

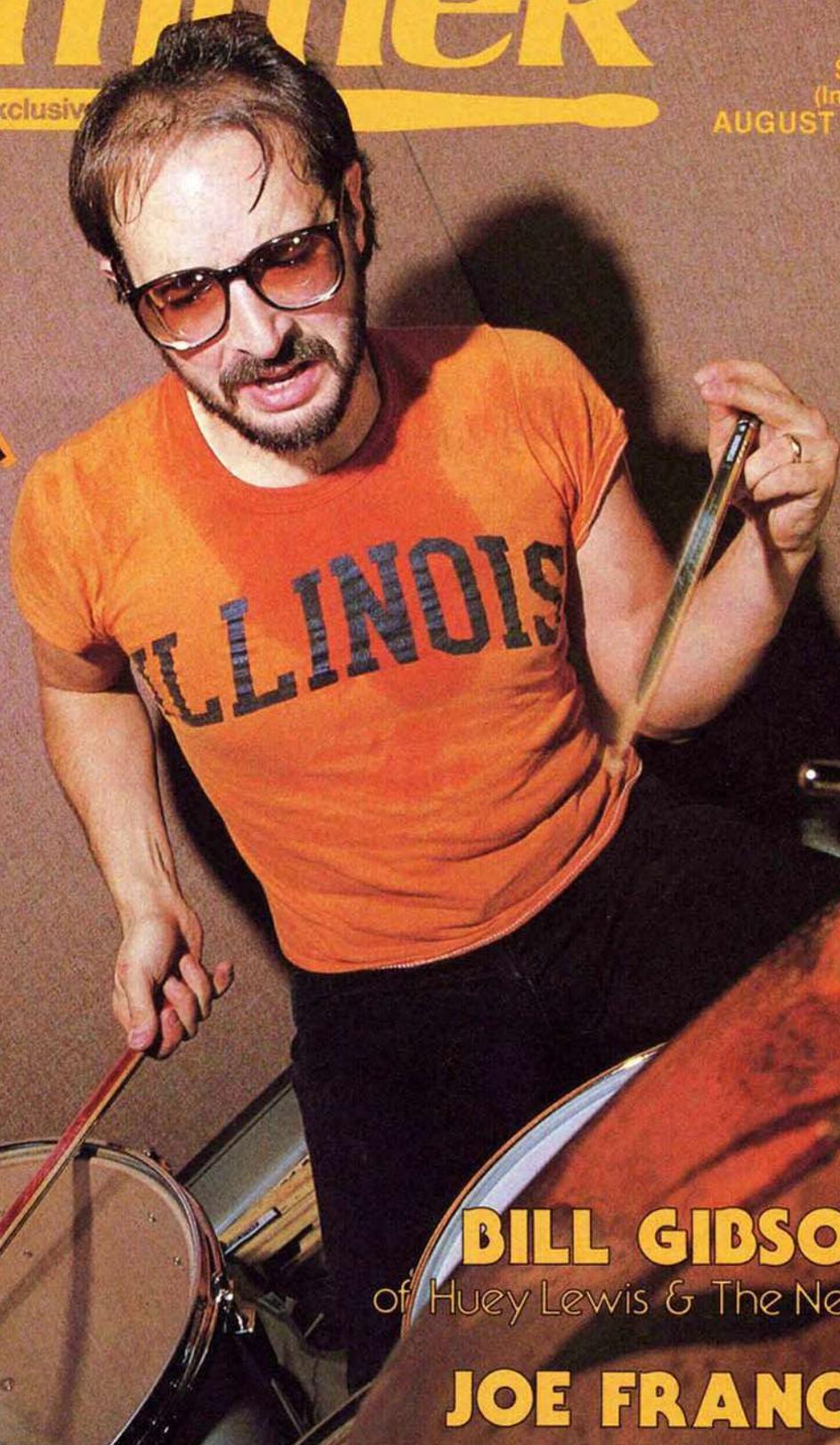
# MODERN DRUMMER™



The International Magazine Exclusive

\$2.75  
(In USA)  
AUGUST 1986

Steve  
Smith



**BILL GIBSON**  
of Huey Lewis & The News

**JOE FRANCO**

**Plus:**

**Terry Bozzio: Style & Analysis • The 20-Minute Warm-Up  
Simon Phillips Transcription • Ian Wallace On Electronics**

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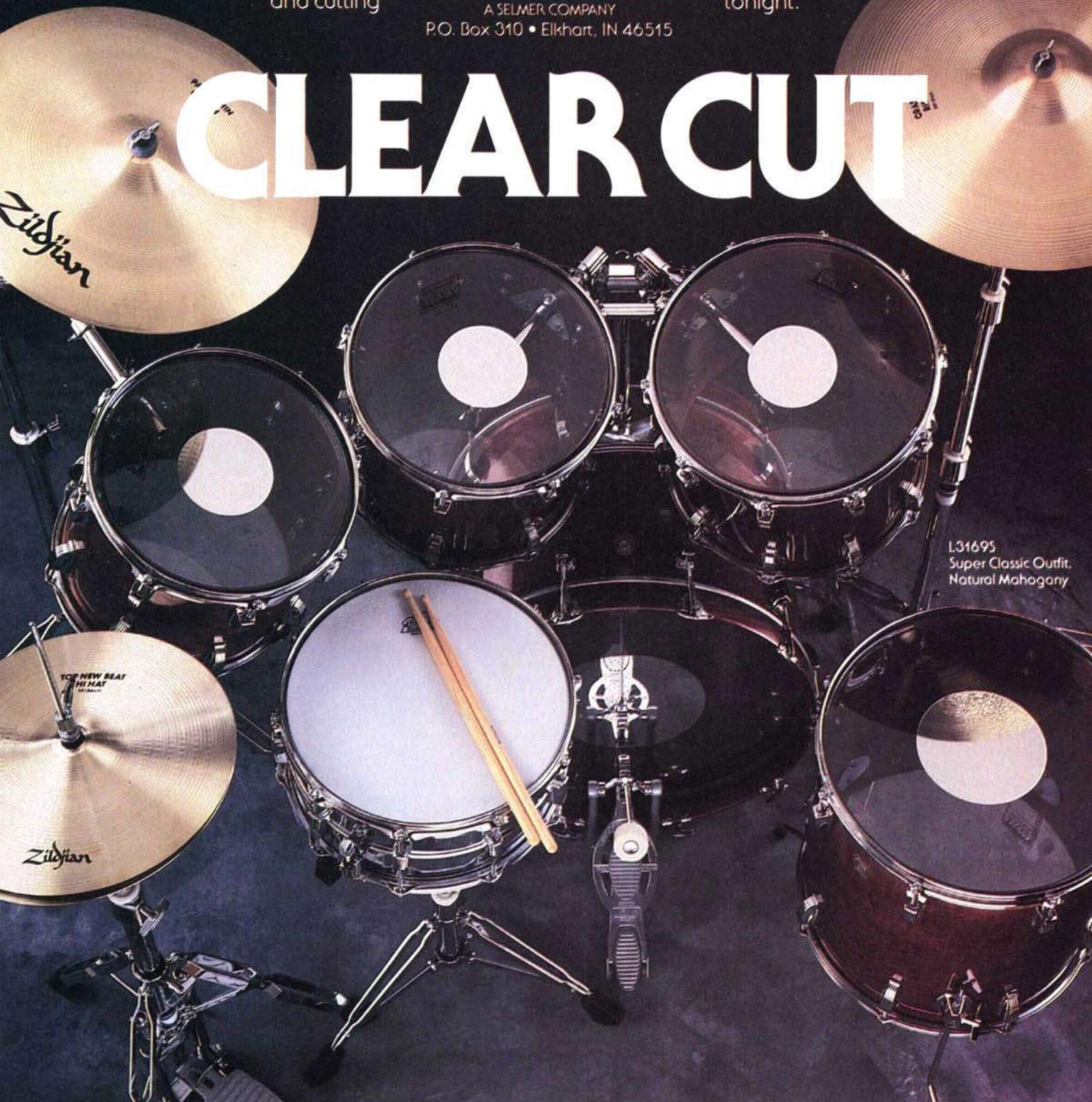
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# Features

Cover Photo by Rick Malkin

## STEVE SMITH

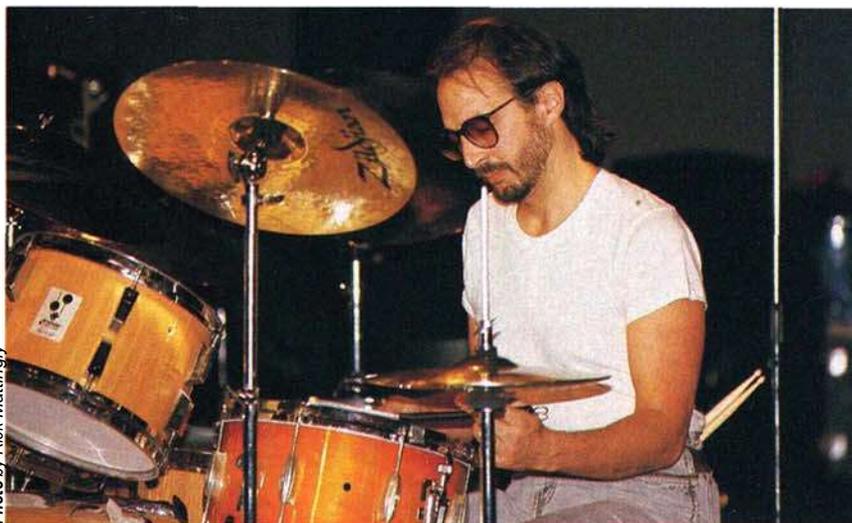


Photo by Rick Martingly

Why did Steve Smith leave Journey? He tells the whole story, from what he had to practice when he first joined the group, through the breakup, to his current work with Steps Ahead.  
by Robyn Flans ..... 16

## JOE FRANCO

As a member of the Good Rats, Joe Franco was a mainstay of the New York club scene for years, and now with the publication of his double bass drum book and his work with Fiona, his talent is being recognized on a much larger level.  
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After several years on the bar circuit, Huey Lewis & The News hit it big, but as drummer Bill Gibson reveals, just having a couple of hit singles doesn't guarantee that the rest will be easy.  
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# EDITOR'S OVERVIEW



## A New Look

If you've sensed that *Modern Drummer* is looking a bit different, but can't seem to put your finger on exactly what it is, let me point out some of the changes that have been made. Just prior to our tenth anniversary issue in January of '86, we felt that MD needed a fresh look. MD's Art Director, David Creamer, was consulted on the ideas we had and was asked to come up with some new designs. I think you'll agree that he's done an admirable job.

Let's start out with MD's cover. Actually, we saw no justifiable reason to make any major changes in the overall look of our cover. We decided to maintain our usual dramatic, tight shot of our feature artist but adjust the items that revolved around it. Though we're still using the same number of cover headlines, we've created a narrow box at the lower portion of the cover to accommodate those heads that usually appeared around the photo. The new look doesn't detract from the photo and still offers the reader the needed information on what to expect inside the magazine.

You might also notice that our contents page has been redesigned. Along with moving certain items around, we also opted to run one large color photo of our cover artist, as opposed to several small black and white shots of everyone featured in that particular issue. We think it's a cleaner look that is both functional and attractive.

Next, we've moved the *Update* department to the front of the magazine. Since *Update* is more of a newsy, information-type department offering the latest on who's doing what in the drum world, we felt that you might be more likely to appreciate it in a leadoff position, rather than relegating it to

"back of the book" status.

Hopefully, you'll also notice that we're utilizing more color photos than ever before in our feature section of the magazine. A few alterations in the way MD is printed, much too technical to go into here, enabled us to add more lively color shots. The greater usage of color photography certainly adds more vitality to the magazine.

Moving along, you'll see that MD's popular *It's Questionable* column has taken a permanent position in the front section of the magazine. And, in case you failed to notice, the *Editor's Overview* you're now reading and our masthead, which lists information on MD's staff, Advisory Board, etc., have also been redesigned. Plus, we've made several interesting changes throughout the publication by using a selection of different styles and sizes of type for feature article headlines, by-lines, and quotes.

Finally, one of the most noticeable changes has occurred with all of MD's regular column headlines. All heads have been redone at a smaller size, in a new typeface, and placed on a black background. We've also boxed most every department in an effort to give each one more of a self-contained feeling.

After ten years of publishing, we felt it was time for a minor face-lift, and we've attempted to achieve it through our graphic appearance, without really changing the content, pace, or personality of the magazine. We hope you like what we've done. I'll look forward to hearing from you about it, favorably or otherwise. By the way, so will Dave Creamer, so feel free to write to him as well.

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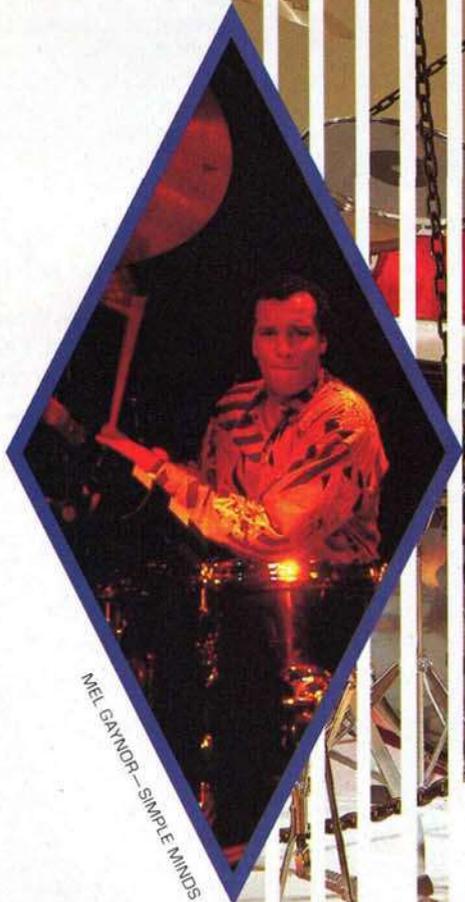
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## EXPANDING YOUR HORIZONS

Thank you, Ronald Spagnardi, for your "Expanding Your Horizons" column, which appeared in the May issue. I must agree with you that learning more than one instrument can greatly enhance one's sense and understanding of music. This notion holds true for drummers, in particular, due to the harmonic limitations of most percussion instruments. I studied piano for years before studying drumset, and as a result, I have acquired a far greater understanding of music than I would have if the drumset was my only means of learning music.

Some time ago, *MD* ran a column entitled *The Musical Drummer*, which discussed various aspects of melody and harmony. More information of a similar nature in *MD's* pages would certainly help to "expand the horizons" of those unfortunate drummers who have not had the opportunity to study other areas of music.

Steve Pitkin

Newmarket, Ontario, Canada

## KUDOS FOR CB AND SIMMONS

I have enjoyed reading *MD* for several years, and I recently experienced something I thought you should know about. While on the road, I purchased a set of Simmons *SDS9* electronic drums in Charlotte, North Carolina. One month later, I found myself in San Antonio, Texas, with a set of drums that went out. I contacted Simmons in California, and spoke to Tim Drury, who, in turn, put me in touch with Mike Sails and Ken Fredenberg at C. Bruno & Sons in San Antonio. The store gave me a loaner set of CB700 by Simmons

pads for my use while the *SDS9s* were being repaired. In my book, CB and Simmons really stand behind their products.

Leonard Britz  
Jacksonville, FL

## FROM A DRUMMER'S WIFE

My husband is a professional drummer who subscribes to your magazine. He's such a perfectionist about his drums and his performance that it sometimes overwhelms me. Each time his *Modern Drummer* hits the mailbox, I can count on a quiet day alone while he reads each article and ad faithfully.

Being a drummer's wife isn't always easy, especially when he's gone so often on the road. That's why understanding his profession and what keeps him motivated is so important to me. As a result, I find myself reading many of the articles in *MD* myself—especially when one concerns a drummer I really like. Your articles answer a lot of my own questions and provide a lot more insight for me.

I wish that more people could understand that there's more to a drummer's career than jumping up on stage and "beating on the drums." They just don't see and appreciate the time spent setting them up, miking them, tuning them, etc. There's so much more to being a good drummer than just having rhythm! Between all of the time spent on stage and the time spent worrying about the best sound and technique, there's not much time left for family life. But, of course, it's not the quantity, it's the quality that counts. Ours is special because my husband spends his few days a month off at

home with me and our two small sons. That time is ours.

I feel as though I'm fortunate to live with so much talent and understanding for music, and I wouldn't trade my life for anyone's! I only wish that more musicians' wives could appreciate their husbands' talents and realize that they have a special gift. Yes, it's lonely when they're gone, but they do come home!

All a person needs is more understanding, and I thank you for "your" part of my understanding. Your articles are great, and one doesn't have to be a drummer to appreciate them.

Sandi Morris  
Myrtle, MO

## THANKS TO JEFF

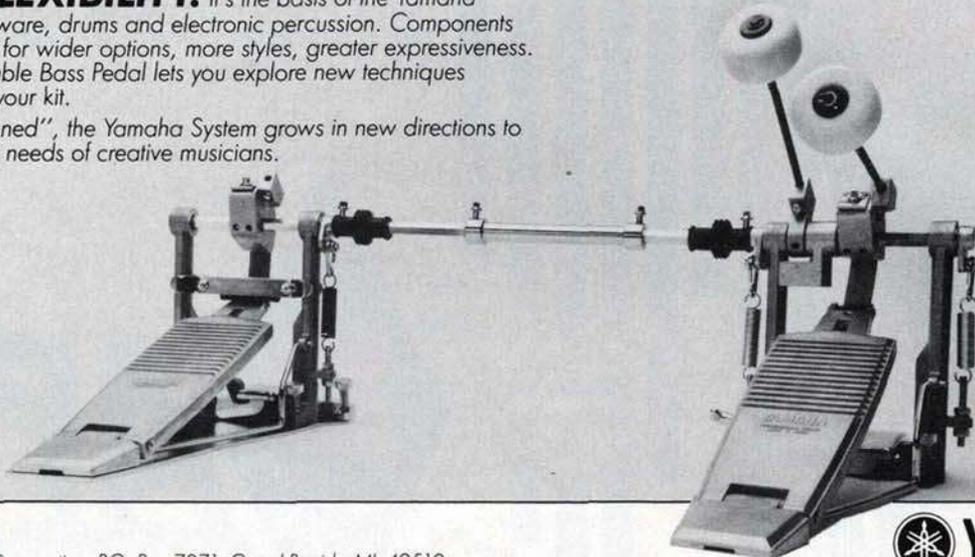
I'd like to tell you about a very kind person and a true inspiration: Jeff Porcaro. I recently graduated from Percussion Institute of Technology, and Jeff came to the school a few months ago. He gave a very informative seminar, which everyone enjoyed. After the seminar, I approached Jeff to ask him some questions about the music business. I asked his advice on some matters concerning the group I'm in, and about record company interest. He took the time to explain everything that I had asked him about and gave me some guidelines to follow. It really helped me out tremendously. It's people like Jeff who make me proud to be a musician. Once again, Jeff, thanks for your kindness.

Kevin Stiles  
Hollywood, CA



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As usual, **Larrie Londin** has been incredibly busy working with such artists as Orleans, Earl Thomas Conley, Nealons, Judy Rodman, Ronnie Milsap, Pake McEntire, Steve Wariner, Louise Mandrell, Vince Gill, the title tune with *The Girls Next Door* for a new Mary Tyler Moore sitcom, and an album with Mark O'Connor, which ' was one of the hardest things I've ever done," Larrie admits. "We recorded 23 tracks of drums, each track separately!"

But the most exciting to Larrie is his new drum video, recently released. Consisting of two video cassettes—one of which is two hours in length, the other one hour and 45 minutes. Nothing was left out. "The first day," Larrie says, "we covered everything from foot pedals, to muffling, to the tape you put on the head, to beaters, sticks, and everything involved in doing my job.

"The second day, we taped a clinic. I have watched other videos and they're wonderful, but I would have loved to have seen the drummers actually discussing equipment and little things they use that sometimes aren't talked about. Since I didn't see that on other videos, that's what I wanted to show the most, because that's what I do. I'm not a flashy player, so the people who watch the tape will get more of the educational part of it.

"At first I was very appre-

hensive about doing this tape. This all came about because I was doing a big band album, and my friend and producer Tom Schieno said, 'Why don't we do a video?' He's done some video work, and he's good at organizing and putting all of this stuff together. I had been approached by other companies, and I wanted to do one, but I didn't want it to be like everybody else's. If I can't do something better than what is already out there, I don't want to do it. So far, I have thought the tapes were poorly done and not worth the talent on that tape. I don't think they're giving the public their money's worth just because they're giving them a famous drummer. Most of the videos have been done like basement films. They may have had two cameras, but they shot like one camera, and it looks like they stopped a lot of times to set up for another shoot. When Tom

came up with the idea of our doing this, he said, 'We ought to cover this like a sports event,' which Take One Productions also does a lot of. They're used to using a lot of cameras and covering what is going on. The idea was to make it more professional, and even though it cost four to five times the money, we wanted to make it look as good as we possibly could." Kevin Irvine directed the four-camera shoot, which took place at a high school in Las Vegas. For the clinic, Steve Perry flew in to make a guest appearance and engage in an off-camera drum battle with Larrie.

Recently, Larrie completed a clinic tour, but if he missed your city, his instructional video is a must. In the meanwhile, you'll be able to see Larrie play with the Everly Brothers on the road through October.

*Robyn Flans*



Photo by Ross Hallfin

"Kiss is one of the hardest working bands out there," states **Eric Carr**. This statement is easy to believe. The band has been consistently putting out albums and following up these albums with extensive tours since Eric joined the band back in 1980. The last tour, which was in support of their *Asylum* LP, ran from late October '85 to April '86.

On this particular tour, Eric received high praise from both critics and fans alike for his performance, especially during his solo portion of the show. His solo involved extreme visual and aural effects, including the use of a movable riser, synchronized lighting, flames and bomb effects, and some quick acrobatics with Eric leaping on

top of the kit. That's show biz! On top of all that was Eric's fine playing, especially with his use of triple-bass/multi-tom (over 18 and still counting) drumkit. Asked about the size of his kit, Eric explains that the third bass drum is used in a way that allows him to pivot to his extreme left or right, and still have a bass drum under each foot. This way, he can concentrate on any particular area of the kit, without having to overreach. "It took a little getting used to, but I loved having the additional kick on stage."

Eric is also quite pleased with his electronic drum setup, and he came up with some inventive ways of applying it. During his solo, Eric had a church organ/guitar power chord sound programmed into his setup. "I was really pleased with that portion of my solo. I would play a heavy, Bonhamesque feel on my acoustic kit, and accompany myself with the power chords on the electronic drums. It came off well, and the crowd response was fantastic."

With that tour behind them, Kiss plans on taking a little

time to write new material and plan for an upcoming album, which should be released by the end of the year. This break will give Eric the chance to pursue another aspect of his music: songwriting. "I hope to get some good material together to bring into the band," Eric said. Eric recently acquired "some serious recording equipment," so he can properly record his ideas.

There are obviously many people who have respect for Eric's musical abilities. Lately, he has been approached by a few up-and-coming bands in the New York metropolitan area to act as their producer. "Up until recently, I haven't had the time to really devote to going in the studio and producing another group. A few bands have been in touch with me—one in particular—but I'm not sure if I'm right for the bands. I know I can do a good job, but I want to be sure that I can really help the group I'm involved with." Working as a producer is something that interests Eric, and it sounds as if he has what it takes to be a good one; he cares.

*William F. Miller*



**Fred Satterfield**, who, with the Oakridge Boys, recently headlined over Southern Pacific in New York, has also been doing a great deal of jingles with Richard Lavsky's Music House in New York. It's quite a change from what he's used to.

