't do it. It's going really well." Fortunately, "Shout" came about, and everybody heard that and thought, "Okay, wait a minute. This sounds great. Let's just give them a bit more time." And then "Everybody Wants To Rule The World" came about, which originally wasn't going to go on the album. It was just an idea Roland had, and he wasn't too into it; he didn't have any words for it, just the 12/8 shuffle, the triplet on the hi-hat, and stuff like that.

Chris Hughes [producer] had a fair bit to do with how it came about, because we all work together. If I'm not there sometimes, Roland's great on the machine. He'll put something down and then he'll say, "What do you think of this?" And I'll say, "Oh, why don't we try this?" He'll sit down and play my drums, and I'll think, "Wow!" He approaches it from a completely different angle, so I'll pick it up and say, "Wait a minute. That's a great idea, but why don't we do this?" He's amazing. He's so inspiring for ideas. So is Curt. He plays drums really well.

**BW:** It's strange how many big hits are last-minute additions to albums, and are often viewed by the artist as throwaway tracks or filler.

**ME:** Yes. It was literally like that. It was almost a throwaway. We needed another track. In the very early stages, Roland liked a song someone else had written. He wrote about six songs when he took a couple months off, and "Everybody" and "Shout" were two of them. He wasn't totally enamored of "Everybody" at the time. It's a great song to play live. It just grooves along.

**BW:** It's a little out of character for *Tears For Fears*. It's sort of a rock 'n' roll shuffle.

**ME:** It is. It's very poppy. But it's nice because it has a certain quirk to it. The fact that it is 12/8 is nice; it's similar to "The Way You Are," which is a single we released [in mid-1984] that didn't do too much, but it had a pattern on it. We felt "The Way You Are" was a bit of a stepping stone for us, though. It took us slightly off track in one way, but it made us stop and think.

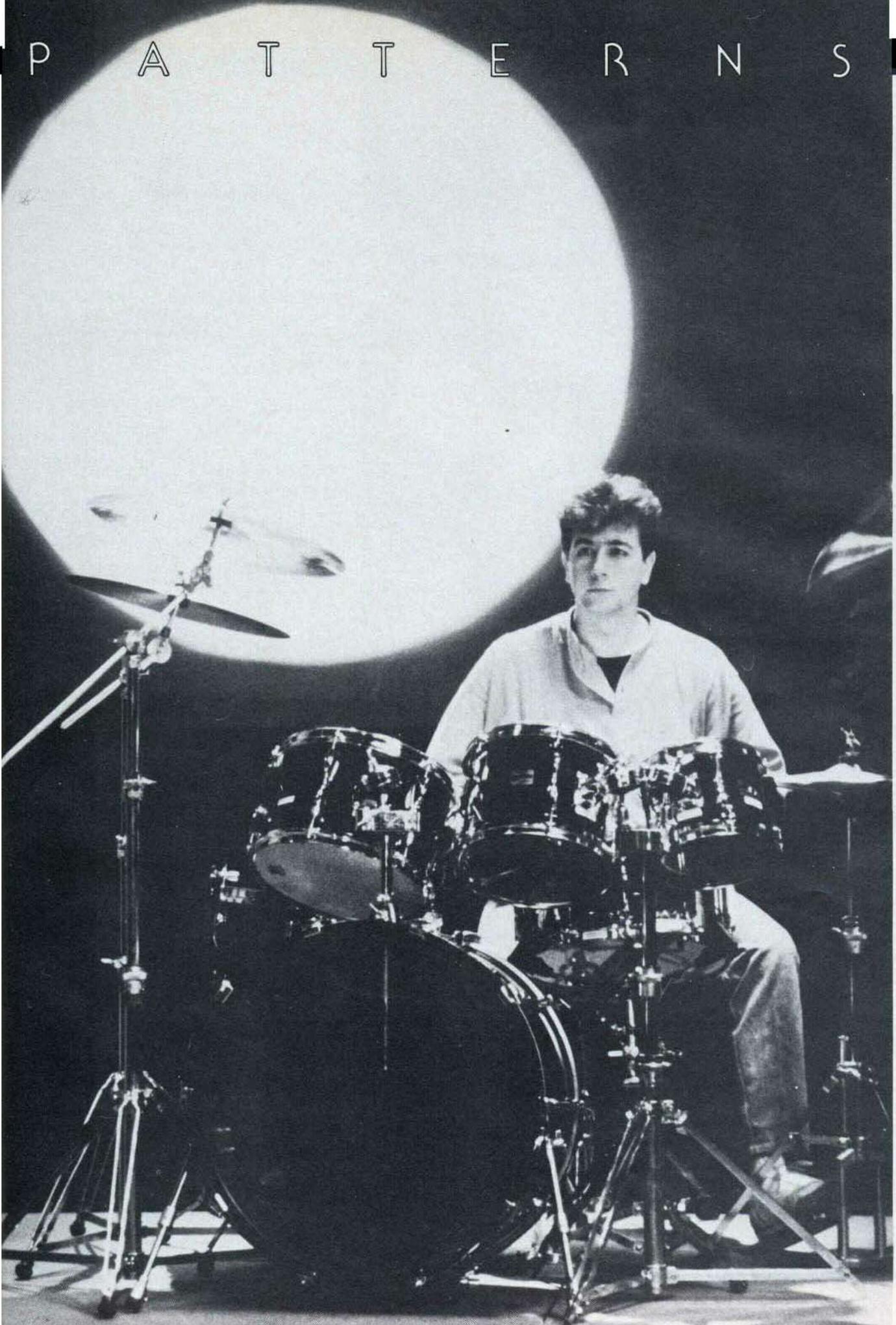
**BW:** How does it feel to be an artsy British band sitting in the Top 10 surrounded by pure pop artists like Madonna, Prince, and Bryan Adams? You don't really fit in. It's a pleasure to have a nice band in there.

**ME:** It's very gratifying, for the reason you said. We feel—and hopefully I don't sound too snotty for saying this—good about being there, because we got there on the strength of the songs and a bit of image, but very little image. The reason I say that is because, every time I look through magazines, we're always there, but if you look in back, where posters and stuff like that are advertised, you'll see everybody—the Whams and the Spandau Ballets and the Culture Clubs—but there'll never be any posters of us. What we're pleased about is that our profile is relatively low as far as that whole image thing goes. I come to the shows and am amazed every night. I'm playing away, and they know all the words to "Everybody" and "Shout." They even know a lot of the first album stuff, and that's very gratifying.

**BW:** What was the particular challenge for you in developing a drum concept for this band?

**ME:** When the whole thing came together, they asked me to do some demos with

P A T T E R N S



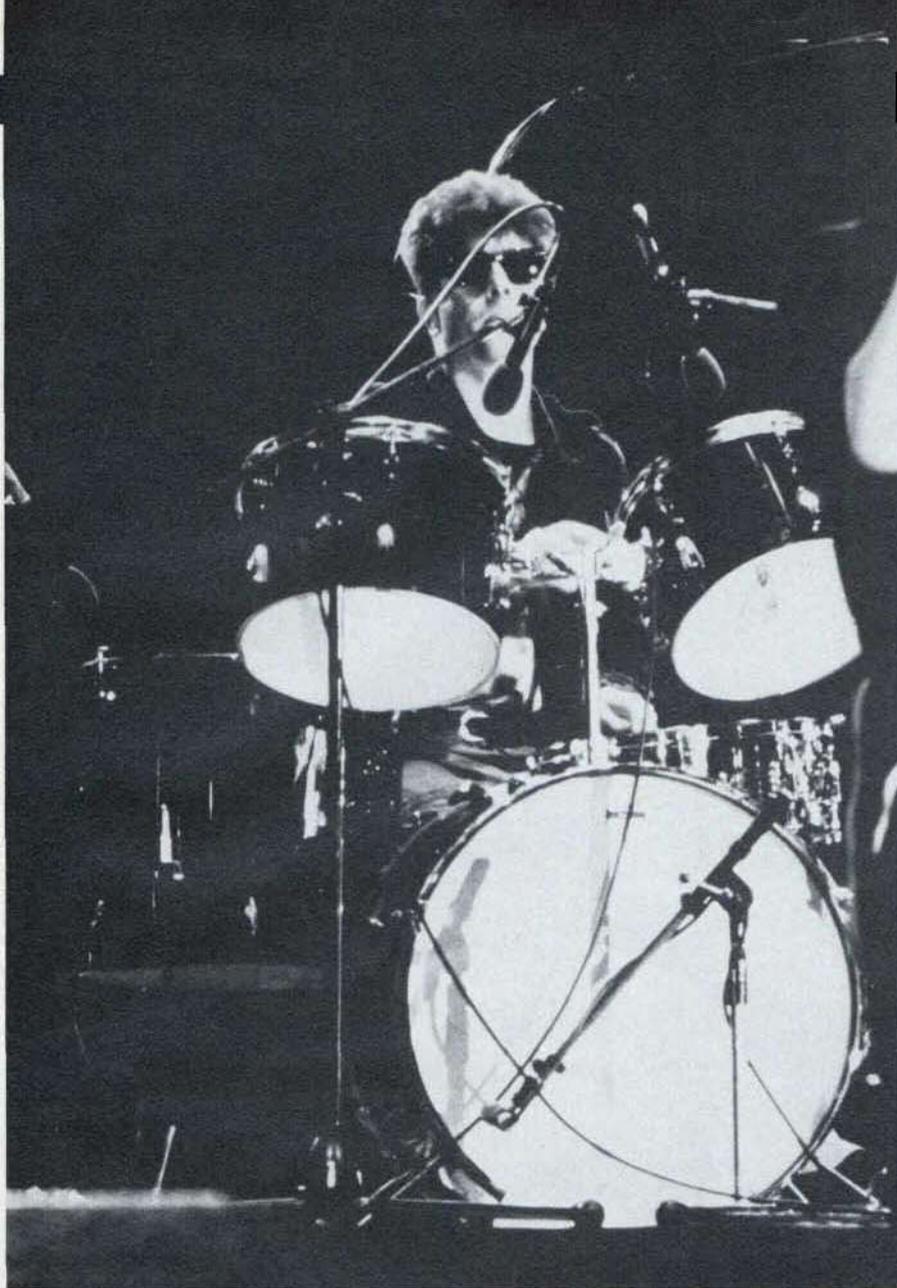


Photo by Fabio Nesottili/GI

them. At the time, I was heavily influenced by the approach Peter Gabriel had taken with no cymbals. I was very aware of Andy Newmark, Steve Gadd, Rick Marotta, Jerry Marotta, Ritchie Hayward, and Bernard Purdie, who I love dearly, and who can all sit on a beat and just make it cook by playing hardly anything. I thought, "I'd love to play that kind of stuff, but there are so many great people playing that. I need a slightly different angle." I vividly remember that there was nothing much but putting the snare beat on "Mad World," and it sort of started from there without using any hats. We just developed it into playing patterns and parts that groove, because we have a lot of mid-tempo numbers like "The Hurting," "Shout," and "Start Of The Breakdown" that tend to groove, and there's very little hi-hat work in a lot of them. So we made a point of trying to go for something like that. Between the songs they wrote and the

rhythms I came up with, we hit a formula that felt good to us—patterns. "The Working Hour" came about from the pattern. We were in rehearsal one day, and I just started playing the intro pattern, Roland started playing a guitar bit, and Ian had a bit of another song. It's like two songs put together, but it's got such a groove to it—that pattern—and it's a little bit different.

**BW:** "Broken" has a pretty insistent groove to it, thanks to the drum pattern.

**ME:** "Broken" had a really frenetic *Linn-Drum* pattern on it, which was like mega bass drum beats going off. Of course, I couldn't play that live, because it was kind of written in the studio. When the riff started off, I just started playing square beats on the snare and popping the bass drum in at the end of the bar. It sounded very rock 'n' roll to us at the time and we thought, "Wait a minute. Dare we do this?" It's something for people to latch

onto. It's normal, as opposed to "The Working Hour" and stuff like that.

**BW:** Can you tell me how "Everybody Wants To Rule The World" and "Shout" came together from a drummer's point of view?

**ME:** "Everybody Wants To Rule The World" was done totally in the studio. Roland came up with the song, went into the studio, and it was jammed around on, not so much with drums, but with machines to find the right feel. It's as simple as that, basically. The shuffle feel was Roland's idea; it was a 12/8 feel. Having already done a 12/8 before with "The Way You Are," rather than complicate it, this needed a much, much cleaner approach as far as the drums went. It's like our Steely Dan track in a way. That's the approach we went for.

"Shout" was another idea of Roland's rhythmically. It was something I did on a track called "Start Of The Breakdown" in combination with what he heard on a Talking Heads album. Sometimes I listen to a certain band or a certain song, and it gives me an idea for a pattern that's totally alien to the song.

**BW:** It's very difficult to draw a mental, aural line between the acoustic drums and the electronic drum pattern on "Everybody." They really mesh tightly.

**ME:** Yeah. The drum machine is playing the 16ths. It's the combination of that and the triplets on the hats. That works very well.

**BW:** "Shout" is really a drummer's song. You control the tempo and the dynamics of the whole song.

**ME:** Everybody who plays drums should have a go at that number. It's just great fun. It's not fast, and it's not tricky. The rhythm is so simple. It's so mid-tempo, and it just cooks. It's lovely. At the end of the set, I can't wait. I think, " 'Shout'—great!"

**BW:** How do you determine what you'll play, and what's left to electronic percussion and the keyboard-derived sounds?

**ME:** That comes about by actually sitting down and playing. You can mentally visualize it. I pick whatever would be the most groove to play. For example, I personally wouldn't like to play 16ths on the hat and have the triplet on the machine, since I can't punctuate quite so much with that. The less I'm playing, the more economical it is for me. In a way, it's a bit harder because the few drummers that we've had supporting us would ask me, "How do you do that?" It's one of those rhythms that, when they get it, it's so exciting to play. [He slaps the cross patterns from "Everybody" on his thighs.] It's pure enjoyment for me.

**BW:** Does Roland present you and the band with a completed demo including a drum pattern, or does he come in with a



Photo by Ebet Roberts

song and ask you to work with him on a rhythm?

**ME:** It varies. More often than not, if he's written it like a complete song with a rhythm, he'll tend to stick with that. And I'll not have that much to do with it, except maybe I'll say, "Why don't we try this here? Why don't we try that there?" Other than that, the songs that I'm more involved with are generally while we're either soundchecking or jamming, or I'll have an idea and pump it on the machine. He'll say great and take it away. The way it's done is very unusual. Often, when Chris Hughes is in the studio, if I'm not there, they'll come up with something between the two of them. Chris Hughes plays drums, so there's absolutely no worry about machine programming that's going to sound just like any other machine programming. He knows about drums, and he knows what drum fills sound good. So it's great from my point of view. I know I won't have to go into the studio and say, "Listen guys. That drum fill is on every other record. It just doesn't work." That is, I think, a strong point.

**BW:** So Roland and Chris are very drum conscious.

**ME:** Absolutely. They all play drums, so we're very aware of the rhythmic approach to a song, and we feel that how it's done is very important, as opposed to just knock-

ing it off and keeping it straight 2's and 4's.

**BW:** What song from *Songs From The Big Chair* or *The Hurting* were you most responsible for?

**ME:** Well, I'm not responsible for any of them. The one that I feel I'm perhaps most responsible for, as far as writing goes, is probably "The Working Hour." There were some chords Roland and Ian had

**"PEOPLE THINK DRUMMERS ARE OF SLIGHTLY LESS INTELLIGENCE THAN OTHER PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY BEAT THINGS AND MAKE A LOT OF NOISE."**

beating around in their heads. When I came up with the pattern, they automatically fit. The initial approach was that Roland had a song and an idea. He wanted something a little different, like "Memories Fade" for instance, that could be played with straight 16's and a square beat on the snare. Instead, I popped in lots of pushes. [He demonstrates the pattern

vocally.] Is that going to confuse people? I'm very verbal when it comes to drum sounds, [laughs] I can't write it out for you, but you know what I mean. I can't read music. I did try. I took a couple of lessons once, but it was miles away in Bristol. The teacher was an old jazzer who spent more time telling me about the sessions he did with some female singer on a TV show than actually teaching me what it was about.

**BW:** How closely do you and Curt work together? I think people tend to forget that he's a bass player as well as a singer/frontman.

**ME:** Fairly closely, but in a very nonchalant way. Occasionally, he'll have an idea or I'll have an idea, and I'll say, "Why don't we try this on this number?" We'll try it, it will work, and we'll keep it. But we try to stay away from the "bass drum and bass guitar together" approach. We try to work at crossrhythms as much as possible, rather than actually playing identical notes with the bass drum and the bass guitar. He is also a great bass player. He is a much better bass player than I think people give him credit for, because they assume he's the lead singer. But some of the lines he's come up with are exciting to listen to and to play.

**BW:** Do you prefer working live or in the

*continued on page 88*

# Tips Toward More Effective Practice

by Mike Myers

At *one* time or another, we've all heard that ageless expression: "Practice makes perfect." But does it really? If so, why do some drummers practice almost endlessly, only to achieve limited results, while others practice a minimum amount of time and advance rapidly?

Setting aside natural-born musical abilities, the answer lies in individual practice methods. There are almost as many different practice methods as there are drummers. Some practice routines are conducive to improvement, while others actually restrict it. Practicing just for the sake of practicing cannot ensure progress, and neither can poorly organized, occasional practice.

Since practice methods vary significantly from person to person, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prescribe a "correct" way to practice. However, there are some successful practice methods that I have observed and also recommended as a teacher, which bear offering in an attempt to make your practice time more beneficial.

1. *Locate a practice space.* The first procedure should be the location of a suitable practice facility. Where it is located is not really important. (I have practiced in bedrooms, band halls, practice rooms, and even a storage closet in an unused corner of a church.) The important thing is to make sure that the area has adequate lighting and ventilation, and can be securely locked. Places where equipment can be left for extended periods of time usually work best.

Next, check with everyone within earshot of your practice area. Make sure it is okay with them if you practice, and agree on what hours of the day it will be tolerated. A method I always use is to approach neighbors, friends, etc., explain that I am going to be practicing drums nearby, and promise not to practice past 10:00 P.M. I also ask them to call if the practicing ever becomes too loud. (So far, no one ever has.)

2. *Plan practice sessions in advance.* Planning is one of the most crucial elements of effective practice. An enormous amount of practice time is often wasted due to poor planning and organization. A person who boasts of practicing an hour a day may in fact be wasting as much as 30 minutes sorting through materials and deciding what to work on, or playing over

material that is already mastered. Know what you want to accomplish before each practice session. Simply going in to the drums thinking that you will become better just because you are practicing anything won't do.

3. *Long-range/short-range goals.* Plan long-range as well as short-range goals. Long-range goals are self-set goals for six months or a year from now, such as "I want to be able to play a good samba groove." Short-range goals are for today, like "I am going to learn samba exercises I to 10 on page 30." Map out beforehand realistic/obtainable long-range and short-range practice goals, and set out to achieve them.

4. *Set up a specific practice order.* If a specific practice order is followed from day to day, practice time will become more beneficial. The key is to make the best use of available time in order to produce the maximum results. Having a specific practice order that is regularly followed gives an organizational structure to practice and leaves less to chance. This is not to say that you may not want to vary your order from time to time, in order to give extra attention to a certain area. But planning a regular daily practice routine will be a step in the direction of more effective practice. Here are my suggestions, along with a possible time allotment for each.

A. *Warm up (five to 30 minutes).* Warm hands up by practicing rolls, technical exercises, scales, rudiments, etc. This prepares the hands as well as the mind for challenging material ahead. Be cautious, though, not to practice technique exercises blindly with no thought processes involved. Careful thought and evaluation should be given to technique each day, in order for improvement to take place.

B. *Learn new music/correct problem spots (30 minutes to one hour).* At this time, the mind and hands are the most alert. Use this time to learn new music and correct problem spots in old music. You can use this time for working out that fill-in during the bridge of the song that you folded on at the job last night, cleaning up the two seven-stroke rolls that are always sloppy, learning the notes of the run on the third page of the mallet solo, getting the tuning changes worked out that take place between movements of the timpani solo, etc. Have specific goals in mind that are determined before beginning to practice.

Many times, this is the most frustrating segment of practicing. It is often difficult to work on new or challenging music. But remember, Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither was Gadd. Miracles can't happen overnight, so be realistic. Don't attempt too much in one practice. Take big problems and break them down into a bunch of small problems. Then convert them into your short-range goals, and attack them one at a time. It is much better to take a difficult measure and practice it again and again, until played perfectly, than to stop every time that measure is encountered and say, "I always have trouble with this part."

C. *Take a break (five minutes).* During practice sessions longer than an hour, take a short break. After an intense practice, you will need one! Let the mind relax a bit and refresh for what is ahead. After a break, the mind is clearer and can function more efficiently. Long practice sessions go more smoothly if interspersed with regular short breaks.

D. *Review learned material (ten minutes to one hour).* Go back and play the piece that you have been correcting all the way through. Then, if desired, play other material that brings you personal pleasure. This can be music you learned last week or last month. The whole purpose of this practice segment is to reinforce concepts you've already learned.

E. *Sight-read (ten to 30 minutes).* Somewhere in the latter part of the practice session, it is a good idea to sharpen an important musical ability—the art of sight-reading. The sight-reading potential is often the most underdeveloped musical ability we possess. It needs constant practice and refinement. Daily sight-reading practice will be very beneficial.

Make sure to locate good literature to practice sight-reading. Don't choose material that is too difficult; it becomes discouraging and also will not carry over to actual situations. On the other hand, don't read music that is too easy, or the skill will not carry over to situations where actual sight-reading is required.

5. *Conclusion of practice.* When concluding practice sessions, some people like to do physical exercises—as well as other playing exercises—which they call "warming down." Other people go immediately to the television. I like to reflect back over the session, and think about what I accom-

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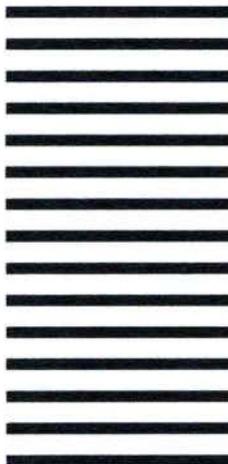
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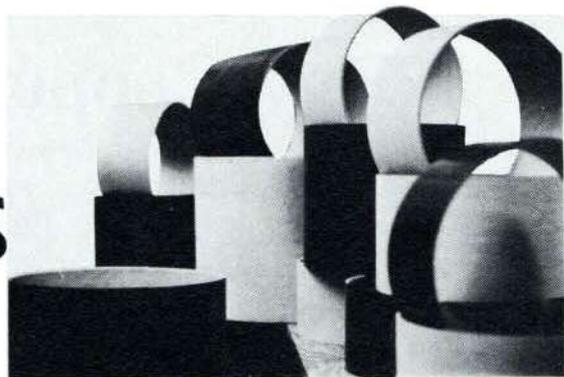
plished and where I still have to go. I will think about such things as: "The four problem measures at letter A are going much better today; I'm finally playing the correct rhythm in the last two measures; I'm understanding the song form much better now."

While everything is still fresh, plan short-range goals for tomorrow, such as, "I'm playing better fills on the rock chart, but tomorrow I will improve my time and polish the fills a bit more," or "Tomorrow I'm going to work out the second phrase at letter C that I didn't get today," etc. It's better to work out your goals when you have a chance to realistically monitor your progress.

6. *Daily schedule.* Every teacher recommends a different practice schedule. Some require seven days a week, while others may only require two or three. I personally recommend practicing a minimum of five days a week. You will find that the greatest progress will occur when you plan an individual practice schedule and stick with it, week after week. It will become a routine—part of your life!

Again, I must state that there are many good practice methods. I have only presented one approach, which has proven successful for myself and my students. Take some time, and concentrate on which method will work best for you. Then, plan out a personal practice schedule to produce the maximum results. 

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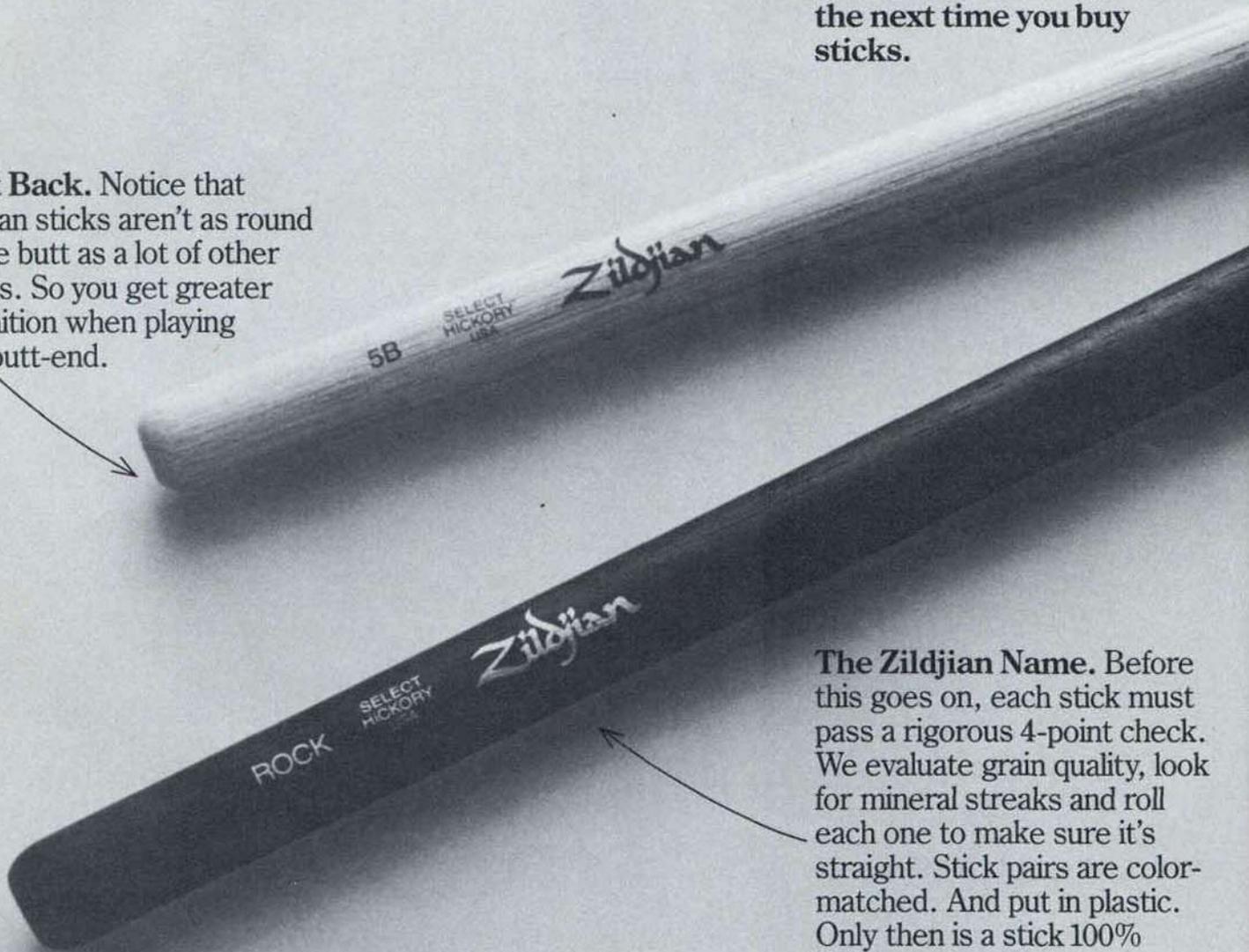
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Marotta continued from page 21

overhead microphone down in the corner and threw a glass down on the floor. Then the producer, Steve Lillywhite, walked in and screamed at the top of his lungs. He threw something, and then I threw my floor tom-tom. Peter became very primal, so we had nine minutes of absolute insanity. If you listen to that track, they sped the tape up at the very end, so it sounds very quick, percussive, and punchy, whereas when we really did it, the track was normal tempo.

I can't remember specifics, because I feel that I always try to do something unusual. I did some records with an English guy, Johnny Werman, which weren't released over here. They're really great records. The whole approach to making them was different. Plus, I got to do whatever I wanted on them. We tried anything. We did this one track where I had this idea to get everybody who was in the studio to get some sticks. We did a pass on this song of everybody just banging the shit out of the drums.

**RF:** You're kind of in an interesting in-between place in that you've been with Gabriel for so long, but technically, you are an independent player. How do you feel about being a gun for hire?

**JM:** I'm not sure I actually have made a conscious decision to be or not to be in a band situation. It's hard to get a band situation together, especially in New York and with the way the business is nowadays. Take a group like Tears For Fears. These are a couple of kids from a little town in England where the only thing to do is put a band together or go to a pub and get drunk. I didn't grow up in that situation. I grew up in Westchester, just outside of Manhattan, where there are so many things you can do and so many ways you can spend your time. But I like the security of being in a band. I've been trying to put bands together every so often, but it's awfully hard to do. I've made so much more money working as a free-lance player, I guess. Although, if Orleans had stayed together and we'd become very successful, I'm sure I would have made a lot more money.