"Recently I was in New York, and I had never played with any of the other players. We had the chart, we sat down, and they expected us to play it right off. Meanwhile, there were five executives in there. They already had the video shot, so we were playing to a click that had to sync up to the video. I've really enjoyed doing this lately. It's quite an education. My reading chops used to be much better than they are now, but I try to rely

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Phil Collins

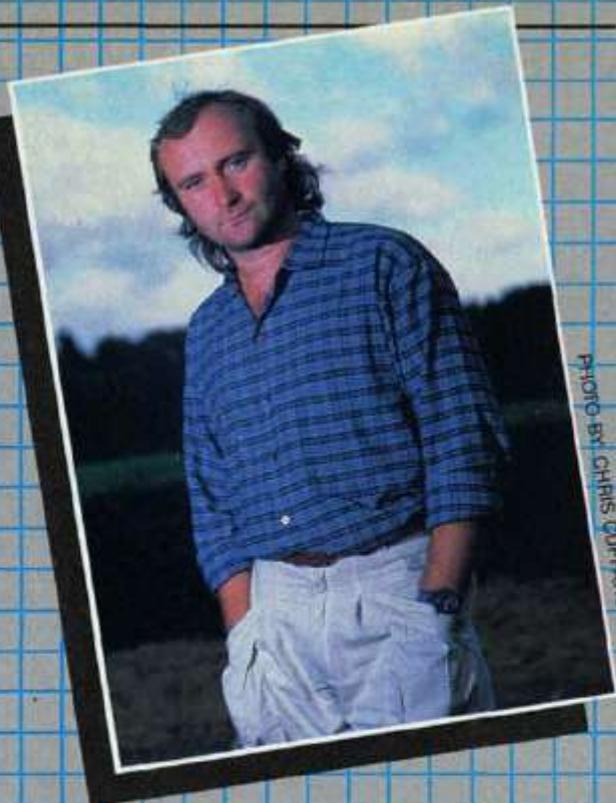


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Pat Mastelotto  
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Session Master

*Satterfield continued from page 6*  
 not just on the reading, but on keeping my mind sharp and developing a good ear. You really have to listen a lot, and if you keep your ears sharp, you can still do this. You have to be able to work with clicks, too. When I'm not working with the Oakridge Boys, I'm recording with friends of mine, so I'm always working at it."

With his studio acumen, it seems odd that Fred doesn't record with the Oakridge Boys. "That's pretty cut and dry. A lot of producers in Nashville use their own rhythm sections, and they don't branch out from that. It is an attitude in Nashville that is changing,

**Steve Goulding** has been very busy in the last couple of years, working with the Gang of Four until their demise in mid-'85 and then working with various Gang members. Beginning in May of last year, however, Steve started working with the Thompson Twins for the remainder of the year. With them, he says, all that was required was really to keep a beat.

"And to invest a certain amount of energy," he adds. "With them, it has to be midway between a drum machine and a human being. It would be easy to use a drum machine really the same, though, because the Thompson Twins are successful, but I'm not really involved in the group. Even being in a group that's less successful is better if you're involved in it. The Mekons, a group I worked with last year, did an album that we put out ourselves. It sold about 3,000 copies, but it was great. It's a really good feeling to have done that. You can be with the Thompson Twins and play all these 15,000-seat arenas, but not really feel a part of it."

The Waterboys will require something very different, he says. "More pure emotion, which will probably come more easily to me. I started out playing with Graham Parker and Rumour ten years ago, so it's come around in a circle. This is closer to that emotional sort of stuff, which I quite enjoy. I really enjoy breaking out in a sweat, which has been what I've been missing."

*Robyn Flans*

though, because bands are popular again. I just keep myself busy and record with other people. I tour about 15 days a month, so there are 15 days I have that are my own time."

In his own time in Nashville, Fred works with a rhythm section consisting of Dee Murray on bass, B. Lowry on guitar, and Ron Fairchild on keyboards. They call themselves Hotwax and are currently shopping for a record deal. "We have the drive to play all the time, and we have to play other things besides Oakridge Boys' material. If that's all we played, we'd lose our edge and

**Jerry Mercer** has put together a new group called The Buzz Band with some former members of a well-known Quebec-based group that recently disbanded. The band is currently putting together material for a new album, while doing some live performing on a regional basis. "We're not signed to any label as yet," says Jerry. "We're basically doing all this on our own. We're putting a complete package together, so that when we go shopping for a label, people will know precisely what they're buying. I think that, in today's market, that's

**Paul Motian**, Joe Lovano, and Bill Frisell are preparing to tour Europe shortly. Renegade drummer **Luis Cardenas** is completing tracks for an upcoming solo LP on Allied Artists Records. To coincide with the first single, a reworking of Del Shannon's classic "Runaway," Luis recently completed a video clip of the song and spent an unprecedented \$500,000 on the clip, making it the most expensive per minute music video shot to date. **Ricky Lawson** is in the studio with the Yellowjackets. **Jonathan Moffett** on the road with Jermaine Jackson. **John Robinson** on Patrice Rushen's newest LP, with percussion by **Terry Santiel**. **Billy Amendola** recently did two Wendy's commercials with Kool & the Gang. **Pat Torpey** is on tour with Belinda Carlisle, as well as having recently completed a video for John Parr. **Stan Lynch** on the road with Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers, working with Bob Dylan. **Land**

have nothing new to add to the show. That's why Ron Fairchild and I have continued to grow while touring with the same band for six years. We keep ourselves active. The Oakridge Boys is a very good, steady gig, but it also affords me time to develop, to keep my education going, and to get into things like electronic drums, which I just added to the live show."

For those who think it's strictly country, Fred says, "I would like to clarify a little mystery that has formed: I don't know how to play country music. The Oakridge Boys wanted a heavy rock 'n' roll

probably a better way to go about it than knocking on doors and saying, 'Please sir, give me \$50,000 and I'll make you a real dandy record.' They don't buy that too much these days. So we'll go in with a video and enough tracks done to let them know that we're serious, and we'll show them what they're buying. I'm looking to do it all over again."

Jerry says that the new band's material is very eclectic. "There's some rock material, some 'adult contemporary'—to use radio jargon—some stuff that's funk-oriented, some traditional blues, and

**Richards** has been working with Gladys Knight & The Pips. **Frank Beard** is out with ZZ Top. In addition to touring with Kenny Rogers, **Bobby Daniels** has been doing some producing of late. Having coproduced the "Superbowl Shuffle" for the Chicago Bears, there are more sport recording/videos in the works. Bobby has also recently produced Linda Clifford, Bob Bailey, and Leon DeBouse. This month, **Butch Miles** is playing the La Crosse Jazz Festival in Wisconsin, as well as the Dick Gibson Jazz Party in Denver. **Michael Mason** can be heard on Ted Nugent's *Little Miss Dangerous* album. He also played on Laura Branigan's recent album as well as Teddy Pendergrass's recent release, in addition to having engineered some of it. He also worked with James Newton Howard on the film *80 Million Ways To Die* and is working at Bertus Productions as an engineer for a film called *Close Range*.

drummer because the group's live show is much meatier and harder edged than its recordings. The kind of music I am naturally attracted to in my own time tends to be more pop or rock 'n' roll oriented. Soul music is probably my favorite." That is why Fred has never had to fight any kind of typecasting. "Once people hear us play, they know it's a little different than, say, Merle Haggard's band. Even our sax player gets some burning solos, so we do a variety of material including shuffles, country ballads, and some edgier material."

*— Robyn Flans*

some soft stuff with great lyrics. All three of us are singing, so we're dealing with vocal blends, whereas there's generally only been one solo voice in the groups I've been associated with in the past. It's quite different from anything else I've ever done before, and I enjoy performing with this group. It's hard work starting over again, but it's also very gratifying. I think the beginning of anything is sometimes the most emotionally rewarding and exciting part of it. Later on down the road—hopefully—the money comes, too."

*— Rick Van Horn*

**Richard Burgess** has recently been producing Imagination, Five Star, and Kim Wilde. **Art Rodriguez** has been working around the L.A. area with a band called Stretch. **Marvin Kanarek** is on a U.S. tour with Burton Cummings. **Rob Greenfield** has been playing for the national tour of the show *La Cage Aux Folles*. Drummer **James Stroud** is producing drummer **Nigel Olsson's** solo album. **Andy Newmark** and **Susan Evans** in the studio recently with Suzanne Vega. **Vinnie Colaiuta** and **Steve Smith** on recent album by guitarist Jeff Richman. **Doane Perry** on new album with Dragon, and on tour with Jethro Tull. **Bill Ward** has a new band called England's Glory. **Geoff Dunn** on tour with First Light. **Jeff Hamilton**, **Jake Hanna**, and **Gus Johnson** will perform at the Minneapolis Jazz Party next month.

*Robyn Flans* 



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# ASK A PRO

## MYRON GROMBACHER



**Q.** On one of your videos on MTV, you have a set that is covered in a camouflage finish. I'd like to know who did that finish for you. Also, are your cymbals and toms mounted on a rack in that video? If so, could you describe how it is constructed?

Mitch Curry  
Cornwall, PA

**A.** The finish was done for me by drum customizing artist Pat Foley, along with my own drum tech, Jeff Chonis. I actually have two kits finished in camouflage: One is a desert finish, and the other is a tiger-stripe pattern, which is probably the one you saw. My drums are, in fact, mounted on a rack in that video. It's the same rack that is shown

in the Ludwig ad I've been in for a couple of years, along with the drumkit finished in Japanese characters. That rack is made of cold-rolled steel, and was designed for me by a metal sculptor in New York City about eight or nine years ago. It comes in four sections that bolt together, and in the video, it's cadmium-plated in a sort of copper color. It's difficult to describe the construction of it, because it was highly specialized and customized to my design. The bends had to be made by hand as I directed from my drum seat. I'm afraid that the gentleman who made that rack for me is no longer with us. However, lately I've started playing Tama drums and have modified their Power Tower Cage system. The custom work was done by Scott Anderson, of Scott Anderson Metal Works in Los Angeles. He did some modifications to the Cage for me, so that it's still pretty personalized. We basically incorporated the ingredients that are present in Tama's Power Tower, along with a little imagination, and ultimately, we came up with a totally different design. That's what I've been on tour with.

## NEIL PEART

**Q.** I would like to know what kind of microphones you use and where you use them. Is your mic' setup for the studio the same as it is live? And do you still use a PZM?

Jay Press  
San Leandro, CA

**A.** My policy in this department has always been to leave the selection of microphones to the experts—the sound engineers—just as I expect them to leave the tuning to me! I asked our live sound engineer, Jon Erickson, what miking he used on our last tour, and he gave me the following list. Bass drums: Beyer M88; snare drums: Neumann KM3; front toms: Countryman Isomax II; floor toms, gong bass drum, and rear bass drum: Sennheiser 421; hi-hat: AKG 452, concert toms: Calrec mic's (sorry, no model number); timbales and snare underside: Shure SM57, and the cymbal overheads: Countryman Isomax III. The Simmons pads, Clap Trap, and EPROM were all taken direct. The mic' selection in the studio varies, again, by the engineer's preference. I don't think we've used a PZM for a while.

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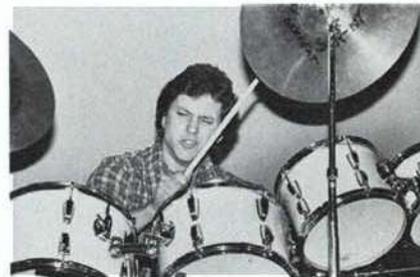
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## CHRIS PARKER



**Q.** Could you please tell me what kind of snare drum you used on Michael Franks' *Passion Fruit* album? Is it the one you use most often? If not, would you tell me what snare you would consider your favorite or most-often-used?

Roger Tarczon  
Los Angeles, CA

**A.** On Michael Franks' projects, I used two different snare drums. The first is a Pioneer Model Ludwig, 5 1/2x 14 with a coated Ambassador head. The second is a Slingerland Radio King, 7 1/2 x 14, that was redone for me by Artie Smith. Live, I use the Ludwig most often. When recording, most often I use Yamaha 7x14 birch or 61/2x14 chrome snares, both from Yamaha's 9 Series, with ten lugs. The only thing I do differently is use old-style strings to hold the snares on, rather than tape.



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# SIMMONS

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California 91302.

**Q.** I'm going to be purchasing a seven-piece Pearl *Export Series* drumkit soon. I am particularly fond of the bright red drum covering sold on the *Prestige World* kits. I was wondering if Pearl takes special orders for drum coverings, and if so, how I would go about having the kit I want covered in the finish I want.

J.G.  
Farmer City, IL

**A.** According to a Pearl spokesman, the company cannot provide any covering on the *Export Series* other than the stock coverings offered. The kits are imported, prepackaged, from Japan, and no customization is possible.

**Q.** I saw a picture of Denny Carmassi's Tama drumset in your magazine and noticed that he had mirror drumheads. I was interested in purchasing similar heads for my set, but I cannot find them anywhere. Who makes these heads, and where might I purchase them?

C.D.  
Pincney, MI

**A.** Tama offers *Mirage* heads with the Tama logo; these should be available through any Tama dealer. Remo and Evans both offer chrome and gold mirror-finish heads. In Remo's *Starfire* series, heads are available in the *Ambassador*, *Pinstripe*, and *Powerstroke* models. Evans' chrome-finish models are the *Looking Glass* series; its gold-finish heads are the *Eldorado* series. While these heads may not be standard items in your local drum shop, they can certainly be ordered by your dealer from Remo or Evans.

**Q.** I seem to have a slight problem with my Paiste cymbals. I recently polished them, using CB-700 cymbal polish (due to the fact that I couldn't find any of Paiste's own brand of cleaner). A few days after polishing the cymbals, a green film formed on them—especially around fingerprints caused by choking the cymbals. I then polished the cymbals again, making sure to rinse them thoroughly. In a matter of days, the film showed up again. I finally obtained some Paiste cymbal cleaner and used that, but for some reason, the green film will not come off. The cymbals look really bad and it's quite embarrassing. Do you have any suggestions?

M.R.  
Katy, TX

**A.** Jeff Neuhauser, of Paiste's *Drummer Service*, replies: "Every Paiste cymbal is protected by a factory-applied wax finish. This coating can last for years if finger marks are removed regularly with a soft, damp cloth. Any commercially available cymbal cleaner [even Paiste's], when applied to the cymbal, will remove this coating. Once it's gone, regular cleaning is necessary to keep the cymbal looking new, as the metal is now exposed to the elements. By the way, Paiste Cymbal Cleaner is the least abrasive product for cleaning cymbals available on the market today. As to why your problem reoccurs with such frequency, the variables are such that different people's chemistry—different acids on their fingers, different elements in the air they're playing in—can all affect the oxidation process on the cymbal."

**Q.** In Rick Van Horn's *Club Scene* column in your April '86 issue, he mentions the *Pro-Fan 707*. This sounds like exactly what I and many other drummers have been looking for. Where can this item be obtained?

K.M.  
Burbank, CA

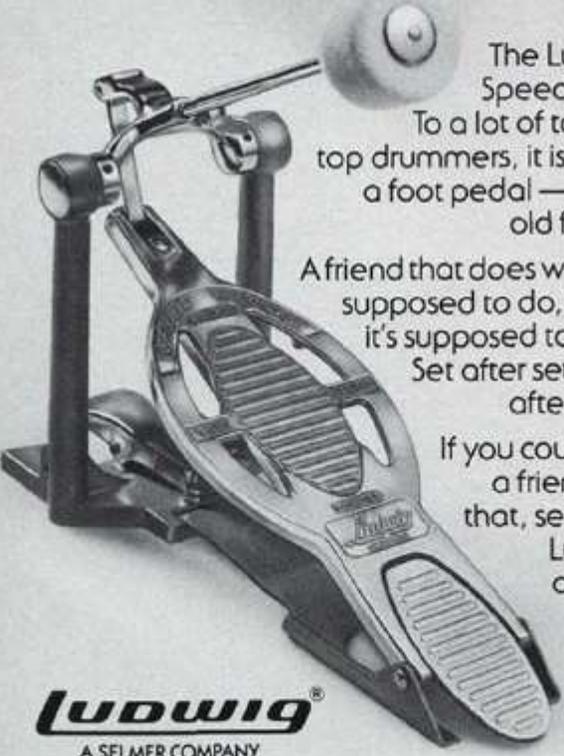
**A.** The *Pro-Fan 707* is offered by *Ideas International*, 40 Ashdale Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4L2Y7. *Ideas International* is currently in the process of establishing a U.S. dealer network, so contact that company for the name of a dealer near you.

**Q.** I was wondering why one rarely hears of artists having more than one brand of cymbal. Although cymbal companies make their cymbals so that the different models complement each other, it seems that, if one were to mix different cymbal brands, one could expand the different sounds available. What are your thoughts on this matter?

M.M.  
Denton, TX

**A.** There are several reasons why you might not hear of artists using more than one brand of cymbal. First, you tend to "hear" of the brand an artist uses through the advertisements for that brand, so it's logical to assume you're not going to hear about any other brands the artist might also use from that source. Second, when an artist who has an endorsement agreement with a given company discusses cymbals in an interview, that artist is generally reluctant to jeopardize that agreement by discussing any other cymbal brands in print. (You may note that some artists—especially jazz artists—who don't have an exclusive endorsement agreement with a single cymbal company very often do use more than one brand, and have no qualms about saying so.) Finally, there is a valid musical reason for using only one brand of cymbal at a time. Quite often, a drummer's preferences in cymbals run to certain sounds and characteristics inherent in a given line. Such a drummer is often seeking an "ensemble" sound from his or her cymbal selection, rather than a group of contrasting sounds that might be the result of mixing brands.

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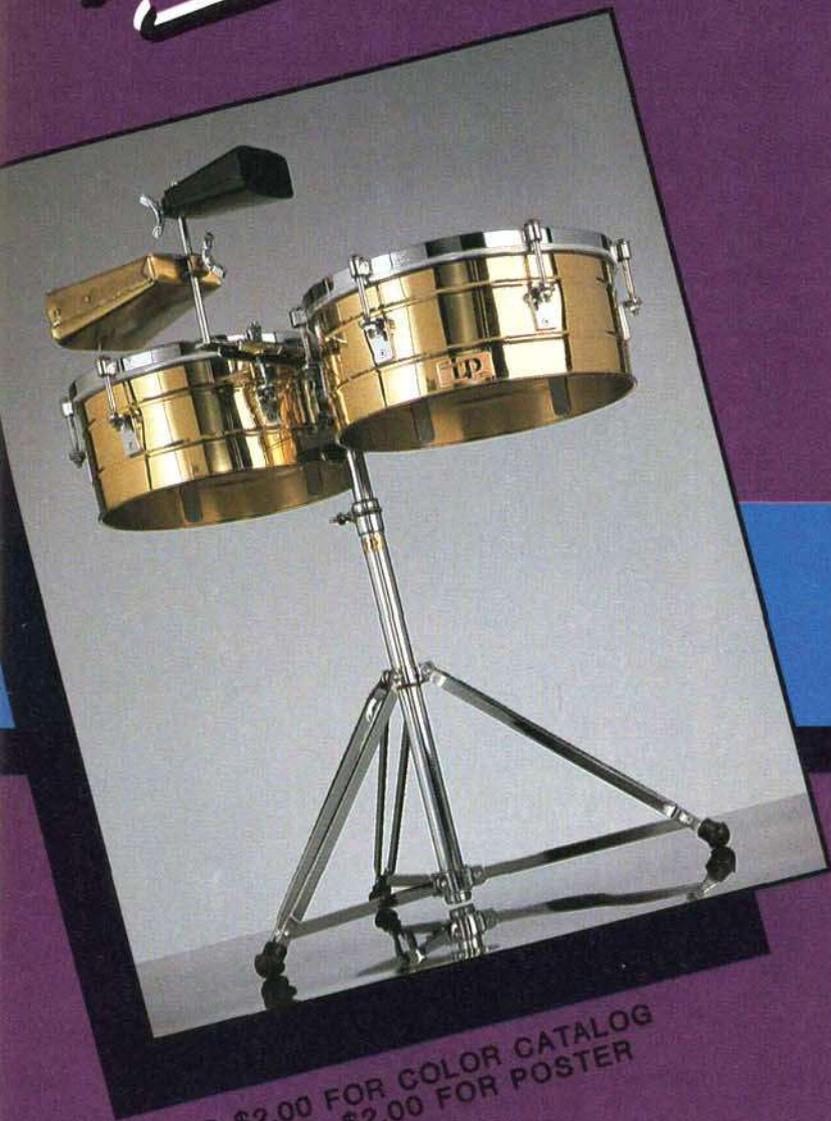
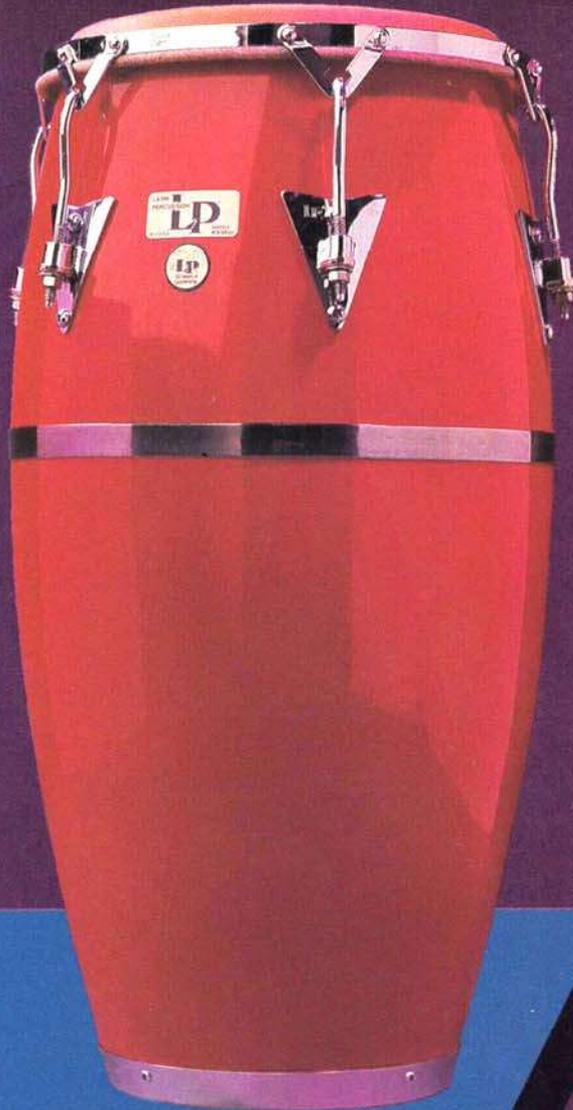
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by Robyn Flans



**W**HEN I met Steve Smith in 1980, I must admit that I knew little about him, as I was contacted about the interview only one day prior to our scheduled meeting. Of course, there wasn't that much to know either. The band he was in, Journey, had only had one top-20 hit two years earlier with "Lovin', Touchin', Squeezin'." Yet, they were due to play one of L.A.'s largest venues, the Forum, that night. Soon after that, however, there was no mistaking the band's success. *Departure* sold 1.6 million records in 1980, *Captured*, Journey's live album, sold 1.4 million, and in that same year, 1981, *Escape* sold 6 million, making it obvious that, for this group, the sky would be the limit. It was also obvious that the new chemistry accounted for this success. With the addition of vocalist Steve Perry in 1977, Smith in 1978, and Jonathan Cain in 1980, the elements were just right.

What I suspected, but didn't know during our first interview, was that Journey was the odd gig of Smith's career. I knew that his background included working with Jean-Luc Ponty, and that he was asked to play with Freddie Hubbard (although he chose to go with Montrose instead), but he seemed tailor-made for Journey. I learned that Steve can play anything, but he is a jazz musician at heart.

In 1983, that was made clear when he regrouped some musicians with whom he had

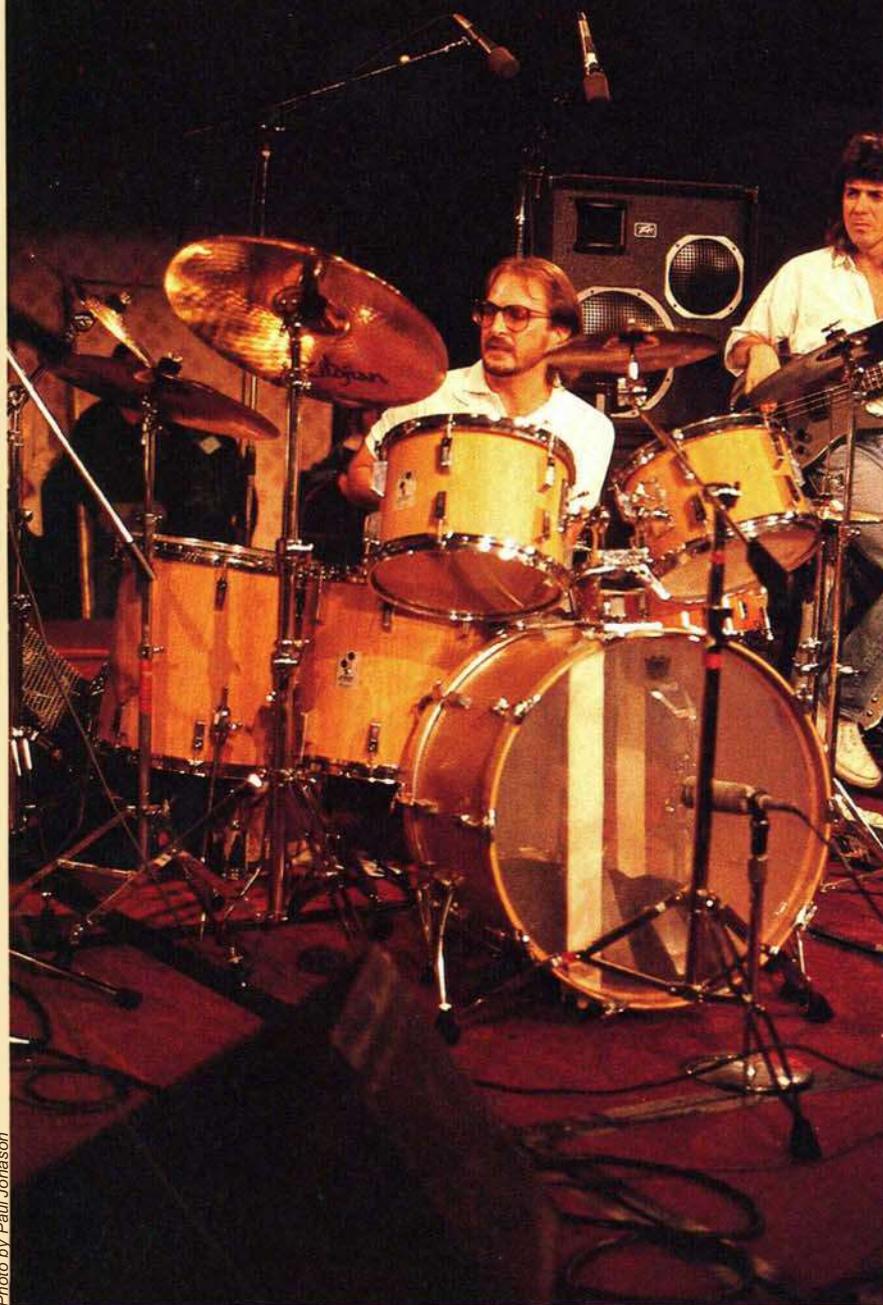


*played during his days as a student at the Berklee College of Music. They released their first, self-titled LP, Vital Information, followed a year later by Orion. Currently in release is their finest effort to date, Global Beat, of which Steve is very proud. What he is most excited about, however, is that, now that he is no longer a member of Journey, he will be able to put all his energy into playing the music he most loves with his own band, as well as with Steps Ahead, of which he has recently become a member. It is obvious that, while the last several months have been a period of intense change and growth for Steve, he is finally enjoying the opportunity to blossom into the musician and artist he truly is.*

**RF:** Tell me about the infamous practice sessions you are known for.

**SS:** There have been all different kinds. The first kind took place from the time I was in eighth grade through my high school years. My practice sessions then didn't take place on the drumset. I used to practice on a practice pad all the time—just practicing to records. Half of it would be trying to understand the different drum parts and copying them, and the other part would be improvising, using the record for tempo. I think that not practicing on a drumset then was a mistake. It would have been better if I had, because I would have developed faster as a drumset player. Practicing on the pad was very good for my hands, but I didn't really get much of a workout for my feet, or for being agile on the kit and





developing a touch for the drums and cymbals. But the teacher I had back then, Bill Flanagan, really insisted that I practice on the pad. He was an old-school guy who grew up learning very rudimentally. He was a big band drummer who did get into drumset, but he was very insistent that I practice sight reading and that my hands get a lot of chops. That's what I concentrated on in those practice sessions, and they would be hours and hours long. When I had days off from school and during summer vacation, I would just practice all day.

Then through college, I didn't really practice a lot. When I was going to Berklee, I played a lot. I'd play for hours every day. Each day in school, we had sessions or ensembles, so I got a lot of chances to play. At night, if there wasn't a gig, it was a session that a bunch of people would put together so we could play. I really learned how to play music just through the experience of playing. That's different from learning how to play the drums. I just kind of relied on the chops I had developed before I got there. And I thought it was the cool thing not to practice, but just to play a lot. Again, in retrospect, a balance would have been the right thing to do.

**RF:** Why did you think it was cool?

**SS:** It was just what was going on there at the time. It seemed like the thing to do. Certain things become hip in your environ-

ment, and that was one of the things that was hip. It was like, "Well, I bet Elvin Jones doesn't practice." It was coming from there.

Then when I was on the road with Ponty and Montrose, again, there was not much practicing—just playing. There was just enough practicing to keep in shape and to keep from getting rusty. When I joined Journey, I had the time and a real need to practice, because I really needed to get a lot of new chops together. Those chops were not what I used to think chops were, which was playing fast and hard. At this point, the chops I needed were playing very slow and steady. Those weren't things that I had a good background in.

**RF:** So they were chops primarily for the Journey gig?

**SS:** Right. I started practicing for the gig. That's a good point, because before, I used to practice just to play the drums, and it almost didn't relate to what I was doing every night. I would practice my weekly lesson, which would be this very complex thing, like all these poly-rhythms. I would practice them enough to do my lesson each week, but it didn't relate at all to the gig I was playing at night or even the jam session I was doing in the evening. But the practice sessions when I joined Journey related very much to what I needed to learn to make it happen for that gig.

**RF:** How did you learn to play slow?

**SS:** By practicing with a drum machine. That was really the best thing for me. I just got a cheap Roland drum machine, and turned it up real loud through a guitar or bass amplifier. I would spend hours practicing to it. I could play the things I wanted to play, and I could tell if they were coming out right by what they sounded like and how my playing felt if I taped it. I'd listen to the tape and say, "Okay, that sounds right. Now what did it feel like when I did that?" And I'd try to remember the feeling of what it was like for all the notes to land just in the right places. Even though it was real slow and there was a lot of room for error between those notes, it did have a certain feel. Then I would really try to tune into what it felt like, so I didn't have to rely on the drum machine. I could take it away, remember that same feeling, and try to recreate it every time I played. Eventually, it started sinking in. I developed a practice technique. I found that what really helped me to nail down those slow tempos was to play a samba pattern very slowly, to keep my feet going very steady, and not even play my hands. I was trained from the hands down, and found out that music is built the opposite way. It's really built from the bottom up, so I had to practice a lot with my feet and get them under control without their following my hands. I would practice with my feet and then add the hands, just playing very simple things, like quarter notes or 8th notes. At those slow tempos, it's very easy to put the beats in the wrong place, just a little bit ahead or a little bit behind, because there is so much space in between the notes. Finally, I started getting the feel of that, building it from the bottom up, and eventually, it started feeling more and more comfortable to the point where I could go in the studio, play

live, and have it feel really great all the time. It took a long time. I would practice for four or five hours every day, and if I didn't practice that many hours in a day, at least I would practice something every day. I really noticed that, if I practiced every day, it made a difference.

**RF:** Were there other considerations for the Journey situation coming from your background?

**SS:** I practiced double bass drums, which I had never practiced before. I started working on that quite a bit.

**RF:** How did you work on that?

**SS:** At first, I just got the other bass drum, stuck it on there, and played it with the left foot leading, because that was what my hi-hat was used to doing. Eventually, I started thinking about it and working things out a little. I found out that I wanted to lead with my right foot. That way, when I did fills with my feet and with my hands, it would come out on the downbeat with the foot and the hands together. I got this book called *Bass Drum Control* by Colin Bailey. It's written for one bass drum, and it's a series of exercises using your hands and one bass drum. I just disregarded his concept of having it be for one bass drum and used it for two bass drums. I played everything with a right-left, right-left, right-left sticking, or hand-to-foot combination. Everything I worked on had that same right-left, right-left, right-left approach. I would just practice what was written in the book and try to get the dexterity, so I wasn't locked into a bunch of licks. I could have the freedom to hear something and be able to play it, which is basically how I've played all my life. I practice so that I can improvise, and not just to learn a series of licks to pull off. I try to get a command over a conception and develop the conception so I can improvise with it. So I did the same thing with the two bass drums.

Another thing I had to practice, believe it or not, was dynamics. In Journey, we played a lot softer than I had ever played with other bands—keeping the tempo really steady, but still playing soft and then playing very loud.

**RF:** Is there a way to learn that?

**SS:** It's the same thing. When you practice, practice with dynamics. Don't practice everything at the same volume level. It's very easy to do. Try to practice musically and not practice a separate thing from when you perform. You have to be thinking that it's very similar.

For my first three years in Journey, I did that intense practicing as much as I could. I practiced not only the slow tempos, but all different tempos. I practiced a lot with the drum machine to make myself very aware of my time, my tempo, and the spacing of the notes—the subdivision of the beats. Those were things that were brought to my attention especially by Steve Perry, who is a good drummer himself and has great time as a musician. He made me very aware of those things, because he needs them in order to do what he has to do. He really demanded that of me. Then he helped me find out how to develop that, too. After three years, I started feeling very secure and very comfortable with the Journey music and the drumming I had to do conceptually to play the music. So I started spending more of my practice time practicing jazz, applying those ideas to things I had learned in jazz, practicing my swing time with the drum machine again, and making it very accurate. I started practicing jazz, jazz-rock, and all of those things I had played before, but now I started seriously practicing them and trying to get them a lot more under control than they ever were before. I was finally learning how to practice as a complete thing, not just with the hands on a practice pad and not just practicing enough to get by. I learned how to make that practice session really mean something and come out with a good end result that I could apply. I started feel-

ing, "Okay, this feels good. I can put this aside and deal with it on a day-to-day basis." I had the space in my mind and in my playing to be seriously interested in the jazz again. So I started practicing that with the same approach.

I found that it was really starting to develop to the point where the next step I needed was an outlet to actually play it. I was playing it a little bit, off and on, but I didn't get the chance to really do it until I met Tom Coster and started playing with him. That kept developing, and then I was playing with the White Boys, which has now become Vital Information. We've been together for a long time. That started happening more often until it got to the point where we decided that we'd go into the studio and record. We did a record, Columbia put it out, and we went on tour for two months. I didn't practice during that time, because I didn't really have time, but my playing really progressed to the best it's ever been, because I was getting a chance to play the music that really demanded the most of me. It demanded that I had the rock chops, the jazz chops, and the fusion chops. In two-and-a-half months, we played about 50 gigs, so I really played a lot every night. That brought it all together and made a complete circle.

**RF:** Like you said, you brought it all together—the rock chops and the jazz chops. Can you be specific about the difference between them?

**SS:** One thing about rock playing is that, first of all, it has to be very supportive. That's basically the role. In jazz music, the role is to be supportive too, but also to

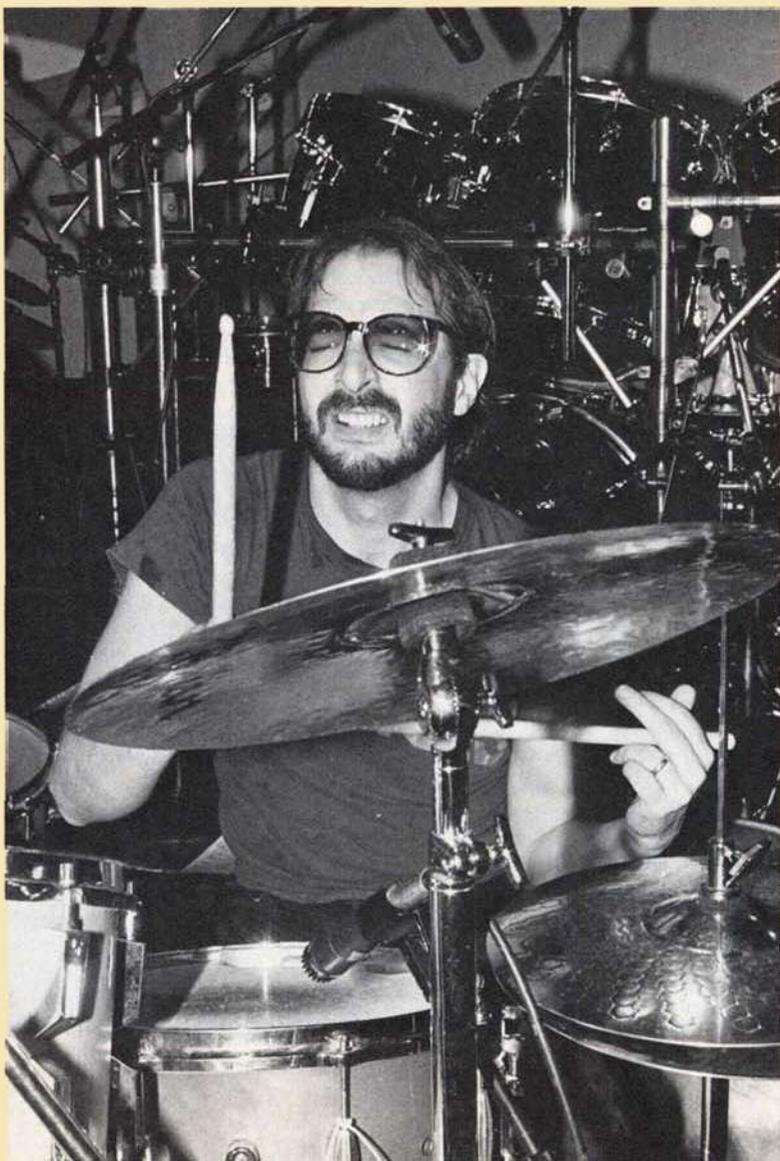
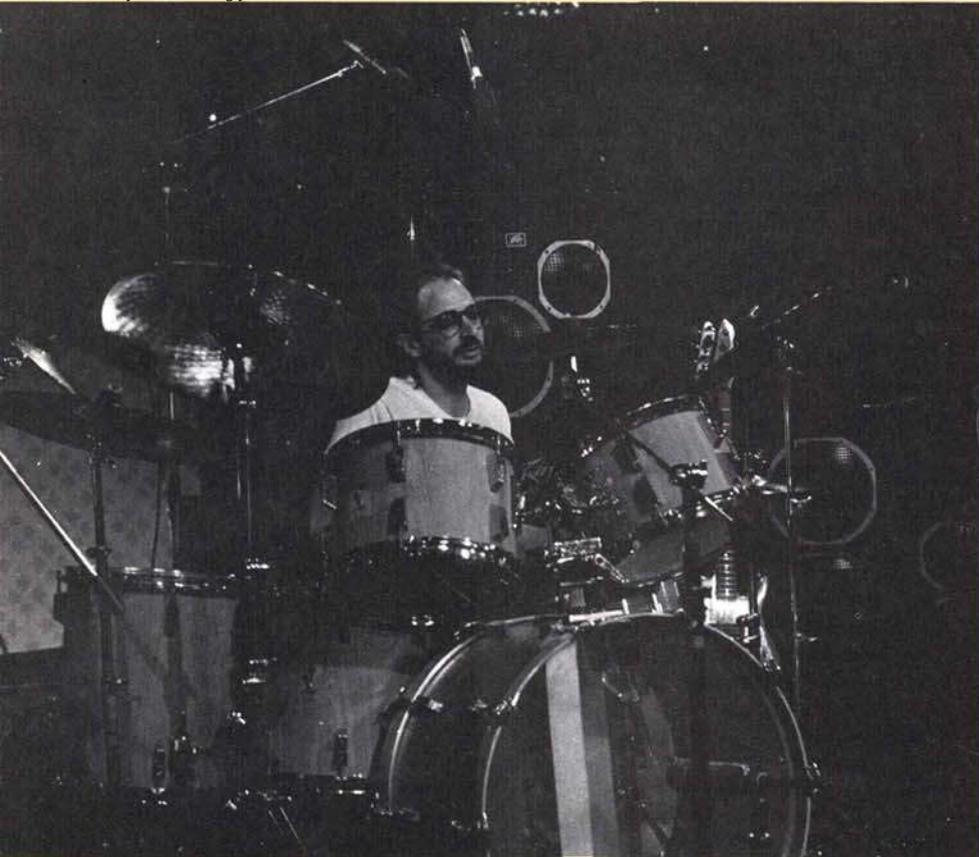


Photo by Rick Markin



be very much of a participant in what's going on with the entire group and to interact, on the spur of the moment, with the improvisation that's going on. With rock 'n' roll drumming, there's very little of that interaction. It's mostly supportive in the sense that you're being a composer. The most creative part of the gig is when the song has been written, it's been brought to you, and you have to come up with a drum part. There's where you have to do the work to come up with the right thing to play to make the song come alive. Once that's done, it's basically part of the composition, so even when you play the song live, you have that as the center. You almost have to stick to what you did on the record, because people become so familiar with that. It's part of the song—even the drum fills. I don't play it exactly like the record all the time, but I really stick close to it.

In jazz music, there's the interaction, but most of the time, when I play on a jazz record—my own record or Tom Coster's record, and even when I played on Ponty's record—it doesn't really have to be exactly the same live. It is close—the same kind of feel or something—but there is a lot more room to change it, and there's a demand to change it. If you played it the same every time, it would cease to be jazz.

There's a generalization that rock drumming is strong all the time, usually loud, very deliberate, holding the time down, and real solid. Jazz time, on the other hand—say swing time—is very light with a lot of forward motion, and the whole feel of swing is a completely different feel—that triplet feel of swing versus the 16th-note or 8th-note feel of rock 'n' roll. The time has to be strong. It can't be nebulous, but lots of times, it's implied as much as it is stated, so it's a very different approach.

**RF:** How do you fuse the two?

**SS:** I put them together just for my own music, which is a part of who I am as a person, and what personal experiences I've had as a rock musician and a jazz musician. I'll try to do exactly what I've described, but all in the course of maybe one record or one song sometimes, in order to have that kind of lightness and implied time together with something that's very strong and forceful. Another way of blending the two together is to improvise using jazz phras-

ing and jazz ideas, but playing them with a rock sound—very strong and powerful. So I'm actually playing what a jazz drummer would traditionally play very light and very sensitively, but playing it very strong with two bass drums and with the toms. Sometimes, I even change things I would play in a triplet context in the jazz playing into 16th-note concepts and play them in the rock feel with the rock sound. That's why, if someone saw me playing a drum solo in a Journey concert, even though it was rock energy in intensity and it had the rock beat, the information I was playing was coming very much from a jazz school. It was the combination of the phrasing and the drums I used, and the way I was approaching the drumset was very much from a jazz approach. An approach I developed on the drums, which is a jazz idea, is to see the drumset without a road map, in order to avoid the typical high tom to low tom, one-way street type of approach. I spent a lot of time thinking about it, watching great jazz drummers like Eric Gravatt and Tony Williams—two people who really approach the drumset from that manner—and also studying with Gary Chaffee. You try to think of all the different motions that are available on the drumset, and then you try them out. Some of them are just going to sound dumb, but some of them are going to sound great and very different.

**RF:** Were these the things you were practicing during the first three years of practice sessions with Journey?

**SS:** No. I wasn't really concentrating on that. I was just practicing the basics of being able to get the timing, the feel, and those things right. That's what I talked about a lot during the last interview, and that's what I was really consumed with then. Once I thought that I had a good command over the time and the feel, then I was open to explore the creativity part of it. I felt that I had been presented with the information backwards. First, I learned how to approach the drums in these different ways when I was at Berklee, but nobody had ever spent any time trying to help me develop my time. They were giving me other things before the basics, so I went back and sort of relearned everything with the right perspective—knowing that I had to get the time together before the other thing could happen.

**RF:** Have you found that reading has been necessary?

**SS:** I'm really glad that I can read, and I've found it necessary to develop all the different chops I have and the different styles of playing, because I've relied heavily on reading the material out of a bunch of different books. A lot of times, it made the difference of getting a certain gig. For example, I needed to read on Jean-Luc Ponty's gig, because I only had four days to learn his music. There have been many other situations where reading has been necessary.

**RF:** We touched on where your education fell short a little bit. What did your education do for you? What did it prepare you

for, and what didn't it prepare you for?

**SS:** There are some definite problems and disadvantages when it's all education and not a whole lot of practical learning. The first problem is that teachers are probably teachers because they are not very good players. That's something I ran up against. I had teachers who were great for expanding my mind and filling it with credible information, but when it came down to practical playing, they didn't have the right information. If they did, they probably wouldn't be teaching, or teaching as much. That's a real problem. You can pick up your teacher's bad habits, which I experienced, and I had to go through unlearning and relearning.

On the positive side, though, it helped me learn the discipline of being a practicing musician, instead of a musician who just learned a particular song. This is very general, but I find it to be pretty true: The difference between a lot of jazz musicians and a lot of rock musicians is that the rock musicians basically learn to play their instruments good enough to play just certain songs, whether they are the songs they're learning off of a record to play in a rock band, or the ones they write themselves. There's nothing wrong with that, because that's all they're going to be required to play, but jazz musicians learn more about their instruments and understand the theory of music. I took that approach. It kept me from being limited just to playing my songs, but on the other side of that, I had to learn how to play songs. A lot of times, if drummers have Ringo Starr for a hero and they grow up listening to that and just playing songs, then they're tuned into what took me ten years to find out. Neither one is better than the other. They're just very different ways of doing it.

**RF:** Can you be specific about the art of improvisation? How do you learn that?

**SS:** First of all, I feel that you have to have a great command over your instrument. Then, you have to do a lot of homework. You have to do a lot of listening to the history of drummers who have been there before you. You have to listen to what they did and try to imitate it, so you can conceptually understand how they were approaching it and you can develop a vocabulary. You need to develop a vocabulary. The ultimate in improvisation is to be able to play differently every time. That's impossible, but how you express that each time has got to be different. Then, you have to develop your own style, which just comes from playing. Tape yourself as much as you can, listen to it, and analyze it. If you listen back and hear what you played, you have to think, "Did I really want to play that, or is that just what came out? Why did that actually come out that way?" If it isn't what you wanted, you're going to have to spend time learning how to hear in your head what you wanted to play, and then try to find that on your instrument. If you can hear in your head what it is you want to hear on the drums and get the chops to pull it off consistently, then you're on your way to developing your own vocabulary and your own individual voice, and to improvising.

**RF:** I think that people sometimes had trouble seeing you in both worlds—the Vital Information and the Journey worlds. How did you feel about that?

**SS:** I didn't spend a lot of time thinking about it.

**RF:** You weren't worried about the acceptance and didn't feel that you had to prove something when you first started Vital Information?

**SS:** My main concern was the direction of music. I wanted it to be serious, and I wanted my participation as a drummer to be very musical. I took a very supportive role in what I played, and I felt as though that was the most musically mature role I could have taken. All I wanted to prove was that I could make a good musical record.

**RF:** Tell me about *Global Beat*.

**SS:** The band that tracked for the new album is Tim Landers, bass; Dean Brown, guitar; Tom Coster, keyboards, Dave Wilczewski, sax; and Mike Fischer, percussion. We also feature a lot of percussion with African percussionists Kwaku Dadey and Prince Joni Haastrup, Latin percussionist Armando Peraza, and steel drums with Andy Narell. We also have Mike Stern, Barry Finnerty, Ray Gomez, and Jeff Richman on guitars, and Brad Dutz on percussion. Tim, Dave, and I wrote the music, and it is influenced by many different types of music from all over the world—the jazz and blues from the U.S., the classical influence from Europe, and the rhythmic influence from South America,

Trinidad, Jamaica, Cuba, and Africa. I'm very happy and excited with how the record turned out.