I don't feel that I'm a sideman. My

brother and I are very different. My brother is the classic "get him in and he can do anything." I don't look at myself as the kind of musician that almost anybody can call and hire for a job.

**RF:** So how do you see yourself?

**JM:** I just never saw myself as a sideman. I've been with Peter for eight years. I worked with Hall & Oates for a couple of years and did three albums with them. It's hard for me to say.

**RF:** And yet, lately, you've been doing a lot of recording where you're not involved with them past the album.

**JM:** I did that with Fee Waybill, which was a good experience. I don't do that a lot, although I don't know if that's because it doesn't come up a lot or because I choose not to do it.

**RF:** How did you get called for the McCartney gig?

**JM:** Through Hugh Padgham, an engineer/producer who did the last couple of Police records, the Bowie record, Phil Collins, and Genesis. He had engineered a Peter Gabriel record, which is how we met. He called me in January of 1984 and asked what I was doing next April. He said that he couldn't tell me what it was because it wasn't definite, but that it was something very big. Then he called me about six weeks later, and told me he was producing McCartney and he wanted me to do it.

**RF:** What was that like?

**JM:** It was an interesting experience working with somebody like Paul McCartney, who is certainly the most successful working musician alive.

**RF:** Why?

**JM:** Because I'm interested in being a Paul McCartney myself—a songwriter and more of an artist. So it was nice to work with the most successful composer of modern times.

continued on page 48

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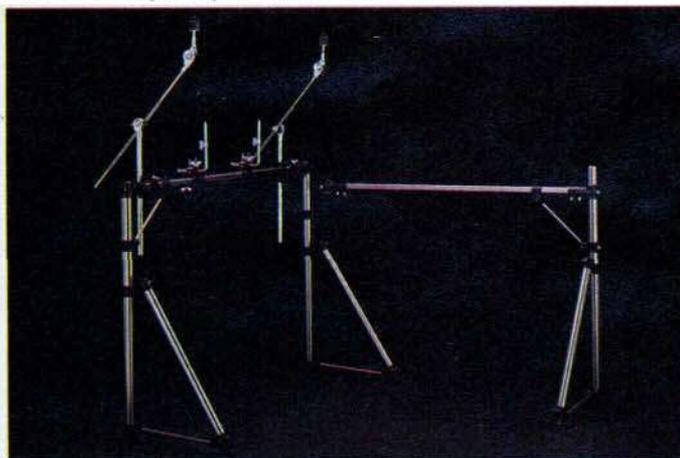
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**RF:** He's also a drummer.

**JM:** He kind of plays the drums. He might be able to play the drums on a record, but just about anybody could play the drums on a record because of the wonders of modern technology. To have him play a live gig would really be the true test. I couldn't see him doing that at all. But he's got very good ideas as a drummer, and he's a lovely guy. I respect him and his family. His prime concern is his wife and his children, which I love about him.

**RF:** In that situation, did you feel like a sideman?

**JM:** Definitely. I felt a little uncomforta-

ble. That's a good point. I never really thought about what I didn't like about doing that record, but there were a couple of times on that record that one person or another said to me, "You've got to do it this way, because that's the way I want you to do it." I don't like that at all, and most people I work with wouldn't say that to me.

**RF:** What about working with the temperamental artists such as Joan Armatrading?

**JM:** I've always been misunderstood or misconstrued. I used to be much more explosive in my temperament. People used to pigeonhole me as crazy or high, or what-

ever. From that, I learned not to judge people on their initial reaction towards me. I try not to take any working relationship personally. I think, when I was younger, I took it personally. Now that I'm more experienced, I better understand people's reactions to the pressure of recording and performing, and that people have to blow off steam.

Joan Armatrading does demos at home, note for note, of everything she wants. She plays all the instruments and has a drum machine. You can feel that she's very protective of what she's doing, and she doesn't want anybody to get too free with interpreting her ideas. As it turned out, I think she loved the way I played, and we did two albums together. I was conscious of her anxiety about that, though. I was able to be myself and I think, ultimately, what happened was that she ended up trusting me and what I would play, and let it go at that. It's just like people's relationships with one another, making friends, getting to know them, and trusting them.

**RF:** Were you initially turned off in that situation where you weren't allowed to offer your creative input in the beginning?

**JM:** In Joan's case, she has such great ideas that it didn't bother me. Honestly, though, she didn't have a lot to say about the drums. She would play bass, guitar, and piano on her demo, and she would want those parts to be pretty much note for note. But drumwise, it really was left more open to my interpretation.

**RF:** What about working with various producers? How do you know when to be aggressive or submissive, etc.?

**JM:** The psychology of working with producers is to do the best you can and good luck. Seriously, when you go to work, your only concern must be doing what you're supposed to be doing, not the psychology of how to work with the artist, producer, or the engineer. Probably one of the best producers I've ever worked with is Steve Lillywhite. He always seems to get what he wants. He doesn't make any demands. He just records the music. Steve is always the same no matter who he is working with. He's consistent. He's very good, and he's not out to prove anything. What that means to me is that he doesn't have to get on anyone's case, because he doesn't have to justify being there and getting his salary. Other people who really shouldn't be producing records do that. There are so many different types of people you have to work with, and you have to try to draw the best out of them, too. I've worked with David Foster on a Hall & Oates record and the

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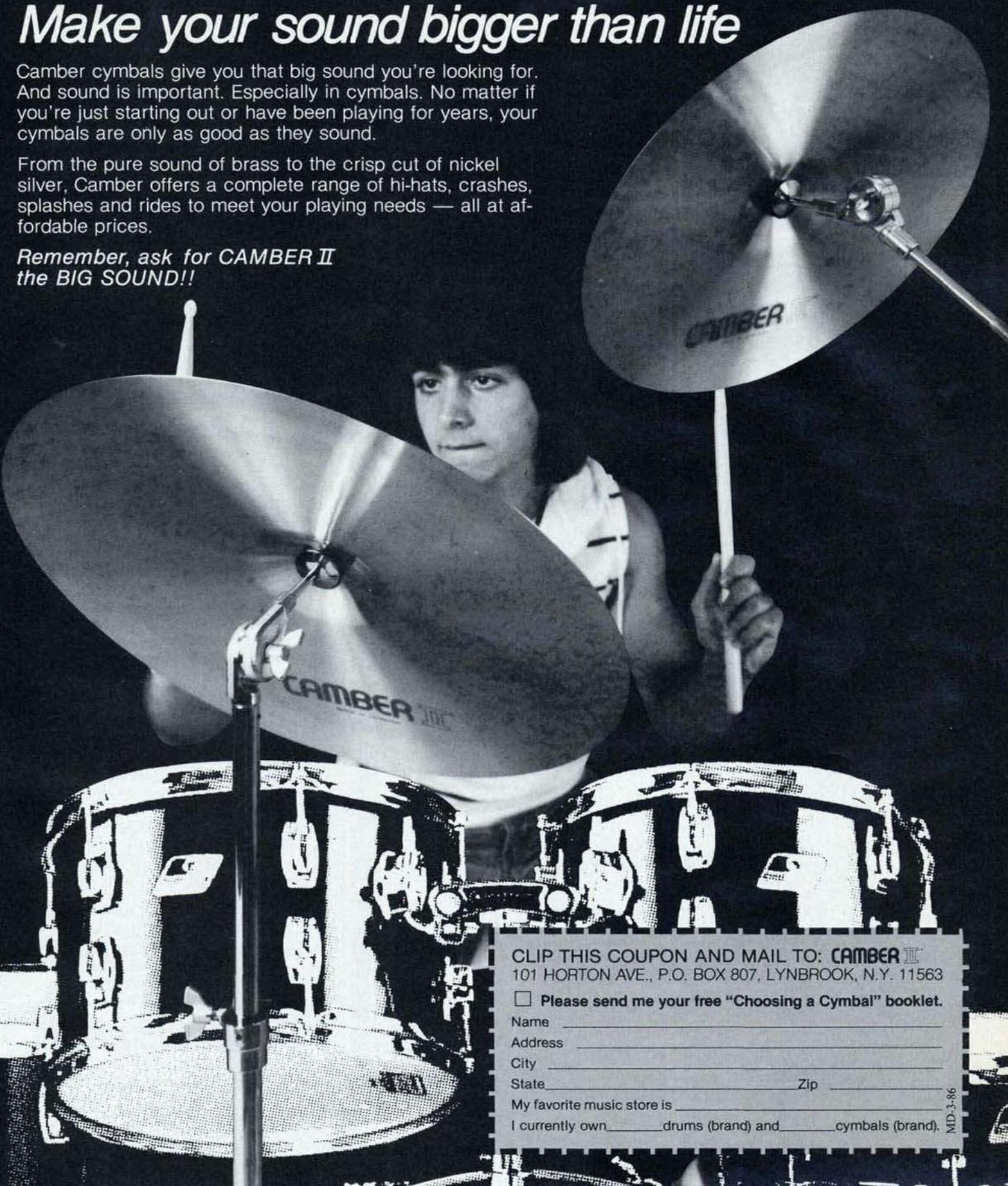
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**RF:** A lot of musicians are getting into production, which you, yourself, have done. What do you have to know to be a good producer, and where can your past as a drummer teach you any of this?

**JM:** It's a mystery. I've worked with all

different types of producers. With Lillywhite, you don't labor over things. That's not to say he doesn't work real hard or that he's not meticulous, but you never feel like the pressure is on at all. He's such a natural kind of person. He's not a musician, and he may have had some experience as an engineer, but other people engineer his records.

**RF:** Can you be more specific? What do you mean by there's not any pressure? As opposed to what?

**JM:** Part of it is that most producers and artists I work with would rather be playing the drums themselves, but they can't. Most people think they can do it better. I always felt that Steve hired me because I did what he wanted or he understood the idea that, "This is the guy who is on this session, and I want him to do it his way. I don't want to force him to do it my way." A lot of times, I get people who love what I do. I used to think it was all a mistake, and they really wanted my brother. That was because of years of growing up where no one knew anything about me. I don't take myself seriously like that. But people really love the Gabriel *Security* album. It seems to have had a major impact on people. When I go into a session, I think people either expect to hear that sound or they expect whatever they're doing to be turned into a Gabriel record.

I was with a producer recently, riding to the studio, and he said, "I just did a drum program. I want you to do whatever you want to do, and I want it to be like you. I have a couple of ideas . . ." Then I knew. I even said to someone else on the date, "Watch what happens." I could tell that this guy didn't really want me to do what I wanted to do. He wanted me to do what *he* did with the drum machine. That happens a lot with producers.

**RF:** When you're producing, do you give the same creative freedom to the players as you like to have when you're playing?

**JM:** I really do try to. Even at the very worst, what I'll do is leave the room and let somebody do what it is they feel should be done if they feel strongly about it. I never say no. You can't do that. Of course, the people I love working with are the ones who let me do that, and the people I really love working with are the ones who, if I'm fiddling around at the piano, will come out and say, "Is that an idea? Do you want to put that down?" They won't say, "You're a drummer. You can't do that." More times than not, though, it's a vocal part I'll start singing around the studio. Some people don't want to be bothered, and others will throw a mic' up, and say to go in and

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record that. In five minutes it's over, and we know if it's good or not.

**RF:** Why did you start your own studio, Wigtown?

**JM:** I needed someplace to blow off steam, because I become more and more frustrated as time goes by. I wish I had done Wigtown ten years ago.

**RF:** Frustrated by what?

**JM:** Lately, I've been having trouble. I haven't been going into Wigtown, because I have this block. I'm so used to being triggered by someone else's chord and bouncing off something else that I've neglected my own creativity. It's very frustrating. Hopefully, over a period of time, Wigtown will help me rediscover that part of me that is an originator. I should be making my own records. I've never been that much of a writer, but when I do write, people seem to like it. Wigtown was a place for me to start working on my own, keep working with other people, and take that hourly clock-watching pressure off. It's a 16-track studio, and we've done some great things out there.

**RF:** Did you score something for PBS?

**JM:** Tim Cappello and I scored "Child Savers," which was for a series of documentaries called *Frontline*. I've been recording some jingles in there, too. I wrote and played on a *Claire* jingle. I'm working on a project now with a singer named Robbie Dupree along with Larry Hoppen. Robbie Dupree is an artist on his own, and Larry is from Orleans. So the three of us are working on this project, of which I am involved in the production and the playing. Tony Levin is also involved in it.

**RF:** Have you learned anything about production from having Wigtown?

**JM:** Having the studio affords me the opportunity to play around with things much, much more: sounds, EQ, delays, reverbs, all sorts of effects, tape speed up and slow down. It's giving me a chance to really explore more. On a very basic level—just getting a drum sound—I can do that on my own now. I can set up mic's myself.

**RF:** How do you get a good drum sound?

**JM:** There's no formula to getting a good drum sound. The thing I've found that's great for me is to walk into a session and ask, "Do you have PZM's? Do you have a 414? Which direction are we going to face the drums in?" I'm not leaving it up to anybody to mess around with my drum sound. The thing I've really learned that nobody can argue with is: Let's just try things. Some people don't even want to try it. That's the amazing thing I've found. Take a couple of pressure-zone microphones and throw them on the floor, and I mean throw them. I was working on a session in New York with an engineer named Nico Bolas from L.A., and I flipped him out. We had this great sounding room, and I was in there by myself. I said, "Let's try these mic's." Fortunately, he was into it.

He said, "Where are we going to put them?" There were four of these PZM mic's and I said, "Let's put two of them on the floor." "Where?" "Throw them on the floor." By the end of the session, I actually had him throwing the microphone, or at least putting it down and sliding it on the floor, and it sounded incredible.

There are four people involved in Wigtown: myself; Mark Mandelbaum, who is the engineer; Todd Levine, who is the second engineer and my drum roadie; and Frank Del Torto, my business manager and cousin. We can spend an entire evening putting microphones in any con-

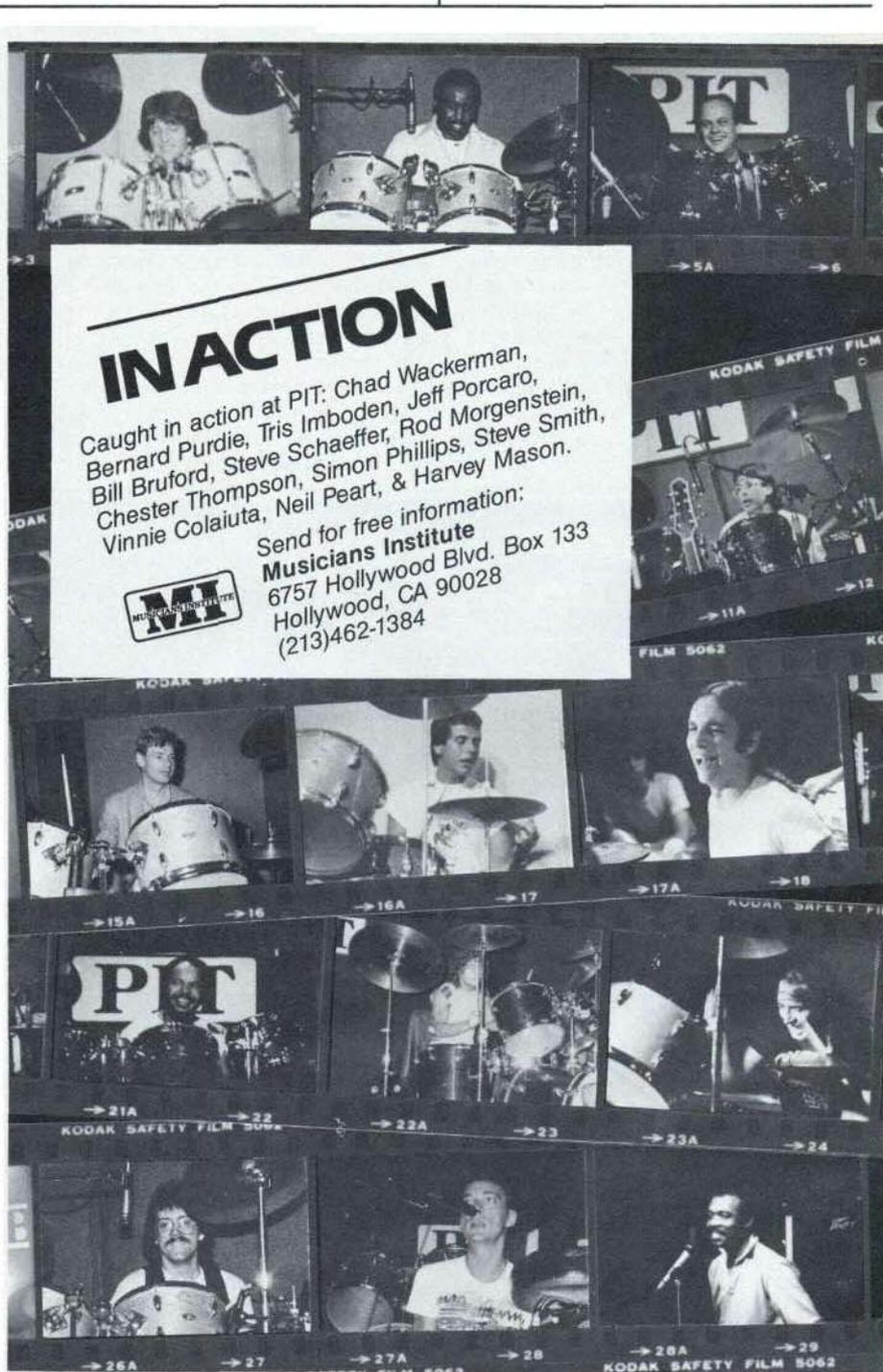
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The collage includes several photos of drummers at their kits, some with the letters 'PIT' visible in the background. The photos are labeled with numbers like 5A, 6, 11A, 12, 15A, 16, 16A, 17, 17A, 18, 21A, 22, 22A, 23, 23A, 24, 26A, 27, 27A, 28, 28A, and 29. Some photos have 'KODAK SAFETY FILM' printed on them.

ceivable place. That's helped me to understand more about walking into a room and figuring where to put a mic', unlike the people you work with in New York who are jingle-oriented and set up microphones one way for every drumkit. Because there's pressure on them, they don't feel they can experiment, and they seem not to have control over what they're doing.

**RF:** In the realm of working with other producers, you now have certain people you work with usually, but when you first walk into a session with an unknown producer, how do you know how to be?

**JM:** I try to be as nice as possible. I'm very good at sussing people out. I walk into a situation, and I'm very flexible and open to anything. I'll sort of sit back and see where it's all at. I've realized what a great person I must be to work with, now that I've had to work with other people as a producer. People are crazy. I've worked with people who are so unprofessional, untalented, and have attitudes. They try to overcompensate for what they can't do by being intimidating. I just don't get intimidated. The combination of someone being unpleasant and incapable is something I just can't stand. If someone isn't capable of doing something and says, "Look, I just can't do this," then fine, we'll find something they can do and we'll make it work. I can't tolerate people who try to bamboozle their way through situations. So working as a producer, I see the advan-

tages of working with someone like myself. I'm a really good professional. I come in and get the job done. If you want ideas, I've got ideas. If you want me to shut up, that could be a problem. [laughs] I don't get called a tremendous amount to work with other people, though, because they think I'm unavailable and that the musicians who play on the Gabriel albums are impossible to get a hold of. There's kind of a mystique to us and him. Plus, Peter is such an interesting and offbeat kind of an artist, anyway.

**RF:** What kind of an artist are you?

**JM:** I'm a starving artist.

**RF:** What kind of music do you create?

**JM:** I don't know how to describe it. It's kind of European, I guess. The only way I can explain what I'd like to do, not necessarily what I've done yet, is that there are two albums I wish I had made, which I could see myself making. One is by a group called Blue Nile and the other is by David Sylvian, on Virgin. David Sylvian was the lead singer in a group called Japan, and he has an album that is about two years old now called *Brilliant Trees*. Anybody who reads this article should definitely try to find both of those records, because they're incredible. I don't know how to explain why they're great, but I think I look at them like most people look at Peter Gabriel records. However, I don't see Peter Gabriel records like that because I'm too close to them. I think those two artists

do accessible pop, but that they maintain total artistic integrity. They're what Top 40 should be.

**RF:** You spend a lot of time in England. Is there an English sound you seem to be compatible with?

**JM:** I think partially it's from touring and working with Gabriel in England. In Europe and England, he's been much more popular than he is here. Working in England creates an interesting combination of mentalities between my being an American and not growing up with the typical influences the kids in England grow up with, and still having a different style and being creative. The whole combination of these things works well. In England, as many people will talk to me about a Hall & Oates record as they will a Peter Gabriel record. I think people can't believe that the guy who played on a Peter Gabriel record also played on a Hall & Oates record.

I work with a lot of bands that nobody's ever heard of over here, and every once in a while, one of them turns out to be a Tears For Fears, which is a local Bath band. They're young, they make a record, and all of a sudden, there are three million copies sold in America and a number-one single. There are a lot of those kinds of bands in England. Lately, a lot of people know about me because of the Tears For Fears album, and a lot of people are scratching their heads saying, "What's this sax arrangement?" They credited me with saxophone arrangement. When I toured with Tears For Fears, I didn't play drums. I played marimba, saxophone, a bit of keyboards, percussion, and sang. On the intro to the song "Working Hour," I played a long sax intro on my own, live. Roland Orzabal loved what I played and used to walk around singing the melody I played. When it came time to do the record, I played the drums on it, but they hired another saxophone player and got him to learn my sax part. I guess they felt funny about that, so they put me down as an arranger.

**RF:** On the completely personal realm, I want to paint an image of you, and you tell me if it's accurate. The image I have is an eccentric kind of mysterious, unapproachable person.

**JM:** [reading from a dictionary] It's "ec," which is "out of," plus "kentron," which is "center": "Out of center. Not having the same center as two circles. Not exactly circular. Odd, as in conduct. Unconventional ..."

**RF:** Unconventional was the word I was going to use.

*continued on page 56*

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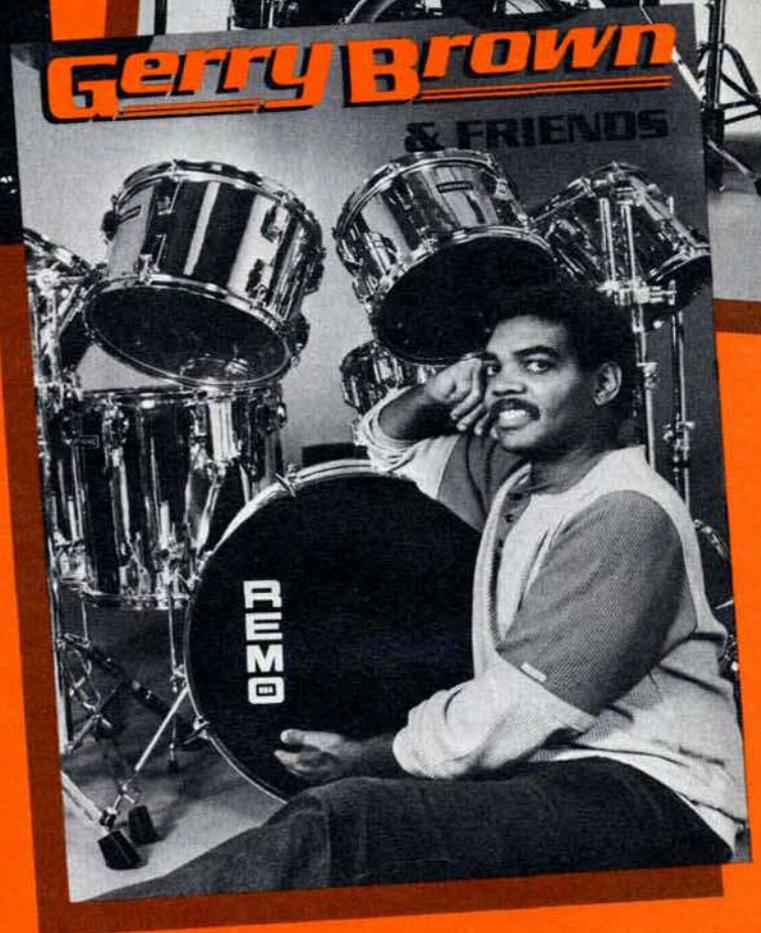
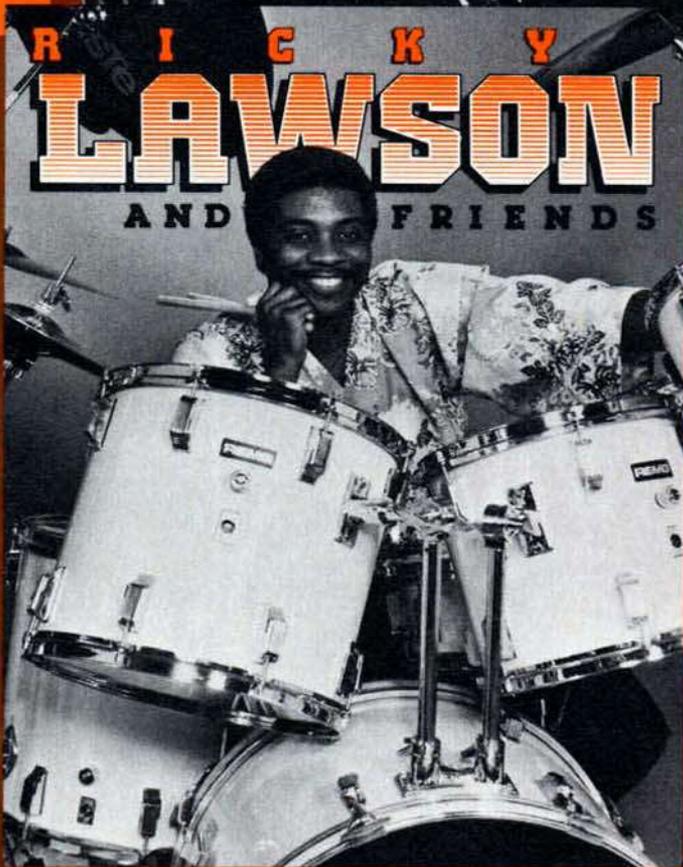
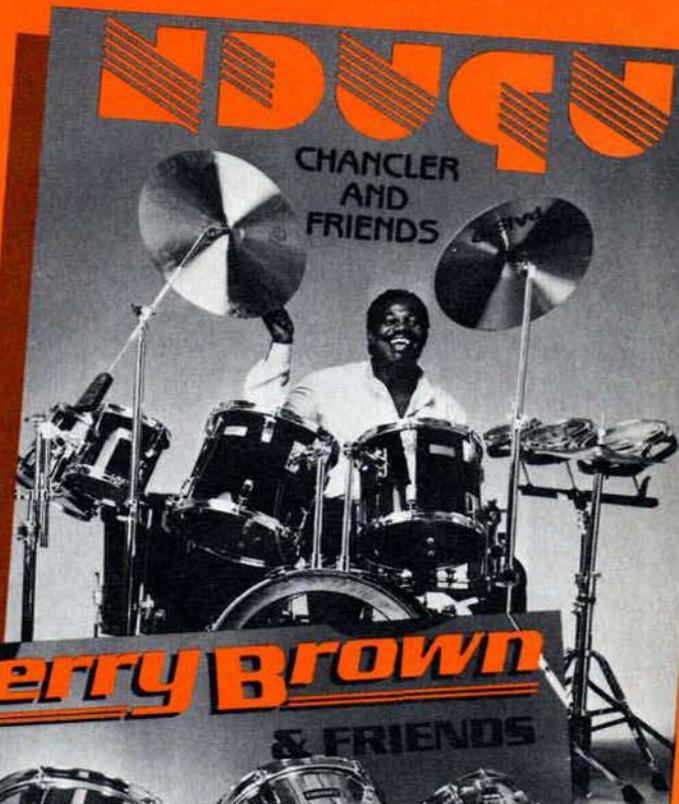
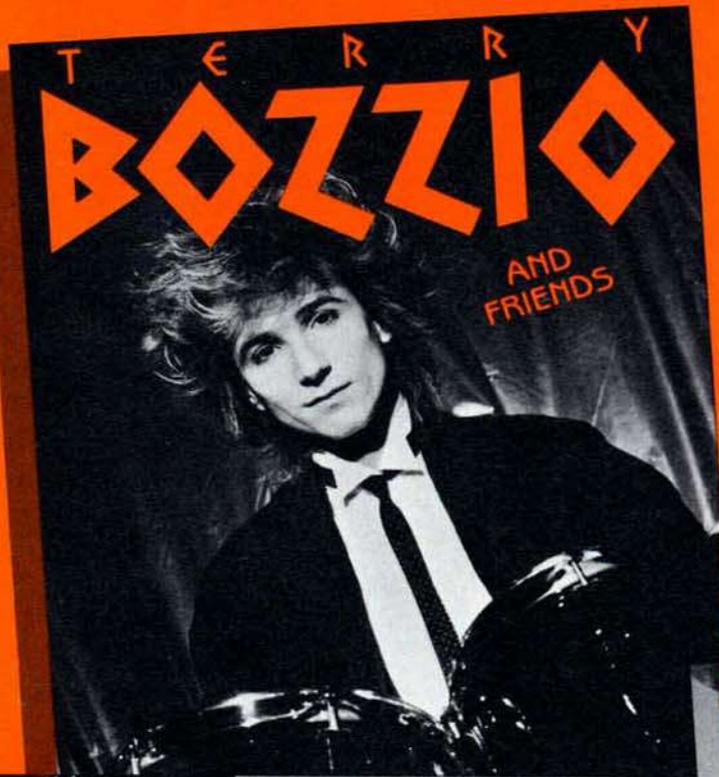
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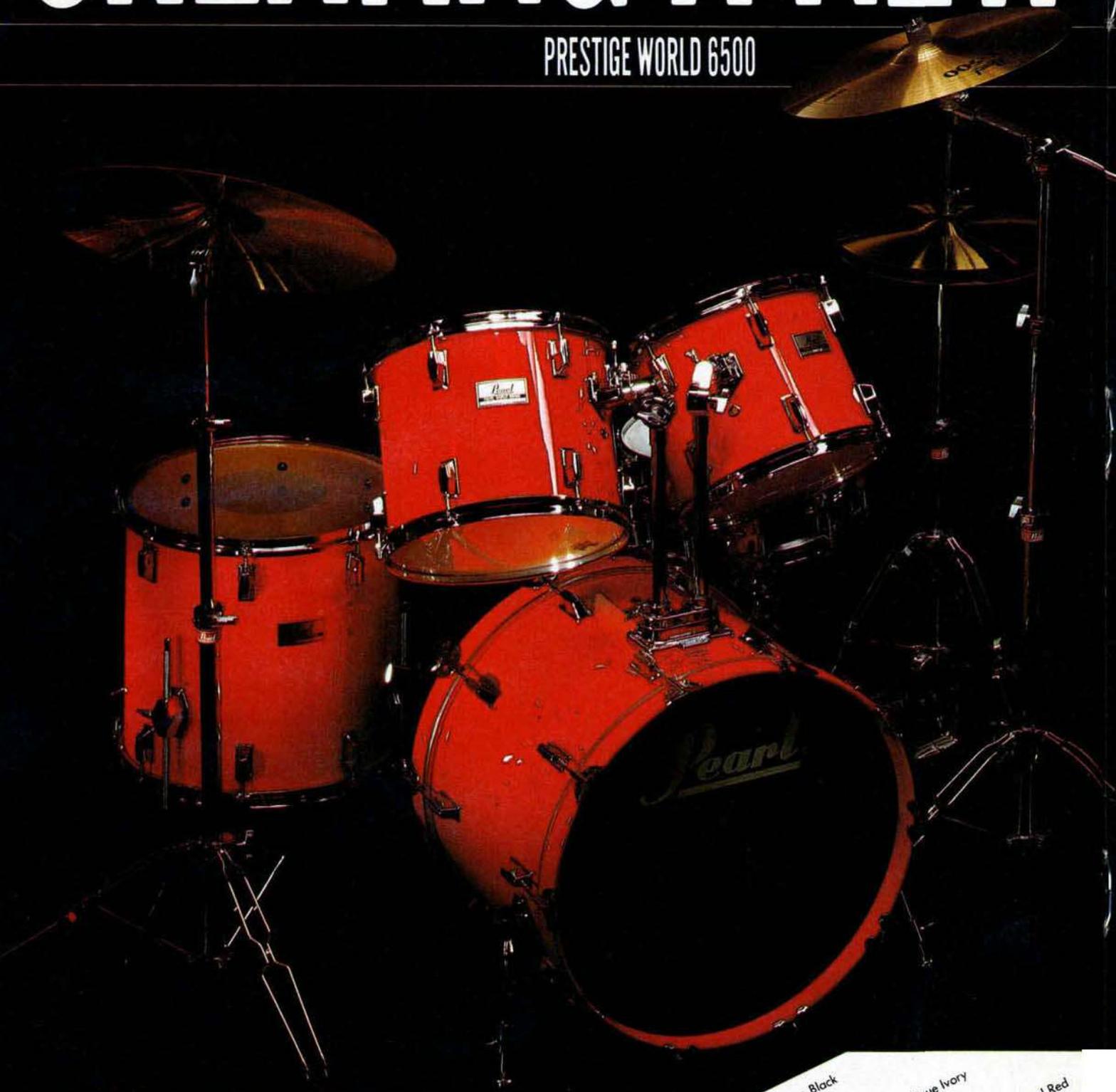
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**JM:** You lucked out that that word was in there. You must have been shaking. [laughs]