**RF:** What are some of the Journey tunes you've played on that you think are the best?

**SS:** I really like what I played on "After The Fall" from *Frontiers*. What I played on "Frontiers" is what actually started that tune. I came up with this drum feel, and we wrote the tune from that. That's about it. That's not to say I don't like the other tunes. I do, but I think those tunes are very special. On the *Escape* record, I like what I played on "Mother, Father," "Don't Stop Believin'," and "Dead Or Alive." Those are my favorite performances. I can't remember very much before then. "Walks Like A Lady" on *Departure* was something I really liked. I played brushes on that one tune, and that was pretty neat. I like a lot of the stuff on the live record *Captured*, and there's a Japanese album called *Dream After Dream*, on which there are some really great performances. It's an import, and they only

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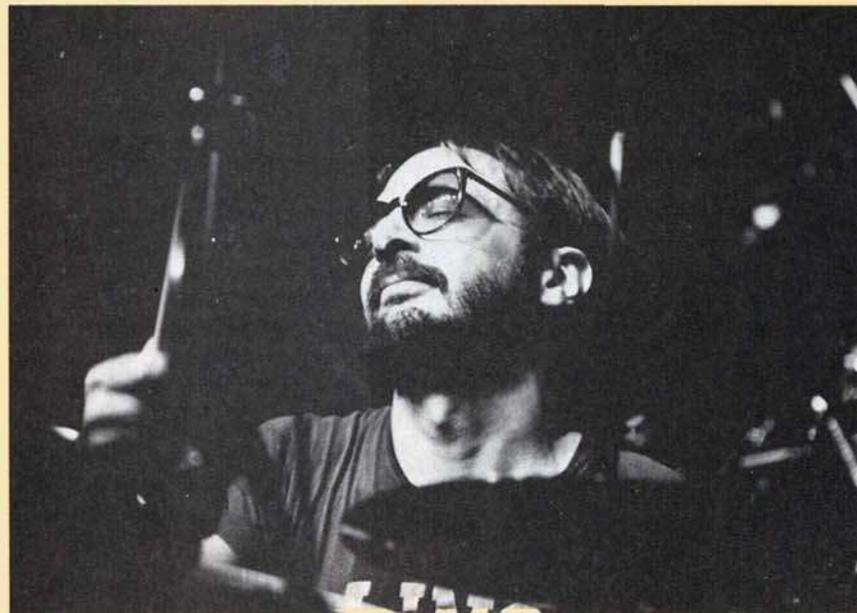


Photo by Rick Malkin

# JOE

by William F Miller



# FRANCO

**A**t a recent concert held at the Ritz, the prestigious New York club, a crowd of enthusiastic fans was on hand to check out Atlantic recording artist Fiona. The band performed an exciting set of powerful hard rock. Near the end of the set, the spotlight went to the drummer, as he began his solo. Normally at this point in a Ritz show, the audience unceremoniously heads for the bar, but not on this night. Building from a driving pattern, the drummer composed contrapuntal melodic lines around the set that caught the audience's ear, and from that point, the audience was hooked. His solo peaked in a breathtaking display of double-bass chops, and the near-frenzied audience responded with gaping jaws, lit lighters, and screaming enthusiasm: business as usual for drummer Joe Franco.

The crowd that night was unaware of the many years of work and dedication it took Joe to get to that point, and his list of musical credentials is extensive. After performing with many up-and-coming acts in New York City in the late '60s, Joe landed the gig with Haystacks Balboa, beating out a long list of other hopefuls. From that band, Joe was asked to join the Good Rats, a band he would record six albums with. Although the Rats never achieved nationwide success, the band developed a huge following in the Northeast, headlining major clubs and opening for major acts in the area. The Good Rats performed challenging music, which at any given time could be odd-meter fusion sections, ballads, or straight-ahead swing, all in a rock context. Through his involvement with the Rats, Joe's reputation as a player grew throughout the industry, and many offers from other bands came along.

After ten years with the Good Rats, Joe accepted the gig to tour with the Canadian band, Chilliwack, and then he came back to New York. After three years of requests by publishers, Joe decided to write a drum book. *Double Bass Drumming* (published by D. C. Publications) was the result, and Joe received high praise from both critics and players alike for this work. It has become the book for double-bass playing. Joe followed the book up with an educational video on the same topic, and again, his work was well received. During this period, Joe also taught students, and played sessions in and around New York. He has also performed at several clinics and at the 1985 P.A.S.I.C. show in Los Angeles, representing Premier drums. Currently, Joe's fine playing can be heard

behind Fiona, presently on tour in support of her second album. Also, the musicians that make up the Fiona band have been approached by management to pursue their own deal. Joe is busy.

**WFM:** What got you interested in music?

**JF:** The Beatles first caught my attention. To me, they brought out the group thing. The whole idea was that, if Billy down the block played guitar and you played drums, you'd throw together a band and have a good time. I was fortunate that my Uncle Tony was a drummer and he saw that I was interested. My idols changed overnight from Mickey Mantle to Ringo. My uncle saw this, and he had a drumset sitting

**WFM:** He saw that there was something there.

**JF:** Yeah, because basically that's what I did. I played along with my Beatles records with my little Victrola speakers right in back of me. I remember the first beats I learned. My uncle taught me two beats: a swing beat and, believe it or not, a twist beat.

**WFM:** What other types of training did you have?

**JF:** Well, when I first started taking lessons, I don't think I got a lot out of them. I was playing mostly by ear and learning a lot more from just listening to records.

Before the Good Rats, a couple of things

# living the fantasy



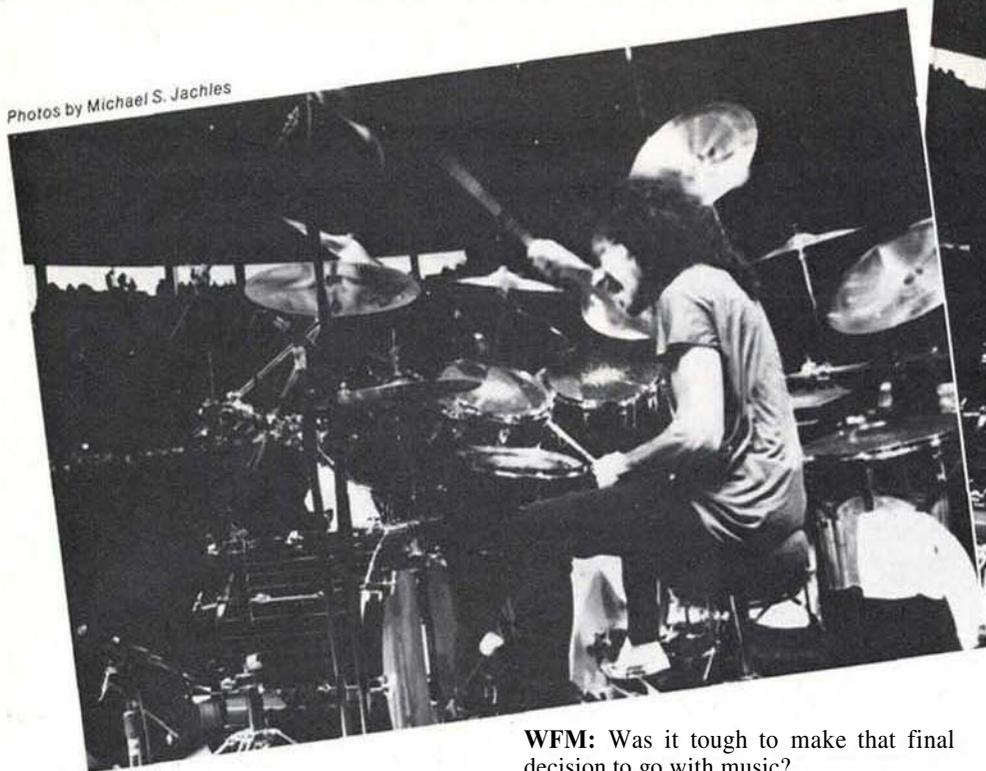
Photo by Ebet Roberts

around—a red-sparkle Ludwig with a snare, a tom, and a bass drum. So I kind of took over. He took me for lessons, and my mom and dad saw that I was really into it, so for Christmas they bought me a floor tom. "Wipe Out" wasn't happening without a floor tom.

**WFM:** Was drumming something you had to work at, or did it come easy?

**JF:** I didn't really have too much trouble. I got behind the drums and played with my Beatles records. That's basically how I started playing. I think that's why my uncle took some interest and said, "Hey, let's get this kid some lessons and steer him in the right direction."

happened that made me realize, "Hey, this is my career." I was 17 or 18, and two major things happened. First of all, I auditioned for a band that auditioned maybe 40 drummers, and I got the gig. At the same time, Carmine Appice gave me a nice kick in the ass by saying, "Hey man, you play your ass off," meaning that music is what I should be doing. Speaking of Carmine, I saw the first clinic he ever did. I got to know him and got really friendly with him. I used to go over to his house, and he used to show me stuff. At that time, he was with Cactus. I'd go over to his house, and Jeff Beck would be on the phone. I'd be really impressed. Those two things con-



vinced me to pursue music. I thought to myself, "When school finishes, this is what I'm going to be doing."

**WFM:** School being high school?

**JF:** Actually college. I was 19 when I decided that I was going to do this full time. I studied computer science in college, but there was no way I was going to be making a living on computers. I was going to college and I didn't really want to drop out, but at the same time, school was too time-consuming. I wasn't really being fair to myself as a musician, and I knew that I had to give music 24 hours a day at one point in my life. So I compromised and said to myself, "Okay, I'm going to finish school, take this diploma, put it in a drawer, and make music my life." I think I was pretty realistic. If, five years later, I wasn't making a dime, it would be pretty hard to make it my life. Maybe it would be a hobby. It would always be in me, but you have to draw the line at a certain point. If you love playing, you're going to play forever. It's as simple as that. But you have to say at one point, "This is my hobby; I'll have a little band and do some gigs," or "This is my life." I was really dying to make music a 24-hour-a-day thing. I wanted to take lessons from everybody and learn as much as I could. School was so time-consuming that I couldn't do that.

I was going to college with guys who read IBM manuals before they went to bed every night. At the same time, I'd cut out from school and go to a gig, and have to compete with them. It was pretty tough to live that kind of double life. So I just said, "Okay, I just can't quit now. I put too much time and energy into this, and I like it." I liked what I was doing.

**WFM:** Was it tough to make that final decision to go with music?

**JF:** Obviously, it was tough as far as the way my parents and family looked at it was concerned. I happen to be the first person in my family to graduate college. You can imagine what Mom and Dad thought when I went through all that trouble to go to school, get good grades, do pretty well, get a degree, and then become a drummer. My mom would be talking to the ladies where she worked, "What does your son do?" My mom would say, "He plays the drums." The lady at work might say, "Oh, my boy does that, too." Meanwhile, her boy was eight years old, and I was 25 or so. [laughs] As for me, personally, making that commitment to music, it was the most natural thing in the world to do. It was just a little weird, I guess, the way my family saw it. They always supported me, which was hip. They always had so much respect for me that they wouldn't dare say, "Hey, what are you, crazy?" That's pretty cool.

**WFM:** A lot of people don't get that.

**JF:** Yeah, I know. I got total support, only because I think they trusted my judgment on things. Boy, I could thank them for that, because you know what it would be like if you had no support at home and you were living at home. Imagine what it would be like to be going to college and becoming a rock 'n' roll drummer, and having your dad on your ass every day. It would be hard to live that way. I never had that. I always had full support. I was lucky.

I decided I wanted to study my instrument more, so I went to Norm Grossman in New York. I studied everything from music theory to classical snare drum—symphonic percussion—the whole thing. I think that was the first time that I really learned what reading was all about, really

learned note values, and really learned what I was doing. Norm was really good. He was like my drum guru. I went back to him after I wrote my book to let him see it. He was really proud of me. I also took some lessons from Andrew Cyrille.

So, from having Carmine rub off on me in the early days to going to a symphonic reading thing with Norm and then to this crazy Afro thing: Andrew Cyrille made DeJohnette sound commercial. [laughs] I then studied with Tony Williams. I went to City College—CCNY—and Tony had a brownstone in Harlem, which was where the school was. I'd go over to Tony's house, and he was a real trip, man. Tony had Pink Floyd records, Ramone records—he's a really special cat, as far as spanning the whole spectrum goes. I learned a lot from just listening to him play, and he definitely did rub off on me big time.

**WFM:** The reason I was asking about your early learning experiences is that you seem to have a very open, rudimental approach to playing. Am I totally wrong?

**JF:** No. At that time, I wasn't big on rudiments so to speak—what people call rudiments. To me, all of the rudiments are combinations of singles and doubles. I decided to get those two things together early on. I didn't practice an 11-stroke roll, if you know what I mean. But I felt that a good single-stroke and double-stroke roll were really important in my playing.

Now since I've developed in my playing, I apply different types of rudiments. For example, I'll use paradiddle combinations between my hands and feet. I also use ruffs and flams between my hands and feet. So I guess, in that way, I do incorporate rudiments into my playing.

**WFM:** Early on, what types of music influenced you, besides the Beatles?

**JF:** I have been influenced in stages. The first stage was the English invasion—Bea-



**"IF YOU BRING A DOUBLE BASS INTO THE STUDIO, THE PRODUCER THINKS YOU'RE DOING A SOLO."**

ties, Stones, Dave Clark 5, the Animals, the Yardbirds, and the Kinks. I liked the people who had a little more edge in the early days. And then the next stage for me was when Hendrix and Cream came around. I just ate music in those days. I lived at the Fillmore. I used to play the East Village circuit. With the bands I was in during the Fillmore days, I would play at the nearby clubs. We played the Electric Circus a lot, which was around the corner from the Fillmore. A lot of times, I'd go to the Fillmore and then leave to play a gig, and I'd see the people who I went to see at the Fillmore at my gig. I'd stay for double shows of Jefferson Airplane, and Jethro Tull when Tull used to open for Jeff Beck. I saw Led Zeppelin's first show there when they opened for Iron Butterfly. This was the second generation, and this, to me, is my real roots. The Beatles knocked me out, but it wasn't Ringo's playing as much as it was the concept of the whole band. But when Clive Bunker, Ginger Baker, and Mitch Mitchell came out, I really listened to the drumming. I think the next stage for me was when the Tony Williams Lifetime and the Mahavishnu Orchestra came out, because then it seemed that the technical side of drumming exploded. Today, guys like Vinnie Colaiuta, Terry Bozzio, and Simon Phillips are another stage of players that inspire me.

**WFM:** Earlier you mentioned auditioning for Haystacks Balboa. From there you joined the Good Rats. How did you come to join that band?

**JF:** They had heard about me. They came down, saw me play in Haystacks, and asked me to join the band. At the time, I wasn't sure, because I was really into the band I was playing with. The singer with

the Rats, Peppi Marchello, came over to my house and played some tapes for me. I thought he was a really talented writer, and the Rats had a production deal. They were in the studio. It wasn't a record deal, but they had a deal where they could write two or three songs, go right into the studio, and cut them. That was really attractive to me. I not only got to work with good musicians and a great songwriter, but it was a band that I could get some studio experience with. Before that I was in the studio with other bands here and there, but nothing serious. I was 19 or 20, and for me to get into the studio and be part of something creative was exciting.

**WFM:** What kind of music was Haystacks Balboa?

**JF:** A lot like Vanilla Fudge; it was real pretentious rock.

**WFM:** That's quite a change in style from what I've heard of the Good Rats.

**JF:** Well, the attitude in both bands was still rock 'n' roll. It's just that the Good Rats were so much more musical. The Good Rats, to me, had everything in terms of musicality, but they were so aggressive. It was as aggressive as any heavy metal band. At the same time, it could be as musical as Barry Manilow.

I really liked playing with guys who prided themselves on being good musicians. Everyone in the band was really into his instrument. Everyone practiced a lot. It would be really hard for me to be in a situation where I had that kind of fire and the guys around me didn't. We always prided ourselves on being good musicians, and we all took lessons. It was that kind of thing.

There was a lot of incentive to improve, because we would be on the road half the time and home half the time. When we were home, we played every night. In the

late '70s, there was such a boom in the club circuit that we could play literally five and six nights a week, and never play the same place more than three or four times a year. I'm talking from Philly to Boston to Buffalo in the Northeast. We were being seen by a lot of people, and obviously, a lot of people were going to see us a couple of times a year. The incentive was to give them some new stuff, whether it was new songs, new licks, or both. We felt we owed it to those fans to keep improving. What an incentive to improve—to be getting out there and playing so often, and getting that feedback from the people. That made you want to be better. So I'm not saying it was total self-discipline to try to improve and all that, but that was a real good incentive for me to want to practice. Also, when you're playing 300 nights a year, it does something for your chops. I had a ten-minute drum solo after playing for an hour and a half. I think I could lay off for ten years and still have stamina after that experience.

**WFM:** By the time you left the Good Rats, your style and your concepts were pretty much developed as far as using a big kit with two bass drums went. Did you go into the band with that type of attitude—using a big kit—or did that kind of develop?

**JF:** My initial double-bass influence was Carmine, because I ran into him and he said, "Man, you play heavy. You should play two bass drums." So I gave it a shot. I started looking at my left foot and saying, "Man, you've got a lazy left foot." After developing my left foot for a while, I got into seeing what it would feel like playing a bass drum with it. It was gradual. It takes a while to get into the double-bass thing. I remember the first time I actually applied it. Everyone in the band turned around and said, "What the hell was that? Where are we?"

**WFM:** What players were you listening to

# NYC

## CONTRACTORS

**R**UMMAGING deep into his desk drawer, contractor Emile Charlap pulls out an old cartoon clipping buried beneath piled paperwork. It shows a businessman conversing on the phone, reaching over his desk into a wastebasket. "Oh yes, in fact I have your tape right here in front of me now," the caption reads. Emile doesn't intend it as a cruel joke. Like most contractors, Emile himself started as a musician and can well empathize with the struggles of musicians. But the cartoon does reveal an unfortunate truth. The three independent New York contractors profiled below—Herb Harris, Emile Charlap, and John Miller—all have their own tape boxes that they may never get around to. There are good reasons for this. It is not a case of aloof negligence.

First of all, the influx of aspirant musicians is overwhelming, and secondly, contrary to the misconception of many musicians, a contractor is not the person whose job it is to give musicians their big breaks. A contractor's first function is to provide clients with top-notch proven professionals. Contractors keep their ears open for new talent that fits the bill, but their first concerns are not with scouting.

Although the contractors disagree on various points, one unanimous, highly emphasized belief is that musicians must first continually circulate and gain acceptance from their musical peers. By the time they are hired by the contractor, their reputations usually have already preceded them. "I've heard it said," explains John Miller, "If you're good, I will hear about you; if you're really good, you will get paid." "Another fact agreed upon by all is that times are tough. The competition for commercial work has increased due to the decrease of available work. The rewards are still there at the top, but now fewer musicians than ever get there.

Despite the bleak state of things, some

contractors contend that musicians with "the right stuff" will be heard and get their breaks eventually. "There are no unknown geniuses," says Herb Harris. "There are no great, great talents stuck in garrets who are unknown." It must be remembered, however, that when top contractors—who deal with superior musicians on a day-to-day basis—use the word "great," it is not intended casually. They are talking about the small handful that are the world's best in their field.

That field is "commercial work," which constitutes the bulk of these contractors' bookings. In this branch of the music business, "commercial music" refers to music made to function as a secondary support for something else, as opposed to being produced purely for listening/dancing. The most desirable gigs in the commercial category are studio sessions: jingles, film soundtracks, and television music. In the past, contractors also frequently provided studio musicians for album sessions. This is less common now due to the self-contained format of most modern popular groups. Contractors who once hired large orchestras for Sinatra-era sessions found their work quickly depleted when four-piece rock groups overran the studios.

Just as city-bound musicians must rid themselves of the naive belief that contractors will receive their talent with open arms, they must also discard the intimidating TV images of all music businessmen as sadistic, cigar-chomping tycoons. ("Beat it, kid. I want to see you grovel some more.") Although the reality they paint is sometimes harsh, it is not the desire of these contractors to discourage new hopefuls. It is simply better that musicians know the facts before stepping out. With that knowledge under their belts, musicians can take a deep breath and go forward better prepared into that tough world of commercial music.

# What They Really Want From You

by Jeff Potter

# EMILE CHARLAP

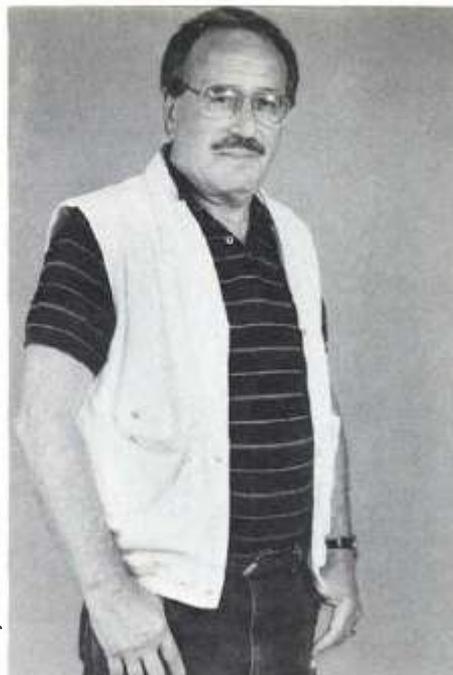


Photo by Laura Friedman

All too often, struggling musicians will dismiss their disappointments with the easy words, "It's not what you know; it's who you know." In all businesses, personal connections are, of course, essential, and strings can be pulled for commercial work. But for the most part, steadily working top-level commercial players are there for the one right reason.

"The basic rule is this: If you're my friend, you have to play better than my enemy to get the gig," says Emile Charlap. "I'm serious. If my enemy plays better, he or she will get the gig, because there is *no way* in the world I can afford to screw up." A case in point of the caliber Emile employs is the roster of musicians he hired for the *A Chorus Line* movie soundtrack. The rhythm section and brass include players such as Randy Brecker, Jon Faddis, Lew Soloff, Dave Weckl, Ronnie Cuber, Warren Bernhardt, Chuck Loeb, George Young, and Alan Rubin, while the large string section, headed up by concertmaster Guy Lumia, is an all-star ensemble of top classical figures from New York's major orchestras.

Charlap estimates that he books approximately 300 dates per year. Jingle dates that he has contracted include Toyota, Parker Brothers, Yoplait, Uniroyal, Cheerios, Wendy's, Leggs, PeopleExpress and Lincoln/Mercury. His film soundtrack credits include *Cotton Club*, *Dressed To Kill*, *Lenny*, *Klute*, *Marathon Man*, *Pumping Iron*, *All That Jazz*, *The Muppets Take Manhattan*, *Carrie*, *The Wiz*, and *Star '80*. Album dates for performers as diverse as Julian Lennon, Perry Como, and Earl Klugh have also been aided by Emile's services.

"They call me to get the best person for a particular job. So, the worst of our drummers are obviously the best. [laughs] Generally, my accounts are agencies and individual writers. There are jingle houses in town—which are self-enclosed—who do their own contracting. But anything that comes directly from an agency or from a producer/director or arranger/composer—these are the people who call me to get the orchestra. At that point, I get the right musicians depending on what the job is. Sometimes I have to get the band, and I won't even know what the product is—whether it will call for a Dixieland band, a

country band, or a symphonic job. So, I need a drummer who is good all around.

"In the drummer category, I have about ten guys who I lean towards and then about another ten that I have access to. I don't think that I ever make a call past the 15th drummer. I use the same people everybody uses: Dave Weckl, Steve Gadd, Chris Parker, Allan Schwartzberg, and Barry Lazarowitz. Others are Brian Brake, Terry Silverlight, Yogi Horton, Peter Erskine, Ron Zito, and Gary Mure. For certain styles, there might be better drummers, but these are people I call for commercial work."

In the studio, Emile represents the musicians to the leader and producer. He is there to protect the musicians' rights and ensure that union laws are upheld. "But," he adds, "it doesn't always actually work out that way. Contractors protect the musicians, but they really work for the producers who hire them." Over the past years, Emile has found that monitoring the dependability of musicians has become increasingly easier. "If a musician shows up late, the leader will immediately come to me saying, 'Where is so-and-so?' and I am responsible. Up until about five years ago, there were a lot of hippies who thought it was hip to be late back when there were a lot of recording dates. I can think of a particular top drummer who got called, and you would be lucky if he came an hour late. Now, he's the most dependable man in the world. I'll call him up to do an 8:00 A.M. gig, and he'll be there ahead of everybody else.

"On a movie date, the studio alone is costing \$400 per hour. A lot of times, a musician might come late and say, 'Don't worry, I won't charge you for the overtime; I'll stay one hour later.' Musicians don't realize that it costs an extra hour of studio time because they came late. If you come late to my dates, you had better be *very* good [laughs] or irreplaceable. And you can count the number of irreplaceable musicians on your fingers. Even the irreplaceable people are now coming very much on time. It's old-fashioned to be late."

Unlike album recording dates, jingle sessions move fast and the deadline is short. Once the session begins, there is little time for padding or "faking it" with

punch-ins or ducking. The tracks are cut efficiently and cleanly by musicians who are seeing the music for the first time. "When our drummers look at a part, they can already play it. And the next time they play it, it's better and with the feeling. The reading is important. We don't have the time to learn it by ear. The drummer has to be right there.

"We have to be finished within an hour. We are hired for one spot, which is either one hour or three minutes of music; that's the limit. Anything beyond that is overtime. If you do only three, five-second IDs [station identifications], it is still paid as a whole session."

The union scale rate for one jingle session is \$74 for one hour. Every 20 minutes beyond that is paid as an additional session. It is rare that anyone is paid above the scale (except for synthesizer players who do several overdubs), but the reason jingle work is so desirable is due to the repayment checks, or residuals. A jingle is allowed to be used for an initial 13-week period. Every time it is used beyond that period, the cycle begins again and each player is paid a percentage of the original fee. If more than one spot is recorded within that hour (a maximum of three is allowed), residuals are paid for each spot. "Where it works best," Emile explains, "is when you play one jingle and they make that into 20 different spots.

"On movie dates, that's not the case. The scale for movies is \$170 for three hours. On record dates, I'll pay some people extra money. For instance, the first trumpet gets double scale. That's common in California, but in New York, it's a courtesy. But if I really want somebody, I will pay extra, because if that person does my

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Photo by Laura Friedman

# HERB HARRIS

"To me," says Herb Harris with a satisfied smile, "contracting is a very creative job." Harris discusses business with the enthusiasm of a man who enjoys his work and loves the Arts. "I don't just get individuals; I have a craziness about this: I hear the orchestra for a particular job in my head. I also look for people I like: intelligent people who have a certain attitude. I feel that certain composers will want a certain kind of attitude in an orchestra. Certain people can be used in one orchestra, but you wouldn't dare use them with another composer. My first question to every composer is 'What's the aesthetic?' I also try to match the composer to the project and engineer."

"Music Administrator" is a title Harris prefers, because many of his projects involve more roles than contractor alone. He is a contractor, player, and musicologist all rolled into one. When working as a percussionist in the New York Philharmonic, Herb began contracting projects for Leonard Bernstein, including the mammoth *Mass*. Theater music became a major part of his blooming business when he became involved with New York's theater czar, Joseph Papp, as Music Administrator for the prestigious New York Shakespeare Festival productions. At every possible opportunity, Herb also played on his own dates. Besides being a skilled symphonic player, he handles other styles as well. Recently, he played traps at New York's Town Hall theater in an anniversary recreation of the original Paul Whiteman Orchestra.

Visitors entering Harris' Manhattan town house are first greeted by a skillfully carved, stomach-high African drum hewn from a hollowed tree trunk. In the spacious living room, African mbiras (thumb

pianos) of all sizes adorn a coffee table. Large African baliphones, Eastern keyboard percussion, and gongs surround the piano. An elegant and delicate Japanese ceremonial drum is displayed on a shelf. First-time visitors may well assume this is the percussion collection that local musicians have spoken of. Not so. In the well-secured basement is a staggering display of world percussion that lines every inch of wall and crowds the floor space. Many of the items are musical/cultural treasures. As Harris demonstrates several prize acquisitions, he responds to their sounds with joy and respect for their heritage.

Theater work has put Herb's ethnomusicological knowledge to especially good use. Finding the right players and instruments for certain exotic demands has required musical detective work. Such sleuthing has sent Herb on the trail of, among other items, a shamisen (three-string plucked Japanese instrument) for the stage production of *Roshomon*, Vietnamese singers for *A Rumor Of War*, and the Argentinian bandemonium (member of the accordion family) for *Threepenny Opera*. Once the shamisen was found, the town had to be combed again for an authentic shamisen pick.

"Larry Rosenthal, who is a top film composer, and I were doing a stage version of *Roshomon* on Broadway for which the music had to be prerecorded. That was before I had been to Japan. I have been to Japan five times since then with the Philharmonic and brought back every Japanese instrument I could house here. But at that time, back in the '50s, there weren't that many Japanese instruments in town. I knew something about Japanese music, and I listened to Kabuki records. So, I used what I had that had the right sounds and put together a percussion collection that had somewhat the same sounds that we were looking for. Later on, when I got my instruments from Japan, Larry said that, if he had heard *those*, he would have written the score entirely different."

As musical consultant/contractor for the New York Shakespeare Festival's production and recording of *Threepenny Opera*, Herb researched several existing arrangements and scores in order to deduce the most authentic instrumentation

possible. The instruments themselves were chosen in the context of 1928, the year the dark, quirky Brecht/Weill masterpiece was first produced. "Some of the score markings were based on loose German translations, and so, the difference between, say, a temple block or a wood-block was questionable. The bass drum had to be a 28" calfskin for that authentic sound. We also used K Zildjian cymbals, because that is what would have been used at that time. By using an authentic setup, it also influences the player to approach the drums in a different way—closer to the original."

Other album ventures Harris has contributed to include *A Chorus Line*, *Original Cast* (as contractor) and *For Colored Girls ...* (as producer). *Samul-Nori/Drums And Voices Of Korea* (Nonesuch 72093-1) is a unique and beautiful album Harris produced for The Asia Society. A four-man percussion/dancing group, The Samul-Nori make a wealth of music from four "simple" percussion instruments. All drummers and percussionists will find the record to be valuable listening.

The Papp projects put Herb in a creative contracting role involving more than just calling the same small handful of hired guns. "I don't necessarily work by just going down a list," he says. "Back in the Joe Papp days—even before *Hair*, which I contracted—at Lafayette [The Public Theater], there were always new needs coming up for a musician who played a certain kind of jazz, or if we were doing an ethnic show, we had to find the right musicians. It was always a question of finding the person. You get a good sense for finding out where a person is at in a very short time."

The top guns, of course, do get their share of Herb's work also. "Chris Parker has been my first drummer for 12 years—since rock became part of the commercial music scene. Chris covers just about any job in pop or soul that you want him to. Dave Weckl, who I use, is a powerhouse. And Steve Gadd—when you can get him—is, of course, the idol of the last two generations of drummers. I believe Steve did his first commercial TV job with me."

The bulk of Harris' more conventional contracting involves television work:

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# JOHN

# MILLER

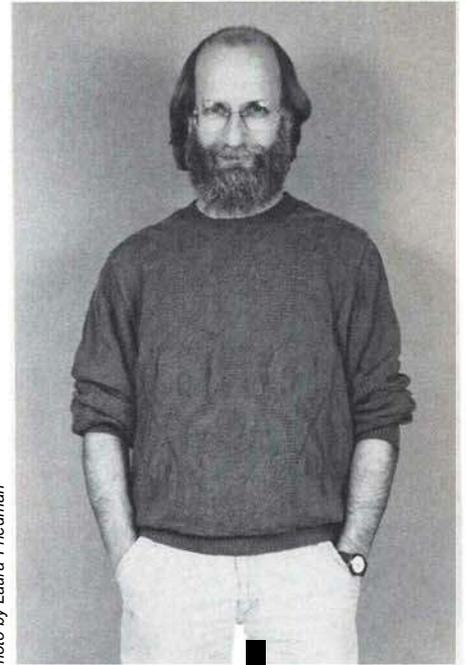


Photo by Laura Friedman

Bassist and contractor John Miller feels that musicians would be far better off if they first unburdened themselves of several dangerous myths: "One of the myths that we all have bought into—and I certainly include myself—is that the way to get work is to find out the people who are hiring. It's a myth; it doesn't work that way. You get work through other players you know.

"Unlike actors, artists, and writers, we don't have people who make their livings by trying to get us work. We have each other. We are each others' agents as well as competitors. I might be on the phone and somebody will say 'I need a drummer real quick.' I'll say, 'I just played with this drummer who sounded great. Here's the phone number.' That's how it happens. If someone sends me a tape and resume or calls up, it means little; I'm tempted to say it means *nothing*. Recommendations from others mean more."

Miller contracts jingles (Kodak, Burger King, Slice), films (*Garbo Talks, Power*), television (*The Equalizer*), and Broadway shows (*Barnum, Pump Boys and Dinette, Peg*), and also plays bass on most of his studio dates. He once taught a course entitled "How To Make A Living As A Freelance Musician Or Singer." "It's one thing to know the requirements," he says, "but the bottom line for a musician is, 'How do I get myself in the lineup?'"

Although John contracts for quality clients, his business operates at a more moderate scale than Charlap's or Harris', and his priority is as a working musician first. As both an active player and a contractor, John has to keep gigs coming in on both sides. He finds wearing both hats to be beneficial. "What I have learned as a player is what a contractor wants. What I have learned as a contractor is that there are wonderful players who are just not in my consciousness.

"For instance, I might not think of certain people for drums. And it's not that when I see those drummers on dates I don't think they play great: They simply just might not come to mind—be in my consciousness. As a player, I'm not much of a hustler. All musicians have to find their own ways of generating work for themselves that are comfortable for them. If I do call someone up as a player, my way is

to say that, 'I am calling to bring my name back to your base consciousness.' That's all that I do, and that is what is comfortable for me."

When contracting a drummer for a Broadway show, John takes into consideration technical abilities as well as psychological factors, which often differ from the qualities he looks for in a studio player. "The obvious is that the drummer must have *great* time and get a good sound out of the drums," he says. "Some drummers have great time, but for some reason, they might just sound tubby or too brittle: no warmth. For *any* kind of job, a contractor wants good time and sound qualities, but for Broadway, there's a special consideration. Most Broadway theaters have a 23-person minimum for the pit. A lot of drummers are used to playing in small groups only. So, one quality that separates a Broadway drummer from the others—who just play in the recording studio—is the ability to kick a big band. That doesn't necessarily mean 'big band music'; it could be a Stephen Sondheim show. But the ability to get that kind of energy and to support that large sound is different than, for instance, a great jazz-trio drummer.

"Another thing that is important is that a lot of people have a difficult time doing the same thing eight times a week. Ideally, a drummer should have the kind of head to be able to play the fourth year of the show like it was played on opening night. This is a psychological/emotional kind of chemistry that certain people are comfortable with and others are not. Some people have said, 'Yes, I can do it,' and they go stir crazy.

"One other important point is that playing in a Broadway show with the same people all the time is like being on tour with a band under the worst conditions. It's like being on a bus with a band: If you have one S.O.B., it spreads like cancer. That is a special consideration when I am thinking of getting a player for a Broadway show as opposed to getting a player for a jingle. When I do a jingle, I'm only together with a musician for one hour. I don't have to live with the person. When I contract Broadway shows—I don't play them myself—but I put myself in the musicians' heads and consider, 'Who would I want to

be next to? If I was going to be on a van with someone for a year, who would I want to be next to?' There is no room for being asocial in Broadway work."

A common way for musicians to break into Broadway work is through substituting, or "subbing," for another player. The subs are called in by the players themselves, not the contractors. This is yet another example of rising through one's peers. "In a show, the union gives you a very liberal time-off policy. You are allowed to take off 50% of the time during every 13-week segment, and your job will still be secure. The management's protection is that a musician can only send in a sub who the conductor approves of. A musician I contracted might bring a sub who I don't even know. At the same time, the musician knows that his or her job is on the line; the regular player had better send a sub who sounds great.

"By subbing, you will get heard and may be recommended for other things. My whole point is that it is important for you to get to know the players, not the contractors. We are all contractors. I think it is beneficial for drummers or anyone to remember that on the lousy job you're doing—and God knows we all do a lot of them—you never know if the trumpet player contracts or is good friends with Burt Bacharach. You just do not know. It keeps you on your toes and makes you play every job as well as you can. I find that sobering and productive."

Those musicians who wait for that connection at the top and *only* that connection, John believes, are bogging down their progress. "If you don't have any connection to that Broadway show," he says, "then *start* where you have some connec-

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Photo by Tommy Noonan/Artist Publ



# ras michael

## The Roots Of Reggae

**D**OWN in Kingston, Jamaica, Ras Michael (Michael Henry) is known as a supreme rootsman. Translated, that means a couple of very important things. It means that Ras Michael is highly regarded among Rastafarian elders. They consider him and his band, the Sons Of Negus, as sort of musical mouthpieces to carry the Good Word as expounded in the teachings of His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie, Lion of Judah and King of Kings. It also means that Ras Michael can cruise the Kingston ghetto as a man on a mission would. Ras Michael has practically attained the status of reggae holy man, and like the Rasta elders, most ghetto folk pay him reverence, too.

Finally, being a supreme rootsman means that Ras Michael is a musician who carries on a powerful tradition in reggae that musicologists have traced back to Jamaican slaves, and ultimately, Africa. A roots drummer—in fact, the roots drummer—Ras Michael is also a builder of drums and a devout believer in the spiritual abilities of the sacred beat not only to move and inspire people, but to educate them about their culture as well.

Ras Michael was born and raised in Trenchtown, the most infamous of the Kingston ghettos, about the same time that Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, and other members of the Wailers were cutting their musical teeth. His first exposure to music came from watching Rastafarian drummers who, during the evening, would make their way down from the hills that surround Kingston, and gather in yards to play and philosophize. Ras Michael's mother was a Christian whose singing in church exposed Michael to still more music. "There was nothing else in my life at this time that was more important to me than music—especially drum music," he says.

Ras Michael began recording in the mid-

60s, and although he never became a pop star in the pure sense of the term, his records sold consistently, and he gradually became one who was known as a purveyor of traditional or roots music. Later, when rock steady evolved into reggae, Michael became one of the driving forces behind roots reggae. "Me like pop reggae," he told one journalist, "but it is the music with history that I love to play most."

Being the high priest of roots reggae drumming didn't mean resistance to change, however. Despite the nature of roots reggae, namely the adherence to simple "riddims," uplifting harmonies, and spiritually or culturally significant lyrics, Ras Michael, throughout the '70s, sought to make roots music more relevant in the rapid expansion of contemporary reggae. He was, for example, one of the very first Jamaican roots drummers to marry electric instruments—guitar, bass, keyboards, even synthesizers—with the acoustic sound of his drums. From him, young reggae musicians learned that it was possible to blend old and new without diluting either.

Usually a private man, Ras Michael doesn't always consent to interviews. Once in Jamaica, I tried for more than a week to locate Michael, and then sit him down to talk into my tape recorder. But it was a futile task. Phone numbers I had proved incorrect or nonexistent. Friends who promised to contact him couldn't or wouldn't, for one reason or another. Finally, I decided to take the big risk and venture forth into Kingston's inner city, where I heard he might be rehearsing with his band. But white boys from the States have no business riding around in a taxi in certain parts of Kingston. I almost learned that the hard way.

So it was with great joy that I pinned down Ras Michael after a very rare appear-

ance at the Manhattan club, Sounds of Brazil (or simply, S. O. B.'s) a few months ago. Backstage, as I dodged clouds of ganja smoke, I explained to him how long I've been waiting to interview him. He seemed genuinely touched by my tenacity and agreed to meet me the next morning for, as he said, "a little chat about drums and things." I knew the chances of that meeting ever occurring were less than 50/50, since Jamaican musicians often find bigger and better things to do in New York City than talk to journalists. But I had no choice.

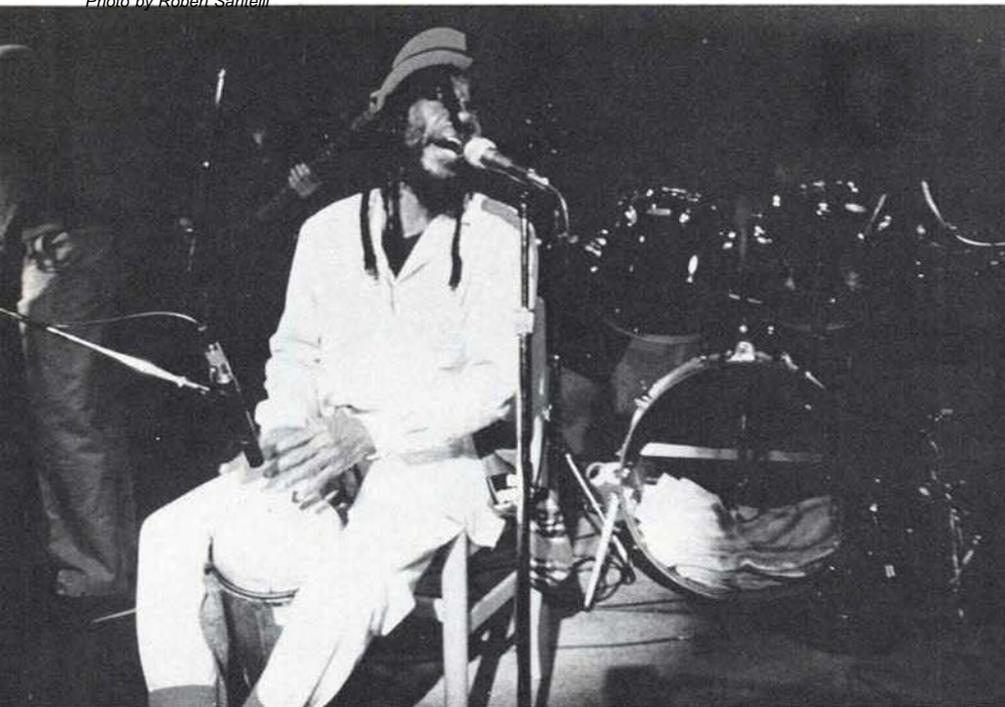
As it turned out, Ras Michael did meet me at the predetermined location in Midtown, although he was two hours late. But it didn't matter. I got what I set out to get: a rare glimpse into one of the most important drummers in the history of Jamaican reggae.

**RS:** You rarely perform in America. As a matter of fact, you've done only one full-scale U.S. tour, and that was in 1985. Has this been due to lack of desire on your part?

**RM:** I've always been more popular in Europe than in America when you speak of places outside Jamaica. And I think the reason why this is so is because I never had the proper distribution of my records here. But now I think that is finally being taken care of. Shanachie Records in New Jersey will be releasing my records in America. So perhaps more people will hear my music and my message, and perhaps then there will be a demand for me to return to the United States again and again.

**RS:** Are there any plans for Shanachie to release any of your previous albums—those which were available only in Jamaica?

**RM:** Yes. They will bring out albums from my past, as well as albums from my present and my future. People who would like to



sample some of the good songs from my earlier days should obtain a copy of *Rally Round*. It is a compilation record and is put out by Shanachie.

**RS:** You're generally regarded as one of reggae's most significant "roots" artists. The term means different things to different people. What does being called a "roots" reggae artist mean to you?

**RM:** Some people in Jamaica say the roots artists have the antique sound. [laughs] Yeah mon, the antique sound. But I think roots artists like myself deal with the true roots of what they call reggae music. We carry on the roots of African music that can be heard in reggae. I accent African drumming in my music. I want to stress the roots vibration of the black man's heritage. It's very inspirational for me to play roots drumming. We bring reggae out into the open, not just on the electrical side, but on the acoustic side as well. And drums are always in the forefront of my music.

**RS:** There are some people who feel that roots reggae is on the verge of a revival or comeback in Jamaica. They say that contemporary reggae has strayed so far from the music's original form that it has to happen if the music is to retain its uniqueness. Do you agree?

**RM:** Yeah mon. You see, some musicians just put anything in front of the reggae riddim. But me, Bob [Marley], Peter [Tosh], and Bunny [Wailer] put such things in front of the riddims that people can relate to. We put things into the music so that people can find out about themselves, and something about their culture and history. That's why our music is important and can never go out of style in Jamaica.

**RS:** It's no secret that a lot of Rastafarian ideology finds its way into roots reggae. You can certainly find it in your music. Do

you feel that your music is religious or philosophical in terms of the lyrical message you present with your musical message?

**RM:** What I try to do is concentrate on things that are righteous. We try to do that, and send out a Rasta message to the people every time we make a record and every time we play in front of an audience. I am committed to doing that.

**RS:** It seems that, as a drummer, you've been highly influenced by the legendary Rasta roots drummer, Count Ossie. Would you say that's true?

**RM:** Yes, that is true. When I was a youth, I used to go into the hills outside Kingston. I used to live in the Trenchtown ghetto, and Count Ossie used to live in the Rockford Gardens area. We used to exchange ideas, y'know. Sometimes he would come and look for me; sometimes I would go and look for him. It was a give and take thing, y'see. I can always give thanks to the brethren who came before me, like Count Ossie. They kept the light burning, so that I could learn about the elements of African drumming and the special meaning of it in our culture.

**RS:** Tell me about those days you spent speaking with Count Ossie. What was it like when you would sit and exchange ideas with him?

**RM:** Well, we'd meet in a small shack, y'know, and we'd chat. Then we'd play the drums. There would be other brethren there who would play, too. It was easy for me to communicate with Count Ossie. I appreciated him as a drummer and spiritual person. We would play together at festivals and groundations [Rasta meetings]. I came and strengthened what he already gave to the people. He was most wise and a very good roots drummer. I came and took the music further. Count Ossie used horn

players to emphasize his message and his drumming. Sometimes I use horns, but sometimes I like to keep it real basic, so there's no question about what the message is.

**RS:** Tell me about his drumming. What made Count Ossie so respected as a roots drummer?

**RM:** The patterns he played told stories. They told of suffering and indignation. But they also told of love, peace, and hope for the future. A lot of what he played was purely African, y'know.

**RS:** Was he your only mentor when you were a youth?

**RM:** No. There were other drummers, too. You see, Count Ossie didn't teach me how to play the drums like some people think. I was already playing the drums. He taught me about things to put into my music—

things about life. That is the most important thing he has done for me, and for that, I still glorify him.

**RS:** When did you begin playing the drums?

**RM:** From the time that I was a youth living in the ghetto. I came from a place in the ghettos where the Wailers—the original Wailers: Bob, Peter, and Bunny—would come and hang out. There were also some brethren there, like Mortimer Planner. He taught us about Rasta Fari. And so it was natural that I began to play the drums. This was at a place called Salt Lane, off Spanish Town Road. There was a big grass yard there where the roots man, or the man who didn't have fear in his heart, would come. But me and the other youths would learn so much there. So from the beginning, I was a roots youth. I began to play the tin drum. It was a big can that would hold oil, food, and other things. I played cans and boxes, until one day everyone was sitting around and someone said, "The people should be listening to our music rather than the 'Darling I love you so' music that the radio plays. Not only Darling, but the whole world should be loved." So we started to make real African drums, and soon we began to get requests to play for groups of people. Then it took off from there.

**RS:** Do you remember the first drum you played?

**RM:** Yeah mon. It was a big tin can. And I'd use a wooden box for the bass. I would hit the tin can and then come in with the bass box. And everybody listening would begin to chant with my beat.

**RS:** So you never had any formal training as a drummer, correct?

**RM:** No school training, mon—none of that. I was inspired to become a drummer by living on the streets.

**RS:** At the time you were growing up and

learning about roots drumming, wasn't the Jamaican government frowning upon roots music? Weren't Rastas singled out and hassled? Weren't there cases of police brutality?

**RM:** Yes, that's all very true. But these kinds of things don't discourage the true roots man from carrying out his message to the people. I needed to learn how to play the drums and how to improvise drums because it was in me. I had a natural riddim that was most important to get out. Jazz drummers and rock 'n' roll drummers can probably say the same thing. It's the inner feeling I have now that I also had back then in my youth days. No one or nothing could suppress it. When you know you're doing the right thing, you keep on going. It's the only thing you can do. Today, I play my drums in prisons, and for the police and

soldiers in Jamaica. I try to bring the two sides together. But at the same time, no government can exist without critics. So I criticize, but I unite. This is a complicated world we live in.