**RF:** Do you accept the definition "unconventional"?

**JM:** It's hard for me to see myself the way others see me, and I have trouble scrutinizing myself. But I would say definitely that most people think of me that way. Most people's impression of me is mysterious and unapproachable.

**RF:** So what I'm asking is, how accurate is that?

**JM:** I don't think that's accurate, personally. I don't think that's me. I think that has to do more with how I appear to peo-

ple.

**RF:** Why do you think you appear to be unapproachable?

**JM:** I really don't know. Why do I appear that way to you?

**RF:** Maybe it has to do with the music you work with so much. It's that hip, mysterious . . .

**JM:** That's true, and I know a lot of people don't call me because they think that the guys who are involved with Gabriel are these weird, eccentric, mysterious, unapproachable people—like we live in Nepal. They never think they can hire us. People don't bother calling me, but when they do track me down and finally muster up,

"Would you do this?" and I say yes, they flip out. It's like, "You go bowling, too?" Then their whole image of me is shattered.

**RF:** Do you ever feel the responsibility to live up to that image?

**JM:** I always do. That's a big pressure, personally.

**RF:** Would you like to keep the mystique?

**JM:** No, not at all. I just get worried about bursting that balloon that people have of me.

**RF:** So you're very aware of the image people have of you.

**JM:** I'm very aware and it makes me kind of uncomfortable, because I don't want to make others uncomfortable. That's my main feeling.

**RF:** Is there more to your life than drums and music?

**JM:** Definitely, unquestionably, unequivocally.

**RF:** So then, what are the important things to you?

**JM:** Right now, I've been doing a lot of evaluating of things like that.

**RF:** People seem to be important to you. **JM:** People are very important to me.

**RF:** Relationships with the people you work with almost seem more important than the actual product.

**JM:** That's definitely true. It's good that you said that. Ultimately, people *are* the most important thing. I could easily exist without the drums, but I couldn't live without my family.

I guess I've been thinking about this kind of thing lately because of the business side of things. If you want to become a professional drummer, it becomes a big business, and you've got to deal with that. I'm being overwhelmed by the music business these days, and I'm going through some changes with that. I've become more of a businessman than a musician, I feel.

**RF:** Is the goal being an artist?

**JM:** Definitely. I've really got to stop playing only on other people's records and start concentrating on my own music. I've got to do that. It's a hard decision to make.

**RF:** It's also a financial risk.

**JM:** Which never was a factor before, but all of a sudden, it seems to be.

**RF:** That's what happens when you buy studios and such.

**JM:** When you grow up, really. Before, I was very cavalier about that stuff, and now that I've become a grown-up, I have to get used to it.

**RF:** Does becoming 30 intimidate you?

**JM:** Not at all. I finally made that transformation from being a kid to a grown-up, and I have to get used to that now. 

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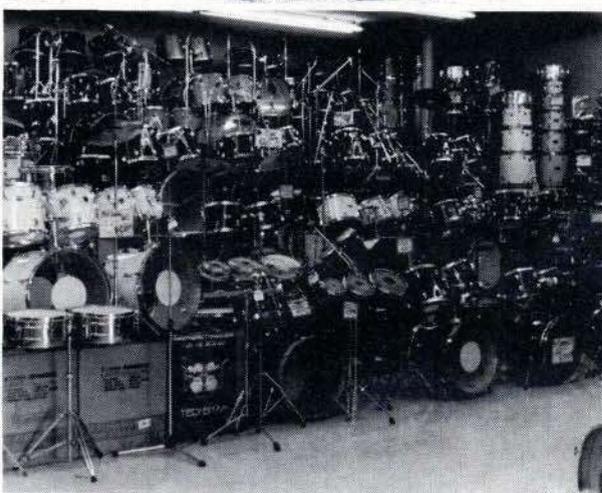
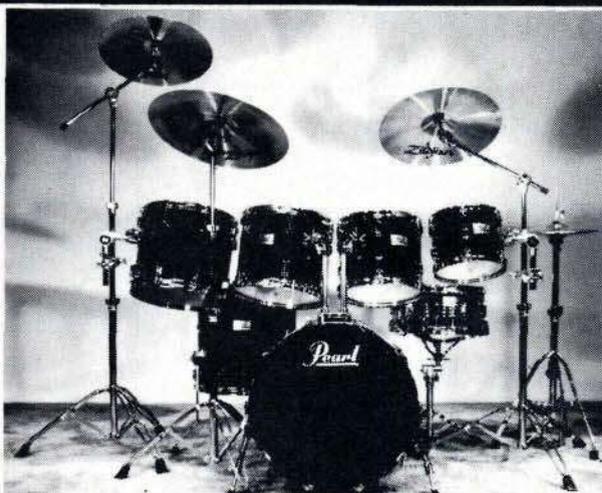
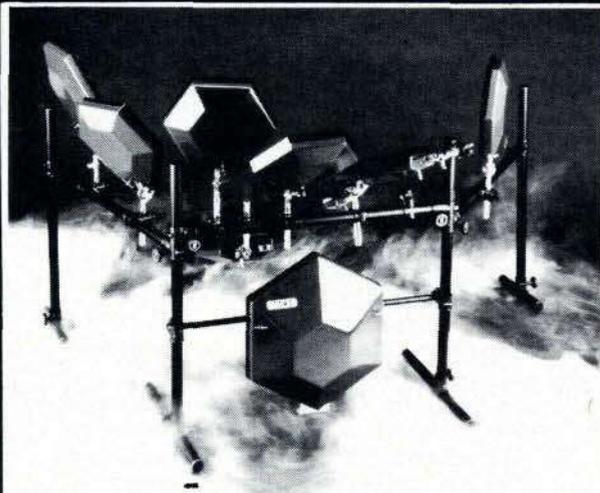
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# Paradiddle

There seems to be a lot of controversy today concerning the usefulness and importance of drum rudiments. This column is not an attempt to justify all of the 26 American Drum Rudiments but, rather, to demonstrate how we can take one of these rudiments, and apply it to the drumset in a creative and useful way. The rudiment that we will explore is one of the most basic, but when played on the drumset, this rudiment can be developed into a contemporary-sounding funk groove. The rudiment we will look at is the single paradiddle.

In this first example, the paradiddle is played on a closed hi-hat. All of the following ideas work best in a medium tempo (quarter note = 92-120). However, you can start at a slower tempo until you are comfortable with these grooves. Concentrate on making these exercises have a good "feel," and be sure to play the accented notes much louder than the unaccented notes.

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

In Example 2, we have moved the accented notes from the hi-hat over to the snare drum. The left hand crosses under the right hand to play the snare drum note on beat 4.

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

In Example 3, we will play a different bass drum pattern that gives this groove a unique sound. We have also added two more accents on the hi-hat in the first beat of the measure. Also, notice the accented bass drum note and really "lay into" that beat.

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

In Example 4, we will add the open and closed sound on the hi-hat to "color" the groove even more.

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

In Example 5, we will take the hi-hat note on beat 3 and play it on the floor tom. Also, note the change in the bass drum pattern.

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

It should be evident to you now what can be done with the paradiddle, or any other rudiment for that matter, by using imagination and creative thinking. It is not always the rudiments or sticking patterns that are good or bad but, rather, how we choose to use and apply them to our playing.

The following eight grooves are just a small sampling of the many possibilities that can be created by using the paradiddle on the drumset. I hope these ideas provide a good starting point and foundation upon which you can build, create, and develop your own ideas and grooves.

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

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

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

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

by Joseph E. Forthome

# Funk

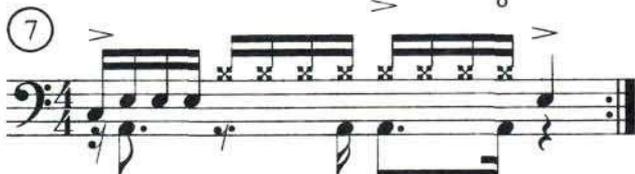
R L R R L R L L L R L R R L R L L



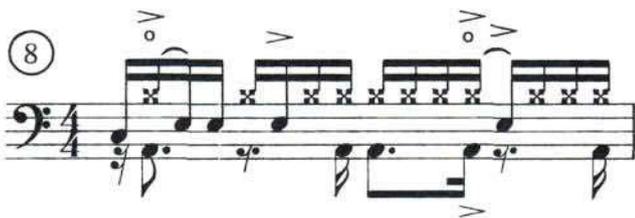
R L R R L R L L L R L R R L R L L



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



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



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



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by Simon Goodwin

# Creativity Or Conformity

It's generally accepted that, for a band to succeed and make a name for themselves, they must have something original to offer—a musical identity that is all their own. Set against this is the unfortunate fact that it's usually very difficult for a totally original act to gain initial acceptance. Most of the "bread-and-butter" gigs are taken by bands who are able to give their listeners familiar material played in a familiar way. The same is true of individual musicians. You *can* make a career for yourself and earn respect by sounding like other people, but you'll *never* go down in the annals of musical history as one of the "greats" unless there is something distinctive about your playing.

Human nature plays some strange tricks. We all want to be individuals, and yet, there is always the longing to belong. Artistically, we want to be innovators, but we need acceptance. People do go their own ways to develop their art in the direction they want to go, but it's only those who eventually find acceptance that you *hear* about. The need for acceptance is tied in with the need for financial security, so there is always a strong motivation to conform. Actually, this need to conform early on in their careers is often a good thing for the development of creative artists. You seldom see a completely unschooled musician with a fresh approach to the instrument find success. There are exceptions, but most people learn the rules thoroughly before they start to experiment with bending or breaking them.

Another problem for the unschooled musician is the ability to judge oneself objectively. You might like what you do, but without a good grounding in what's gone before, it's very difficult to gauge whether your ideas are adding anything new and constructive. Also, without any guidance or formal training on the instrument, the musician's ability to get the best results from it is limited.

There's a saying among club musicians that, if a top star were to grace the stage suddenly, as long as he or she was anonymous and presented in the same way as the house band, nobody would notice. This isn't supposed to be insulting but, rather, a reflection on the attitudes of audiences who tend to take jobbing bands for granted, and only sit up and take notice if there's something to indicate that they ought to. The typical Hollywood scenario of the young kid sitting behind the drums

and the whole room watching spellbound belongs strictly in the realm of fiction. The chances of it happening are slim, however good you are. Your chances of impressing people by being exceptional and unusual are so small that it's a much better bet to impress them by fitting in and obviously *belonging*.

The learning process is bound to involve a certain amount of *molding* of the player. Good teachers will be careful to leave room for personal development, and not just turn out carbon copies of themselves. But it's what you learn, either by going to lessons or by listening to the music you enjoy, that goes a long way towards forming your musical character. When you listen to the music you enjoy, you imagine yourself in the role of the drummer, in the same way that, as a child, you might have imagined yourself in the role of a favorite film character. This "I am the drummer" feeling can get you into a state of mind in which you can *mentally* play the music by imagining yourself doing it. Sometimes it's quite a jump to being able to actually play it, but it is a start. Your own creativity is heavily influenced by the music your mind is absorbing.

Part of being creative is being yourself, and as long as you're absorbing influences, this can be a matter of playing like your favorite drummer, or like an amalgamation of your favorites. This is fine, as long as you *control* the urge to try to sound like your favorite drummer, regardless of the musical environment in which you find yourself. If you want to play in one particular style, it's necessary to join or form a band that plays in that style. It's possible, to a point, to influence the style of the band, but only when the other members are prepared to go along with you. After an audition, I was once told by the bandmembers, that I sounded like a particular well-known drummer. They then told me that they wouldn't particularly want to have *him* in the band either! It's so easy to have a clear idea of how you would like to hear the drums being played, without having sufficient sensitivity to the musical environment in which they *are* being played. On the other hand, you *can* have some musical ideas that are good, but are just not acceptable to the musicians you're playing with, because they are not prepared for something different.

Jon Hiseman once told me that, when musicians tell their drummer to play like

another drummer, they're really saying they want the drumming to make them feel good, which isn't happening at the time. This is undoubtedly true, but it's worth considering the psychological reasons for musicians wanting some sort of regulation drum sound behind them. It might be that their drummer really is failing to give them the lift they want, or that they have conditioned themselves to expect certain things from the drummer, and only feel comfortable when they're getting them. This is very understandable when the music as a whole fits into certain conventions; it doesn't do for the drummer to be the *only* one out of step.

Drummers often have less influence over the type of music played than the other musicians. It's far more often a case of "Put a rhythm to this tune," than "Put a tune to this rhythm." It's therefore up to the drummers to make their parts appropriate to the music, rather than expecting the music to be adapted to suit the drums. I *do not mean* that you should sit back and be tolerant when people are not keeping time, or are coming in on the wrong beat. But you should always make sure that what you're doing is right for the musical situation you're in. In this way, the musical conventions can be very helpful as guidelines. When you hear a tune being played in a particular way, you *know* the type of drum part to play. Remember what the disco craze of a few years ago did? You could find almost any tune—standards, classical, or rock 'n' roll hits—being played with a disco beat. The point is that the opportunity is often there to change the rhythmic feels in a lot of music, but the drummer very rarely has *carte blanche* to do this at will. Teamwork with the rest of the band is required, and this usually involves following conventions—at least as far as the jobbing scene is concerned.

There are two good reasons why jobbing bands have to play within conventional frameworks: One is that audiences usually prefer to hear things they know, and the other is that, in most cases, they want to dance as well. It's the particular responsibility of the drummer to give them a beat they can dance to. When you're doing this for nonprofessional dancers, it's important that the rhythm be such that an untrained ear and untrained feet are able to relate to it. It should generally be kept straight and uncluttered. Even when soloing, if there are dancers on the floor, the

pulse should be laid down in an obvious fashion. Musicians might feel it if it's only *implied*, but a dancing audience won't.

So far, I've played down the creative side of things for jobbing drummers. But if we are to grow musically, *a creative urge is vital*, so let's consider how it's best nurtured. One good way is to become involved with your colleagues in writing and arranging original material. This can be a great outlet, even if you do have to fall back on the tried-and-tested stuff when you perform. With the recent boom in home recording, it's become much easier for groups of musicians to get together to "demo" their material. The drummer's contribution can be invaluable in making the difference between "just another song" and something truly original. The Paul Simons and the Donald Fagens of the world are able to come up with beautiful fresh ideas, but less experienced writers always tend to conceive their songs within very conventional frameworks. An innovating influence in the rhythmic department can be very helpful.

In "Playing Music You Don't Like" (*MD* Feb. '84), I talked about how it's possible to inject a bit of yourself into the playing of music that would otherwise be boring for you. It is, in fact, difficult not to do this to some extent. The important thing is to keep it within reasonable limits. We're like sponges; we soak up influences, often subconsciously. These get mixed up in the melting pot of the mind and come out in our playing. If you set out to reproduce a particular part played by somebody else, chances are that you won't *quite* make it, and it will come out sounding slightly different but still acceptable, *or* you might actually add something to it. This aspect of being creative does work, as long as you don't set out deliberately to turn something on its head when a particular style of playing is called for.

One of the great joys of being jobbing drummers is that we can be musical chameleons. We're not specialist players, and we don't often call the shots. But we *can* develop versatility, which allows us a wide spectrum of influences to learn from. Clearly, we're going to have our own preferences, and we can continue to develop our playing in areas that we enjoy. But if we want to work, we can't afford to have a blinkered outlook. It's our responsibility to please most of the people most of the time, that is, other musicians, employers and audiences.

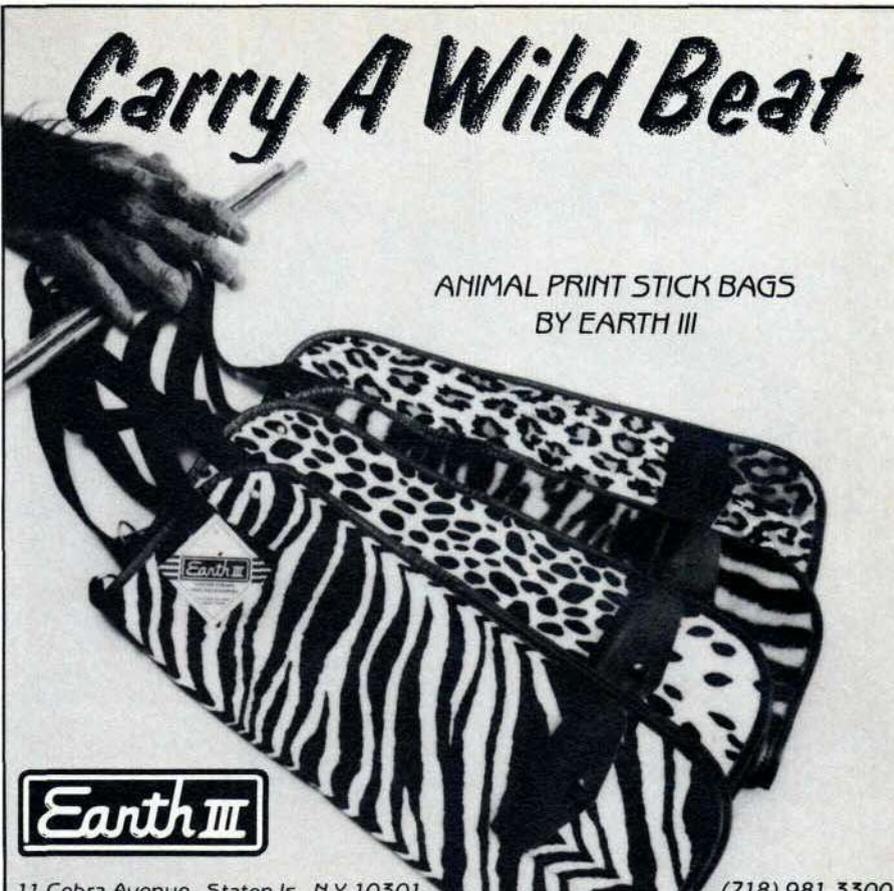
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Smith continued from page 25

"Well, this is my extension right here." So he saw himself in me.  
**CS:** That's beautiful.

**SS:** So I'm an expression of how much further he wanted to carry it. I have a great love for my pop and my moms, too. They gave me a lot of support. You know, I would trip sometimes, because my mom would just sit and watch me practice occasionally. She was a paraprofessional and worked at the high school I attended. When she came home and finished her chores, she would come down to the basement, stretch out, and watch me practice. Isn't that something? I mean, you can't get any more support than that. I remember when I first went to college, and she told me that it just wasn't the same, because she was used to hearing me in the basement practicing the drums. It took them both a while to get adjusted to not hearing me play the drums. They miss me, and I miss them. She's always asking when I'm coming home, and I say, "Whenever I get a gig that brings me close to home."

**CS:** Where'd you go to college?

**SS:** Berklee College of Music. I *passed through* there for two years, and then I copped a gig with [singer] Jon Hendricks. It's very interesting how that came about. I was doing a lot of work in Boston. It got to the point where I was playing with some of the faculty members there: this pianist by the name of Alex Ulanofsky, who I believe is still teaching there. He'd done some previous gigs with Jon whenever he came to Boston, and Alan Dawson was usually the drummer. Now this was December of 1980, and Jon was doing this thing in Vermont over the Christmas/New Year week. So he called Alex, and he was trying to get Alan Dawson, but Alan had something else happening. So Alex was going to get this faculty drummer named Quinous Johnson, who was my ear-training teacher, private drum teacher, and very good friend. But he had gone back home to Jackson, Mississippi, for the holidays. So Alex called and asked me if I was planning on going home. I said I was, and then he asked me if I'd be interested in making a gig with Jon Hendricks. I called my parents and said I wouldn't be making it home for Christmas. That was the start of it—missing many, many holidays.

We didn't have any rehearsal. They came up around Christmas Eve, and we had this big Christmas dinner and all. We got to know

everybody, and when we got to the gig, we just talked down the tunes and hit. Jon was a little skeptical—I was just a young guy of 19—and when he got there, he asked who the drummer was, saw me, and freaked: "That little kid?" But afterwards I learned that Alex had told him not to worry, that I could handle the gig, and that he thought I was one of the best drummers he'd heard in 20 years, which was real nice of him. You know—"Trust me." But then after the first few notes, Jon turned around and looked at me like, "Yeah!" So I had a ball, and at the end of the gig, he asked me if I'd like to go on the road with him. That took me back, because I'd never been on the road like that. So that was heavy for me. And I must have called up my parents every day for a week. They both wanted me to finish school, but my dad could understand because he was a musician. He'd wanted to do that sort of thing, but didn't because of his family. He said to me, "Opportunities like that don't knock every day, so you should *get on it*." So I took a deep breath and went out. I was on that gig until December of 1982—almost two years. I saw a lot of things, and I grew mentally, spiritually, and musically. When I found it was time to go, I went. And in the meantime, I would do gigs in the city, because after Vermont, we came straight to the city and played Paulsson's—before they got into a serious cabaret thing and excluded all drums—plus the Other End and Greene Street. But at Greene Street, a few days after the gig came through, we found out they didn't allow drums, and I was heartbroken. I'd just gotten the gig, and now I couldn't make it. But Jon said it was cool: "We'll just arrange it so you can play brushes on a phone book, and play some tambourine, maracas, and all of your little percussion." The gig was fun, and people thought it was a gas. Whenever I wasn't working with Jon, I'd do gigs with [pianist] John Hicks and [saxophonist] Bobby Watson. Through that, I became affiliated with trombonist Slide Hampton.

**CS:** I'm curious about what it is you studied when you practiced to achieve your current level, and what you're practicing now to advance it. I ask that specifically because Sam Ulano told me that, of all the drummers who ever came to him, you were the hardest working, most gifted student he ever had.

**SS:** Well, Sam specialized in sight reading. If you want to get your eyes together, Sam is the cat to see, as far as my observations go, because this cat has his whole thing hooked up as far as a system is concerned. Discipline is something you can definitely learn from him. I had a good amount of that with my previous teachers back home, because that was one thing they were always into—the love of practice. Donald Taylor *loved* to practice. Anytime I'd call him up, he'd be practicing, and anytime he called me, I'd be practicing. He gave me that love of practice and the discipline to go with it. So after I got off the road I'd be checking in with Sam at Alex's Music, where he'd be doddle-e-whoppin' on a rubber pad with these metal sticks and talking about reading. I became interested and decided to check this cat out, because my eyes were kind of slack. I dug his system, because he had it organized and tight, and he knew how he was running it. So I started studying with him, and it was real nice, because it built up that discipline. It was fun. He's a good guy, and every time you go to a lesson, it's fun because he makes it fun; he's good people, and you look forward to seeing him next week. So I refreshed myself in getting that good discipline back, hooking up a system, and getting things back in order. I guess my youth and enthusiasm gave him something to feed off of, too. I mean, I just wanted to learn, and I always loved to apply what I learned.

**CS:** So he kept throwing books at you and challenging you?

**SS:** Yeah, it seemed as if this cat wrote books every day. I'd come to my lesson, and he'd have a new book for me to try out. So we'd read through a few pages, and I'd be into it: I'd say, "Do you have another copy?" And he'd say it was just a prototype, and that when he got a copy he'd lay it on me. It was cool, because you can apply the art of organization to all the aspects of your life—period. I was impressed by the fact that here was a cat who was like 63 years old, and he kept in shape, could sight-read his butt off, and still played some gigs. That showed me that you don't have to be washed up when you're 50. So when I reach that age, I know I should be able to perform at that level or better.

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CS: What are you practicing now?

SS: It's been a while since I've been with Sam, but I still practice my sight reading. I just reached a point where I got so busy that I couldn't make regular lessons, and I miss that edge you get when you *have* to see somebody every week. But I still work with my books on sight reading and technical things. I still play along with tapes and records, which goes back to when I was younger and it was so much fun. I don't do it so much now, because I'm experimenting with other ways of learning. Now I practice creating off of tunes. I have a *Real Book*, and so I'll play a head. Then, I'll play some choruses on it, and see how far I can go before I can't come up with any fresh ideas anymore. I'll practice with my drum machine to tighten up my time, program some rhythms in it, and play on top of them.

CS: Do you play other instruments?

SS: Well, I mess with piano; I have a little five-octave keyboard in my apartment. Some people have tried to help me with some little things, like different ways to voice II-V progressions. I have a couple of little piano books that show me how to finger scales, and I practice them because I'm really trying to get some facility. I write music: I have several compositions I've completed, even though it's a real slow process for me, but several people have encouraged me to write, like [altoist] Bobby Watson, [guitarist] Kevin Eubanks, [bassist] Dave Holland, [tenorist/arranger] Frank Foster, [altoist] Steve Coleman, [tenorist/arranger] Benny Golson, and a few others who slip my mind. They encourage me, tell me not to get hung up on trying to write a symphony each time, and give me the confidence to pursue it for the musical benefits it'll yield me as an improviser.