**RS:** Most readers of *Modern Drummer* probably aren't familiar with the Niyabingi style of Rasta drumming. Could you offer your explanation of what it is and how it figures into your drumming?

**RM:** Well, the Niyabingi is the source of all Rasta roots drumming. It's a spiritual style of drumming that sends out a message to all those who practice injustice and prejudice. Beware! The Niyabingi will strike you down! Niyabingi is color-blind. The black man and the white man can hear and see its vision message. I have many friends who are not of my color, y'know. They know the sounds of the Niyabingi drums. They understand the message of Rasta. So when I play my drums in a Niyabingi style, they can listen, and understand and appreciate the riddim.

**RS:** I've heard you say that the Niyabingi style of drums is one of order. What exactly do you mean by that?

**RM:** The riddim brings on order; it keeps people's thoughts and vibes in a righteous place. See, there's a family of Niyabingi drums—the akete—which is where the message comes from. I am a Niyabingi drummer; brother Bob Marley used to call me a Niyabingi drum specialist. Once when he went to Paris, he told the people there who had never heard of the Niyabingi or Niyabingi drums to check it out if they wanted to understand the black man's culture and destiny. He said, "Check him out, the Niyabingi master, Ras Michael." It was a great honor to know what he said. And today, y'know, I am very popular and very well received in France and other European countries. I must give thanks to brother Bob for passing the word about



Photo by Robert Santelli

Niyabingi and Ras Michael.

**RS:** Did you ever play with Bob Marley?

**RM:** Yeah mon. I played with Bob Marley and backed up Jimmy Cliff, too, y'know, and Robbie Shakespeare and Sly Dunbar, and lots of others. I play with many brothers over the years. Too many, though, to remember them all.

**RS:** Sly Dunbar is unquestionably reggae's most successful and popular drummer, especially here in the States. He's certainly not considered a roots drummer, but rather a pioneer, one who is constantly exploring new realms of reggae drumming. He's also brought the idea of electronic drums into reggae. What are your feelings regarding the use of electronic drums?

**RM:** Drums are the core of reggae music. Electronic drums are just another creation. I don't think there's anything wrong with electronic drums if they serve to give order to the music and communicate a message. Sly finds it necessary to explore new riddims with new kinds of drums. That is good. That is important for the growth and expansion of reggae music, is it not? But someone must keep the beat of

roots drumming, too. That is the reggae heritage. It must be preserved. It must move forward, too, y'know. It's not a matter of which style of drum is better or worse than the other. No mon. It's what you do with the drum. Sly Dunbar is a master drummer. Ras Michael is a master drummer. People can enjoy both of us and learn from both of us.

**RS:** Let's talk for a moment about the specific drums you use on stage when you perform.

**RM:** Well, okay. I use a big, round-faced drum as a bass drum. It gives my music a deep, bottom sound. It's the sound that Bob Marley sings about when he chants, "Listen to the one-drop, boom! I say, listen to the one-drop, boom! Ain't got time to rap, boom!" Then we have the funde [*pronounced fun-day*]. Now the funde, it keeps the Niyabingi heartbeat, boom-boom, boom-boom. I play the funde sometimes because it leads the singer into the song. Then we have the repeater drum, or sometimes it's called the talking drum. That drum gives the color to the music, y'know—spices it up. It can be fancy, and

# Bill

by Robin Tolleson

# Gibson

**B**ILL Gibson frees the padlocked garage door on his Marin County rehearsal warehouse, where he's been hashing out demo tapes for the past 11 years. But these days the drummer is arriving at the old practice place in a shiny black European sedan, because the band he's a very big part of is Huey Lewis & The News, and unless you happen to be Rip Van Winkle, you know that they are huge.

That's the way it's supposed to happen in the biz, isn't it? Drummer works hard for years and years, keeps his act and the beat together—then gets big payoff. But Gibson could easily have faded into obscurity like so many other talented Marin County musicians. Lewis & The News is one of only a few bands ever to break out of this sometimes-too-comfortable and isolated hamlet just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. Indeed, they've become a very visible face on MTV airwaves, awards shows, and at concerts around the world.

Because the group has a policy of putting all of its members in its videos, not just using Huey, Bill Gibson is probably one of the more exposed drummers on the video channel. But he didn't get to his now-enviable position by flashing extraordinary chops or being a super-showman. Gibson is, on the contrary, a consummate ensemble player who beats a rock solid groove, knows when to throw in the fills, and—maybe even more importantly—believed in himself enough to keep at it until he landed in something big.

You've probably heard Gibson kicking out the pulse of "Heart Of Rock And Roll," providing the current for Johnny Golia's sax or Huey's harmonica. His fancy fills on the Lewis & The News hit "Heart And Soul," played between agogo bells and timbales, highlight that track. He slams up a storm on "Walking On A Thin Line," cymbals ablaze, pounding out some impressive tom-tom breaks.

Gibson was born in Sacramento—California's centrally located state capital—and moved with his family to Marin at the age of nine. Bill's dad was a jazz drummer who was constantly beseeching his son to listen to drummers other than rock 'n' rollers. Bill developed an early love for jazz players like Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa, and today likes jazz-rockers such as Rod Morgenstein and Omar Hakim in addition to more pop-type drummers.

The News' self-titled debut album in 1980 was recorded very dry, and the strong, sometimes frantic drum performance by Gibson sounds muffled. But the drummer feels the band may have turned things around when it decided to produce itself on the next album, *Picture This*. Taking more time on the record to get the sounds they wanted, the band scored their first hit, "Do You Believe In Love," in 1982. A year later they recorded *Sports*, an album with so many hit songs that the group had to wait nearly three years to record another album for fear of overloading the marketplace.

In his first *Modern Drummer* interview, Gibson talks about the depth of his involvement with *The News*, the band's musical roots, his concepts about drumming and being a partner with technology, and more.

**RT:** You told me that you've been rehearsing at the same studio for 11 years. Have you been with Huey that long?

**BG:** No, but Mario, the bass player, and I have been playing together since 1969. And Johnny joined our band in 1972. So I've been playing with him for 13 years.

**RT:** Well, that explains why you and Mario sound so tight. You go way back together.

**BG:** Yeah, we learned how to play together pretty much. We learned how to improvise and all that. Each of us pretty much knows what the other one is going to do next.

**RT:** And Huey was with Clover during this time?

**BG:** Huey and Sean were with Clover, right.

**RT:** What was the band you had with Mario?

**BG:** It was called Soundhole. We backed up Van Morrison, and played at a club in San Anselmo called the Lion's Share. Soundhole and Clover were kind of rival bands.

**RT:** So you knew Huey then.

**BG:** Oh yeah, I grew up with both Huey and Sean.

**RT:** What kind of a band was Soundhole?

**BG:** Funk music, and rhythm & blues. We were a horn band. Everybody in this band [Huey Lewis & The News] grew up listening to black music, except maybe for Mario, whose brother John played with Quicksilver Messenger Service.

**RT:** Mario seems to have a pretty good ear for the funky stuff, too.

**BG:** Yeah, he can play all that stuff.

**RT:** It sounds like you've paid some dues. You've been at this for a while.

**BG:** Yeah, I've been playing those clubs a long time. We played four sets a night, five or six nights a week for years, and never made anything. We just kept at it, and it's paid off.

**RT:** I don't think records get much bigger than *Sports*.

**BG:** Not many of them do: six million in the States; that's not too shabby. I never expected it to do that, though. That blew my mind.

**RT:** You had an inkling of what was to come on *Picture This*. You had a couple of hits on there, didn't you?

**BG:** Yeah, "Do You Believe In Love" went to number seven. That was our first hit. The other ones went Top 40, but the album didn't really do much.

**RT:** By that you mean it didn't go platinum?

**BG:** It just went gold a few months ago. It didn't do as well as it looked like it was doing. It hit number 13; that's as high as it got. It looked like it was doing really well, because there were three hits on it. But geez, then you get an album like *Sports*, and it just goes wild on you. I had no idea.



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Photo by Ebet Roberts



**RT:** I guess it can be deceiving to the general public when they see a hit or two off an album. They think, "These guys must be cleaning up."

**BG:** That's right. We were still struggling after *Picture This*. We had to go out and play clubs all around the States. Even after *Sports* was in the can, we had to do a long tour just to pay the bills, because we were going through some differences with the record company. Chrysalis was folding, essentially, and we said, "We know we have a great album, but you're not going to get it, because you're not going to be able to distribute it properly." They wanted the album, but we said no. We took the tapes from the studio and stuck them in our office. Finally, they got their thing together and got a new distribution deal with CBS. I think good distribution is really what was responsible for *Sports* doing so well.

**RT:** And those videos . . .

**BG:** Oh yeah, the videos always help if you do them right. We finally got into producing our own videos like we produce the records, and it made all the difference. The first couple of videos we made from *Picture This* were just horrible. They were done by these L.A. guys who didn't have a clue as to what we were all about.

**RT:** The whole band is very visible in your latest videos, and that's good.

**BG:** Yeah, we wanted it to be a team effort. That's the way we write songs. That's the way we do everything. When we make decisions, it's all done by committee. Each guy has as much to do with it as the next. It's not just Huey Lewis and his backup band, like a lot of people would like to think.

**RT:** Huey is rarely seen without the rest of the band. Of course, there was the *Late Night with David Letterman* show, when they said that they couldn't afford the rest of the band.

**BG:** That's right. That's a true story. Actually, I saw Paul Shaffer in New York and said, "Listen Paul, I don't cost that much, man. Really, I'm cheap. Next time, tell David I'll do it for nothing." [laughs]

**RT:** There's a good deal of blues influence in the band now, and you play well on the blues feels.

**BG:** Huey likes the blues more than anybody. I'm more of a funkster/jazz/rocker. Since Huey plays harmonica, the blues is what he learned to play. I mean, blues for a drummer is pretty boring—not that it's not challenging. You've got to know what it's all about to be able to play it right—to shuffle and all that.

**RT:** If you loved funk when you were learning, you couldn't have escaped hearing a lot of David Garibaldi.

**BG:** I was a big Tower of Power fan. We all were, as witnessed by us using them on our tours and stuff. Garibaldi used to say that, if you could find the "1," he wasn't playing it right. Rocco [Prestia, bassist for Tower] used to tell me stories about how they'd be playing along and have to stop and say, "Dammit David, where are you?" And he'd say, "Just play your own part; I'm playing mine." "Yeah, but we can't follow you." "I'm doing it right." "Yeah, but it's backwards." "That's right!" He's excellent.

**RT:** The band sounds real good with the Tower Of Power horns on "Hope You Love Me Like You Say You Do."

**BG:** That was written by a friend of ours from Atlanta, Michael Duke, who used to be in Wet Willie. He wrote that tune and sent it to us on a demo. Our manager said, "Man, you guys have got to hear this. It would be perfect for Huey." So we worked it out. We were in the studio cutting it for the record, and we said, "This song would be great with horns." We had always wanted to work with Tower Of Power, so we decided to see if we could get them to come and listen. We didn't put it together with horns in mind; it just kind

of happened after we were sitting in the studio listening to it. Greg Adams came down and wrote an arrangement on it, and it just came alive. That's my favorite tune to play live with Tower Of Power. It still gives me chills.

**RT:** Who else did you listen to that influenced you?

**BG:** My dad was a jazz drummer. He raised me up on those big band 78s, with Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Sonny Payne, Jo Jones, and all those jazz drummers. So I listened to a lot of that. Then when rock came along—electric rock—it was pretty much Mitch Mitchell. And there's a drummer here in the county named Bill Bowen, who was the original drummer with the Sons Of Champlin. He was my hero for years. I thought he was fantastic.

**RT:** My dad is in music, too. He's a trumpet player. I think that had a lot to do with my getting interested in music.

**BG:** Yeah, my dad gave me my first pair of sticks and bought me my first drumset, so he could play on it, too, of course. He wanted it as much as I did.

**RT:** What was your first set?

**BG:** It was a Ludwig 1965 silver sparkle *Super Classic*. I still have it. It was top of the line—\$400. And he always told me that Zildjian cymbals were the only ones to get.

**RT:** Did your father teach you how to play, or did you study with someone?

**BG:** My father taught me how to swing, the "ray ba-do" beat. He said just to think of it like "ray ba-do, ray ba-do, ray ba-do." I also picked up a lot of stuff. I listened to the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and the Beach Boys, so I was thrashing around playing rock. But he really taught me finesse more than anything else. He said, "Anybody can play rock, you know. Those drummers are carpenters. Here, learn how to play something classy." He was funny. Yeah, I put the headphones on for hours and hours and hours, and listened to all kinds of music. I liked Bobby Colomby of Blood, Sweat & Tears; I listened to him a lot.

**RT:** Did it just come naturally for you when you were a kid?

**BG:** It did come natural; I had a knack for it. But I played with the headphones on five hours a day for ten years. I drove everybody crazy.

**RT:** You said that you were in rival bands with Huey and Sean. How is it that you guys got together?

**BG:** We always liked the way the other guys played, you know. Clover was kind of a country band—country and rock. When Sean and Huey joined the band, they brought in the R&B kind of thing. Then they went to England and played for a while. They thought they'd try to make it over there because they couldn't do it here. It didn't happen for them, and when they came back, all six of us were in different groups. Huey was hanging out with Johnny, our sax player, trying to get something together. Then we started putting together these Monday night jam sessions at a club here in Marin. That's basically how this band started. We all quit what we were doing on the same day to form this band. Basically, we were interested in the same kind of music. We just said, "We like the way you play; you like the way we play. Let's go." That was 1979, and the next year, we put out our first record.

**RT:** You're carrying a surfboard on the cover of that first album.

**BG:** That picture is an exact replica of the Beach Boys album cover, *Surfer Girl*. We're trying to keep that sense of humor, you know.

**RT:** When I interviewed Russ Kunkel last year, he said that he'd been influenced by surf bands like the Surfaris.

**BG:** I was, too. The first songs we learned in the very first band I was in were "Pipeline," "Penetration," and all that stuff. Yeah, we were influenced by the surf stuff. Our vocals are definitely influenced by the Beach Boys in the block harmonies and stuff like that. I love singing. I don't do much singing when I'm playing, but on the a Cappella stuff, I'm able to come down from behind the drums and just sing. That's a gas. The band has a good blend, too. We sing all the time. We go to parties and end up singing.

**RT:** It's getting to be a familiar sight to see you guys do the National Anthem before a football or basketball game.

**BG:** Yeah, I love that. My legs are just shaking when I walk out on

the 20-yard line at Candlestick with both teams lined up. It's wild.

**RT:** Do you get more nervous for that than for a big concert?

**BG:** Absolutely. When I'm behind the drums I'm not nervous at all, but you get out there with nothing, you know, and 50,000 people staring at you and quiet . . .

**RT:** The double-time snare beat you go to at the end of "Hearts" is nice. Do you write all your own parts in The News?

**BG:** I pretty much write my own parts, but everybody writes everybody else's parts, too. It's hard to say. Huey will come up with something that he thinks sounds good, and I'll try it. I'll come up with something for the keyboard player.

**RT:** That democratic approach works for you guys.

**BG:** Yeah, it really does. I wrote that song, "Hearts." I have an 8-track setup, and I write a lot of songs. I pretty much spend most of my time recording. I play keyboards, guitar, and bass as well. The only time I really practice drums is when the band practices. I want to build a studio in my new house so I can play drums there.

**RT:** How did you learn to play piano and bass?

**BG:** Self-taught. We always had a piano at our house. My sister and mother played piano. I would just sit down, figure out chords, and learn songs. I just picked it up and started playing. I think it helps me to play drums more musically.

**RT:** The other guys in the band must like you, because you leave space a lot of times. You don't always feel the need to put a big fill in.

**BG:** My theory is, "Less is more," in most situations. The less you play, the more it's going to mean when you do hit it.

**RT:** I guess it's even more that way in the studio.

**BG:** Yeah.

**RT:** When you guys are writing songs, what is going through your minds? Are you thinking, "This one is going to be a single; this one's going to be a big hit"?

**BG:** I've never written a song thinking that it was going to be big. I guess we're kind of thinking that way with the songs we're writing now because we know we've got to come up with some hits, right? But it's not like we're real worried about it or anything. We figure that, if we write good songs, we've already got the base of support,

*continued on page 88*

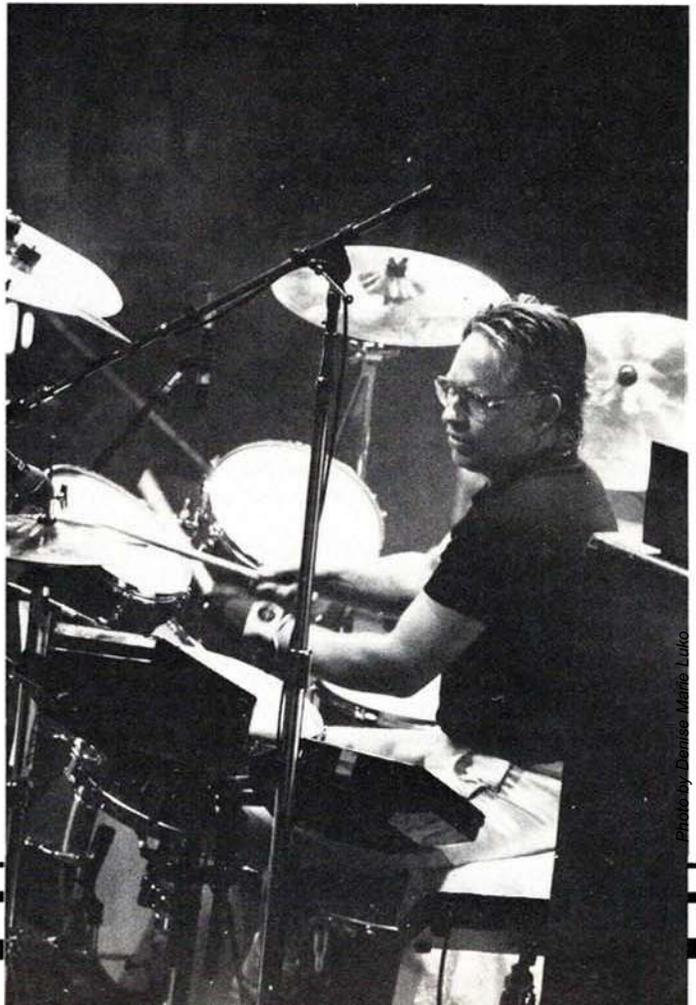


Photo by Denise Marie Luko

by Peter Cassidy

# Girls' Night Out's Kathy Burkly



*Kathy Burkly, drummer and rhythmic force behind Boston-based Girls' Night Out, says her grandmother regrets buying her a Sears snare drum 19 years ago. "She really wanted me to be a lawyer," says Kathy. "She was very disappointed that I took up music as a profession. I told her many times, 'You were the one who started it.'"*

*Well, Kathy hasn't been studying for the bar exam, but her grandmother's Christmas gift did start the 31-year-old drummer on her way to becoming a different kind of professional: a percussionist who has toured widely, played and recorded music from country to rock, and prides herself on her versatility and ability to handle any musical style that's demanded. Her recording credits include percussion work for everything from jingles to country work with John Lincoln Wright & The Sourmash Review. She played and recorded with the popular, but now disbanded, Wheatstraw, and made an album with country songwriter Tom Ghent just last year.*

*But these days she's a pop rocker, laying down a throaty 2 and 4 from behind a pink, handmade drumset for her six accomplices in Girls' Night Out. The group is an all-female pop and soul band, currently breaking big in the Boston area. The band recently released a self-produced EP, and two accompanying videos are receiving significant air play on local video channels. The media has latched onto Girls' Night Out's combination of energy, talent (six out of the seven members are Berklee alumnae), and ambition, and*

*there's every indication that this group is likely to be a real success.*

*In 1973, Kathy left home (at the ripe old age of 18) to play with Barbara Allen and the Tennessee Hot Pants, a country covers show-band that toured extensively in the States and abroad. "I didn't even go to graduation or my prom or anything. My mother mailed my diploma to me a month after I started touring with the band. That band did nothing but tour. We'd tour for three months, go home for a week, and then go out again. We lived in a Winnebago. [laughs] I would never do that again, but back then, it was fun—you know, when you're just out of high school. We even went up to Greenland," Kathy says.*

*Greenland? "Yeah, at the airforce base that's up there near the North Pole. We were an all-girl band: five women going to Greenland, where there were about two thousand Danish men, five hundred American Air Force men, and very little else except a lot of glaciers. We'd go up there for a month at a time and play seven nights a week. It was like a USO tour. When we were up there in the winter, it was pitch black 24 hours a day. You had to stay inside all the time, because it was 70 or 80 degrees below zero outside. It felt kind of strange with all those guys around. The first night we played there, all these guys were yelling, 'Take it off. Take it off.' We had no idea of what to expect from them. I don't know what would possess a booking agent to send an all-girl band to Greenland," Kathy says.*

*Since then, Kathy has played many other genres, always striving to improve her performance capabilities. At her apartment in Somerville, west of Boston, Kathy told of her rise from musically illiterate country flogger to well-known professional percussionist.*

**PC:** Who did you listen to when you were young? You seem to be into everything.

**KB:** Mostly swing stuff, because my mom was a Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw fanatic. After that, I was really interested in Buddy Rich, so my grandma bought me a couple of his records. One was *Keep The Customer Satisfied* and the other was *Live At Ronny Scott's* in England. I listened to those a lot when I was about 15. Around that same time, I started getting into rock. I mostly just listened to what was on the radio. I liked all the Motown stuff on the radio. The people I listened to most when I was in high school included Tower of Power—with Dave Garibaldi—and the Buckingham—of all people. I liked their drummer; he was snappy.

I got the idea to play ambidextrously from a drummer named Michael Dawe, who played with a band called Gypsy up here. I think he plays with Robert Palmer now. He could lead with his left or his right hand. A lot of drummers cross their hands, but I play the hi-hat with my left hand and the ride cymbal with my right hand. Playing ambidextrously helps you get away from playing patterns.

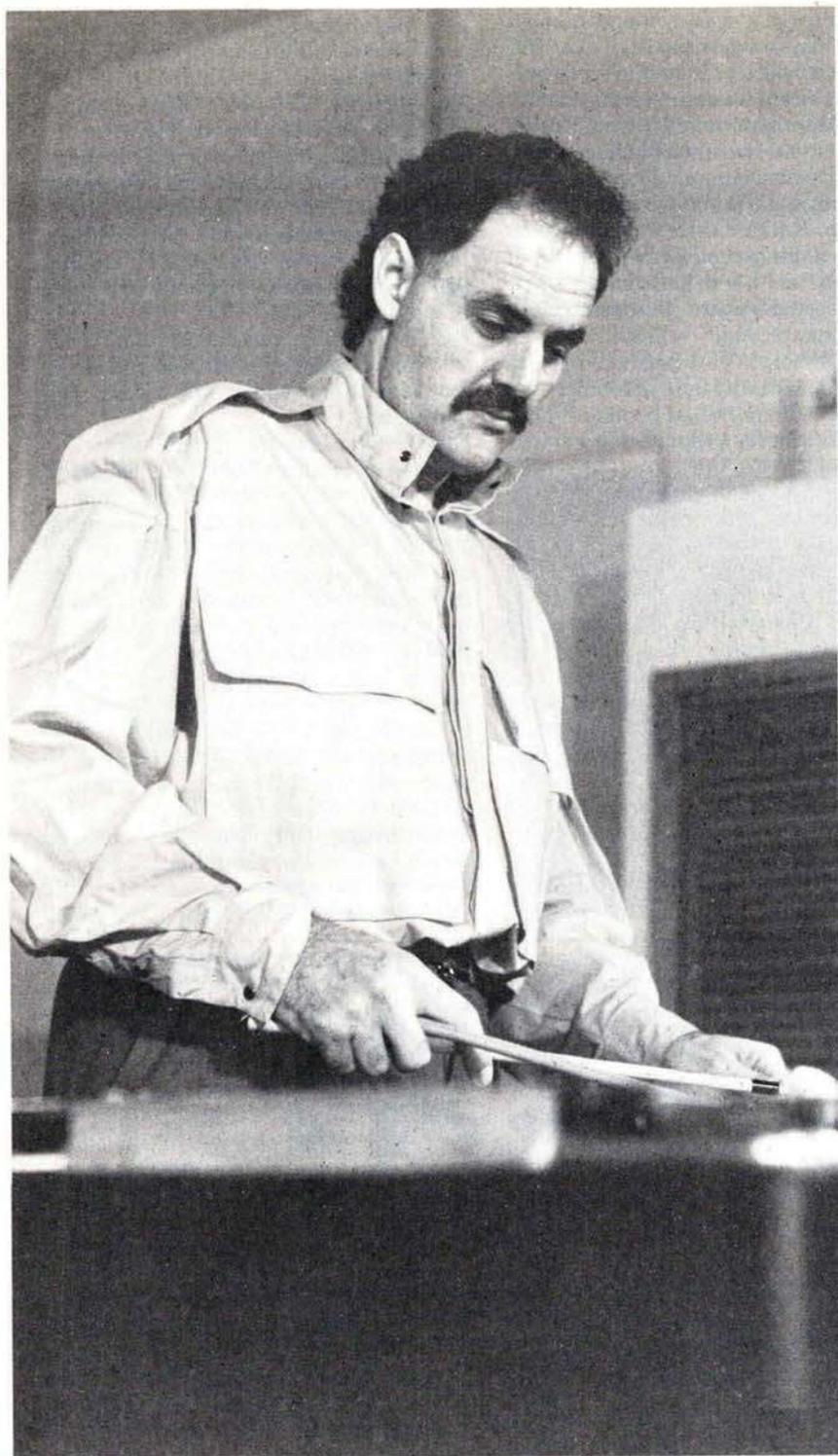
When I was 19, I started listening to country music. Emmylou Harris had a drummer—John Ware—who had a really nice time feel. He was very relaxed, and he had a really beautiful sense of melody. I got a lot of ideas about how I wanted my cymbals to sound from listening to him. He had a great sense for making a cymbal sound five or six different ways.

**PC:** How were you playing before you went ambidextrous?

**KB:** When I first started I didn't take lessons, so I played the traditional grip. I had a drum book that had a picture of exactly how to hold your hand: "Put your hands like this, lay the stick across, and hold your fingers this way." When I went back to Berklee College of Music in Boston after playing in Lincoln Wright's band, my teacher told me to play matched grip. And that was a great piece of advice, because otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to play ambidextrously. At Berklee I learned to read. I graduated from Berklee three years ago, and the two best things I learned there were how to read and how to play matched grip ambidextrously.

**PC:** You started getting serious about your playing in high school. How did the concept of a girl drummer come across? Did you meet with some resistance?

**KB:** Well, yes, a little. But either I was lucky or just obnoxious. I just told anybody who gave me any grief about being a girl drummer, "I can play. Let me prove it to you." I approached it that way, and it worked 99% of the time. One or two times, someone refused to hire me, sight unseen, because I was a woman. Some country singers can feel threatened by a female drummer, I think. But with Chuck McDermott & Wheatstraw, it worked out fine. Chuck had enough self-confidence that it didn't bother him that some attention would be diverted away from him when people noticed that he had a female drummer. When I played with John Lincoln Wright, it was the same way. They both had strong enough self-images to overcome that. Getting shut out hasn't happened to me very much, but it has happened to some of the other girls in Girls'



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*David Friedman*

*Photo by Rick Mattingly*

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Night Out. If you get in a situation where you can't handle what employers throw at you *and* you're a female, it's easier for them to get rid of you. That's why I decided I wanted to be able to play all different styles of music.

**PC:** And that's when you went to music school?

**KB:** Actually, it was while I was on leave from Berklee. I was down in Atlanta, recording with Wheatstraw. Harvey Brooks, the staff bass player at the studio, heard me play and liked my time feel. He was putting a band together, and he wanted to hire me. So I went back down there when I left Wheatstraw. But the thing was, Harvey assumed that, because I could play well in the style he'd heard me playing, I could do anything else as well. I got down there, and he threw things at me that I couldn't handle. He was surprised, and I was embarrassed. So that's what made me decide to go back to Berklee and learn to read, learn to play funk, and learn to do stuff I couldn't do. That gig with Harvey Brooks would have been a good opportunity if I had been up to it. I couldn't handle it at the time, but if he called me now, I could.

**PC:** What did you major in?

**KB:** Professional music. To get a degree, you also had to take English, literature, and other academics. I had a good time with those. I liked art history a lot; it made me sensitive to different kinds of art.

You're more open to every side of music if you're open to other kinds of art, like painting and poetry. It widens your perceptions. I mean, if you appreciate the different colors that one artist would use—say, dark, somber colors where someone else would use predominantly fiery colors—it makes you think. Color's a part of music, too. I'm sure there are good musicians who don't care about other forms of art, but for me it's definitely part of it. However you broaden your perceptions can help your playing.

**PC:** So you think it's important to step out of one's regular genre once in a while?

**KB:** Oh, definitely. When I couldn't handle the stuff Harvey Brooks threw at me, I knew I had to learn other kinds of music. When I went to Berklee, I played for one semester with a big band: full sax section, four trumpets, four trombones. I was also in a couple of smaller ensembles with this really good piano player who did a lot of Bill Evans' material. So I had a whole semester of pretending I was in a Bill Evans band. It was great—a lot of cymbal textures and stuff. And what I learned doing those things then shows up in my playing today. For instance, in a song of ours called "Love Under Pressure," we orchestrated the solo section. I wrote out the whole drum part, so that the drums and bass would be right together. The cymbal things were supposed to be airy and very delicate. And the bass drum and the rim

click was a specific part, so that one measure would be one hit and the measure after it would be [claps two 8th notes] like that with the bass. You don't think of things like that if all you do is bash. If you experience playing more delicate music or something that's more orchestrated like playing in a big band, you're aware that the drums are not a single-lined thing. You're listening. It just makes you think on a wider scale if you've done a lot of different kinds of music.

**PC:** You have an unusual drumset. It has very large mounted toms. And I've never seen pink drums with a wood grain. Tell me about it.

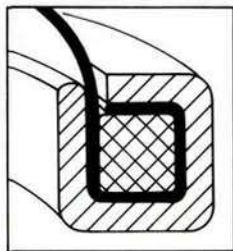
**KB:** Well, the bass drum is 16" deep by 20" in diameter, with a 12-ply shell. The snare is 7 1/2x14, with a 15-ply shell. The toms are all nine-ply, and the sizes are 10x10, 11x12, and 12x14. There's no floor tom, because the 12 x 14 tom sounds like a floor tom. It's also easier to reach, being rack-mounted. All the cymbals are Sabians: 15" hi-hats, 17" and 18" medium crashes, and a 22" heavy ping ride. That's my favorite. It's got this great big, nasty bell that's great for the soul stuff. The bass drum pedal's by Sonor; most of the rest of the hardware is by Pearl. It's a very comfortable set. Joe MacSweeney, over at Eames Drums, built it for me. I liked the idea of having handmade drums, because I could have exactly what I wanted. I could have the edges beveled sharply, the way I

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like them. The shells could be made of the exact number of plies that I wanted, and out of the wood that I like the sound of: birch. The main thing is that the drums are very warm, very resonant, and very versatile. Depending on the kinds of heads I put on and how I tension them, I can tune the drums to be very punchy or I can tune them to sound very delicate and really emphasize the warmth. I'm currently using clear *Emperors*, which produce a very sharp attack. When you combine that with the warmth of the drums, you get the punch you associate with rock, but you don't get that brittle or electric sound.

**PC:** What would you consider your style?

**KB:** I like to describe it as "punchy." I don't like my playing to be cluttered. I like to put in some nice, juicy beats, but keep it very seamless, so that if a nice roll goes whizzing by, it doesn't seem like it's not supposed to be there. When I hit rimshots, they all sound the same. I don't like drummers who kind of miss the center of the drum; they hit one place on the tom-tom and then they hit another.

**PC:** Are there some other kinds of music that you'd like to play more of?

**KB:** I would really like to play in a small, acoustic trio with just piano, bass, and drums—like that Bill Evans thing I did back at Berklee—not free-form jazz, but very unrestricted jazz. I'd like to do that, I think, because it's so opposite of what I'm doing now, and because the room for expression is so much greater. You don't have to worry about amplification. You can strike a cymbal very delicately, you can smash it, or you can just hit the rim of the drum. In a rock band, you can't play on the side of the drum: hit just the shell to make a "tikky-tok" sound or something like that. It doesn't carry across when you're fighting electric guitars and stuff. But in a small jazz group, your whole frame of reference is much more acoustic, and you don't have to stay with a heavy 2 and 4 kind of thing. I can only do so much in a band like *Girls' Night Out*, because people have to dance to it.

**PC:** Who are some of the drummers you admire?

**KB:** I admire Dave Garibaldi and Stewart Copeland. Actually, I also admire Joe Morello and that whole school of trio- and quartet-style drumming. It's very emotional, but it's also very precise; it's not stuck in any kind of form. I've always liked Billy Cobham; he's got wild ideas and the physical ability to carry them out.

**PC:** Who would you most like the chance to play with?

**KB:** I'd love to play with Tower of Power.

**PC:** Do you have a regular practice regimen that you follow?

**KB:** I work every day on a practice pad. Joe Morello has a book called *Master Studies* with a series of exercises. It doesn't

look like much at first. You start with the real easy stuff, and it never gets very hard, visually. But the thing is that you do each exercise for 15 repetitions, and only up to the speed where you can keep your arm totally relaxed. As soon as you start to tense up, you stop. It makes you very aware of when you're tensing up. Working with Joe's book is like doing aerobics: You build endurance by stepping up the speed of what you're doing but keeping relaxed. The other thing I study is a reading book by Gary Chaffee called *Patterns*. That's really a good book. It's just sight reading. You just flip through it, and pick a page; you're not supposed to spend any time looking at it. What's good about this book

is that it's all odd times. Since I don't read a lot with *Girls' Night Out*, I try to practice it every day so my reading doesn't go down. I practice leading with my left as well as my right hand, so I don't get stuck playing patterns. It's very important not to have my brain stagnate just because I'm playing pop music that's not real demanding, mentally. What I'll do is take one of those *Billy Gladstone* pads, and play my right hand on the flat part and my left hand on the middle part. Then, I'll take one of Joe's or Gary's exercises, and play it hand to hand to see if it makes me think of new ideas. Or I'll play a simple pattern with my left hand and play an exercise against it. I use things like that to stay creative.

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Photo by Ebet Roberts

Style & Analysis:

by Michael Bettine

# Terry Bozzio

Through his work with Frank Zappa, UK, and his own band, Missing Persons, Terry Bozzio has built up a reputation as a hard hitting drummer and dynamic showman. While most of the attention seems to be focused on Terry's speed and technique, it is important to remember that 90% of the time he is a supporting musician. He may do some awesome fills and solos, but it is his job to support and drive the band, and this is something Terry does well. This column will take a look at some of the different and interesting things Terry plays, while laying down the time and supporting the song.

The first example is taken from the title cut of the *Danger Money* album, by the group UK. The verse features two simple but driving rhythms in 15/8. Each measure ends with a simple fill that carries it into the next. The odd meter and changing snare/bass patterns add to the shifting mood of the song.

①

Swift Cym Bell 3 times

etc.

The following example is taken from the verse of "Caesars Palace Blues," from the *Danger Money* album. This section really moves along. The 9/8 meter almost has a 4/4 feel to it, with the last three 8th notes rushing into the next measure, giving a definite downbeat.

②

etc.

The next example is from "As Long As You Want Me Here," from the live UK album, *Night After Night*. It shows Terry moving away from straight-ahead patterns. The rhythm is broken up between the snare drum, cowbell, and hi-hat chokes. The feeling is very precise, yet moving.

③

Cow Bell

The last two examples are from the Missing Persons album *Spring Session M*. The excerpt below is from the intro to "Walking In L.A." The Chinese (or double cymbal) and bass drum play the accented figures with the band.

④

The last example is from "No Way Out." This two-bar phrase from the chorus has the accents on Chinese cymbal, cymbal bell, and snare drum. They are underscored by a steady quarter note played on the bass drum. The end of the phrase again uses a tom pickup into the next measure.

⑤

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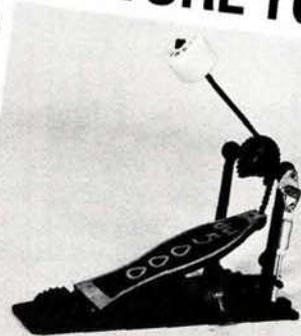


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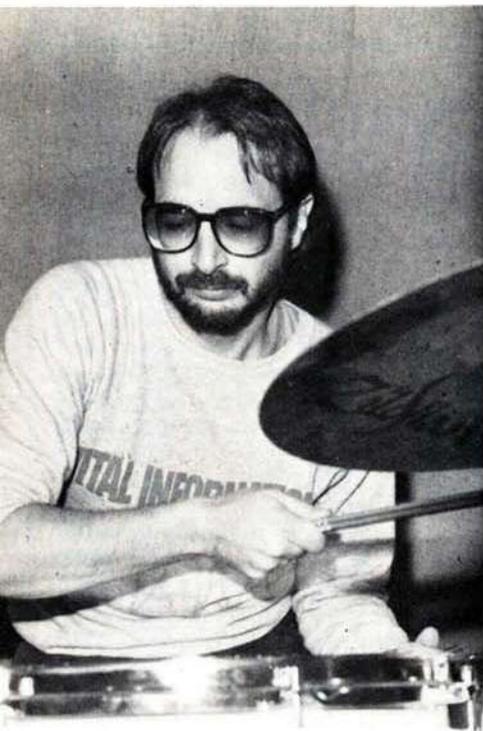


Photo by Rick Malkin

recording. Up until this last album, during the writing/rehearsal process, somebody had an idea for a song, and then that idea was presented to everyone. Everyone contributed ideas to that, and we created a song out of it. There was only one time that a complete song had been brought to us, and that was "Faithfully." Jonathan Cain had really finished the whole thing with words and melody. Other than that, all the tunes were finished by the band. We spent hours every day practicing and taping, going home and listening to the cassettes, coming back in and changing things around, until finally we felt that we were ready to go in and record without spending a lot of time experimenting in the studio. We usually worked from 11:00 in the morning until about 7:00 at night—very sane hours. Those tunes that we worked out in rehearsal always ended up changing a lot. The process was that basic tracks were played by everybody—not just bass and drums, or just drums. Steve sang, and we usually saved everything. So if we didn't end up using a guitar solo or a lot of the lead vocal, it was left there as reference to do one with. Then, we went back and overdubbed for a couple of weeks—guitar parts, keyboard parts, lead vocals, and harmonies. Not everybody was there for that. Usually, the producer and the one person who was working were there. The rest of us came in and out, listened, and added a little bit. However, we noticed

that, if somebody was working all day and another guy bopped in off the street and said, "Hey, that stinks," it was like, "If you want to say that, you should have been here all day." Everybody trusted the other person to have enough maturity to do what was going to be right. Then when it came to mixing, we let the producer or the engineer work all day to get a tune ready and make a mix of the tune at night when they were done. For *Frontiers*, Steve Perry and I went in a lot and listened to the mix. If we liked it, we left it. If we didn't, we'd suggest changes, they'd make them, and we'd finish the mix right there. We'd leave, and they'd go on to the next tune. We'd come in in the morning with a fresh perspective, and that's how we finished the mixes.

**RF:** Compare and contrast the equipment you used for both situations.

**SS:** With *Journey*, I was using the big Sonor drumset with two 24" bass drums and three rack toms. I used the standard drum sizes, and had three rack toms, two floor toms, and the A Zildjian cymbals. I used that same drumset when I did the first *Vital Information* record. The only difference was that I had a lot of K Zildjian cymbals—lighter cymbals—which really made a big difference in how I approached the drums. It had a much lighter, softer sound. I tuned the drums up a little higher. Then on the first side of *Orion*, I used the big set, and on a couple of the songs, I used some Simmons toms. On the second side, I used

*Smith continued from page 21*

made 50,000 for the States.

**RF:** What was the recording process like with Journey?

**SS:** First of all, we rehearsed a lot before we went into the studio, so we were really prepared before we actually started

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a real small drumset with a 20" bass drum, two rack toms, and one floor tom. I found that it worked even better. I used the same lighter cymbal setup and one bass drum. On the newest record, *Global Beat*, I just used the small set for the whole record and the K Zildjian cymbals. It's getting an even more personal sound for Vital Information, because I'm finding that, even though I changed the cymbals, it made me play much lighter and more sensitively. Now that I've gotten rid of the two bass drums and five tom-toms, it also changes things. It changes the approach, and the tuning of the drums is very different. I also went back to using the white heads instead of the clear heads, and it gives the drums a warmer sound.

**RF:** When you were spending so much time with a set format with Journey, wasn't it difficult then to turn around and gear your head toward a more improvisational approach with Vital Information?

**SS:** It took a while to feel real comfortable at it and to start understanding it completely again. Most of the conceptual understanding was there already, and I could slip from one to the other pretty easily, but it did take a little while. What took time in the jazz thing was getting the facility and sensitivity back to do the subtler things, and getting that control back.

**RF:** What about tips for playing a power ballad, as you are known for having done in Journey?

**SS:** I think the arrangement is very important. We tried to develop a real nice arrangement of the song. Sometimes the arrangement was that the drums wouldn't play through half of it, or they came in and went out. You have to be very aware of when it's right not to play. That was everybody's contribution—not just my own ideas. First off, I like to look for a really nice feel. When you play those slow tempos, that's when you really have to dig into the beat. A lot of times, I pull it way back, not to the point where it's slowing down, but just enough so it really feels majestic. When you play the big tom fills, there has to be a lot of air in between the notes, so the drums have a chance to really ring out. You have to have a great sound first off, and let that sound ring out so you hear the toms, and you're not hurrying through the fills. A lot of times, I composed those drum fills. It wasn't that we would be in the studio, and all of a sudden, I would have a fill to lead up to this thing. I'd try a lot of different ones and settle on one. So even if we did ten takes of the song, I'd usually play the same fills every time.

because I would have tried enough possibilities so that I would know it was right, the other guys in the band would know it was right, and we would have settled into it. Then it was just a matter of really pulling it off so it worked. Sometimes, I'd change them at the last minute, and that change would be the magic that we were looking for, but most of the time, I would have already worked them out in that rehearsal time. Then they became part of the song, and I'd play the same ones in the live performance. I wasn't afraid to do that. Sometimes for a jazz musician, that's a bad thing to do. It's predictable or contrived. Maybe it is, but it also works best for the song, and it was the best way for me to do it.

**RF:** The ballads were really lush and dynamic.

**SS:** We had really become known for those, and in a way, I've become known for doing that. Bryan Adams had me play drums on some ballads, for just that reason. I played "Heaven" on *Reckless*, which was a number-one hit single. I like doing sessions. Since leaving Journey, I've played on some cuts of Glen Burtnick's album, and I've done an entire album with Tony MacAlpine. He's a young, black, rock guitar player and classical pianist who just recorded his debut album. Billy Sheehan plays bass, and it was produced by Mike Varney. The album is instrumental, and it's absolutely smoking. It has my best rock playing on it to date.

**RF:** In our last interview, we touched on the difference between playing in a vocal-oriented situation and playing in an instrumental situation. In the first interview, you mentioned giving the notes their full value. Aren't there other considerations?

**SS:** That was when I was first experiencing being in a group with a singer, and that was what I was being presented with by Steve: "Don't hurry your fills and don't come out of the fill a little bit early, because I'm holding the note and I know when it's supposed to end. Don't get there before I do." I was very conscious of everything's proper length and time. That concept works with everything now. I've applied that to the jazz music as well, because good time is good time. He just made me aware of how to make it even better by being aware that sometimes, at the end of fills, I got there a little too soon. I got all excited about it and hurried my way through it.

I guess the main thing is that, before I played with Journey, I was always interacting with what was going on, and I stopped doing that. I don't do that when I

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play rock. I do it to a slight degree—enough to add to the composition—but not enough to take away from the foundation. Never leave that foundation. I don't think of it so much in terms of a vocalist anymore. I guess I take it for granted that, when I'm playing in rock, I'm playing with a singer. That was a new thing for me back then.

**RF:** Yet, I would think that, in a rock context, it might be hard to be forceful and not overbearing.

**SS:** I focused all my energy through Steve when we were playing. It wasn't like I just listened to the bass player. When we played instrumentally, I could dish out a lot more stuff and it was okay. Neal could pick up on it, and I could really cut loose. When Steve was singing, I was focusing everything through him to make him feel comfortable, to stay out of his way, and to support what he was doing. I was listening very closely to what he was singing and to his phrasing. I made sure that what I was giving him felt good for him. I could usually tell how he was singing and if the tempo was right. One of the most important things in working with a singer is that

the tempo has to be right, so you can hear the words. With an instrumental thing, a lot of times you can play tunes a little faster than the record, and it will still be okay. But with lyrics, the words can get squashed together, and you have to make sure the tempos don't get too fast.

**RF:** So what happened with you and Journey?

**SS:** This is very hard to explain, because it's very emotional and I also have a lot of confusion about it. It's not very clear to me. I would have to say that it all started with Perry's solo record, and how that experience really changed his approach as a musician/songwriter. In my opinion, he became more interested in being a solo artist and enjoyed the feeling of writing songs with maybe one or two other people, rather than a whole group situation. He quit the band, and to get him to do another record, we agreed to his producing the record and that he could bring in anyone he wanted to play on it. Most of the material for this new record was written by Jonathan and Steve together or Neal, Jonathan, and Steve together. The band ceased being a band. They did very extensive demos of the songs at Jonathan's studio, complete with drum machine beats and bass parts that they specifically wanted. So I felt a lot less involved, and there was much less leeway in what I could contribute. They felt very specific about what they wanted in the drums and the bass. They

also felt that the parts they had come up with were integral to the tunes. First they said, "Let's record the whole album with the drum machine and have you maybe put some parts on later." They felt that the drum machine itself was part of the compositions. I started feeling that it wasn't a band, and it certainly didn't have the same band approach as when we wrote collectively.

**RF:** How did you feel about their wanting to put a drum machine on the album?

**SS:** I felt terrible about that.

**RF:** Was that because you honestly, in your heart, believed that the tunes could have been great with you on them?

**SS:** I really felt that they could have been better with me playing, rather than the drum machine playing. To me, it goes back to the feeling of a band. I feel like each member of a band is an important contributor. If I were a fan of a band's sound, I'd feel bad if I bought an album by that band, and the bass player and the drummer didn't play on it. It really bothered me that those decisions were being made, and I didn't really have a lot to say about it. As much as I tried to change that, I wasn't effective. There was a lot of friction to start with, simply because of my resentment of their using a drum machine. I have a whole set of feelings about drum machines, which I really sorted out through this whole thing.

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making an experience complete: a physical part, an emotional part, an intellectual part, and a spiritual part. The engineer and the guys in the band would ask me to make the drum machine parts a little more believable by changing the programming a bit. They said that, if I was thinking of the stuff, why couldn't I let the machine play it for me? They couldn't understand why that didn't satisfy me. So I had to think about it. I realized that it took away the physical pleasure of playing the drums, it took away the spiritual pleasure of playing music, and it took away the emotional feeling. The only thing that was left was the intellectual part of programming the machine. That's not enough for a complete experience for me. I've had too many years invested in actually playing the instrument to feel good about being a programmer.

**RF:** And yet, on the last couple of Journey albums, the drum sound was explosive. Why would they do away with that?

**SS:** I think it comes from a paranoia of thinking that we have to keep up with the trends and the times, and that what we've done in the past is lousy. On a scale from one to ten, maybe what we did on the last record was an eight in comparison to our potential, but I think that some people in the band looked at it as if it had been a zero. It was totally irrational and unrealistic.