CS: Writing is nothing but reading in reverse.

SS: It affects your playing when you write, because you're thinking more compositionally. I mean, I've been writing for a while; I studied theory in high school, and we'd have writing projects for different settings, like big band pieces for different numbers of horns; I wrote something for strings. So I've had that experience, but my chops are rusty and I have to sharpen them up. But it's something I love to do. Just to know that you can actually create music, make your sound, and hear it being played back at you is a beautiful feeling.

CS: Let me ask you this: Drums are primarily a rhythmic instrument. Do you hear them as a melodic or harmonic instrument in any way?

SS: Within the realm of the physical nature of the instrument, you can't play a C-Major scale on the instrument unless you have a group of concert toms tuned to that scale. But I feel that they can express ideas melodically and harmonically. Take Max and Philly Joe: You can tell that they're playing a tune, right? But it's all based on rhythm anyway. Melody *has* to have some kind of rhythm. And like I've already mentioned, I would love to incorporate all the mallet instruments and timpani into the kit.

CS: Well, you have a very interesting approach to the kit and its tuning. The sound of your kit was really entrancing: so deep and resonant. Let me ask you this: You have a conception on the instrument. How do you want to present your particular synthesis of ideas and vocabularies?

SS: I just want to apply all the experiences I've had and all the things I've learned. I want to be able to apply all that, and reflect that in my music and in my playing. And I want each aspect to show itself at its best. I want everything to be top-notch—just the best it can be. I would just like to communicate with other musicians and the general public, as well as make a contribution on my instrument—a contribution to music for people. I would like people to remember Smitty Smith as a good cat—just good people—because it's more involved than just sitting up here practicing for several hours a day. It's about people, and it makes the expression so much purer and clearer if we have an understanding among people.

CS: Are you a spiritual person?

SS: Yes. God has blessed me with a gift, and I'm going to use it to the fullest. I'm going to multiply it as many times as I can, and give it to the people for them to enjoy. I try to stay high in spirits. I try to

be a positive person. I'm just searching for the truth, for myself, and then apply it—be a part of the truth. And I want to pass it on. Our elders passed it on. They left it here for us: They said, "Here's what we contributed. Take it, use it well, and use it wisely. But—and this is the most important thing—*create something of your own out of it!*" We should also carry on the tradition of doing something for other people—just creating beauty, whether it be music or science or architecture, because it all relates to life itself. It feels great when musicians say you're a musician's musician. That's respect among peers and contemporaries, and that's wonderful. However, it's also nice when people—who maybe never heard jazz or your music before but are just looking for a brighter aspect of life—come up to you after your set, and say they really enjoyed your music and that it made them feel good inside. *That* feels wonderful. That means you were communicating with the public. It seems like it often gets to the point of "I'm the musician, and you're the audience," creating a condescending attitude toward the listener, making the music seem aristocratic or esoteric, and making yourself seem more important than you really are. But it's all still about communication; we could still sit down at a bar and have a conversation. Why should it be any different? Why should we feel that we need to talk above somebody's head?

CS: Maybe to prove one's self-worth. That has been a syndrome in jazz.

SS: I don't see why we have to strain to prove anything. When I was old enough to understand, my parents told me that I was somebody, so I never felt like I had to prove anything. I never worried about proving I was somebody. From there, you just go on and live. Do the best that you can and be honest. Be true to yourself and stick to your guns. Just knowing that you were true to your beliefs is a hell of an accomplishment. Then you are more comfortable than if you were always selling yourself out.

CS: Well, what do you mean by selling out? Many jazz musicians who pay lip service to communication put that on the level of trying to deal with pop music or R&B music, both of which are more familiar forms than the mainstream of jazz.

SS: That's cool so long as they are sincere. That's really not my problem. I can sit up here and pass opinions on what somebody is doing, but I don't care to get into that. It all depends on the artists. If they feel true to themselves and go into "commercial" ventures, and it's really in their hearts, then, to me, that's not selling out. If that is what they really want to do, that's great. Selling out to me is *not* sticking to your guns, *not* having the faith in your own beliefs, or backing down on your own beliefs to benefit somebody else with the *illusion* that you are benefiting yourself. That's what I'm talking about.

CS: I suppose I'm just fishing around to see if you have any interest in music of the so-called pop side of the fence.

SS: Let me put it this way: I can clear it up in one statement. I never declared that I was a jazz musician, because once you put that label on, that's it. *I play good music.* Duke Ellington said that there are only two kinds of music: good and bad—and I play the good kind. At least, I would like to believe that. I've played so-called commercial music. I play in a funk ensemble led by a trombonist named Henry Mitchell—a group called Beautiful People. I've been playing on and off with them for a long time, appearing at clubs like Mikell's, and we're trying to do something in the studio. It's a ball for me to play, because I don't get to do these gigs a lot. I look forward to it, because it's another perspective, and it's another area where I can make a contribution and play good music. I also play with a jazz-fusion big band from time to time, led by a pianist named Tom Pierson. I also auditioned for Sting's band.

I don't totally dislike any style of music. I grew up playing that kind of music: the funk—what is also called R&B—and rock, too, as well as jazz. I'm a child of the '60s and '70s, so that's part of my life. I was playing a lot back home. I had to play with the old cats in order to play jazz, but I was still playing with my boys, too, and we were funking out. Then we did a rock thing. Then when the so-called fusion thing came along, we got into that, but I was still playing jazz, too. Hell, I played in a wedding band for three and a half years when I was in high school, playing country & western



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tunes, polkas, mazurkas, and all. I've played everything, you dig?  
CS: So you don't make any separations?

SS: I just try to judge whether I get a good feeling from the music. No matter who I see, whether it's Sonny Rollins—whom I've had the honor of playing with recently—or James Brown, I go in there with the attitude of trying to learn something from the music, enjoying the show, and going away with a good feeling. It inspires me to be more musical and create more—just to have a good feeling about people and have a good time with them. I want to have a good time. There are some people who look upon music as an occupation, but I don't want to kill the spirit I have about music: I love it, it's fun, and it's a part of me—as a player or as a listener. If I wouldn't enjoy playing in a situation, I'd rather have someone take my place who *would* enjoy playing the gig. You get better music that way. You're not doing people any favors by trying to play music with a negative attitude. Let someone who's up for it have the gig. Don't shortchange the music, and don't shortchange the audience.

CS: You know, when you think of most cats playing a jazz gig, you think of little drums, *Ambassador* heads, thin sticks, and 18" bass drums. But you were going for a big, round bottom frequency that some cats have forgotten about. Have you always had your drums tuned that way?

SS: I always loved that deep sound—that jungle drum sound as some people might call it. With all due respect to Max Roach and all those great drummers like him who tune real high and get a beautiful sound that way, I was just hearing a much deeper gut-bucket sound—that raw Art Blakey sound that just reached out and grabbed you—Roooooaaarrr! I love Art's sound, and I just love that depth of tone and feeling he gets when he plays. That's the sound I'm hearing for now, and I'm trying to capture that sound. I just began using a 22" over the past few months. I used to use a 20", and I tried everything I could to get a deeper sound, but it just wouldn't do it. It depends on the situation, again; I'd use that sound with Dave Holland, Hamiet, Branford Marsalis, or Terence

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Blanchard and Donald Harrison. Now, obviously, if it was a real intimate trio setting or something with a vocalist, I would use a smaller set; I wouldn't use so many toms. I'd use smaller bass drums and cymbals.

The setup I have now is a Sonor kit consisting of 12" and 13" rack toms, 14" and sometimes 16" floor toms, and 18" and sometimes 22" bass drums. The snare is a 6 1/2" bronze-shell Ludwig.

Ludwigs are my favorite snare drums. There's something about Ludwig snare drums. They always give you that nice, fat sound when you hit them in the middle. That always fascinated me, and that's why I always loved to play them. I mean, I have a couple of other snare drums, but just give me a good Ludwig snare, and that's good enough for me.

CS: You tune it so it's pretty fat and resonant, not tight like Roy Haynes.

SS: That's a beautiful thing in and of itself, isn't it? But for my own personal tastes, I'm trying to get a fatter sound, still maintaining the liveliness, so I tune the snare head tighter than the batter head.

CS: It sounded almost like you were bending notes on the snare at points, which is an old Pete LaRoca trick.

SS: Yeah, he kind of sticks the butt of the drumstick into the head. I don't focus on that aspect, but I suppose it comes out that way sometimes. I'm just trying to get a nice, open, fat beat sound. I do that with all my drums, too. I tune my toms low—lower than most drummers would. There's just something about four tom-toms that I love, because it gives me more of a tonal range to deal with. It helps me to achieve a more realistic melodic sound, especially since they're not precisely tuned instruments. So it gives me more of a sense of the pitch that way. I like that sound. I'm not just carrying them around to have a big set.

Cymbals, too—you mentioned to me before that having rivets in my ride cymbal creates a continuous layering of ride cymbal. That's true. I like to look at my ride cymbal sound as a wave on the ocean; it doesn't have to be loud. It just coats the entire area. It surrounds you. It can be relaxing and mellow, or it can build like

the rise and fall of the waves; it's ever-present without being overbearing—but it is there. It creates a mood. I look upon that for all of the cymbals I ride on. Basically, I ride on just two cymbals: the ride on my right and the other one on my left. That's to set different moods. It's creating scenery for the soloist to play off of, and to give the listeners a picture in their own minds of how they hear the music. I'm fascinated with cymbals for the colors they offer, as well as the drums.

CS: What do you have now?

SS: I have an old 22" K. Zildjian medium ride with rivets. I found it at Alex Music; Sam Ulano sold it to me. When I played it in the store, the rivets weren't in it, but I knew it would sound good with them. It has a nice bell, and it has just enough spread to get a crash on it, but just enough weight to get definition when I ride on it. Most of the ride cymbals I hear today are too heavy. Do you know what I mean?

CS: Sure, too dry and top-heavy.

SS: Do you know how Tony got a sound? I like a ride cymbal like that, and Art and Elvin of course. That's where I think I got the idea for that kind of sound. They'd be riding along on one of those rivet cymbals, but when they wanted to crash, they could ask for it. Yet they could come right back into the ride. Their cymbal sounds were so powerful that they just created this ambience through the entire room.

CS: Plus the hiss of the cymbals creates a light hum that blends right in with the ring of the drums—not just a tik-tik sound.

SS: Even with the ride cymbal Art has now, there aren't any rivets in it, but he gets this roar from it that's something else. And that's the way I think about all of my cymbals. Each one sets its own mood—a blanket of sound.

CS: What's the one on your left?

SS: That's an old 20" K. Zildjian medium ride—a perfect match with my 22". I have a new 15" K. thin crash in the center, an 18" Canadian K. crash on the far right, and sometimes I add a new 17" K. thin crash. My hi-hats consist of a Canadian K. top and an old A. bottom. They're 14". I change my cymbals depending on the

situation. I try to get the appropriate sound for each context. I use my K.'s for more jazz-oriented music, and my A.'s for more rock-oriented situations.

I like the effects I can get from all of those cymbals. Maybe I will create just a hint of a crash here—like in the distance—rather than a bash, and bring up a great big wave in another spot or whenever the appropriate moment arises. I just like music to have life—not simply ding-dinga-ding, but breathing. Music is supposed to have an added dimension.

CS: Well, you, Jeff Watts, the Marsalis brothers, Terence and Donald, the Eubanks brothers, and a lot of other cats have certainly brought that into contemporary music.

SS: Steve Coleman, too. All these cats want to play. They came to play and have that hunger.

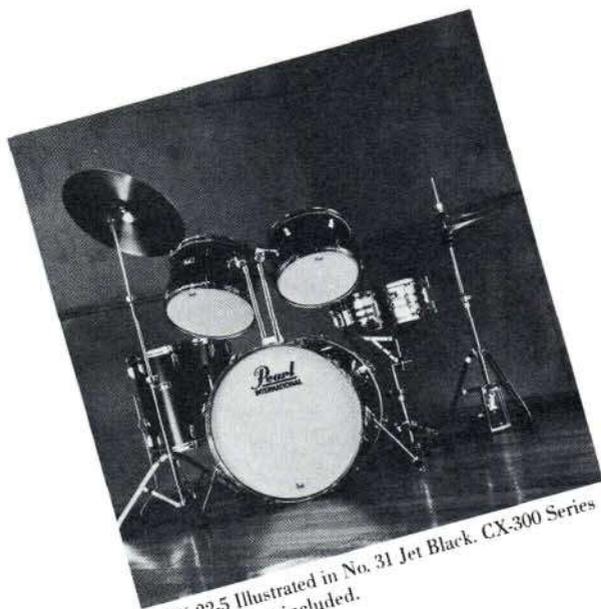
CS: But more than that, this generation of young players has re-established certain standards of excellence. I'm not talking about being geniuses, even though you're all very gifted, but about a level of no-bullshit competence on the instrument, from top to bottom, which is very studied, disciplined, and sincere. A lot of cats in the '60s were very flashy and exciting, but many of them weren't all that schooled on their axes, as if a disciplined, schooled approach would somehow detract from their muse. As a result, most of them have faded from the scene. For staying power—once that gush of youth has passed—you have to have the flexibility and broad vocabulary to adapt to a variety of situations, or you'll die. It's very competitive.

SS: Right. I think all that reading and writing discipline is very important. It definitely helped me out—that combination of natural feeling coupled with discipline. It's important to be able to read not only drum music, but music in general. I've gotten into some nice situations that manifested themselves into better situations, because I had certain skills. For example, I had subbed on a Jazztet gig for Billy Hart, with Benny Golson and Art Farmer. On the last night of a six-night engagement, Billy had to leave to go to Bombay, and he called me to fill in. I know the band and the music, so I knew that Benny had these charts. Man, he's a hell of a writer. Those are some serious charts, and you don't just brush them off.

But I knew I could read them down, and that's why Billy called me, even though I'm sure it shook Benny and Art to see someone come in who was supposedly just going to read these charts. They were skeptical. So I set up my tubs, and met Rufus Reid the bassist, who I'd played with before. He knew what I could do, so he was cool. Benny came in, and he was so nice. He told me just to relax and everything would be fine. Then Art came in, and they wanted to know what tunes I wanted to do. I said, "Gentlemen, you play anything from your book that you like." I didn't want them to feel inhibited because of me. So I told them just to run their program. And after the first tune, Rufus let me know later that they were real cool. Benny turned to Art and said, "I bet he could play 'Without Delay,' " which is a drum feature that has a lot of kicks in it. I supposed that was the hardest chart in their book. All this was happening on the first tune now; Curtis Fuller was taking his solo, and Benny and Art were having this discussion. Later on when we played "Without Delay," it was cool. Subsequently, I have been playing on and off with them ever since. I also got to play with Frank Foster and Frank Wess the same way. I wouldn't have been able to perform that way if I didn't have the disciplined reading under my belt—not just knowing how to read a chart, but understanding how to *interpret* it as well. I knew the music all along. That's the other half. Just reading it for accuracy is one thing, but to interpret it as music and make it come alive is another. I've seen people who have theory up the wall and who can read flyspecks, but you count off a tune, and they get lost. Then, on the other hand, you have some superb natural players, but they kind of cut themselves short, because you might have a last-minute situation where they have to cut these charts, and they can't do it because they don't have that knowledge of reading. That hurts me. It really does, because they have all that natural talent and beautiful feeling—and you can't buy the feeling or study to get it—but they've hindered themselves by avoiding the theoretical aspects of music. If you want to have staying power—if you want to be able to reach out to the people and other musicians as you get older—you have to have both aspects happening, or you'll never reach your full potential.



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## Steve Ferrone: "We Got The Love"

This month's *Rock Charts* features Steve Ferrone performing on the tune "We Got The Love," off the George Benson *Collection* album (Warner Brothers K 66107, recorded 1978). Ferrone demonstrates some fine groove playing on this track. Thanks to Colin Aldridge for his assistance with this transcription.

♩ = 108

Open O R Cym Cr Cym  
HH TT  
SD FT  
BD

first time only

A

B

first time only

C

D

Bell of Ride Cym.

Choke Cym.

first time only

Bell of Ride Cym.

The musical score is written for a cymbal solo and consists of ten systems of two staves each. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, rests, and dynamic markings. Key features include:

- System 1:** Starts with a bell of ride cymbal pattern (marked with 'o').
- System 2:** Continues the rhythmic patterns.
- System 3:** Features a 'Choke Cym.' section with a dynamic accent (>).
- System 4:** Includes a key signature change to F major (marked with 'F') and a time signature change to 6/4.
- System 5:** Contains a 'first time only' section with a double bar line and a repeat sign.
- System 6:** Shows a time signature change to 4/4.
- System 7:** Includes a key signature change to G major (marked with 'G').
- System 8:** Features a 'Bell of Ride Cym.' section.
- System 9:** Ends with a double bar line and repeat sign.
- System 10:** Continues the rhythmic patterns.

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A single staff of music in bass clef, featuring a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various articulations like accents and slurs.

A musical staff in bass clef starting with a first ending bracket labeled 'I'. It includes a 6/4 time signature change and various rhythmic patterns.

A musical staff in bass clef with a 4/4 to 6/4 time signature change, containing eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs and accents.

A musical staff in bass clef with a 6/4 to 4/4 time signature change, including a section labeled 'J' and various rhythmic figures.

A musical staff in bass clef with a 6/4 to 4/4 time signature change, showing eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs and accents.

Bell of Ride Cym.

(Close H.H. with foot)

A musical staff in bass clef consisting of a series of eighth notes with stems pointing up, likely representing a cymbal or snare drum pattern.

A musical staff in bass clef consisting of a series of eighth notes with stems pointing up, continuing the rhythmic pattern.

A musical staff in bass clef ending with a double bar line and a 2/4 time signature. The word 'fade' is written above the staff.

# Drumming And Experience

One of the most frustrating things for a young drummer to hear is, "Kid, you have talent. Get some experience, and come back and see me," or the equally discouraging, "You play well, but you lack experience." I have seen ads that say, "Keyboard player and guitarist looking for experienced rock drummer to form new group." There is that word "experience" again.

Most young drummers would probably play for little or no money just to *get* some experience. Unfortunately, there are fewer places to play these days where young players can gain experience without being subjected to undue pressure. The music business has never been an easy one, and this is particularly true for drummers. The reason for this is that there are more drummers than there are jobs. Naturally, the better drummers usually get the jobs, which makes getting experience an even tougher task for young players. Where to play? What to do? Where to start?

1. *Learn your instrument.* This statement does not mean that you need incredible technique to get a job. What you need is the ability to play what is called for in a musical way, and enough technique to play in a relaxed manner. You need control over your instrument in order to develop enough confidence to play well with other musicians.

2. *Learn to read music.* When you are young, it's a shame to miss a good job because of limited reading ability. Early in my own career, Lionel Hampton asked me to join his band to play Las Vegas for six weeks. I explained to Hamp that to be away from New York for six weeks would cost me a lot of studio work. After some negotiation, Hamp made me an offer I couldn't refuse.

At the first rehearsal, I understood why Hamp wanted me in Las Vegas. His band had to play for a singer, a dancer, and a comedian, plus Hamp's own book of arrangements. As it turned out, the singer only sang three songs, the dancer canceled out, and the comedian needed very little music. If the regular drummer had been able to read just a little, he would have stayed on Hamp's band.

3. *Develop your ear.* Learning to read helps you to visualize rhythms as you hear them. Also, listen to a variety of drummers. It's fine to have a favorite, but listening to the way other drummers play rhythms, phrases, and accents will help

you to develop a better understanding of drumming and rhythms.

4. *Stay in shape.* When you are young, you never know when a break will come. My first record date came as a result of another drummer not being able to make it. He was doing a TV show that went overtime. He had to finish the show, so he called the contractor to inform him that he couldn't make the date. I got a call during dinner. I frantically took a cab and played on my first commercial studio session.

Very often, early experiences occur when someone else has a last-minute problem. The band needs a drummer *now!* When things are desperate, bandleaders are more likely to give a young person a chance. After all, they *have* to have a drummer. So be ready, mentally and physically. Practice each day—especially when you aren't working. In this way, you have a better chance of "being ready" when a break comes.

5. *Play free rehearsals.* Top singers, bands, and groups pay musicians for rehearsal time. After all, rehearsing is part of the job, and pros deserve to be paid. However, there are other types of rehearsals. They may take place in someone's garage. Some musicians may just want to jam. Volunteer! Play any rehearsal you can. Meet other musicians, and get your name around.

In most big cities, there is a "rehearsal" big band. Musicians get together to read through some charts. Attend these rehearsals, and if you can read, you may get a chance to sit in. This is valuable experience if you have any ambition to be a studio drummer. It is also a great experience to play with 18 or 20 people at once.

6. *Go to jam sessions.* Many large cities have nightclubs where musicians can sit in and play. Often, this is a regular one- or two-night policy. For example, Sunday afternoons or Monday evenings are typical for jam sessions.

You may get to sit in, and you may also hear other good players. If you do sit in and play well, other musicians will want your phone number. These contacts can lead to future jobs.

7. *Play for demos.* Many singers and groups want to record a demo tape to sell the group (or perhaps the songs). Aspiring songwriters usually have little or no money. Offer to play for free to help them out. If they sell the songs, maybe they'll hire you to be in the band. Whether they do

in fact hire you later on is not the point. Get into the recording studio, and get that experience. Then, when you get your next opportunity to record, you will have a better idea of what to do. This will help you to be more at ease, which, in turn, will help your playing.

8. *Be willing to take any job in music.* When I first got to New York, I played all sorts of jobs, just to keep from starving. I played society parties, Jewish and Italian weddings, college dances, and industrial and fashion shows. A few years later, I started playing the Merv Griffin TV show. It was at this time that I began to develop an appreciation for experience. On a commercial TV talk show, you get all kinds of guests, ranging from artists like the late Count Basie to a group of "singing dogs." As a result of playing all kinds of music earlier, I was able to play what was needed on the show.

*There is no substitute for experience.* You can't get it by reading a book or a magazine. You can't get it by imitating your favorite drummer. You can't get it by practicing. You can't get it from your drum teacher. Gaining experience is something you have to do by yourself. Each person's situation is unique. This is one of the problems encountered when advising young drummers on how to get experience. No two people have the same experiences. However, you can be prepared. Be ready, as much as possible, for the opportunity or "break" that will start you on the road to your own experience.

I took a drum lesson from Sonny Igoe many years ago. Sonny watched me play at the lesson and said, "I'm not going to charge you for this lesson. You don't need more lessons at this point. You need to play." My question for Sonny was, "How will I find out the things I need to know?" He said, "Just play, and then play some more." Shortly after this encounter, Sonny recommended me for Woody Herman's band. I auditioned and got the job, and that was the beginning of my professional experience. After six months on the band, I began to understand. In order to play *well*, you have to *play*. Play anything, anywhere, anytime. If you are prepared, you have a good chance not only to get experience, but also to get a real break in drumming. Just remember that everyone starts out with no experience. We all start even. Hang in there and keep trying. This, too, is part of experience.

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butchers when compared to luthiers [makers of stringed instruments, such as violins]. If luthiers in Europe have to use glue, they will only use an animal glue, because it's a natural product, and they reckon that synthetics affect resonance and other sound properties. Also, they have the grains all going a certain way. There are a thousand years of skill, thought, and craftsmanship that have gone into their construction methods. Why the hell aren't drums made the same way? It's always been, "Well, it's just a drum. As long as it's round and sounds like the next person's ..." One of the reasons that drum manufacturers have been going into all this cosmetic thing is to get some marketing advantage over the next company, because they cannot appeal from the standpoint of *sound*. They all sound much the same. Some are made better than others and so may sound a bit better, but there's only so far you can go with that. The only thing they haven't done, to my way of thinking, is get a lot of exotic woods and make drums out of them right straight through all the plies. That's something I want to do, and at that point, I'll be willing to say, "Now maybe the ply drum has gone about as far as it can go." The major drum companies would dread something like that starting to take off, because with rosewood and things like that, the costs would be astronomical. But with what I've got down in Australia, there's a real possibility that it can be done. I want to go off on other tangents as well, including some experiments I'm doing with an ultra-thin shell. Basically, I'd like to get to a point where I can ask a drummer, "What sort of sound do you want?" Perhaps I'll even record them all, tuned the same, so that we can start to know what we're getting from each wood type and each construction type. It's a long job to find all this out, and I doubt that I'll ever finish. It's a lifetime task, but I really love the idea.

Some people don't understand why I'm not pumping out drums all the time. A guy said to me, "You've built the ultimate drum." I *hate* that terminology, because to me that means that it can't be improved, and I think that everything can always be

improved. In interviews in your magazine, people have said that the most important things in creating a drum's sound are the roundness of the drum, the rim, the head—all that sort of thing. The reason they say that is because all the drums are basically the same to begin with, so if one sounds different, you have to get down to those sorts of details to explain where the sound is coming from. The shells all give out much the same sort of sound, because they're all made on the same principle. Mine are different. I've had solid-wood drums that were out of round and that still have blown people away. So maybe all new rules apply; I'm finding that they do. I've never tried a calfskin head on a solid-wood drum, but there are some very interesting principles involved with that. Consider this possibility: When you get into a humid situation, what happens to a calfskin head? It slackens off. But a solid-wood shell tightens up! So the two would work in perfect harmony with each other. In other words, as the humidity rose, the skin would tend to slacken a bit, but the shell would tend to expand just that little bit, and tighten the head back up. Conversely, if the air got dry, the head would tighten, but the shell would come in that little bit. Mind you, the movement in the shell is nowhere near like the movement in the head, but it's one of those interesting little things.

**RVH:** You said you were experimenting with 19 different woods. Which ones are you going into production with?

**CB:** I'm working with jarrah and she-oak initially. She-oak, by the way, is not really an oak; it's actually a member of the Casuarina family. Then I want to get a wandoo drum out. I'm still talking about block drums at this stage, although wandoo would probably make a pretty good solid-wood drum, too. It's double the hardness of jarrah and much harder than ebony. I think it's going to have a lot more projection and slightly higher tones. It's going to be very interesting to hear a high-pitched, woody sound.

**RVH:** You can experiment ad infinitum, but you can also get so wrapped up in that that you never put out a single, consistent

product.

**CB:** Right, and that's been my problem. What's happened is that I've now got some people backing me, and they've said, "Stop! Make one thing that you can sell." That's what I've started to do, with the block snare drums out of jarrah and she-oak. I'm going to go into the market with those, and then I'm going to make up a couple of complete block drumkits. They'll go into specific shops in the U.S. for people to see and hear. If they catch on, I'll be marketing kits, and I want to use the RIMS mounting system on them. I believe that, if you're going to get a good sound from your shell, you should take it to the limit. I do the bearing edges slightly different than other people do, too.

Once those drums are established, I can bring other woods into the market. I also intend to have solid-wood drums going about the time this article goes to press. But a year or two down the track, I may find that, once you get up to a certain hardness, it doesn't make any difference to the sound what wood you're using. Things like that depend on the grain structure, too, and whether you've got a free-floating situation or fittings on the drum. The ultra-thin shell idea that I'm thinking about will probably make a difference no matter what wood is used; that's why I'm interested in it. I don't want to say, "That tree there is no good for anything." It must be good for *something*. Do you see what I mean?

**RVH:** You mentioned the difference in moisture content, but are the woods you work with all much harder than those normally used to make drums in the U.S.?

**CB:** Jarrah and she-oak are about 10% harder than maple, which rates about seven on the hardness scale. Some of the woods I work with are much harder, such as wandoo, which rates 16, and others that go beyond that.

**RVH:** Does that make them more difficult to work with, in terms of tooling?

**CB:** Somewhat. But one of the main banes of wood turners is not so much the hardness of the wood, but its silica content. You can get a soft hardwood from the Philippines that has a high silica content, which is basically the same as having sand going against your lathe blades. Even though we've got some very hard woods, their silica content is low, so most of them can be turned pretty easily. Lathe blade life might be a bit less with the woods I use than with maple, but there's got to be some sort of a trade-off if you want to use those materials. If you want that sound, you've got to put up with the inconvenience of that sort of thing. I think that drums have

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always been made the most *convenient* way. Today, drum companies say that maple makes the *best* shell. But the reason it was probably used in *the first* place was because it bends easily, and it was the hardest wood available where the drumshell companies got their start, which I believe was in New England. Then, other companies came along from overseas and copied them. Over the years, they've all just copied each other, saying, "Maple makes the best shell." Now, I always say that, before you can make a blanket statement like that, you should have tried nearly every wood in the world. I don't say that jarrah makes the best solid-wood drum; I really don't know! What happened with me was that I started in exactly the same way the other drum companies did. I could have made my drums initially out of karri, which is a much bigger tree than jarrah, but it grows further away from me. I *live* in the jarrah forest, so I'm using jarrah, and I'm happy with the sound. But I'm not content to *leave* it there; I want to try a lot of others. I want to find out as much as I possibly can, and then maybe one day I'll be able to sit back and say, "Well, I *think* I've got it down." I have also made block drums out of American woods; I didn't stick with Australian woods alone. I've had drums made of American white oak, walnut, and osage orange, and frankly, I didn't like them at all. To me, there was something missing. I think you've got to get up to a certain density to get the sound right. But not all Australian woods work well either. I don't particularly like she-oak in a 5" drum—although a lot of people might. It has a sound that's reminiscent of that old bebop sound out of the '50s that they had, with the snare drums wide open. But then again, Bob Yeager, of the Professional Drum Shop in Hollywood, heard one and told me, "With a calfskin head on it, that drum is where it's at." He went on to say that he hadn't heard drums like mine since Billy Gladstone died, which I take as

a great compliment. Bob grew up and played in the bebop era, whereas I grew up in the age of gaffer's tape and close miking. But I'm trying to cover the spectrum, if I can.

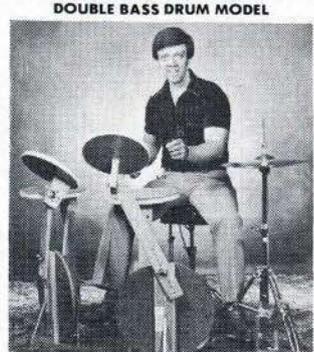
**RVH:** Speaking of sound, we ought to try to describe what it is about the sound of your drums that makes them different from ply shells.

**CB:** Well—that's always hard. What do your ears tell you? It's like trying to describe a color to a blind person. How do you do it? I can say that the shell itself has a very natural resonance; tap on one side of the shell, and you can hear it vibrating on the other side. That's because it's one piece

of wood, whereas with a ply shell, you're tapping on one of several layers, and by the time the sound of that tap has filtered around the drum through all the layers, you don't hear as much of it on the other side.

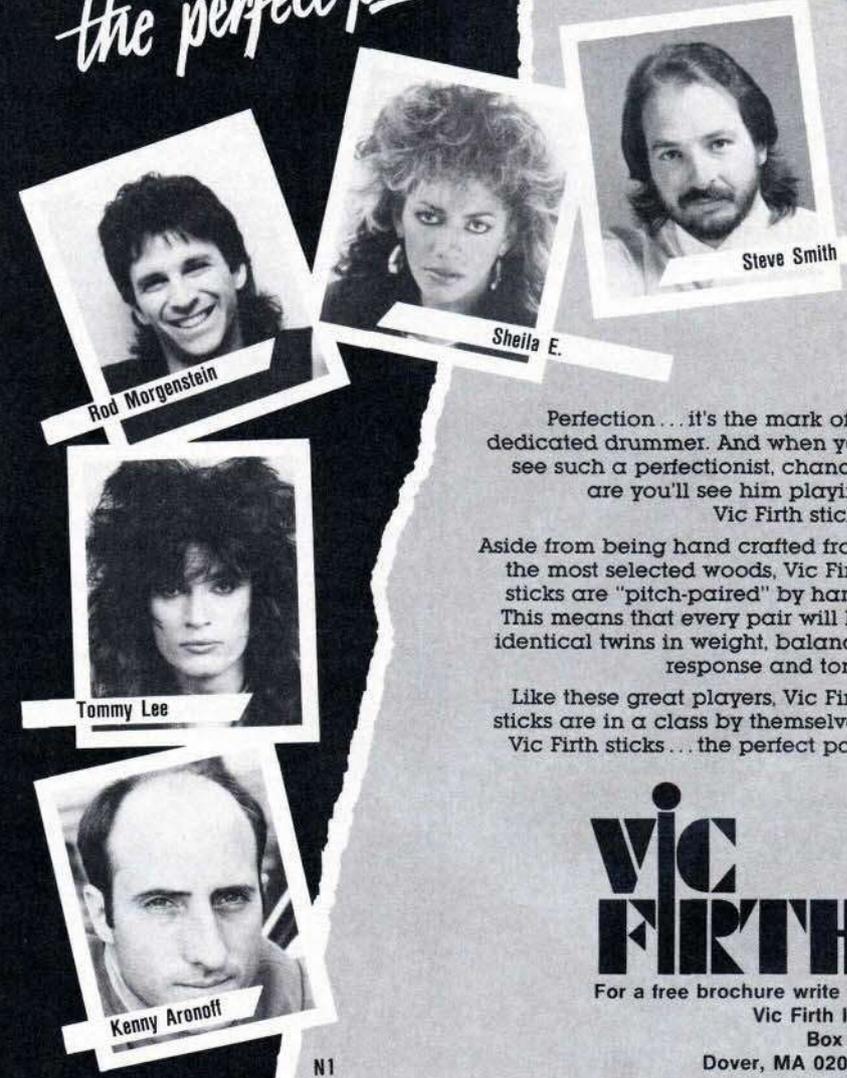
The drums certainly throw very *deep*, from a distance. They sound like a recorded sound from any distance at all. When Richard Crooks used my drum in a concert hall with Leonard Cohen, his first inclination was to tune it down a bit. But I said, "Hang on a minute; have a listen from out front." And when he did, he said, "Oh no ... that's good. Leave it there." The same thing happened with Art

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Rodriguez. Most drummers automatically think: "Want depth? Tune it down." But they wind up *not* tuning my drums down. Jim Keltner told me that he doesn't know what the drum he got from me sounds like tuned down; he's never done it. He's never had to. He used it on the last Bob Dylan album for three tracks. When I asked him which ones, he said, "You'll know when you hear the album." Richard Crooks told me that he did an experiment with a block snare in a New York studio. He said, "We de-tuned that drum, and when it was tuned low, it still had high, mids, and bass in it—no matter what we did with it headwise. So there must be something in the shell construction that has a basic tone that's pleasing to the ear." The thing I want to stress is that a drum must sound good *acoustically* in the first place. A lot of drums available today don't really make it unless they're being miked, EQed, and all that. When I first took a solid-wood drum into a studio, they said it was the best sound they'd ever gotten, and they didn't even EQ it.

The only sound that I haven't gotten is the real sharp, Police "crack" sound. That's more of a "metal-snare-tuned-up" sound, and it's the only one I'd say would be pretty elusive with my drums. But you certainly don't ever need to tune them down to get a fat sound.

I'm in a situation where people ask me about all the sounds of my drums and I'm saying, "I really don't know." Jim Keltner asked me, "Why don't the snares rattle?" I didn't know, and frankly, I hadn't ever thought about it. This is going back a few years ago, and since then I started to give it some thought. I built a few more drums and the same thing was happening, so I figured, "There can't be that much going on; obviously, the snare wires might be tighter." I discovered that my snare drums throw "snarey" from a distance, as well as deep. That's why you can bring the tension up on the snares—to eliminate tom "buzz"—but not choke the snare. I don't like a choked snare drum.

Chick Corea once heard one of my drums and said, "That is the sound I've been trying to get in the studio for years. If

you can continue to get that sound and you don't mass-produce, you'll be back-ordered for years." Most people who have come through have said things like, "God, this has such a sound for recording," or "It has such sensitivity," or "It's so woody." There must be something in it; I've never had a player tell me he or she didn't like the drum. Most ask me if they can have it on the spot.

**RVH:** What snare models are you offering?

**CB:** I make 6 1/2" and 8" depths. The 8" is the one I really want to push, because you can get a lot out of it. It's got the natural depth, yet you can tune it up quite high if you want. It seems to me better to have one drum that does most things for you. Some drummers take 20 snare drums to a session, and I don't see that that's necessary. I admit that I have two snare drums—one wood and one metal—because you're never going to get a wooden snare drum to sound like a metal one. But that should be enough. Actually I haven't used the metal one for three years.

There are two unique aspects to my snare drums. The first is that no solid-wood snare will sound exactly like the next. Each is unique because each tree is unique, and in fact, each section from the same tree is unique. This has to do with where the shell is cut in relation to the growth rings of the tree—which have different densities—the heartwood's position in the tree, etc. The other unique aspect is that all of the drums I've ever sold I've played first. I take a drum out to a gig and use it. Then I can tell a drummer, "Yeah, you'll like that. I've used it." Or I can say, "Come along to the gig on Friday night, and I'll use it for a set. Have a listen to it, and if you don't like it, don't buy it." In a lot of situations, I'll let the potential buyer use it for a gig. I think that's about as good a service as you can give to somebody.

**RVH:** You mentioned earlier the marketing problem you have, due to Perth's isolated location. What are your arrangements for distribution, now that you want to get into the marketplace in a serious manner?

**CB:** Up to this point, my whole operation has been limited by a simple lack of funding. But there are now people who want to invest money in the company. That's basically all I've needed. I've paid my dues, I guess; I've pretty well lived in poverty for six years while I've gone through all this, because there hasn't been a lot of money in it for me.

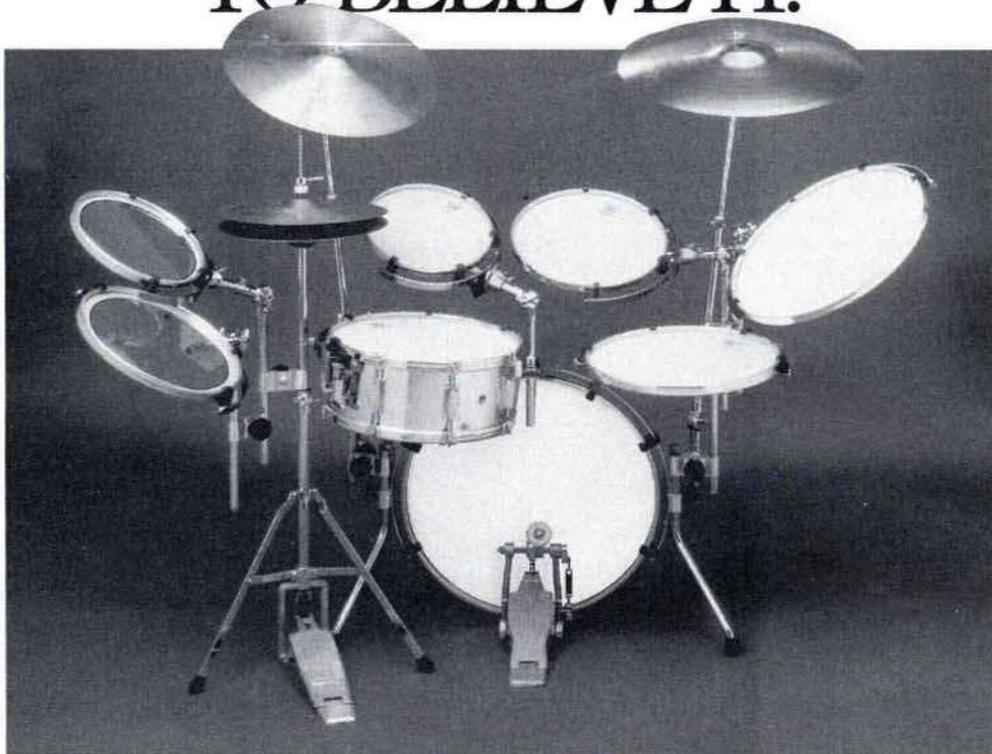
As far as distribution in the U.S. goes, Pro-Mark and Drum Workshop will be my distributors, and Pro Drum Shop in L.A. will be a direct outlet. My agents in Australia will be the Drum Shop in Perth, and Makins in Melbourne. There are certain ways that I want to do certain things. For example, I want to air freight the drums to the U.S., which is not as expensive as it sounds. It actually costs more to send them by ship, and takes three months from Australia. So air freighting is the way to go.

I don't see myself ever becoming a large-scale, corporate-type operation. I think that, possibly in the years to come, the drum industry may get back to where it was in the 1930s, with a lot of small, independent craftsmen making high-quality, individual products. There's a great deal of expertise in the area of custom drum work in America—much more so than there'll ever be in Japan. Stan Yeager at Pro Drum Shop in Hollywood really knows his stuff as does Don Lombard! at Drum Workshop. There are a lot of that sort of people around. Given the right sort of shells, they can make good drums. And I intend to sell my shells to those people; they don't necessarily have to be finished by me. I'll make the shells, and then I'd like those people to have them to work with. That way, rather than everybody getting the same shells and just putting different fittings on them, they can get honestly *different* shells, and have a few more options—which I think will be a real good thing for the industry. It would certainly be a good thing for me.

The only thing I am worried about is someone copying what I'm doing. Someone could put a lot of money into advertising—but use inferior woods pumped full of resins to stabilize them—and just blanket the youth market. Luckily, I have a certain amount of insurance, because the Australian government has placed very severe restrictions on the export of many of the hardwoods I'm using. And I know that most other woods around the world won't lend themselves to my process, because I've tried a lot of them myself. ✦

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# Chart Reading:

by Gil Graham

## Part 3

In the last article in this series, we looked at a new chart and some common road signs. I also explained how your chops, concentration, and time feels are involved in your reading performance. In this article, we shall look at a new chart that, along with the familiar road signs, also includes two time-feel variations and a couple of figures. I shall explain the time feels, figures, and how to play both of them in detail later in this article.

The following chart includes a couple of new features. "Bouncy 2 Beat" refers to both the tempo and the time feel. "Bouncy" implies a medium-fast swing tempo (half note = approx. 92), and "2 Beat" is the time feel you must play. The chart begins with a vamp by the rhythm section, and again we are told the groove must be "in 2." At letter A, the time feel goes into four ("in 4"), and you continue playing time at a *mezzo forte* (*mf*) or medium volume.

**Bouncy 2 beat**  
Rhythm Vamp "in 2"  
Ens. "in 4"  
*mf*  
(4) *ff* *mf*  
(8) *ff* *mf* (12) *ff*  
(4) *mf*  
(8) *mf* (12)  
Open Trb. Solo Play 12  
Open Sax Solo 12 more  
*mf* *dim* *ff* *Fine*

There is a figure in the fourth, eighth, and 12th bars that should be played very loudly at a *fortissimo* (*ff*) volume each time. The impact should be very sudden in each instance, since the volume immediately before and after each figure is at *mezzo forte*. The repeat signs indicate that letter A is to be played again in the same fashion. Letter B begins with a crescendo that extends through the figure in the second bar. This crescendo functions as a minor swell within the given volume. Since no volume is indicated at the end of the crescendo, you should immediately drop back down to *mezzo forte* until told to do otherwise. The same crescendo and figure combination occurs twice more in letter B.

Letter C is a trombone (trb.) solo. The word "open" means that the solo has no predetermined length. The number of repetitions is determined entirely by the soloist. "Play 12" tells you to continue playing the 12-bar form established at the beginning until cued into letter D. Letter D is a saxophone (sax) solo and should be interpreted in the same fashion as letter C. Letter E tells you to continue playing time. Since the repeat signs are written across the bar line, letter E amounts to time being played in two-bar phrases. "Dim"

(*diminuendo*) tells you to get softer throughout letter E and play the final figure at *pianissimo* (*pp*), a very soft volume. The fermata (hold note) over the final figure means to sustain the note until you are cut off.

Two different time feels are required at the beginning of the chart. The terms "in 2" and "in 4" refer to the basic accent patterns or pulses per bar. The entire rhythm section will participate in establishing the difference between the two accent patterns. However, bass and drums work especially closely by playing in unison a majority of the time. Figure A shows the basic accent patterns "in 2" and "in 4."

Figure A: Accent Patterns

"in 2" *>* *>*  
or  
"in 4" *>* *>* *>* *>*  
or

A feeling of two is derived by playing two main pulses per bar, rather than four. Beats 1 and 3 should be stressed slightly more than beats 2 and 4. A feeling of four is derived by playing four main pulses per bar. All four beats should be stressed equally.

The vamp at the beginning of the chart indicates that the time feel you play should be "in 2." Figure B shows an example of how to play a "two" feel.

Figure B: Basic Two Feel

R Cym Cr Cym  
S D  
B D  
H H  
w/foot

This example shows the bass drum and ride cymbal playing beats 1 and 3, with only the hi-hat playing beats 2 and 4. Play the accents approximately one dynamic level louder than the unaccented notes.

Figure C shows a slightly hipper variation. It is busier and should be used in a jazz context where improvisation is encouraged.

Figure C: Jazz "Two"

This pattern is similar to Figure B, with the addition of a snare pattern. (The snare stroke on beat 3 should be played as a buzz.) In each case, the feeling of two is attained by stressing beats 1 and 3 slightly with the bass drum and cymbal.

Back to the chart: Letter A indicates that the time should change into a "4" feel. In order to do this, you should stop accenting beats

1 and 3, and begin stressing all four beats equally in every bar. A very common practice in jazz is to emphasize the difference between "in 2" and "in 4" even more by accenting beats 2 and 4 slightly. Figure D shows a typical swing pattern in a jazz "4."

Figure D: Swing In Four

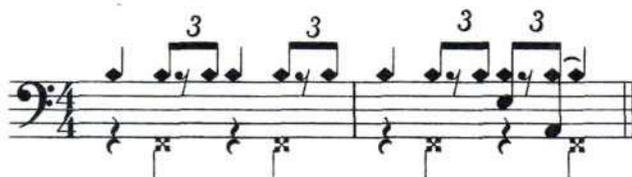


This example shows the cymbal played on all four beats with the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4. Letter A is an ensemble passage that contains time and figures for you to play. The swing pattern in Figure D is a straight-ahead swing feel tailor-made for letter A. It is a simple, yet effective, time pattern that does not interfere with the band. Your time- and figure-related responsibilities will be much easier to fulfill if you simplify, rather than complicate, your playing. You will find it much easier to direct your concentration towards time, feel, and figure, in that order.

Letters C and D, however, are quite a different story. During the two solos, you have no figures to play, and your concentration should be directed toward the soloist. Your playing should be different than it was behind the ensemble. Instead of simply laying down the time, you will improvise and actually participate in the creation of the solo.

A dotted-quarter-note figure appears in the fourth, eighth, and 12th bars of letter A. The same figure appears again in the fourth and eighth bars of letter B, though it is written differently. In all four instances, the dotted-quarter note (or its equivalent) represents a long sound written off the beat. Play the long sound by striking your crash cymbal and bass drum simultaneously. Use your right hand, and allow the crash cymbal to ring for the full value of the dotted-quarter note before resuming time on the ride cymbal. For the sake of clarity, a single left-handed stroke on the snare drum should be placed on the beat immediately preceding the crash to set it off. Clearly stating the beat in a playing situation enables the other members of the band to play their figure (on "an") more precisely and helps maintain unity with the band. The right hand will stop playing time long enough to strike the crash cymbal and then resume playing time naturally! Let the time flow smoothly and freely! Figure E shows how the time, set off, and crash should be played.

Figure E: Set Off And Crash



This is not the only way to set off a figure, but merely the first we will examine. It is a simple, yet effective, way of playing the figure. The technique involved is minimal, so you are free to devote your full concentration toward your counting and placement of the figure. It is vital to count at all times, so that the figure is played precisely the first time and every time. In my next article, we will examine some counting exercises geared specifically toward the figures discussed in letters A and B of this article.

*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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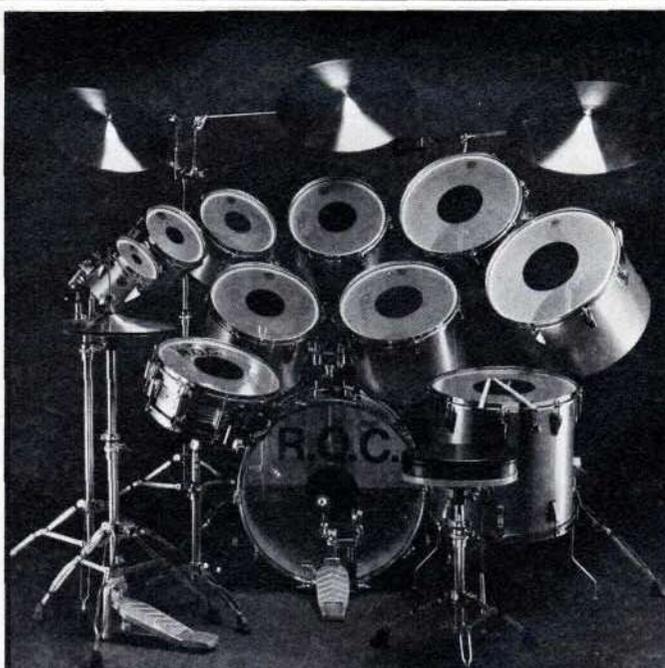
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*Williams continued from page 33*

that. But I played a lot of gigs with them too, before I even got to the album point. They were always using big-time studio musicians, but as I developed, I ended up doing albums. I produced one of Herbie Mann's albums, along with a guy named Lou Volpe. I produced a movie soundtrack with Roberta for Richard Pryor's *Bustin' Loose*. I wrote too, with Marcus Miller, and we got that out there. I try to do as much as I can. I'm into all kinds of stuff, though. It's real crazy, but it makes me a complete person. It's like you shouldn't just eat salad or eat fruit. You've got to get it all. That's why I live in New York. You've got a taste of everything there. I really think that being in New York was the best thing that ever happened to me, because I got to hear everything—all the Latin bands—Jorge Dalto, Mongo, and people who I've played with like that. You'd never get to do that if you were in Iowa. I met Dave Grusin in California, but he said, "What are you doing in California? I'm in New York. Come back." Tom Browne went to Music and Arts, but I never got to play with him until the GRP days. Marcus was a young boy at Music and Arts when I was there.

A lot of folks know the records I'm on, but a lot of folks don't know *what* records I'm on. I turn up in the dangdest places.

**RT:** What records are you on that people wouldn't think you'd be on?

**BW:** Israeli records, rock 'n' roll records—I did some rock 'n' roll records, but I can't remember the artists. Please forgive me, rock 'n' roll people. You know, you do a lot of dates in New York. I'm being honest now. I did a lot of dates in New York for people who are now big time. It's not that I wasn't into their music, but . . . Look at the Honeydrippers thing. When I played on TV with those guys, everybody went, "Oh, you played with the Honeydrippers, wow." It's not just another date and working in a coal mine kind of thing. It's more like a musical experience. I didn't know who they were in the first place, so I didn't put them up on such a pedestal. I've got a friend in New York right now, and all he does is go to record shops and look. And he says, "Did you know you're on this?"

Look at Sanborn. I've known Sanborn

since he was playing with Stevie. I didn't play with him then, because he didn't have a band. I guess Gadd played on his first album, *Butterfat*, and then he had a little band. Victor Lewis and all those guys started playing with him. Then those guys couldn't make the gigs, and Dave just said, "Can you play with me?" From then on, I've been playing with him, and that's a long time ago. But he doesn't play extensively because he's in the studio all the time. We're doing the same thing. We're more friends than boss and employee. I enjoy playing with him because he plays from the heart. I don't go on the road that much—not that I have anything against it, but I like to stay home. You know, I was on the road with Bette Midler and all these people forever, so it's good to stay home sometimes. I write and I produce, so I stay in town. I get real busy. It could be a club thing, a record date, or a jingle. I do a lot of jingles in New York, knock on wood. If I keep going on the road though, I won't. It's just that way, you know. New York is a big factory. You could be cool today, and tomorrow nobody will know who you are. You'll be driving a cab. Life is like that. And my father, thank God, put that whole thing about something to fall back on in my head. Young people who are coming up shouldn't lock into one thing. You've got to play everything in order to do something.

**RT:** So what is your bread and butter now, the jingles?

**BW:** Everything. I try not to be locked into one thing.

**RT:** You were doing a lot for the GRP label. Is that still happening?

**BW:** Well, they're using drum machines now.

**RT:** That's right. I heard Grusin's new album.

**BW:** I'm on some of his stuff, though. I played Simmons. They dropped me and Marcus in the middle of that. See, I already knew about the drum machine. I played with Sly Stone when he had the *Rhythm Ace*. On "Family Affair," we were playing around with it. But I didn't play on the record. He was into me, because he said I was the only drummer who didn't bitch about the thing. I locked right in with it and said, "That's nothin'. If you want to play with a metronome, great." And he was like, "Yeah, I like that. See, he's cool." But I went back to New York.

**RT:** So what's your average day like?

**BW:** I could be home watching TV one day and the next day everybody calls me to be there for that one session. You've got to remember that jingles aren't only music. They're music that goes behind the selling of a product. So once you get that in your head, you know what's going on. I like playing them, because it's a challenge. You've got to read. Ain't no getting around that one. You've got to read, boy. Yesterday, before I left New York, I did a

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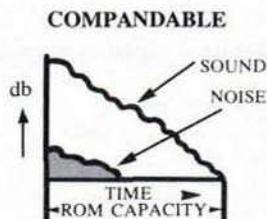
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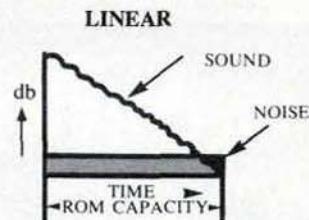
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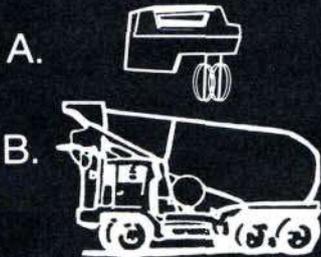


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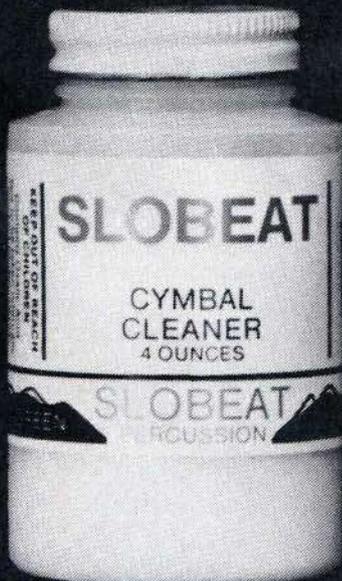
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Burger King commercial, and they said, "It's one second too long. It's got to be 29 seconds, and it came out to be 30." So they have to cut off a beat in the middle of a bar. Never mind the fact that Richard Tee is grooving in the middle of the thing. It was Richard Tee, Marcus Miller, George Wadenius, and Steve Love, for Burger King. That's what all the top people do. Nobody turns down jingles, because jingles run all day and night. It's just like a factory thing. That's one of the biggest challenges, for me, because you've got to make it all sound like it's nothing, and you don't hear it that much over a little speaker. Now they're getting into stereo TV, and you'll start hearing the commercials more. You'd be surprised at how many people do that. Patti Austin doesn't ever have to make another record. Patti Austin is the queen of commercials—millions of dollars. Did you ever hear the end of the Nabisco commercial? "Nabissssccooooo." That's a lot of money.

Jingles are only one aspect of the music world for me. It's a money-making venture, but my goal in life is not to do all the jingles in the world. There are a lot of people in New York *who just* do jingles, and they can't play real gigs. They can't even play a real form at all. If you base your life on jingles all the time, there's no music to that. But it's a skill. It has its uses and abuses.

**RT:** A friend of mine was listening to the GRP All-Stars record you're on, and said you sound like a "cool funk" drummer—kind of like a cool jazz drummer.

**BW:** I know, a lot of people think that. It's a nemesis of mine. I had a guy boo me in Pittsburgh when I was playing with David. I saw him after the thing, and he said I wasn't playing anything. But see, man, I'm not a showboat kind of guy. I like to blend in with the music, and when it's time to solo, great. But I'm a team person. I'm into playing with the thing. Yeah, I can play a whole lot of stuff and eat 'em up, but then I would be sticking out like a sore thumb. People talk about Billy Cobham and how he sticks out like a sore thumb within the music. People talk about Steve Gadd being so locked in and all that stuff, but if the music calls for that, great. When I play with Michael Urbaniak, I make all

that noise. But I never wanted to be playing a whole lot of stuff in the middle of it, because then they say the drummer was too loud. And I'm really kind of sensitive.

Maybe sometimes that's why you don't hear a person like myself making a whole lot of noise and doing a whole lot of stuff that isn't necessary musically. I try to be very musical. If it doesn't fit, I'm not going to play it—sorry, unless you write it in, or somebody says, "Go crazy right here." With the Herbie Mann thing, it was very important for me to stay out of the way if that's what the job called for. It was important not just to take the money and run, but I want to do a good job every time and I'm a real nutty perfectionist with that. I want it to be right. I try to stay out of the way as much as possible. David loves me because I can keep the energy going. Wayne Shorter told me that I was like a swan. He said, "You look real calm on the top. Meanwhile, your little feet are going down there." And I took that as a compliment, because again, I'm not trying to take away from the thing. Even if I had my own group, which I've had—my own ensemble and stuff—it isn't about the drummer. It's about the music being good. So it's not that I can't play. It's just that I don't want to get in the way. And I don't want to take away from what you're trying to do—the overall end of the thing.

**RT:** Sometimes the things you play sound like they'd be easy to play, but when you sit down to play them, they're not easy at all.

**BW:** It isn't easy. It's like another guy said, "Man, you look like you're bored and you're not playing anything." But like you just said, when you sit down and try to play that, it's real hard. It's control. It's got to come from that. You've got to be able to control yourself at all times.

**RT:** You're playing a rented Yamaha set on this gig.

**BW:** Sometimes I have to play rented drums in these situations. But we'll be doing the rest of this tour with Al Jarreau, and my drum guy, Artie Smith, will be taking my drums to travel with Al Jarreau's crew.

**RT:** But these are your cymbals. You didn't rent those.

**BW:** No, no. I don't go anywhere without my cymbals and my snare drum. I bring my own. I use different cymbals for different situations. There's no one basic setup. It depends on where and when I'm doing it.

**RT:** During soundcheck, I noticed that your snares sounded pretty loose.

**BW:** The reason I keep the snares loose so much is that, if you get them too tight, then it sounds like a piece of cardboard. When they mix it in the house, it comes out a little better.

**RT:** I was listening as you did your drum check, thinking some people say the Simmons are so much faster to get a sound with, but ...



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**BW:** Bull.

**RT:** It didn't take them long to get a great sound on you.

**BW:** Simmons are awful, man. Simmons are great for what Simmons do. Simmons are nothing but an extension of the Syndrum.

**RT:** When you were checking the toms, you said, "Give me more of the low ones than the high ones."

**BW:** At the loudest point of the music and the softest point of the music it must be audible. You've got to be able to hear it. These guys are cranking, and they've got a volume knob and I don't. So I don't want to bang; I want to play. I resent it when people say, "You really bang those drums." No, I don't. That may be semantics, but that's a feeling. I don't bang, man. I try to play.

**RT:** The higher toms cut through better than the low ones?

**BW:** Yeah, because of the frequency and pitch of the instrument itself. You'll always hear the higher ones before you hear the lower ones, because the lower it gets, the more washed-out it gets, and the more susceptible it is for the other instruments to slip in there, like the bass. That's what the bass player and I were discussing just now—getting a proper balance between the bass drum and the bass. It's not so much the hearing, but you've got to feel it right.

**RT:** Your cymbals look like Zildjians.

**BW:** Yeah, all K.s and A.s. It's not that I've got anything against everybody else, but that's what works for me. It's not because of my endorsement either, because I've checked out other ones just to see if they have something new.

**RT:** Your cymbals were cutting through really well.

**BW:** Yeah, that's why I bring my own cymbals. I have an 18" over my hi-hat, and I have a 20" medium with a bell. I have an 18" medium thin, and this little small guy—he's about a 16"—next to the ride. And then I have the China Boy. I call them garbage cans because they sound like garbage can covers, you know. I mean that lovingly, because Zildjian makes nice stuff. Those other guys do too, but I like the Zildjian stuff. At least, they hang in there longer.

I use different setups for different situations. For *Saturday Night Live*, I have a totally different setup—drums as well as cymbals—because it's another kind of situation. With the TV show, I have a special setup that I designed with Artie Smith. I have 10", 12", and 16" tom-toms, and then I have three electric drums—Simmons and a new Yamaha electric drum prototype that I've been using—over each tom-tom, and then a Simmons snare over the hi-hat. So it's a double layer of drums. That's why you can never see me on TV. When they look up at us on an angle above the main stage, you can't really see me through the

drums.

**RT:** What's your reason for this special setup?

**BW:** On *Saturday Night Live*, you've got all kinds of sounds and all kinds of stuff, because you're dealing with TV. You've got parodies. If you've seen the show, you've got all this silly stuff like spoofs on commercials. So maybe you've got to play something stupid-sounding to get the bit off. I find that, if I program it inside of an electronic thing as well as the regular drums, I can get the fast changes. It's at my fingertips. I can press it and capture that, and still have the regular natural thing going on, because we have to play for sketches, we might have to play for an artist, and then when they go to commercial, we play for the audience. We play our own tunes and our own stuff. It's split-second, and that is the last of the live shows. That's



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why I love doing that show. It's been on for ten years. I've been there for most of the ten years, but I did leave, and a gentleman named Steve Jordan started doing the show while I was gone. I had left to do *The Rose* tour with Bette Midler, and that was my stint in California. It's not that I didn't like the show when I left; it was just that it was another experience. As I said before, I like to try to do all kinds of different stuff. I had worked with her before the show came on the air, and then when the show came on, it was like a locked-in, in-town thing. Howard Johnson got me on the gig, and I met the great Paul Shaffer and all these people before anybody knew who they were. Paul's a silly cat, but you know what, he's a *bad* piano player, man. He can cop any lick. He can remember any old song—rock 'n' roll, funk, or jazz—and play it verbatim. He's like one of those *Name That Tune* kind of whiz kids. So he really has that gift to capture a thing and really play it. He really did well. In fact, Paul Shaffer was the one who really kept it going, musically. It was a great opportunity and an honor to play with that show, even though it is, as some folks say, just a TV show. But it was following in the tradition of my father. My father sang in that same studio during the '30s and '40s. That studio was made for radio, when they did the *Kraft Music Hall*. I brought my father to see the show one time, and he said to me, "Yeah, we used to work in this studio."

**RT:** How much time do you put into *Saturday Night Live*?

**BW:** You're there all day Saturday, 11:00 in the morning to 1:00 A.M. Maybe you have to prerecord something during the week for one of the actors so they can get it together. If you have to play for an artist, like when we had to play with Judy Collins, Linda Ronstadt, or Robert Plant & The Honeydrippers, you may have to rehearse with the person. Then, you've got a camera block-in another day. And then on Saturday, you come back and do your whole thing all day. Friday night, you may have to do something. You're like a fireman. There may not be a fire that day, or maybe you have a couple of fires to go to that day. You don't know what's going to happen. You're on call. I remember that Marcus Miller and I were doing a session for a guitar player, and we got a phone call at the studio. They said, "Listen, you guys have to come up here right now." Aretha Franklin's band didn't come. It was a mix-up where they thought Aretha was going to bring her rhythm section and just use the *Saturday Night Live* horns. It turned out that Aretha did not bring her rhythm section, so we had to drop what we were doing with this guy who was paying a lot of money for studio time right in the middle of his record date. But we had to do it. It's a "You knew this job was dangerous" kind of thing. We had to do the rehearsal with Aretha and the soundcheck, and then

go back to the guy's date. Who's going to say no to Aretha Franklin, The Queen of Soul? I know I'm not. You never know what's going to happen with the show. We're off for the summer, but when we're on, we never know when we might have to be there. It's funny though, because it gives you the chance to play with a whole lot of different people. It could be anybody, and it's always funny. I remember that John Belushi loved to play the drums. I had played one of the Blues Brothers things, but I left the show right before the Blues Brothers jumped off. My only regret was that I missed the Blues Brothers, but Steve Jordan did a great job. He's another Music and Arts kid. He was two years behind us. I remember Eddie Murphy used to be my drum student at the show. He loves the drums.

**RT:** David Sanborn seems to love ballads. Do you find it hard to play slow?

**BW:** Slow is hard, because you've got to stay out of the way. It's really like you're trying to keep the dynamics and everything going with the music without messing it up. A lot of people call me for ballads. I have this feeling—maybe it's my own paranoia—but the jazz people think I'm a funkster. The funk players think I play too much jazz. The people who really love ballads think I only play upbeat and funk. And the people who want driving rock 'n' roll think I only play ballads and R&B. It's because I play so much different stuff. But Luther Vandross, my dear friend, is a master of ballads. Have you heard "The House Is Not A Home"? We did that performance live. The strings were overdubbed, but the performance was right there with him developing it. He gave us all a hug and hung out. Anthony Jackson played his subway notes—you know, the ones that are way down there. I tease Anthony about it. I tell him, "Anthony, the subway just called, and they say you just derailed another train." The ballads are a real sensitive, got-to-feel-it-out kind of thing. Yes, it is hard to lay back on ballads, but again you've got to get inside of it and not just be the drummer. You have to be a piece of that machine that makes it all come together. I don't mind.

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*Fred Buda began his music career behind a drumset that consisted of a bass drum with a canoe painted on the front and a blinking light bulb inside, an old Chinese tacked tom-tom, and a Leedy snare drum—playing along with Gene Krupa records. Over the years, he has made his way through the navy bands, a teaching/chairmanship at Berklee School of Music in Boston, and teaching positions at the New England Conservatory of Music. He plays in the Boston Ballet, and has played under the batons of both Arthur Fiedler and John Williams in the Boston Pops. In addition to all this, he is a Yamaha clinician, leads his own jazz quartet, and still finds the time to run six miles a day and be with his family.*

*Talking with Fred was special for many reasons. The greatest of those was his genuine warmth, sincerity, and strength of character. Another reason was the respect and admiration I gained from learning that Fred is a self-taught musician. His outstanding accomplishments have been achieved through perseverance, self-discipline, and a strong belief in himself. That, in itself, should be an inspiration to anyone. Fred has gained a reputation as one of New England's top teachers. The interest he displayed when it came to discussing the education of our young musicians shows how much he cares about this vital subject area.*

**TS:** Do you teach beginners?

**FB:** I have, but I don't anymore, because frankly, I don't have that kind of time. I think that teaching beginners is a very neglected area. A lot of so-called "bad habits" are formed in the early stages of

# Fred Buda

development. When you try to break them later, it's very difficult. When someone comes to me for lessons and can play, I don't try to change that person in the area of technique. I don't listen with my eyes. I don't feel that there's any one way of playing. When I can see, though, that students are doing something that will eventually bring them to a "wall," I will make some suggestions. Many times the students will know or sense that they may be backing themselves into a corner, and will bring it up on their own. To me, playing drums is a study in motion, and what you need to avoid is wasted motion. It's a physical thing. What I deal with a lot is beginning concepts with advanced players, because that's what it's all about, anyhow.

**TS:** What sort of teaching aids do you use?

**FB:** I'll go as far as tapes with chart reading. Other than that, my teaching is only somewhat methodized. One size doesn't fit all. I like to teach on drums, not pads and such. Also, I have a mallet instrument and some timpani. That's about it.

**TS:** What are your feelings on teaching with a metronome?

**FB:** I think it's very useful to exercise with, working on *Stick Control*, *Accents And Rebounds*, and things like that. A metronome will show you if you have a tendency to rush or slow down. Then you have to turn it off, so you won't learn to depend on it. It's good to check yourself with, but time is not an absolute. It can go up or down, within boundaries. As long as the music is swinging, no one says anything. In fact, in some musics, it's kind of good when the thing ends up a bit faster than where it started. *Rhythm* is an absolute. You don't say, "The rhythm is almost right." That's like being "a little bit pregnant." [laughs] If you're playing with a soloist with a lot of fire, your time will be indicative of that soloist. If the soloist is a Lester Young type, your time will have that laid back feeling. A good drummer will be able to be that flexible. Yes, you're driving the bus, but you can't drive over people! You've got to lay it down, but be sensitive about it, too.

**TS:** What do you do for students with a time problem?

**FB:** If they're advanced students, I like to work with the Pete Magadini book on polyrhythms. That's the book I always wanted to write. He relates everything to quarter notes, 8ths, triplets, and 16ths. When you play polyrhythms, you increase your feeling of space and time. Instead of

thinking from one to two to three to four, you may think of one to three, and one to one, so you start to increase your spatial feel. For students at an intermediate level, I would recommend working with a metronome and playing with records. Play with the metronome for a while, then turn it off, and then come back to it three to five minutes later, to see how close you are in maintaining a certain tempo. Time is the hardest thing in the world to teach. If I had the answer, I'd be on a mountain top in a white robe!

**TS:** Sometimes a drummer reaches a certain level, and just can't seem to get over that "hump" onto the next level. How do you deal with a student's frustration with this kind of progress?

**FB:** At the college level, I call it "drumitis." The students have to deal with theory, solfège, and maybe starting a mallet instrument. They just have to work harder to develop that aspect of their playing. We all learn at various rates of speed. In the end, I don't think it makes any difference how quickly you learned the material. The idea is that you *learned* it and internalized it. The music comes out of you naturally. Some drummers learn very slowly, but the thing I tell them is to be persistent and keep trying. One of the secrets to being successful in the music business is that you have to keep at it.

**TS:** Do you believe that a student either "has it" or doesn't?

**FB:** No. I've had students who I thought would go out and make a lot of noise, and I have been surprised when they haven't. And then there are some who have really surprised me the other way. I've had students for a year or so, and have given them, say, a "B," because of their efforts. And I've thought about going to them and discussing the possibility of having a double major or putting some effort into another line, in terms of making a living. I've been shocked to hear some of these drummers four or five years later, when they've become really accomplished. Of course, there are some people who have it all, but are they going to have the perseverance to go after those high-level gigs or those positions in the studios? Or are they going to call the contractor a jerk, or show up with the wrong clothes, or make fools of themselves by not showing up at all? Years ago, you could get away with a certain amount of eccentricity, but today, with the wealth of musicians that are out there, no one is going to put up with the

smallest amount of nonsense. It's supply and demand, and the supply is coming out of the woodwork.

**TS:** Have you come across any teachers who just teach?

**FB:** I studied with George Lawrence Stone, who was quite old at the time. He was a rudimentalist of the old tradition, but he taught many of the great jazz players, including Joe Morello. The man was so analytical about motion, and at times he was overly critical and technique-oriented. I think some of today's more successful teachers model their approaches in some way after his; he was kind of the dean of American music teachers. Primarily, he was just a teacher, not being much of a performer. He was at the point where the rudiments were being used more and more in a jazz sense, in addition to the traditional approach.

**TS:** Do you think that, overall, a non-performing teacher will find it hard to relate to today's students?

**FB:** I wouldn't be quite so brazen as to say that. The opposite could be said. Many great players teach because they like the income, and they're not particularly interested in teaching. That's not always the case, however. There's nothing that says that someone who is not performing will not be a good teacher. A teacher could be out of touch with today's music musically and stylistically, yet could be giving the students a sound background in the basics of technique, reading, writing, and meter.

On the other hand, the longer you stay away from playing, the more the reality of being "on the firing line" passes. You forget that feeling of insecurity of performance, and the agony of laboring over the music before playing something you're not quite sure of when you're in a goldfish bowl. It's very easy to sit back on your laurels and tell your students how you did it ten years ago. In that sense, no, I don't think a non-performer would be a very good teacher.

**TS:** What do you feel is the greatest disservice a teacher can do to his or her students?

**FB:** To paint a silver lining to it all with ivory tower concepts like: "Learn your materials; practice all your repertoire; only play the *best* music; don't prostitute yourself." It applies to any instrument, like violin students who are taught that anything other than Mozart or Bach is beneath them, or piano players who are taught to only appreciate and respect Beethoven. String players who come out of school and don't get into a symphony on the first or second audition could play some jingles in the studio, but they don't know the first thing about doing that. That's sad. I think the schools should think about providing some exposure to other avenues of playing experience. There are some schools where you go through four years of music as a percussion major, and rarely get the opportunity to play under the direction of

a conductor. You may be a fine reader, but if you've never done it with a conductor in front of you, it's a whole other world.

**TS:** Let's go to the other side of the coin. What's the greatest *service* a teacher can provide?

**FB:** To make students totally aware of the fact that what the teacher is showing them is only a beginning. In other words, the students have to learn to be individuals. They must be influenced and impressed, but they must still learn to be themselves as players, and to develop their own styles and sound. If I am putting out 100% of the information, and the student can grasp and apply 30 to 40% of it, I think it's a pretty good rate of absorption. It's not only what I have to offer, though. It's also what the next teacher has to say. Students should try to gain many options so that they can start to formulate the system that works for them. A student will say, "I have to play a country gig. What a drag!" Oh, is it? It should be fun to play every kind of music the best you can play it. After you can do it well, *then* come and tell me what a drag it was. Today, you've got to know how to play a million styles.

**TS:** How do you keep your teaching ideas fresh?

**FB:** I think the students keep them fresh for me. They're always picking my brain and making me think. If you're really honest with your students, they'll be open and honest with you.

**TS:** Assume that I'm a new student. What's my first lesson with you going to be like?

**FB:** First you're going to play for me. I'm going to ask you why you are coming to me. I don't take students, other than by audition in the schools. I do have a couple who come to my home and who are professionals. I help them with specific areas of their playing. I'll tell you whether or not I can help you in what you want to learn, and what I will do to help get you there. I want you to know where *I'm* coming from. I don't have a magic wand; I can't teach you to read charts if you can't read music. I'm expensive, and if you can come to me with some prior knowledge of theory, so much the better. I'll listen to you play for

15 to 20 minutes, and then give you a general analysis of where I think you're at and what I can do for you. I don't want students who are not going to work well with me. Some students don't ask questions, and I can't deal with that. I never know if I'm making myself clear or not. If I'm one-dimensional in how I come across to a student, then I'm not a very good teacher. You'll do most of the playing during a lesson. If I play, it will usually be to teach a certain phrasing or subtlety.

**TS:** What are your goals as a teacher?

**FB:** Just to improve and do it better. My goal is not to become methodized and programmed, but instead to tackle each problem and situation in as many different ways as there are individuals. I mean, I get these questions like, "How much should I practice?" Obviously, if you can't play it, you haven't practiced it enough, or you have practiced it the wrong way for too long. Knowing *how* to practice is so important. I don't believe in the idea of going into the practice room for six to ten hours straight and then staggering out for oxygen. To me, you have a concentration span. You progress and then your concentration starts to fall off. The harder you try to keep going, the faster it falls off and the more frustrating it becomes. Take a break; do something else. Then come back to it. Just hammering away at something isn't productive.

I think every drummer has had the experience of trying to build control and chops. Where that *building* stops and the *tearing down* begins is a delicate point. Some drummers can practice for four hours and be fine. Someone else might do the same thing and come away with tendinitis. I don't *assume* that people know this, no matter how bright they are. It's something you really don't learn until you're right in the middle of it.

**TS:** What's the best advice you can give your fellow musicians?

**FB:** Keep growing. Keep your ears open to every kind of music. Don't put anything down until you've tried it. Don't reject things if they don't come naturally to you. Keep trying. You'll learn and that will make everything that you do better.



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studio?

**ME:** I like them both. I like the fact that the unpredictable can happen in the studio, because nothing is pinned down that well when we actually go to the studio. It's not like, "Okay, this is it. We've rehearsed it. Let's record it." That's why we spend so much time in there. With this album, it was more to see what works and what feels good, rather than being totally precious about it. But myself, growing up through the latter part of the Beatles, the Stones, the Doors, and all kinds of people like that, I'm very much into playing live. I love playing the drums live.

**BW:** This is your first tour of America. How are the audiences here compared to others you've encountered on your 1985 World Tour?

**ME:** Great, very friendly. In England, they're a bit reserved, and they're a little bit more image conscious, I think. In Canada, they were very friendly, and they knew about Ian [Stanley, keyboardist and songwriter] and myself. Ian and I have been with the band from the year "dot," but nobody knows too much about us, because Roland and Curt tend to get a lot of the attention. In Europe, they're beginning to know Ian and me, because it's our third tour over there. The audiences in Europe are very tough. In Paris, there were 7,000 people in this tent, and it was one of the best shows we've done, but their attitude was, "Come on, entertain us! We want to hear it. Play it loud. Hit us hard, low, fast." You know—take no prisoners.

But over here, they're friendly. They have a good ear over here. They know if it's too loud or if it could be louder. Robbie, our sound engineer, said that on a couple of nights somebody's looked 'round, and he's said, "Wait, I know there's a guitar solo here." So they're a very appreciative audience over here.

**BW:** What kind of equipment are you using on this tour?

**ME:** I have a Yamaha Recording Custom kit, comprised of 8", 10", 12", 16" and 18" toms, and a 20" bass drum; I have four homemade octobans, a 17" Chinese crash, a 20" thin K. Zildjian China crash, a 17" normal, heavy K. Zildjian crash, and a 16" K. Zildjian crash; I have Zildjian hats. I like them a lot. I have an *Amir* bottom and a *Power Beat* top on the hats. I have 7-series Yamaha pedals, and that's about it, I think. Yamahas—I love them. I use a Ludwig snare; I've always used a Ludwig snare—a *Super-Sensitive*. It's great.

**BW:** Is there a difference in the way you set up your kit on stage and in the studio?

**ME:** Not very much. How we set it up in the studio just depends on what's on the track. Live, everything just goes up, and I reproduce it as near as possible. I have as much fun as possible live by throwing things in. There's no one over my shoulder saying, "Oh no, don't do that fill over there." So live I can basically say, "Do you remember all those fills you didn't want me to do?" [laughs] So I have a bit of fun like that.

**BW:** Do you plan to incorporate more electronic percussion into your drumkit?

**ME:** I used to operate the *LinnDrum* on the last tour, because we have a *LinnDrum* click going along with us. I've thought about it. I've played some stuff and recorded some stuff on Simmons drums, and I haven't really got on with it. It hasn't sparked any kind of emotion for me, as far as playing goes. I love the feel of the stick hitting the 8" and the 10", and the reaction I get back from it. I would use them if they were called for, but there's no way I would out of personal choice.

**BW:** You play a lot more percussive punctuation with Tears For Fears than you did with Interview, where you were basically a straight-ahead rock and pop drummer. Which style of playing do you prefer?

**ME:** I like what I'm doing at the moment very much, simply because I find that it keeps my interest going when I'm actually playing. However, I do miss that; I'd love Talking Heads to give me a phone call—not that that's likely—or Hall & Oates, or Springsteen—something like that—just to get up there and push the band. In Tears For Fears, the keyboards are in layers, and they bring in different little ideas here and there. I punctuate and just lay down a basic rhythm with bass drum and snare. I try to keep the bass drum and snare recognizable. Then I fill in a part, and try to make it as musical as possible—I know that sounds a bit high-flying—with the toms, so that it does add a little part of its own to it, and I've still got the bass drum and snare pumping away.

**BW:** Is it important for you to be involved with a relatively mature, intelligent band? Interview was a fairly intellectual, literate pop band, and Tears For Fears aren't particularly lightweight. Do you prefer to be in a band that has some serious intent?

**ME:** I do enjoy it. It's not through design, because both bands asked me to play with them, as opposed to me being a founding member, as it were. After having played with them, I enjoy it a lot more than I think I would if I was with a straightforward rock band. However, I'd love to do what Mel Gaynor does with Simple Minds. That guy's great. I miss that sort of aspect of what we do, but then I know from what we do that a lot of people think, "Hmmm, this is interesting. This has a different angle on it."

**BW:** You've mentioned Jerry Marotta and Mel Gaynor, who play with British acts. Do you like any American drummers in particular?

**ME:** You people over here keep coming out with all these *amazing* players. I don't know *where* they come from. Vinnie Colaiuta: I went to see Zappa and I thought, "Who's this guy? I've never seen him before." He's a stunning player. There are such good players over here, and they know about their drums. They know about tuning. They know about the sizes of drums they need to get the sound they want. In England, there are people like Pete Thomas, who plays with Elvis Cos-



tello, and Steve Jansen, who used to play with Japan. They are great drummers and they do know their art, but there are many more over here who just appear from nowhere and just knock me out. Omar Hakim is astounding.

**BW:** Let's get into the Manny Elias bio. Tell me about your childhood and growing up in Bath.

**ME:** I wasn't born in Bath, actually. I was born in Calcutta, India. My father's father was a very staunch, Orthodox Jewish person who had business dealings in India. My mother was from Australia; her father moved over to India because he was in the aircraft industry. My parents met, and suddenly I arrived on the scene. When I was 12, we moved to England so I could get decent schooling. I went to a prep school in Sussex, until I was about 13 years old, and then I went to a public school in Wellington, in Somerset. That was it. I mean, I wanted to play the drums since I was 12 years old—ever since I heard that intro Ringo does on the toms on "She Loves You."

**BW:** That's a strange coincidence. Rob Hirst of Midnight Oil told me that, when he heard the drum break in "She Loves You," he knew his destiny was to play drums.

**ME:** I said to the schoolmaster who taught music at my public school, "I'd like to play drums. Is there any possibility of that?" and he said [in a wizened, old *veddy* British schoolmaster's voice], "Ohhhh, well. Mmmm . . . drums, not really. *Piahhno*, viola, violin, you know." I got so much grief. People said, "What do you want to play the drums for?" Basically, people think drummers are of slightly less intelligence than other people because they beat things and make a lot of noise. Unfortunately, that is a general opinion of people who aren't involved in the end of music that we are involved in. Then I left school, desperately depressed. I was going to study photography at Manchester Polytechnic, and a friend of my dad's—a guy of *amazing* character called Daddy Mazda—was sitting at the kitchen table and said, "Hey, what's the matter with you?" I was looking through a magazine at all the second-hand drumkits in the back. I was 19 at this time, and I still hadn't really started playing. I said, "I want to buy some drums." He said, "Why do you want to buy drums?" I said, "Because I want to be a drummer. I want to play in a group. That's how I want to earn my money." He asked me how much drums cost and I said, "60 pounds." This was 1972 or '73, and 60 pounds was like 500 pounds are now; it was a *lot* of money. So he said, "Hmmm, alright." He dipped into his top pocket, pulled out three 20-pound notes, said, "Well, you'll need taxi fare as well," and gave me another five pounds. I didn't tell my mum and dad. I was out of the house [snaps his fingers] like that.

I didn't really start playing until a year

before Interview. I started seriously in 1975, because I used to travel and play with bands here and there. Then I saw Jon Hiseman do a 20-minute drum solo, and I thought, "I don't *believe* this!" Now it excites me, but then it frightened me. I thought, "Right, okay." I got a set of headphones, fixed them up to my set, and I used to play all day long to Average White Band's first album, an album called *John Barleycorn Must Die* by Traffic, because I love Jim Capaldi's drumming on that, the Isley Brothers' *Three Plus Three*, and stuff like that. That's how I taught myself, basically.

**BW:** So you never took lessons; you're largely self-taught. Did you regret not learning to read music?

**ME:** There was a time when I thought, "I wish I could read," because I could have earned a fair bit of money from that area of music where I might have gotten work if I could read.

**BW:** How did you come to join Interview? That was your first real band. Weren't you in a band in public school?

**ME:** Yeah, I was in a band with a Canadian guy actually, and that band fell apart. We were just doing local gigs around Bath—pubs and little clubs. Allen [Brain, Interview guitarist] and Jeff [Starrs] approached me one day and said, "We're forming this band. We're calling it Interview. Do you fancy coming to play a little with us to see what happens?" Pete

[Allerhand, lead guitarist] was involved, and we got hold of a guy named Phil Crowther, who did the bass on the first album [*Big Oceans*]. It just went from there.

**BW:** I think Interview was one of the all-time great undiscovered bands. Their second album, *Snakes And Lovers*, is one of my desert island discs. Why didn't they catch on?

**ME:** We had lots of problems: no management, the record company was signing acts left, right, and center at the time. We had a lot of Elvis Costello and Graham Parker comparisons thrown at us. We weren't conscious of it. Jeff [Starrs, vocalist and lyricist] did happen to sound a little like them. Our timing was totally wrong; we were dying and thinking, "What else can go wrong?"

**BW:** *Snakes And Lovers* really captures the summer of 1980 for me. It takes me right back to that period of time.

**ME:** Yeah, it was a very summery record. I got a letter from a DJ in Australia recently who said [he assumes a crisp, Aussie accent], "'Shout' and 'Everybody Wants To Rule The World' have just recently got you back on my play list, but I'd just like to ask you a few questions about that band Interview. I mean, as far as I'm concerned, I think *Snakes And Lovers* was one of the rock albums of the '80s." We did well everywhere on a very small scale with a few people, and the few people who liked us

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really liked us. It was a little bit cultish.

**BW:** How did you come to join Tears For Fears?

**ME:** Interview fell apart at the same time that the Graduate fell apart, which was Curt and Roland's band. They decided to leave the Graduate, and Interview fell by the wayside. Pete Byrne and Rob Fisher, who used to be with a band called Naked Eyes, came around. They were called Neon at that time, and they said, "Do you want to do some drums with us? We're on the verge of a deal, and we need to do a live show." So I said, "Yeah, I'd love to." I went to their place, I met Curt, and we got on really well. We did a show, and Roland came along to the show. After the show they said, "We're going to do some demos. Do you want to do some drums for us?" And I said, "Yeah, I'd love to." I'd seen Roland and Curt with Graduate, and I thought, "Wow." They were playing ska stuff like the Specials. They were real moddy, with really short hair, suits, and all that stuff. There was this drastic change from what they were doing, to what I was doing, to what we've ended up doing now. And it was really exciting, even doing the demos. When we were doing "Mad World," I thought to myself, "This sounds like a hit single to me."

**BW:** The first time I heard Tears For Fears was the "British 12" single of "Pale Shelter." That was your second release?

**ME:** The first song we did was "Suffer The Children"; that was released on a different

label. Then they got a deal with Phonogram, and we released "Pale Shelter." That got a little bit of notice. Then we released "Mad World," and it was a hit. Then we rereleased "Pale Shelter," and it did quite well. Then "Change" was released.

**BW:** You've mentioned a number of people as we've talked, but in your formative years as a drummer, who specifically did you listen to and who influenced you?

**ME:** Michael Shrieve, who used to be with Santana, Graham Lear, who also used to be with Santana, Ritchie Hayward of Little Feat, and the drummer on *Abandoned Luncheonette*, who I hear was Bernard Purdie. The drumming on Hall & Oates' *Abandoned Luncheonette* is so economical. It's just *there*. The rimshots are brilliant. I loved all that sort of playing! And of course, in the latter stages, Rick Marotta, Steve Gadd's "50 Ways To Leave Your Lover," Andy Newmark—it would have been an ambition of mine to play on John Lennon and Yoko Ono's *Double Fantasy*. I'd loved to have done that, because his playing on that is stunning. Julian Lennon, actually, is someone I'd love to do some work with, because I've just been listening to his album. I love it.

**BW:** What do you do to improve yourself as a drummer?

**ME:** Listen and watch. I don't actually practice. I can't make it to a lot of gigs, because we're out of London, where all the

gigs happen, really. So I go to as many shows as I can locally in Bath. When we start working, we're rehearsing and stuff like that, and there isn't a lot of time. I'm not that bothered. There aren't that many groups I'd love to see, and I won't go along just to see what they're like. I think that's an insult to them.

**BW:** What are your goals as a drummer? What would you like to do in the future?

**ME:** Goals are very hard things because they keep changing, to an extent. There are various artists that I'd like to be involved with, because with the setup we have, if I'm not doing anything, then I'm totally free to do what I want. As soon as there's something to do, my loyalty is 100% with TFF. That cuts down any extraneous activities that I can get involved in, but when I do have time, I'd love to work with a number of people. I won't give you all their names, because it would sound like I'm fishing.

**BW:** But they might read this and say, "Hey, I like Tears For Fears. I'll give him a ring."

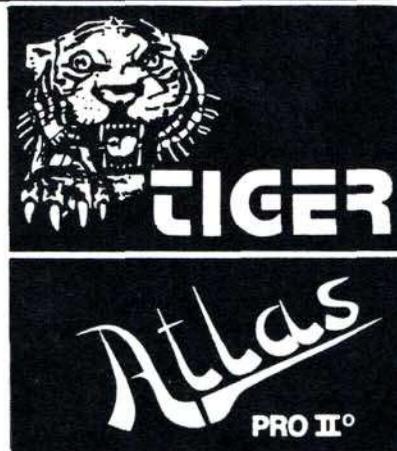
**ME:** Alright. David Byrne—write them down [laughs]—David Bowie, Paul Simon—people like that. People who write *songs*. This is where I think we score heavily, because Roland writes great *songs*. His lyrics are intelligent. They're nice words.

**BW:** Do you think you'll be with Tears For Fears for a while?

**ME:** Who can say? There is a lot of pressure for people to stay together, but we all know that it'll just go as long as it's working, it's fun, and everybody has some creative input to put forward. Otherwise, it would just end up being too formulated, and I think we would hate that, because we're pleased with the fact that people said to us, "The second album is *so* different from the first." And although we don't quite see it as being very different, it obviously must be, because everybody's said that. So it's nice to have that natural progression, which we didn't do on purpose. All we did was just say, "Let's put a bit more guitar in this and make it a bit more rock 'n' roll, and not so precious." That's all we did, rather than to say, "Okay, we've got to make this one really different." There was none of that involved at all. So, if we keep doing that, then I think we'll be happy.

**BW:** Did it ever bother you that time was passing, you were nearly 30, and you still weren't in a major, successful band? Did you ever think of giving up the drums?

**ME:** No, never. I feel privileged that I'm in a position to enjoy what I do. And I've always earned enough money out of it. Recently, even before Tears For Fears came about I did sessions and things like that. It was nothing too grandiose, but enough to keep enjoying what I'm doing, rather than to say, "This is a nightmare. I'm going to work on a building site." I could *never* do that.



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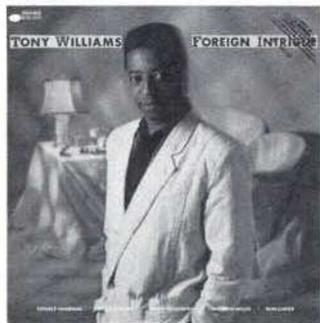
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**TONY WILLIAMS**—*Foreign Intrigue*. Blue Note BT 85119. T. Williams: dr, elec dr, dr mach. W. Roney: trp. B. Hutcherson: vbs. M. Miller: pno. R. Carter: bs. *Foreign Intrigue / My Michele / Life Of The Party / Takin' My Time / Clearways / Sister Cheryl / Arboretum*.

The first few seconds of this record had me worried: a short drum solo with some really dated electronic drum sounds. But once Williams got that out of his system, the band came in with some of the nicest straight-ahead jazz I've heard in a while. This is the first album to come out under Williams' name in six years, and it seems appropriate that it has appeared on the recently revived Blue Note label, as the style of music is more reminiscent of Tony's playing on numerous Blue Note discs of the '60s than of his own solo album catalog. On past solo albums, Williams has concentrated on playing drums in a variety of settings, and the results have ranged from innovative to merely competent, depending on the style. But for the last few years, he has been studying composition, and perhaps he has returned to the style of music he knows best in order to concentrate more on the tunes than on blazing new trails in drumming. In fact, the tunes on this record are more catchy than on most jazz records, indicating that Williams' time has been well spent. As a mainstream jazz drummer, Williams now shows the maturity that his work in the '60s foreshadowed. And it's always great to hear the Tony Williams/Ron Carter team behind first-class soloists. This record, then, represents a well-rounded artist who can handle his instrument better

than most (as long as he stays away from gimmicky sounding effects), and whose depth as a musician is growing through his continued study of composition. I hope that this album is merely the beginning of a new phase in Williams' career. — *Rick Mattingly*



**WHAT IS THIS**—*What Is This*. MCA 5598. Jack Irons: dr. A. Johannes: gtr, voc. C. Hutchinson: bs. *Dreams Of Heaven / Big Raft / Chasing Your Ghost / Whisper (To Natasha) / Stuck / I'll Be Around / Touch The Flame / Wool Over My Eyes / Waves In The Sand / Breathing*.

What Is This is the name of the group and its debut album. What it is is exciting material from a trio of young players who offer an almost unheard of commodity in today's music: something that is both different from the norm and high-quality at the same time. Don't let their cover version of the Spinners' hit "I'll Be Around" fool you. It's a nice piece of work, and a savvy way to get some life-sustaining commercial radio airplay for a new group. But it is *not* representative of the bulk of the album. The music this group creates is strong, contemporary, and firmly based on a foundation of strong musicianship (drummer Irons and bassist Hutchinson form a rhythm section at once rock-solid and innovative). What Is This has been able to combine the raw freshness of the L.A. underground/alternative scene with the high-tech sophistication and experience of producer Todd Rundgren to create a totally unique sound. Iron's drumming throughout is exciting and powerful; I haven't enjoyed listening to a single

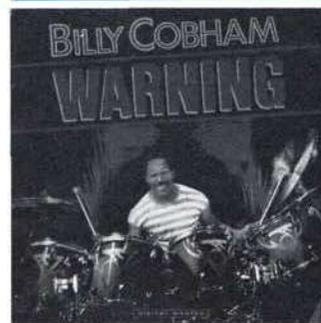
player so much since the early Police albums debuted Stewart Copeland's influential style. This is a group deserving greater exposure, and it is to be hoped that their cover single is rapidly followed up by other singles featuring their own terrific music. In the meantime, grab the album. — *Rick Van Horn*



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**—*Baby Boomer Classics*. JCI Records.

A recording series of historical interest to drummers, JCI's *Baby Boomer Classics* features original artists, primarily from the 1960s (but recently expanded to include four albums from the '50s) on digitally remastered records and chrome tapes. With the increasing popularity of music from the "Baby Boom" generation, this high-quality retrospective should provide not only a nostalgic good time, but a representative collection of music that identifies an era and its feelings. A wide variety of styles are presented, each grouped onto one of the 18 albums now available. Many notable drummers—as well as bands featuring anonymous but nonetheless stylistically influential drummers—are included throughout the series. Album titles include: *The Electric Sixties* (featuring Ginger Baker with both Blind Faith and Cream, and Michael Shrieve with Santana), *The Soul Sixties* (with early Stax and Motown hits, including the work of Otis Redding and Aretha Franklin), and *The Rockin' Sixties* (highlighted by Johnny Bee with Mitch Ryder & The Detroit Wheels, Bobby Colomby with Blood, Sweat & Tears, and Floyd Sneed with Three Dog Night). Surf music, mellow rock, psychedelic and

"British" rock, dance music and ballads are all represented with their own albums. A lot of the groundwork for today's music was laid by the artists presented on these recordings, which would be a worthy reference addition to any drummer's music collection. The *Baby Boomer Classics* series is available in retail music stores nationwide. — *Rick Van Horn*



**BILLY COBHAM**—*Warning*. GRP-A-1020. B. Cobham: dr. Sam Davis: perc. G. Etkins: kybd. D. Brown: gtr. B. Browne: bs. *Mozaik / Red And Yellow Cabriolet / Slow Body Poppin' / Unknown Jeromes / The Dancer / Stratus / Come Join Me / Go For It*.

Billy Cobham's technical ability on the drumkit set new standards of drumming virtuosity. However, his use of this technique has, at times, overshadowed some of his other drumming qualities. On *Warning*, Billy tempers his "chops" with some sensitive dynamic playing and some "smokin" grooves.

As for the compositions on this album, they were all written by Cobham and are some of his best. His writing involves a group sound much more than before. The drums are featured occasionally, with Billy taking a solo now and then, yet the overall effect is a total band sound. The band plays these tunes well, and it's nice to hear a percussionist back in Billy's music. In addition to the fine playing, the sound quality of the album is excellent, including a great drum sound that fits this style. Cobham's music has finally been captured by some hi-tech recording procedures, and it only helps to magnify the group's musicality, as well as Billy's own attack, power, and

precision. Good tunes, good engineering, and good playing—Billy has put it all together on this one. — *William F. Miller*

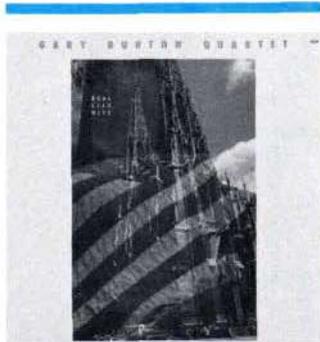


**DAVID GRISMAN**—*Acousticity*. Zebra/Acoustic ZEA 6153. D. Grisman: mandolin, mandola. R. Wasserman: bs. J. Buchanan: vln, shaker, whistling. J. Sholle: gtrs. Hal Blaine: dr, perc. S. Sharp, J. Lyle, R. Greene: vlms. J. Ehrlich: cello. P. Ellis: tn sx. B. Doll: trp. R. Taormina: al sx, bar sx. *Acousticity / Dancin' / Brazilian Breeze / Blue Sky Bop / Dawgalypso (The Island Song) / Tango For Django / Ricochet / New Monia / Pamela.*

Let's start simply: *This is a great album!* It rates high on my list as a candidate for "gem of the year." It features every style you'd want to hear from an instrumental group: funk, jazz, blues, Latin, and even bluegrass. It has subtlety. It has power. It has get-down grooves and tongue-in-cheek humor. It has all the music you'd ever expect from a contemporary band, yet there's nary a synthesizer in sight. There's not even a guitar cord around. *Everything* is acoustic, including the bass. It's so refreshing to be reminded of how much sound can be created by talented musicians playing only their instruments—unassisted, unprocessed, and totally hot.

Beneath it all is the drumming—in a "special guest" appearance—of "the father of the groove," Hal Blaine. Hal plays it all on this record, ranging from his patented studio funk grooves on several songs to tasty up-tempo brushwork on the bluegrassy "Ricochet." "Brazilian Breeze" and "Dawgalypso" feature more ethnic feels, while "Blue Sky Bop" (which has the most misleading title on the album) features Hal

laying down a boogie groove that would have made Buddy Holly smile. Hal also plays some tasty percussion on several tracks. If you like great music by great players and would like to hear what real instruments sound like in the hands of masters, don't pass this record up. — *Rick Van Horn*



**GARY BURTON QUARTET**—*Real Life Hits*. ECM 1293. G. Burton: vbs, mar. M. Ozone: pno. S. Swallow: bs. Mike Hyman: dr. *Syndrome / The Beatles / Fleurette Africaine / Ladies In Mercedes / Real Life Hits / I Need You Here / Ivanushka Durachok.*

This is the most vibrant Burton group album since *Times Square*, which was released quite a few years ago. Burton seems to have rediscovered the sense of enthusiasm and adventure that was so evident on his early albums but seemed to be lacking on the past few. There's a lot of energy and exploration on this record, which makes it definitely worth checking out. In addition, the four musicians really sound like a *band* here, rather than Burton, Swallow, and a couple of sidemen (which, again, has been the case on some of the recent albums). Hyman in particular is working *with* Burton rather than just playing behind him, and that is another element that gives this record such a strong sense of purpose. Burton was one of the strongest musical personalities of the late '60s and early '70s, but in recent years, he was almost starting to settle into predictability. However, this record proves that he still has what it takes, and in this age of electronically produced sounds and rhythms, it's nice to have a record like this to prove what *musicians* can do. — *Rick Mattingly*

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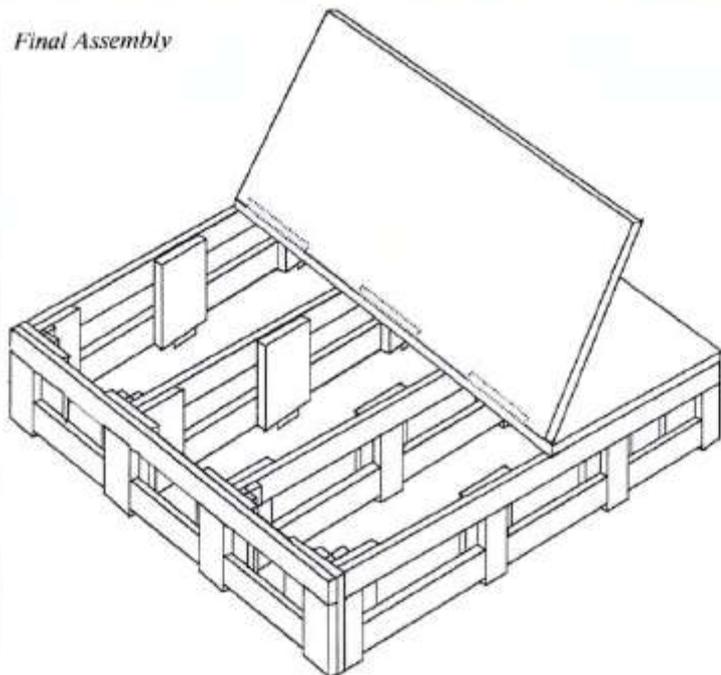
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# On The Rise: Part 3

Last time, we discussed the construction of a one-piece, box-type riser, which was relatively easy to build, but had the disadvantage of being heavy and difficult to transport, since it was not collapsible in any way. This time, we'll go into the construction of a *parallel*, the theatrical type of riser I mentioned in my January column. This unit is a bit more complicated to construct but has the advantage of being collapsible. The parallel is quite strong, and the assembled riser isn't light by any means. But the portability factor is still high, since the riser breaks down into sections, and you can carry as few or as many of those as you wish at a time. The riser is made almost completely of wood; the only hardware involved is a few hinges and the screws necessary to assemble the various pieces. One nice additional feature of this design is that it is very easy to increase the riser's height, if you so desire. All you need to do is refigure the height of the vertical pieces to obtain the final height you wish; all other pieces remain the same measurement.

Before we begin our project, let me reiterate a few cautionary points from last time. First—and most important—if you aren't a skilled woodworker, get help from someone who is. Don't make this your first attempt at carpentry; you're likely to waste time, materials, and money, and you could easily be injured if you aren't familiar with the tools necessary to complete the job. Second, be sure that you (and/or the person assisting you) read and thoroughly understand all the instructions *before* you start.

As with the box riser, I'm again figuring

a 6' x 6' x 12" riser as a standard size for the parallel. If you need a riser of a different size, study my design in order to understand the principles involved, and then adapt those principles to your own specifications.

### Building A Parallel Riser

#### Materials required:

1. 1/2" *plywood*. This will be used for the top of your riser, as well as providing the material needed to create your corner blocks and center braces. You'll need two 4' x 8' sheets, sanded on one side. (Note: As an option—to save overall weight—you may wish to purchase a half-sheet of 1/4" plywood from which to make your corner blocks and center braces. They will do the job as well and will indeed reduce weight. But since my aim is to make this riser design as economical as possible, and since you can get the corner blocks and braces you need out of the same sheets of 1/2" ply as are required for the top, I've figured the design that way. If you *do* use 1/4" plywood, you'll need to refigure some of the design dimensions accordingly.)

If you have a particularly heavy drumset, or if you are very heavy or very active when playing, you may wish to opt for a 3/4" plywood top. That will increase the strength of the riser, but will also increase the weight of the top section when being moved. If you choose to go with 3/4" ply and want to keep the riser exactly 12" high, you'll need to reduce all vertical dimensions on my design by 1/4". Otherwise, it might be easier just to let the riser come out at a final height of 12 1/4".

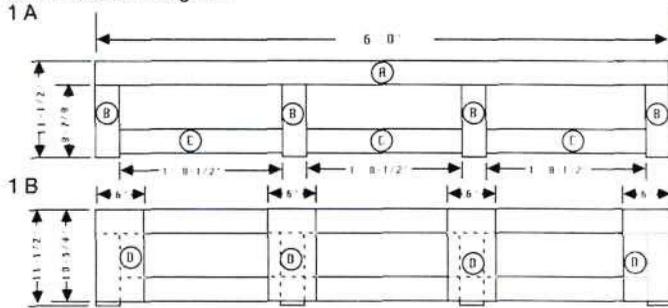
2. 1 x 3 *pine battens*. 1 x 3 boards will be

the basic material for the bulk of the riser. The dimensions on the design are based on 1 x 3 that is milled to an *actual size* of 3/4" x 2/8", which is standard in most areas. Check with your lumberyard on the actual size of the lumber you're buying, so that you can adjust the dimensions on the design as necessary. You want wood that is straight and free from imperfections, so buy "clear pine." If you can't afford that, show the design to your lumber supplier, and ask his or her advice regarding what type of stock to purchase in accordance with your budget.

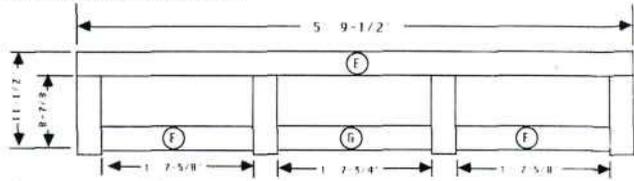
Lumber is sold in different lengths ("battens") in different areas. I've figured batten lengths that would be most common; if you are skilled at figuring total board feet versus necessary cuts, you'll want to determine what battens to buy for yourself. According to my figures, you'll be able to get the cuts you need (with a minimum of waste) if you buy the following battens: three at 7', two at 10', three at 12', and one at 12' plus *at least* one inch. (The design calls for two boards that are *exactly* six feet long, so buying a batten precisely 12' long won't do, owing to the width of a saw blade. You need a bit extra to cover yourself.) The reason for buying longer battens and cutting them down yourself is economic: Lumberyards charge extra for each cut they make for you.

3. *Screws*. You'll need approximately 500 1" flat-head wood screws. Since this riser will see a lot of set-up and break-down movement, screws are more desirable than nails. If you are going to be putting the screws in with a power drill or "Yankee" type screwdriver, I suggest using Phillips

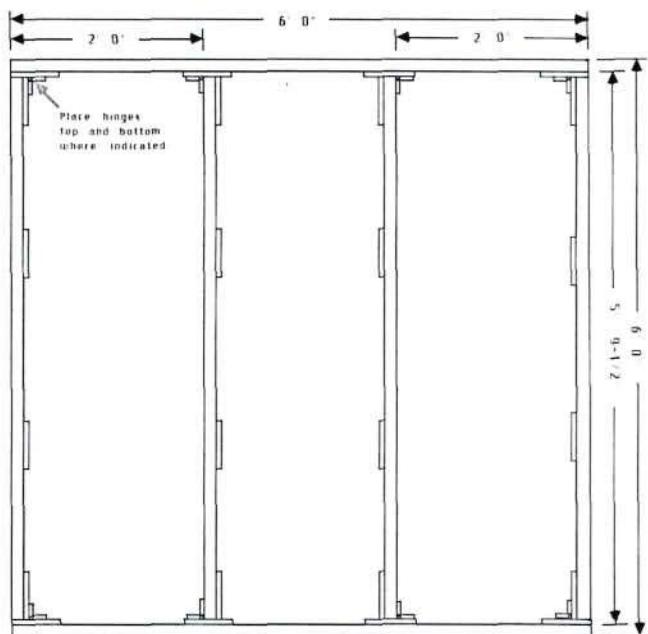
Construction Diagram



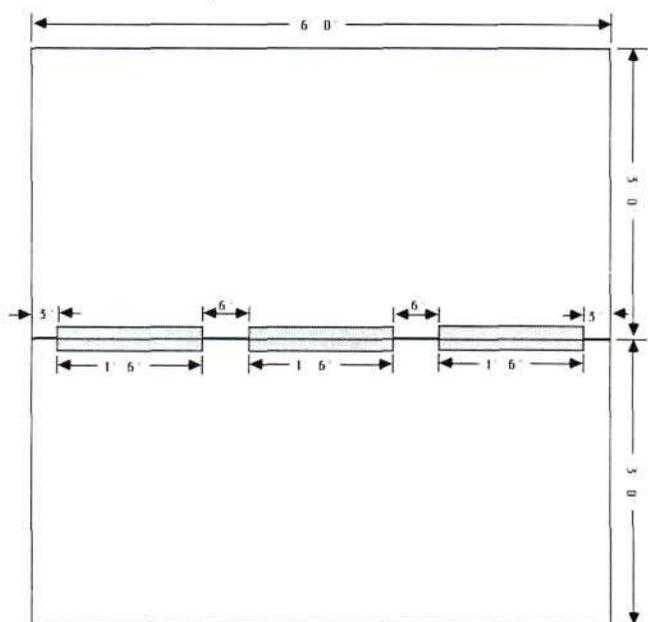
Construction Diagram 2



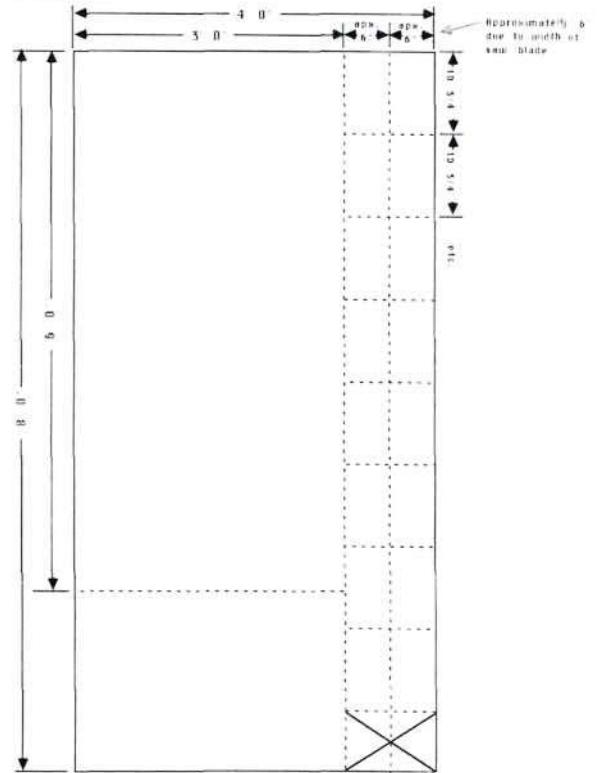
Construction Diagram 3



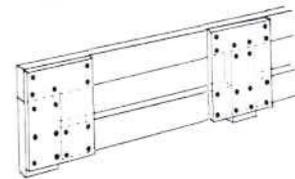
Construction Diagram 4



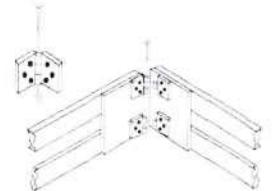
Detail #1



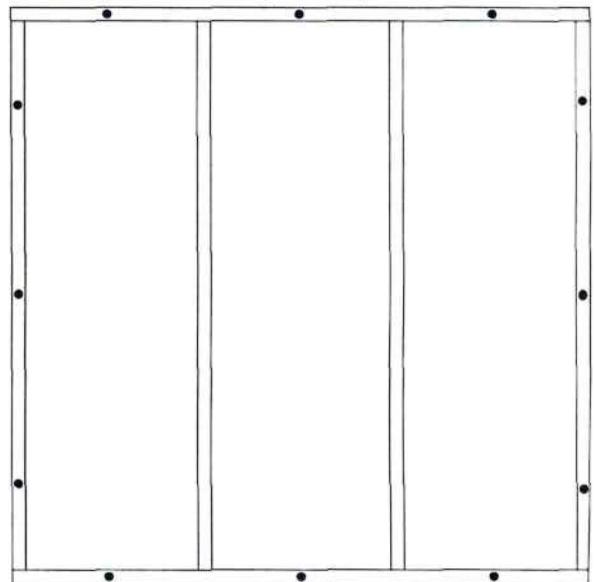
Detail #2



Detail #3



Detail #4 (loose bolt hole positions)



screws.

If the piano hinges you purchase are not supplied with screws, you'll need to buy the correct number and size to correspond with the number of holes in the hinges. (It's not a bad idea to buy a dozen or so *more* than are needed; they always seem to get lost under a workbench.) I suggest using 3/8" long sheet-metal screws, which are threaded right up to the head. Get half-round heads; they'll handle the easiest.

4. **Nails.** As part of the assembly operation, it may be desirable to "tack" the support frames together with easily removable nails, in order to facilitate the mounting of the hinges. For this, you'll need a supply of 6d ("six penny") double-head nails. It will also be easier to attach the corner blocks and braces to the frames if they are tacked with 1" wire nails before being drilled for the wood screws.

5. **Piano hinges.** The design calls for three piano hinges, each 18" long and at least 1" wide on either side of the pin. Use the hinge type of your choice based on your budget: Steel, chrome, and brass finishes are all available.

Piano hinges are commonly sold in 18" lengths, but you may find it less expensive to see if your local hardware store sells longer hinges by the foot. It may be less costly overall to purchase one 54" long hinge, and have the store cut it into 18" lengths for you.

6. **Loose-pin hinges.** These are the keys to

the collapsibility of the riser. The various supporting frames of the riser are connected by 16 loose-pin (which means the hinge pins are removable) hinges. When the pins are in place and the top is put on, the riser is very solid; when the top is removed and the pins pulled from the hinges, the riser breaks down into seven separate sections for easy portability. Hinge types vary, but you'll want hinges that are a minimum of 2" x 2" on either side of the pin, with holes that will accommodate the heads of the screws you are using.

7. **Glue.** You'll need at least two quarts of *Elmer's Woodworker's Glue* or its equivalent.

#### Tools required:

1. **Saws.** You'll need a table saw or portable circular saw to cut your plywood, and a radial-arm saw, portable circular saw, or portable jigsaw to cut your 1 x 3 stock. Handsaws may be used, but extreme care must be taken to ensure that all cuts are straight.

2. **Carpenter's Square.** To ensure square corners and straight cuts.

3. **Drill.** A power or hand drill (with appropriate drill bits) will be needed to drill "pilot holes" in your corner blocks and braces, and in the 1 x 3 below them. A screwdriving attachment for your power drill will make assembling the frames a great deal easier. You'll also need a countersink bit to countersink the screw holes to accommodate the flathead screws.

4. **Screwdriver.** If you're not using a power driver, you'll need some way to drive the screws. It's also a good idea to use a hand screwdriver just to check the tightness of screws put in with a power driver. Obviously, the screwdriver type (Phillips or straight) should match the type of screws you're using.

5. **Tape measure.** You'll need this to measure your cuts.

6. **Hammer.** To assist you in tacking pieces together and removing double-head nails.

7. **Backstop.** If you're working alone, you'll need a backstop to back you up when tacking pieces together. Don't use a plaster wall or a wall with siding that might be damaged by the impact; a concrete wall or curb is best.

#### Cuts:

(Remember that a saw blade has width; always allow for that width when making your measurements so that you end up with a piece that has the dimensions you want.)

1. **Plywood.** From each sheet of 1/2" plywood, rip a 3' x 8' piece. Cut approximately two feet off of one end of each of

those pieces, so that you are left with two pieces *exactly* 3' x 6'. Next, take the two long strips (approximately 1' x 8') that were left over from your first long cuts, and rip each of those in half lengthwise, giving you four lengths of plywood, each approximately 6" x 8'. (The widths will not be exactly 6", but this is not critical). Finally, from those strips cut 24 rectangular pieces approximately 6" wide by *exactly* 10 3/4" long. (See Detail Diagram 1.) These will be your corner blocks and center braces. (If you have opted to use 1/4" ply for this purpose, a 4' x 4' half-sheet may easily be divided into the pieces you'll need.)

2. **Pine boards.** (I'm figuring the following cuts based on my own experience with batten sales availability. Again, let me stress that, if you can, you should figure your own cuts from what is commonly available in your area.)

Referring to Construction Diagrams 1A, 1B, and 2, make the following cuts: From the one 12'-plus batten, cut two A pieces 6' long; from two 10' battens, cut 24 B pieces 8 7/8" long; from one 12' batten, cut six C pieces 1' 8 1/2" long; from two 12' battens, cut four E pieces 5' 9 1/2" long; from two 7' battens cut eight F pieces 1' 7 5/8" long; and from one 7' batten, cut four G pieces 1' 7 3/4" long. (Pieces indicated as D are plywood corner blocks and braces.)

#### Construction:

The construction of a parallel looks more difficult than it is. It's really just a big jigsaw puzzle. Simply separate and label the various cuts to correspond with the construction diagrams. Then, take each piece as called for, according to the following instructions.

1. **6' support frames.** Referring to Construction Diagram 1A, lay out the pieces necessary to create one of the 6' frames. Referring to Construction Diagram 1B, place corner blocks and center braces into position. Apply glue to the area where the plywood will meet the 1 x 3. Then, carefully square up each corner using the carpenter's square (don't rely on the edges of the corner blocks), and tack the blocks and braces down with 1" wire nails. (Be sure to place the nails in places that the screws aren't going to go.) Once all corner blocks and braces have been glued and tacked into place, *carefully* set the completed frame aside to allow the glue to dry. Remember it's only tacked together, so don't move it any more than necessary (in order to avoid getting the corners out of square). Repeat this process for the other 6' frame.

Once the glue has dried on the first frame, lay it down flat, and drill pilot holes for your 1" wood screws, using a drill bit that approximates the diameter of the shaft of the screw *without* threads. (Refer to Construction Diagram 1B and Detail Diagram 2.) When this is completed, change to a countersink bit, and counter-

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sink each hole to accommodate the screw head. (You want each screw to seat in flush with the top of the plywood.) When that step is completed, put the wood screws in, using a power driver on your drill or some other form of screwdriver. Be sure to check with a hand screwdriver to make sure each screw is in tightly. Repeat this procedure for the other 6' frame.

2. *5' 9 1/2" frames.* Repeat the frame construction process for the four 5' 9 1/2" frames, referring to Construction Diagram 2. (The corner blocks and braces are installed in the same relative position on these frames as on the 6' frames, so a separate diagram has not been included.)

3. *Riser top.* Placing the two 3' x 6' sheets of plywood with their smooth sides down, join them along a 6' length as shown in Construction Diagram 4. Following the dimensions shown, install the piano hinges. (Pilot-drilling with a very small drill bit may be beneficial, but be careful to keep your pilot hole in the center of each hole in the hinge plate. Otherwise, your screws will have a tendency to pull the hinge off center.) When completed, the top should fold up with the smooth side of the plywood to the outside.

4. *Corner hinges.* Note the positions of the loose-pin hinges indicated on Construction Diagram 3 and the mounting method suggested by Detail Diagram 3. There are two ways to install the hinges. The easy way is to set the frames up as indicated in Construction Diagram 3 and nail them together, using 6d double-head nails. Use your carpenter's square to make sure that the corners created between the various frames are all square. Then, either fit the hinges into place and install them immediately, or mark where the screw holes need to go, remove the 6d nails and lay each frame flat again, and install the hinge halves separately.

A method that is a little trickier, but involves fewer operations, is to measure back from the edge of one frame carefully to allow for the thickness of the other, and place the hinge halves accordingly. (Again, refer to Detail Diagram 3 for clarification.)

It's a good idea to code the two halves of each hinge, so that you can assemble the riser the same way each time. In other words, when you install the first hinge, put a clearly visible "A" on each half of that hinge. Put "B"s on the next hinge, and so on, so that the two elements that make up any given corner are clearly identified. Use enamel paint or engrave the code right into the metal, so that the marking is permanent.

Please note that the layout of the hinges

is such that the assembled frames cannot all fold up in any one direction; the hinges are placed to work opposite each other and thus prevent that. It is the fact that the hinge pins can be removed and the frames carried separately that makes this a portable unit; it is not a "folding platform." Only the top actually folds up for transport.

5. *Finishing.* When all the pieces are assembled, the riser may be painted (but don't cover your hinge codes); the top may be covered with a rug or painted; special fittings (*Trak Shoes*, cleats, eyebolts, etc.) may be attached to the top to secure stand legs, etc. (Just remember that any hardware permanently attached to the top may prevent it from folding completely flat.) You may also wish to cut hand holes or attach handles to the top. Be sure to set your kit up on the riser *first*, in order to determine the best location for such holes or handles.

#### Assembling the riser:

To assemble the riser, simply stand one of the 6' frames against a wall, or have someone hold it upright. Starting at one end, fit the halves of the two hinges on one end of one 5' 9 1/2" frame into the corresponding halves on the 6' frame (according to your coding) and insert the hinge pins. Continue this until all four 5' 9 1/2" frames have been fitted at one end. Then, attach the other 6' frame to the other ends of those pieces. Place the top onto the frames

with the hinges down and running parallel to the 6' frames.

It is my belief that you and your kit provide enough weight pressing the riser top down against the 1 x 3 frames to hold the top firmly in place. However, in order to *lock* the top into place—and also to increase the rigidity of the assembled frames—you may wish to use loose bolts to secure the top to the frames. This is best done by drilling three 1/4" holes through the riser top and into the center of the top edge of the two 6' frames and the two outside 5' 9 1/2" frames. (See Detail Diagram 4.) These holes should be about 2" deep into the 1 x 3. When the riser is set up, simply insert a 1/4" x 2 1/2" eyebolt down through the top and into the edge of the frame through each hole. The eyebolts are easy to remove, and easy to link together with a piece of string or a wire tie, in order to travel in your trap case along with the hinge pins.

Building this riser sounds like a lot of work when described on paper, and to a certain degree, it is. But the riser should last for many years if properly handled, and the visual benefit you will gain should make the effort worthwhile. Let me close this series by saying that, if you have any questions whatever about any of my designs or the procedures I've suggested, please feel free to contact me *c/o MD* before you begin. I'll be happy to explain any point in greater detail.



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by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.



# Ludwig Rocker II Power Plus Kit

Ludwig has upgraded its previous *Standard* line of kits to the new *Rocker II* drumkits. These kits have wooden shells, finished inside with a gray sealant. The lugs have a slightly different design than Ludwig's top "Classic" drums. Components of the *Rocker II Power Plus* are: 16x22 bass drum, 11 x 12 and 12 x 13 toms, 16 x 16 floor tom, and 6 1/2 X 14 snare. All drums are fitted with Remo *Ebony Ambassador* heads on top and bottom, except for the snare drum, which has Ludwig-made heads.

## Bass Drum

The 16 x 22 bass drum has 16 lugs with T-rods and claws. Metal hoops are used (a first for Ludwig), and these hoops have a plastic inlay, matching the drum's color. The *Rocker II* spurs disappear into the drumshell. Instead of being curved like the regular Ludwig spurs, these are merely straight steel rods, angled slightly forward in their brackets, and secured with a T-screw. The spur tips are convertible from rubber tip to spike point, by threading the rubber tip up the spur leg shaft. A felt strip is fitted behind the batter head. This bass drum has good power and fullness, partly due to its extra two inches in depth. The spurs hold the drum in place quite well.

## Mounting System

Ludwig's 771 L-arm tom-tom holder is mounted onto the bass drum. A single down post fits into a diamond-shaped base plate, and is secured with a T-screw. The base plate also provides for the post's memory lock to ensure accurate height in future setups. Each L-arm moves independently of the other and works on a ratchet. Ludwig has at last incorporated T-bolts at these angle ratchets but still uses hex nuts at the arm holders themselves, which means you still need a wrench to adjust the separate arm tilt and spread. This tom-tom holder has been around for quite a while. Simplistic as it is, it still works just fine, and has enough height to accommodate the deep-shell toms in this kit.

## Tom-Toms

The 11 x 12 and 12 x 13 toms have 12

lugs each, and no internal mufflers. For some reason, Ludwig has decided to go with imported metal hoops, rather than its American-made ones. Both toms have T-bolt-locked brackets for mounting onto the L-arm holder. The 16 x 16 floor tom has 16 lugs, plus three rather short legs that fit into T-screw/eyebolt brackets. It too has no internal muffler.

A bit of dampening is needed to ease the overtones on the drums, but all in all, the toms have good depth and tonal clarity with the *Ebony Ambassadors*. If you prefer a thicker sound, *Ebony Pinstripe* batters may help. (By the way, it should be mentioned that toms are available in 8", 10", 14", and 15" sizes, should you want to add onto your kit at some later date.)

## Snare Drum

The 6 1/2 x 14 snare has a wood shell with plastic covering. It has eight double-ended lugs, a knob-operated internal muffler, and 12-strand, plastic-end snares. Ludwig has chosen the popular *P-85* side-throw strainer for the drum. It's very efficient, with a minimum of adjustments. The drum is fitted with a coated Ludwig batter head and transparent snare-side head.

The drum is capable of a range of timbres from crisp to fat. The rimshot sound is a bit thin for my taste, but since sound is such a subjective matter, I suggest you try the drum yourself, if you can. Overall, this snare drum is just fine.

## Hardware

The *Rocker II* kits allow a choice of hardware packages: either the *Modular II* series or the lower-priced *Rocker* series. The kit tested came with *Modular II* hardware, so let's take a deeper look.

All stands in the *Modular II* line have double-braced tripod bases (not tubular), and nylon bushings set into their height joints. The cymbal stand has two height-adjustable tiers, while the boom cymbal stand has one adjustable tier, and a telescopic boom arm with length adjustment for the entire arm. Their tilters operate on concealed sprung ratchets. Both stands are very sturdy and have fabulous chrome

plating.

The *Modular II* bass drum pedal has a split footboard with an adjustable toe stop. A single, adjustable expansion spring is stretched upward from the frame's right side. Linkage is done with a semi-flexible synthetic strap. There are two sprung spurs at the base. A T-screw mounted off to the side of the pedal moves a small block along a track to either raise or lower the hoop clamp plate. This method is certainly a lot easier than having to get on your hands and knees in order to mount your pedal. The pedal has good action and is quite silent. I have no complaints with the design, which is tried-and-true among many different drum companies.

The snare stand relies on the common basket design with threaded shaft. The stand's angle is adjusted via a concealed ratchet gear. Its base folds up from the bottom, and like the other *Modular II* stands, the base itself has huge rubber feet. This stand holds the snare drum well, and by itself it is pretty impressive looking.

The *Modular II* hi-hat's footboard matches the bass drum pedal, and it too has sprung spur tips at its base. Two externally housed compression springs are used for tension. They are easily adjustable via rotary caps at the top of their tube housings. This stand uses parallel-pull and has a chain linkage. I really enjoyed playing this hi-hat because of its great feel and extremely smooth response.

Six different coverings are available for the *Rocker II* kits: black, white, red, blue, silver, and maroon. Each logo badge has a stamped serial number, and these badges are a bit different from the top-of-the-line ones, in that they are colored black-white-silver. I must also mention that Ludwig is the only company I know of that *still* includes sticks and brushes with its kits!

Ludwig's *Rocker II Power Plus* kit is an excellent outfit for the price. The drums are well-made, and the hardware is a killer. The kit as tested retails at \$1,190. With the lower-line *Rocker* hardware, retail is \$1,015.



Photo by Ebet Roberts



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# INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

## Highlights Of The PASIC In L.A.

Photos by Rick Mattingly and Lissa Wales



*Chester Thompson's clinic dealt with electronic drums.*



*Mark Stevens and Jim Keltner discussed studio drumming.*



*The Repercussion Unit in concert.*



*Twisted Sister's A. J. Pero*



*Several of L.A.'s top studio musicians recreated the recording session for the music of Star Trek III.*



*Gerry Brown and Ed Shaughnessy performed with the C. S. U. Northridge Jazz Band.*



*Billy Cobham in clinic.*



*Joe Franco presented an informative clinic.*



*Walfredo Reyes, Jr. and Alex Acuna conducted a Latin "hands on" session.*



*It was standing room only for the Tony Williams clinic.*



*Vinnie Colaiuta proved that he is in a class by himself.*



*Stewart Copeland and Steve Smith chatted between their respective clinics.*



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# J U S T   D R U M S

## NOBLE & COOLEY DRUMSETS



Encouraged by the success of its popular *Classic SS* snare drum line, Noble & Cooley introduced professional-quality *Classic SS* maple drumsets at the recent NAMM Winter Market. The new four-, five- and six-piece drumsets include 8 x 10, 9 x 12, and/or 9 x 13 mounted toms, a 14 x 14 floor tom, a 16 x 20 bass drum, and either a 5" or 7" snare drum. All drumshells are made with a single piece of rock maple. Heavy-

duty die-cast chrome rims, brass tension casings, Remo heads, RIMS tom mounts, and natural honey maple finish are standard features. According to Noble & Cooley Sales Manager Jonathan "Jay" Jones, "Each drum is exceptionally sensitive, resonant, and dynamic. The *Classic SS* kit responds to drummers' playing styles and feelings better than any other drumset we've tested. It's a top-quality set for discriminating drummers."

The Noble & Cooley kits do not come with throne, bass drum pedal, cymbal, or hi-hat stands. "Drummers have their special needs and favorite brands of hardware," says Jones, "so we decided to give them that flexibility." For more information, write Noble & Cooley, Water Street, Granville, MA 01034.

## THE BALANCER

*The Balancer* is the premier product from Rollor, a new company started by drummer and inventor, Peter Smith. The device is a counterweight for bass drum pedals to provide adjustment of beater balance, enhance beater stroke, and add power without loss of speed and control. The Rollor *Balancer* mounts to the stem of any conventional beater and is designed to work with most pedal designs. Essentially, *The Balancer* is comprised of an aluminum beater stem mount and a balance rod. The rod is comprised of a steel weight secured to a brass rod that extends over the pedal axle and alongside the beater mount. By adjusting the balance rod, counterweight may be either increased or decreased.

The effect of *The Balancer* is most pronounced on chain-drive pedals where it makes up for the lack of eccentric extension as a result of sprocket wheels. Also, the unit greatly helps the performance of double-pedal systems, especially when mounted to the left-side beater stem. However, *The Balancer's* greatest contribution is that it gives drummers a means to adjust the quality of stroke and feel on all pedals, which is useful when playing a variety of styles. In general (according to inventor Smith), *The Balancer* by Rollor will make any pedal feel better. The device is currently selling in selected drum shops, or you may contact Rollor, 5731 Newcastle Ave., Encino, California 91316, or call (818) 344-8177.

## PAISTE 2002 REFLECTORS

Paiste has introduced a new mirror-like *Reflector* finish to its popular 2002 line. Based on input from drummers throughout the world, Paiste has developed 2002 *Reflectors* to offer a new way to create visual excitement and continue to deliver high-quality sound. The cymbals are manufactured with a special process (not buffed, which Paiste believes can distort frequencies and change the

sound) to provide the same energetic, projecting, and precise sound that 2002s are noted for. *Reflectors* are finished with a special coating, eliminating the need for constant care and keeping cymbal appearance like new. For further information, contact your Paiste dealer, or Paiste America, Inc., 460 Atlas Street, Brea, CA 91621.

## REAL OFFERS CAPELLE TURBO BASS DRUMS



Paul Real Sales is now marketing the *Power Turbo* bass drums by Jacques Cappelle. These bass drums are made of African mahogany and feature

extra depth for the power player. Available sizes include 32 x 22, 32 x 24, 26 x 22, and 26 x 24, and the drums come in all popular colors and finishes. According to Paul Real, "Up to now, drums in these sizes were only made on special order for world-renowned endorsers. We are pleased to make them available to drummers here in the U.S." For more details, write to Paul Real Sales, 745 Oak Knoll Circle, Pasadena, CA 91106.

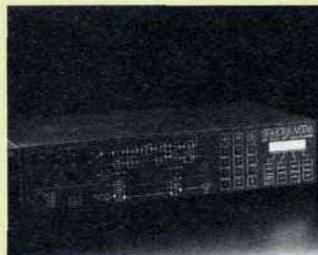
## NEW HEADSETS FROM SHURE



Shure has unveiled two new microphone/monitor headsets, the *SM1* and *SM2*. Designed initially for professional broadcasting and intercom applications, these headsets may appeal to drummers who need both high-performance microphone and monitor units in a single headset. The *SM1* features a single earphone; the *SM2* offers a double, fitted into large, cushioned ear pads covered in a durable, leather-soft

material for maximum comfort during long periods of use, as well as for exceptional isolation from outside noise. The microphone in both models is a close-talking unidirectional dynamic mic' with a frequency response (50 to 15,000 Hz) specially tailored for voice intelligibility. Because of its noise-reducing character, the mic' discriminates in favor of close sounds and against distant sounds, and as a result, can be used in extremely noisy environments (such as a concert stage) without loss or masking of the voice signal. For additional specifications and details, contact Shure Brothers, Inc., Customer Services Department, 222 Hartrey Avenue, Evanston, IL 60204, or call (312) 866-2553.

## SIMMONS MTM PERCUSSION INTERFACE UNIT



Simmons Electronic Drums has recently introduced the *MTM (MIDI Trigger Module)*, an eight-channel, fully programmable instrument that converts drumpad, acoustic drum, or tape signals to trigger MIDI and non-MIDI electronic sound sources under full dynamic control. *MTM* is a drum and percussion interface unit that combines unique applications of existing inter-

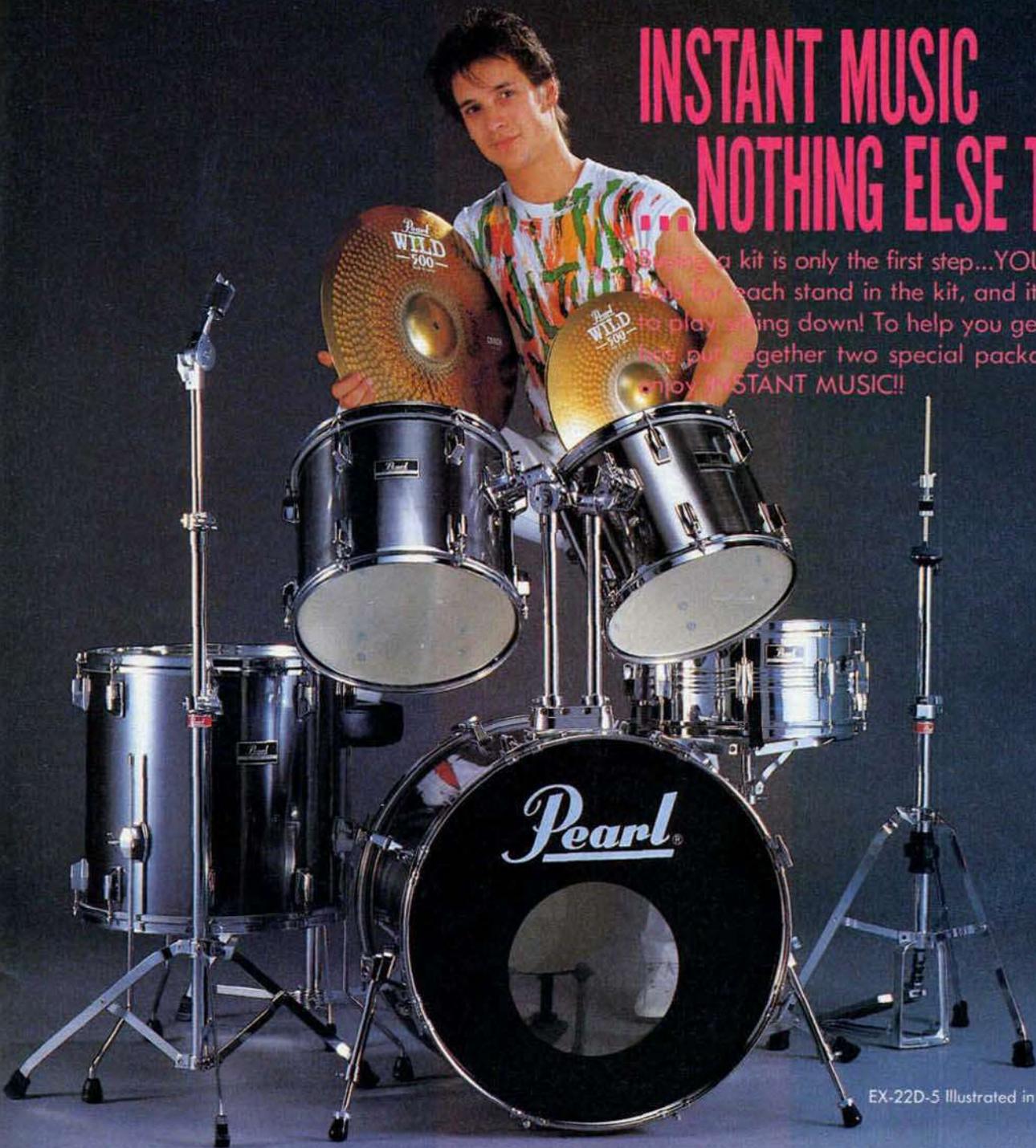
face technology with totally new Simmons innovations.

The *MTM* is primarily designed for use with Simmons' *SDS5* and *SDS7* as a pad-to-MIDI converter. However, the *MTM's* extensive signal processing capabilities can be programmed to produce unlimited musical effects from a variety of triggering methods, and can be used to interface acoustic and electronic drums, acoustic drums and MIDI-equipped synthesizers, or in the studio for converting audio signals on tape to MIDI code.

For additional specifications and performance details, contact your local Simmons dealer, or write Simmons Electronic Drums at 23917 Craftsman Road, Calabasas, CA 91302.

# INSTANT MUSIC ...NOTHING ELSE TO BUY!

Buying a kit is only the first step...YOU still need cymbals for each stand in the kit, and it would be nice to play sitting down! To help you get started, Pearl has put together two special packages to let you enjoy INSTANT MUSIC!!



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# Pearl®

# MD's 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Readers Poll

Here's your opportunity to make your opinion count. Your vote will help MD pay tribute to the leading drum and percussion artists in the world today.

HALL OF FAME \* (see NOTES)

ROCK DRUMMER

COUNTRY DRUMMER

BIG BAND DRUMMER

REGGAE DRUMMER

MULTI-PERCUSSIONIST

UP-AND-COMING DRUMMER <sup>2</sup>

LATIN/BRAZILIAN PERCUSSIONIST

ALL-AROUND DRUMMER

MAINSTREAM JAZZ DRUMMER <sup>3</sup>

ELECTRIC JAZZ DRUMMER <sup>4</sup>

FUNK DRUMMER

STUDIO DRUMMER

MALLET PERCUSSIONIST <sup>5</sup>

CLASSICAL PERCUSSIONIST <sup>6</sup>

RECORDED PERFORMANCE <sup>7</sup>

ARTIST'S NAME

SONG TITLE

ALBUM TITLE

The purpose of MD's annual poll is to recognize drummers and percussionists in all fields of music who have been especially active during the past year, either through recordings, live performances, or educational activities. It is in no way to suggest that one musician is "better" than another but, rather, to call attention to those performers who, through their musicianship, have been inspirational to us all.

### MD's Honor Roll

A new feature of *Modern Drummer's* Readers Poll to be initiated this year is the Honor Roll. Artists who have been selected by the MD readership as winners in any one category for a total of five years will be placed on MD's Honor Roll as our way of recognizing the unique talent and lasting popularity of those special artists. Artists placed on the Honor Roll in any given category will subsequently be ineligible in that category, although they will remain eligible in other categories. (The exception to this is the "Recorded Performance" category, which will remain open to all artists.)

In order to initiate the Honor Roll this year, we have gone back over the previous seven Readers Polls and selected those artists who have been awarded as the tops in their field for five or more years. These artists are our first Honor Roll members and are now ineligible in the categories shown.

All-Around Drummer: Steve Gadd  
Rock Drummer: Neil Peart  
Studio Drummer: Steve Gadd  
Big Band Drummer: Buddy Rich  
R&B/Funk Drummer: David Garibaldi  
Latin American/Latin Brazilian Percussionist: Airto  
Classical Percussionist: Vic Firth

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. You must use the official MD ballot — no photocopies.
2. Please print or type.
3. Make only one selection in each category. (It is not necessary to vote in every category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.)
4. Mail your ballot to:  
Modern Drummers Readers Poll  
870 Pompton Avenue  
Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288.  
Ballots must be postmarked no later than April 10, 1986. Results will be announced in the July '86 issue of MD.

### NOTES

- 1—Vote for the artist, living or dead, who you feel has made an historic contribution to the art of drumming. Previous winners (Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, John Bonham, Keith Moon, Neil Peart, Steve Gadd, and Louie Bellson) are not eligible for this category.
- 2—This category is reserved for the most promising artist brought to the public's attention within the past 12 months.
- 3—Please restrict this category to drummers known primarily for their work in small-group, acoustic jazz.
- 4—This category is reserved for drummers who generally perform in fusion or jazz-rock situations.
- 5—Please limit this to performers who specialize in vibes, marimba, and/or xylophone.
- 6—This category is limited to artists performing with symphony orchestras, operas, percussion ensembles, etc.
- 7—Vote for your favorite recording by a drummer as a leader or as a member of a group. Limit your selection to recordings made within the last 12 months. Please include the artist's name, the complete title of the song, and the name of the album from which it came.

# OUTER LIMITS

The outer limits of creativity are now within any drummers' reach. Why just play one set of drums, when at the touch of a drumstick you can have access to 32 different drum sets, or as many as 96 different sets? Stretch your talent beyond any limits with Roland's new **DDR-30** Digital Drums Module and the PD-10 and PD-20 Drum Pads. Not just a drum set, but an advanced electronic drum system—loaded with the latest PCM digital technology. The **DDR-30** responds to every nuance of your technique—from the expressive to the explosive—and also interfaces you with all other MIDI instruments and equipment. You lay down the beat on electronic drum pads that play and feel like acoustic drums (the PD-10 is a Bass Drum Pad, and the PD-20 Pad is for Snare or Toms). But it's the rack-mountable **DDR-30** Digital Drums module that takes your drumming to the limits of imagination and inspiration. Each of its 6 drum voices (kick, snare and 4 toms) has 4 PCM sampled real drum sounds to build upon. And with the **DDR-30's** Alpha Controller you can go beyond sampled drum sounds by adjusting over a dozen parameters per voice to tune in a limitless variety of kit sounds. Create your own distinctive drum sound. And then, up to 32 drum kit patches can be programmed into memory to be recalled later—on stage, in the studio—instantly. That's like having 32 different drum sets! Optional M-16C memory cartridge stores an additional 64 patches for a total of 96 different set-up possibilities. Because the **DDR-30** is totally MIDI, the traditional limitations of acoustic drums no longer apply. Play the Digital Drums Module by hitting the electronic drum pads or by playing a synthesizer—or play a synthesizer by striking the drum pads! The **DDR-30** can also be used to expand the capabilities of MIDI drum machines or other electronic drums. Take creative control of your drum and percussion sound—at home, in the studio or on stage—all with full MIDI versatility. And, best of all, the **DDR-30's** low system price won't take you to the outer limits of your budget. For more information contact: RolandCorp US, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA 90040.  Roland



*Roland Makes It Happen!*

# Cymbalism

## Keep them looking good...

"Paiste cymbals not only sound the best - they also look the best" says **Les Cole**, who as **Carl Palmer's** personal drum technician keeps both Carl's and his own cymbal collections in immaculate condition.

"Let's face it, when you spend a lot of money on cymbals you want to keep them looking good as new. It's really quite easy if you treat them with the respect they deserve."



Les Cole / Carl Palmer

Les explains... "When handling cymbals avoid finger contact with the surfaces as Amino-acids will attack the alloys and attract dirt. Wipe off fingerprints immediately with a soft duster. Once out of the case, handle the cymbal by the edge (just like a record album), and mount the cymbal straight away. Don't stack them on the edge - if they get kicked over this can cause damage which could result in cracking at a later date. Now the cymbals are up, spin them and wipe them clean. Easy Eh!"

"All the Paiste cymbals have a protective film which is the best I've ever experienced. Regular cleaning means I never have to revert to "harsh cleaners" which could remove this coating. If you do have some stubborn marks on a cymbal however, try a clean soft cloth and pure alcohol."

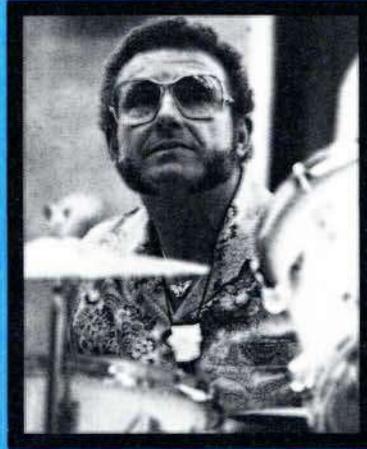
"I store our cymbals in bags which are then placed inside a flight case, cushioned against movement and moisture free."

For further information please write to

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# Marc Droubay —

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