**RF:** So what happened after you rehearsed?

**SS:** We went into the studio to record those tunes. The whole time, I had a very pessimistic attitude that it wouldn't work out. We started the first week with the whole band. By the second week, Ross wasn't playing, and Bob Glaub was playing bass. I felt very bad that Ross wasn't going to play. I also felt very threatened by it, because I thought that a can of worms was being opened. I felt very insecure about my position, so I expressed my fears and I was assured that it would all be okay. We tracked for about two weeks, and then Randy Jackson came in on bass. We tracked for another couple of weeks, doing some of the same songs over again. We spent two months tracking. At that point, it was decided that they would bring in another drummer to re-do four of the songs. Steve just felt that what had been recorded didn't live up to the demos. On one hand, I wasn't completely surprised, because it wasn't fun going to work every day. There was so much tension. I felt a bit relieved to be out of that pressured situation. But they had no intention of just

doing four songs. When they got Larrie [Londin], they wanted him to play everything again. When I heard that Larrie was there for two weeks tracking, it was a terrible time for me. Nobody called me to talk to me about what was going on. It became very impersonal. I ended up calling the other members.

**RF:** People don't know how to deal with hurting other people.

**SS:** That's what happened. It got so uncomfortable that my attorney was informed that they wanted me to retire from the band. I felt like I didn't know how I could work with them again because I felt so bad about the situation, and I'm

sure they felt the same way. That's one aspect of the split up. Another aspect is that you taste what it feels like to hire different people for different tracks. There are definitely specialists, and Larrie can do certain things better than I can do them. But I can play other things better than somebody else, and in a band, you have to be everything. But when you taste what it's like when you don't have to accept what another band member offers, I'm sure that's an intoxicating feeling. In addition, you figure that you only have to pay someone for a day's work and not share the royalties with that person. All that added up to my being asked to leave the band.

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**RF:** How did you feel, Steve?

**SS:** I felt really hurt, personally betrayed, and really unappreciated. During the whole thing, it was, "You're not happening." I was constantly made to feel that I wasn't a good musician, and that hit me where I live. That is something that is so important in my life. It's left an impact on me and made me a little insecure, but only a little, because I felt there were so many other reasons besides musical ones.

**RF:** How did you build up your confidence after you had been shot down?

**SS:** At first, I really withdrew a lot and stayed at home. I was very upset and went to therapy. Susan and I had a new baby, Elizabeth Ann, on July 1, 1985. That was very uplifting. Then I made a 100% commitment to my solo career, and I made a lot of creative decisions about what I want

to do with myself as a musician in the future. I started finishing a solo record that I had recorded the basic tracks for in July of 1984. I had put it on the shelf, because every time I had planned to work on it, management would call me up and say, "We're going to start Journey rehearsals next week," but they would inevitably get postponed. I started working on *Global Beat* full time, finishing the overdubs, starting to think about album covers, and all these things that I had put on the back burner. The positive effect was that I was happy not to be in a situation where I was not appreciated.

**RF:** How long did it take you to get to that point?

**SS:** Some of it was there from the beginning. Along with the grief, there's also relief that happens simultaneously. That didn't start to become a bigger part of it for maybe a month or more. Then I started looking at it differently, because I started seeing it as: Now is the time to be a captain of my own ship, rather than a passenger on somebody else's. Now is the time for me to really develop as an artist, rather than just a good musician.

**RF:** Although, you're also doing some varied work as a player.

**SS:** Yes, and I've really enjoyed it. I did a European tour with a guitarist by the name of Torsten deWinkle. That was with Tom Coster and Ernie Watts. The bass player

was Kai Ekhardt-Karpeh, and he was great. That was more in the vein of Vital Information or Steps Ahead. I also did records with T Lavitz, Jeff Richman, and Jeff Berlin, and a live recording with Players, which is a group with T Lavitz, Jeff Berlin, and Scott Henderson.

**RF:** How did the gig with Steps Ahead come about?

**SS:** I was doing a Sonor drum clinic tour and one of the clinics was with Lenny White. After the clinic, Lenny and I started talking about what we were both doing, and I told him that I was looking to do some jazz gigs. That's when he told me that Steps Ahead had just called him, but he couldn't do it because he had his own band together with Marcus Miller. So he was going to call and recommend me, which he did. That led to my being asked to join Steps Ahead. It was more than I ever dreamed of, as far as playing with good players goes. The band is Michael Brecker, Mike Mainieri, Mike Stern, and Victor Bailey, although Victor is going to be playing with Weather Update, so Daryl Jones will be the bass player for the summer. I went to New York, rehearsed for three days, and then went out and did four gigs. It feels great, and it's opening up all kinds of doors for me as far as my growing as a player is concerned. It's giving me the opportunity to develop to the highest degree of my potential. To play with musicians who are that good makes it an open-ended situation. I don't feel any restrictions; what is required of me is to play as much as I can possibly play. There is a rock influence in their music and, at the same time, the requirements of the gig are to be really strong, real sensitive, and to be able to improvise with the band. I've done all of those things before in jazz, but the level of musicianship is the highest I've ever experienced.

**RF:** How will this affect your work with Vital Information?

**SS:** I think it will give Vital Information more credibility, because I was fighting against the stigma of being the Journey drummer. It will also give me a lot more input as far as writing and direction, and also develop my musicality to a higher degree.

**RF:** Since practicing has always been important in your gigs, what things did you start practicing when you got this gig?

**SS:** I'm practicing just to develop an incredible amount of facility, because I need a lot more facility and vocabulary to deal with the gig.

**RF:** How does one practice facility?

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**SS:** The same way I've always practiced: focusing on what the gig requires, and then practicing jazz chops, funk, fusion, and all that stuff. The level of musicianship is so high that I'm just going to have to keep pushing myself. For example, I have a couple of places in the set where I just play with Brecker. One of them is a real fast jazz tempo, and the other one is a real fast rock fusion tempo. I can deal out everything I'm capable of playing and he just eats it up like it's nothing. So I have to work on surpassing everything I've ever done before in order to play with a musician of that caliber. Everyone in the group is at that level. It's challenging for me to push myself beyond my limits. I've always pushed myself to get into situations that are challenging, but this one is more than I ever imagined.

**RF:** What are your immediate plans for the future?

**SS:** Of course the Steps Ahead gig, and then to promote the *Global Beat* album, first with clinics and then with band touring. I'm studying piano so I can write more, and I'm spending a lot of time practicing. For the first time, I'm meeting a lot of the local jazz musicians in San Francisco, and I'm getting involved in the local jazz scene. I have the opportunity to get out and play now. It feels good to me not to be cloistered in a band and to be an active, working musician again.

**RF:** Being in a band of that nature can almost become a star syndrome, and it sets you apart from people.

**SS:** Yes, it does. It removed me from the musical community. Just the other day, I did a Charlie Brown TV show soundtrack. I was called at the last minute, and it felt great to do something like that. I met all these studio players in San Francisco. I didn't even know there was a studio scene here. I had a great time. I had never done anything like that—watching the screen and playing along.

**RF:** Were you nervous?

**SS:** Yes, I was. I didn't know what to expect. The whole thing was jazz brushes. There are a lot of things I'm thinking of doing now. I want to write a book, do a video, and develop the educational aspect more.

**RF:** Is it hard when you've been cloistered in a band to become "one of the people"?

**SS:** I experienced the feeling of being a so-called rock star for maybe the height of the success of Journey. Some of it probably came from me, but I think most of it came from how people treated me, more than how I treated other people. I was on the

road for most of ten years, but for the last two years, I've been home. I have a wife and two kids now. I started feeling very grounded and normal. Plus, living in a neighborhood where I see the neighbors every day made me feel very normal. Taking Ian to school and being one of the parents at school was good, and I lost that whole feeling of the rock 'n' roll world. I don't miss that kind of touring and the intense life-style. I'm looking forward to touring with my own band and Steps Ahead, and doing as many other creative projects as I can fit into my schedule. Music feels very fresh to me right now, and the future seems very exciting.

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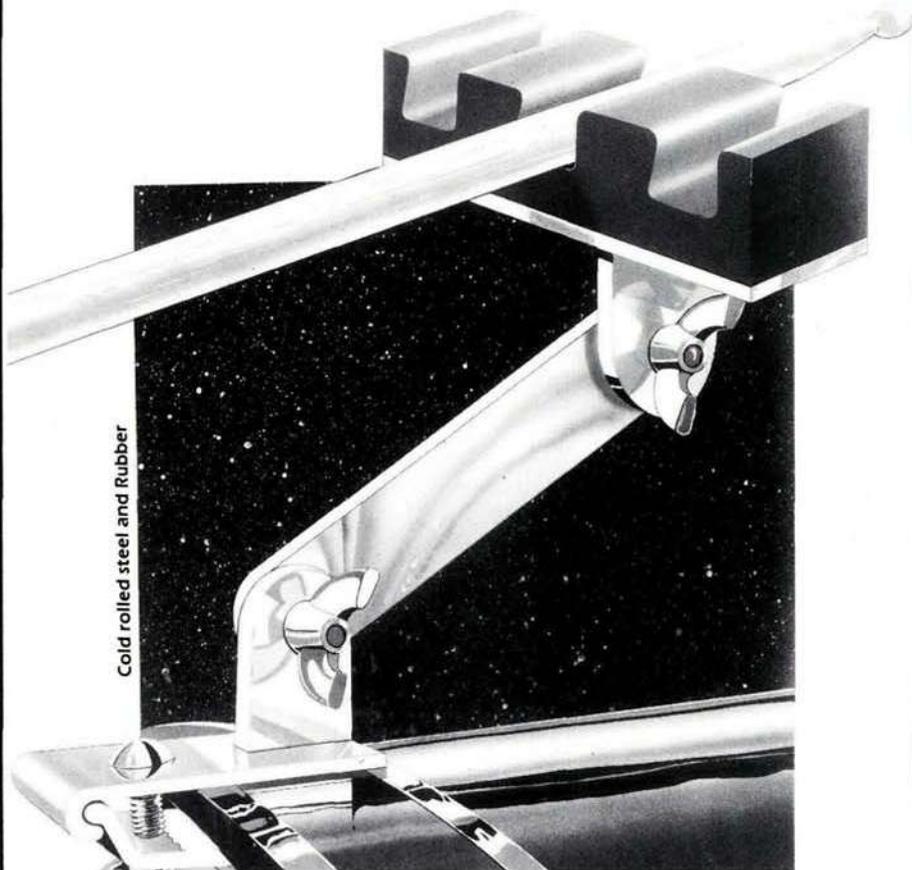
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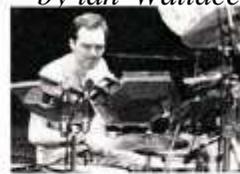
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by Ian Wallace

Photo by Lissa Wales



# Electronics On Tour

During the summer of '85, I was on the road with Don Henley. We had occasion to play at the Garden State Arts Center in New Jersey, and my friend, Rick Van Horn, came to see me play. The band had just finished soundcheck, and Rick and I were standing around backstage behind the drumkit, talking about drums—of course—and deliberately trying to avoid the meatless lasagna dish that was our alternative downstairs. Rick was examining my varied array of equipment, which, at the time, consisted of acoustic drums, Simmons electronic drums, a Linn drum machine, mixer, delay, reverb, monitors, etc. After asking me many questions about how everything worked (and my answering in my own down-home, yet sweetly sophisticated, way), Rick suggested that perhaps I could write a piece for *Modern Drummer* explaining my setup and how everything functioned. He thought this might help some young drummers out there who may be having a problem trying to combine electronic drums, acoustic drums, and drum machines into a cohesive whole. So kids, here goes!

## Setting Up The System

Anyone who has heard "Boys Of Summer"—and I assume most of you reading this article have, at least once—would probably know that the entire drum part is done by machine. Several of the other cuts on Henley's *Building The Perfect Beast* album are also the dreaded machine. (Swings, huh?) However, Don knew that, if he performed these numbers live with just machines and sequenced synthesizers, it would be very boring for the audience. So we decided to "give the drummer [me] some" by splitting the parts between my Yamaha acoustic drums, my Simmons SDS7 electronic drums, and the Linn drum machine. This presented several problems, not the least of which was my being able to hear everything comfortably on stage. To help accomplish this, I contacted Doug Buttleman, of the Yamaha electronics department, who kindly loaned me a 16-channel mixing board through which I isolated all the channels on the Linn, all the pads on the Simmons, and—to give us all the necessary reverb and delay effects on stage—a Yamaha *D1500* digital delay and an *R1000* reverb unit.

Each channel on the board had a separate out to the house mixer, so Buford Jones, our sound mixer, was able to put his own EQ and effects into the house mix.

The advantage of having my own EQ and effects is the ability to adjust the highs, mids, and lows in the monitors so that it sounds pleasant, or ballsy, but always good. EQ is very important in attaining the "right" sound—especially when you're playing along with echo effects—because it's important to hear what you are playing "to." Likewise, reverb is necessary to take away the "dry" sound of the Simmons and Linn, and to give them some ambience. (My system can apply to anyone playing in a club: If you have your own mixer and effects rack, you can mix your own sound and send a stereo or mono output to the house P.A., thereby cutting down on the number of channels needed on the house mixer and also ensuring that your sound is the way you want it!) So, the acoustic drums were put through the main monitors. (I usually have only kick, snare, and vocal in them.) Rounding this out, I had stereo wedges, (wedge-shaped floor monitors), the left putting out Don's vocal and my acoustic drums, and the right putting out the Simmons and Linn. (During rehearsals, I also used a compressor, two graphic equalizers, two power amps, and my own speaker cabinets, but with the full stage setup, this became unnecessary. I'm mentioning them anyway because they could be useful things to include in a club situation—assuming, of course, that the economics are viable.)

## Operating The System

Now we come to the problem of starting this whole mess in conjunction with the keyboard sequences. On the tour, we used three *Emulator 11s*, which are keyboards that digitally sample and then reproduce any kind of sounds (from a grand piano to breaking glass, to wind). These were especially important when it came to reproducing sounds that we could not create manually on stage, like the deep, manly voices on "Building The Perfect Beast," the cute, girly, French voices on "Driving With Your Eyes Closed," or the great horn section on "Sunset Grill." However, the problem with this is that all these parts have an exact time sequence, so everything has to be played to a "clock." (A "clock" is something that creates a common time for all the machines—sort of like a conductor in an orchestra . . . or a drummer!) We did this by using a Yamaha *QX1* sequencing machine to control everything that was MIDI (like the *Emulators* and

synthesizers), and a Garfield *Dr. Click* for the Linn (which was not MIDI). Once this was all set up, all we had to do was press a button, and everything started together.

The next thing I had to consider was how to count in the song, in time. One way would have been to put a count on the Linn, but I think it's better to have a human count, because that way, one has more control over the beginning of the song. I also think it is ever so ugly—soundwise—to hear a great clunking stick or hi-hat coming out of the monitors. It's also terribly anticlimactic. So what I did was use a Boss *Dr. Beat*, which is a small, inexpensive metronome that is battery-operated and puts out both a click and a flashing light. I would dial up the tempo of the song, watch the light for a few moments, get the "feel" and the time, and then count in the song. Scott Plunkett, our keyboard player, would then hit the footswitch to start everything and away we would go! (Paul Young's drummer told me that he does a similar thing to start sequenced songs, but uses a Casio watch that puts out a click, which he wears on his wrist.)

Incidentally, the *Dr. Beat* or an equivalent device can be very useful for starting non-sequenced songs, too. When you are in a band, some nights you may be feeling a bit speedy, while other nights you may feel slow. If you start the songs accordingly, you may find yourself getting complaints from the singer or whoever that "It was too fast," etc. Getting the tempo from the machine as a guide to the count-in can help you to start the song at the same speed each night and to get "in the pocket" every time.

Well, that about covers it. This year, I'm going out with Jackson Browne. Some of his new album is also sequenced, so I will be using a similar sort of setup, except now I'll have the E-mu Systems *SP-12*, a Simmons *MTM (MIDI Trigger Module)*, and a Yamaha *Rev7* (a most versatile reverb and delay machine).

I hope this article has helped some of you who may be having similar problems with machines and sequencers, and that you can modify these ideas if you're playing in small clubs. Whatever you do, when trying to cope with today's technology, I think the ultimate thing you have to work towards is getting the song to feel "human," and always to look for that all-important "pocket."



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# Oliver Jackson

There are some people who always sound like they're competing for the title of "world's noisiest drummer." Not Oliver Jackson. He's more inclined to draw you in with inventive, subtle playing than to force you back with bombast. Give Jackson a break where you'd expect most drummers to cut loose, and he's apt to surprise you—maybe patting the drumheads low and musically with his hands rather than his drumsticks, or doing a whimsical tap dance on the rims and cymbals with his sticks. He understands dynamics, the use of drama, and *effects*. He can get more different sounds out of a standard drumset than most young drummers would probably think possible. But he always has power in reserve. And when he's got you lulled—*bam!*—he'll break through with the energy he's kept under careful control.

"A lot of drummers," Jackson says—making it clear from his tone of voice that he is not "a lot of drummers"—*beat* their drums. They *beat* them!" (He sounds almost disgusted by the idea.) "That's like beating your old lady. The drums start screaming at you: 'Oh, you're beating me!' You always have to maintain a *touch*."

Jackson's been maintaining the touch for some 30-odd years. He's worked with many of the greats: Earl Hines, Charlie Shavers, Erroll Garner, Teddy Wilson, Oscar Peterson, Sy Oliver, Benny Goodman, Roy Eldridge, Dorothy Donnegan, Coleman Hawkins, Lionel Hampton. The list goes on. He's currently a member of George Wein's Newport Jazz Festival All-Stars. He's drummed on more than 300 albums, according to a discography prepared by European admirers. And he's equally comfortable in the drummer's chair of a big band or a small group.

If you ask most drummers to talk about their work, chances are they'll start with terms referring to rhythm and power. They'll talk about the beat they try to lay down, how the drummer is the timekeeper for the band, and how the drummer has to take charge of a band and drive it along. But if you ask Jackson to talk about his work, he'll tell you first off that he's striving for "a *melodious* sound—a sound that's compatible with whatever I'm playing with.

"My approach to playing the drums," Jackson explains, "is to play them like a piano would be played. I try to get harmonics with them—with their sounds. I have four things that I'm working with: my left hand, my right hand, my left foot, and my right foot. So really, I could play four-part harmony there.

"Sonny Greer set the pace when he played with the Duke Ellington Orchestra," Jackson says. "Sonny Greer's thing was to play drums as effects—not to keep time. It's like in a symphony orchestra: You have a conductor, and he or she keeps the time. The percussion section is just for effects. It's another voice—another section—like a woodwind section or a brass section. You play for effects—to get certain sounds. In jazz, people always say the drummer keeps time. But everybody is supposed to keep his or her *own* time."

Born April 28, 1933, in Detroit, Michigan, Jackson started taking drum lessons when he was 11. Why drums, as opposed to any other instrument? "The school system provided music classes. I didn't have any money to buy an instrument, so I started taking drum lessons because you only needed a practice pad to take the lessons," Jackson explains.

"I used to go to the Paradise Theater all the time, from the time I was nine years old on up. I saw all the big bands there and all the drummers that were playing. I saw Big Sid Catlett with Louis Armstrong; I saw Gene Krupa, Lionel Hampton, and Cozy Cole. I saw Jo Jones when he came through with the Basie Band, and I saw Andy Kirk's Band.

"I knew right away, after about a year of studying, that I wanted to become a professional musician. At that time, Detroit, where I grew up, was like a southern town up north. There was a lot of discrimination going on. By the time I was 12 years old, I realized that I could never be a fireman, a policeman, or even a garbage man, because at that time, black people weren't allowed to have those kinds of jobs. This was even before Jackie Robinson got into the baseball scene. So I said, 'The best thing for me to do is just to stick with music,' because I saw a way out of the situation that I was in through music. When I saw all the guys at the Paradise, I realized that there was a future for me in entertainment.

"I started working around Detroit, and playing for the singers and dancers on Hastings Street, which was a big entertainment street—every bar had a band in it. At 14, I was working at night and going to school during the day. Then I got a gig with Wardell Gray [the tenor saxophone player] at the Bluebird Inn. See, with so many musicians and so many jobs around, all the older cats had to take younger cats. I met Billy Mitchell and Elvin Jones. Lucky Thompson was there in Detroit, along with Doug Watkins, Barry Harris, Donald Byrd, Kenny Burrell, and Tommy Flana-

gan. We all grew up together around that time.

"By the time I was in high school, I was working at the Juana Club, playing shows. Everything was a show, then. Very seldom did you just get a gig, like playing in a jazz club. I found out then that you had to be a well-rounded musician in order to make a living. I not only played jazz, which was my preference, but I also had to be able to play for singers and dancers, and to know show business. Nowadays you can't see these things. There are no more cabarets, with tap dancers, shake dancers, jugglers, and comedians. But back then, you had to play for everything. So I got a well-rounded, basic playing experience there in Detroit at that time. I was very fortunate.

"One thing about playing shows is that you learn how to give of yourself. You're always putting your individual thing in it, but it takes a lot of cooperation and a lot of sacrifice to play for singers and dancers. That's because usually they're not expert musicians. So you have to bend and learn all the different tricks. For instance, when you're playing with tap dancers, you can't keep a strict tempo, because the dancers' tempos change according to the steps they're doing. They'll slow down when they're doing a buck-and-wing, but when they're freestyling, they'll speed back up to the regular tempo. And you have to watch, because you have to hit things and make accents. Then you take some singers: They sing way behind, but you still have to go straight ahead, because they'll make up the time, like the way Billy Eckstine or Sarah Vaughan sings. You think that they're out of meter, but it's just their style. Little tricks like this mean a lot," Jackson says.

Jackson adds that he received invaluable instruction while in high school from members of the Detroit Symphony, who taught part-time to supplement their incomes as musicians. He also had opportunities to attend symphonies with them.

While in high school, Jackson became friends with another aspiring drummer by the name of Eddie Locke. They both went on to Wayne State College (today Wayne State University). Around 1952 or '53, they worked up a two-drummer vaudeville act. They figured that, by presenting themselves as all-around entertainers and not just drummers, they'd have a better chance of making it in the business. Drummer Cozy Cole—then touring with Louis Armstrong's All-Stars—gave them pointers as they rehearsed their act.

Billed as "Bop and Locke—Versatile Percussionists" (Jackson became "Bop" for the time being), they sang, danced, and

by Chip Deffaa

drummed in clubs, resort hotels, and theaters in the U.S. and Canada for several years. In between those bookings, the two men accepted whatever gigs they could find separately as jazz drummers. Jackson became a member of Yusef Lateef's band for a couple of years, recording a number of albums with him.

Jackson and Locke moved to New York permanently in 1956. Bookings for their act were running out, so they decided to see if they could make it just as drummers. The legendary Papa Jo Jones was the one who recognized their abilities as drummers right away.

"Eddie and I were staying at the Alvin Hotel, and we ran out of money; we couldn't pay the rent. This was about 1956. So Jo Jones let us come and stay with him. We lived with Jo for about three years, and during those three years, Jo turned me on to a lot of gigs," Jackson notes.

"I got a job in the Metropole, subbing for Zutty Singleton. That was about 1957, and back then, a lot of people worked in the Metropole. Everybody came. I met Gene Krupa there. Gene was instrumental in my getting with the Slingerland Drum Company in 1958. He recommended me to the company, and I've been with them ever since. So I got a chance to meet and play with all these different types of people. I worked at the Metropole for a couple of years, and I also started working over at the Embers with Teddy Wilson. I still work with Teddy a bit."

From there, Jackson moved on to steady work with trumpeter Charlie Shavers' Quartet (1959-61), Benny Goodman's big band (1962, plus subsequent gigs with Goodman's small groups), Lionel Hampton's big band (1962-64, plus subsequent gigs with Hampton's big band or small groups continuing to the present), Earl Hines' Quartet (1965-70, with occasional larger groups or big bands formed by Hines during that period for specific engagements), and Sy Oliver's nine-piece band in the mid-'70s. He's primarily been free-lancing since then.

These days, touring keeps Jackson away from his New York apartment the better part of the year. He gets to Europe two or more times a year, leading his own groups about half of the time. Throughout his career, he adds, he's never stopped trying to learn new things—whether concerning drumming per se, music arranging, or music theory. Studying music, he stresses, goes on for a lifetime. There are always books you can read and other musicians you can glean things from.



Photo by Chip Deffaa

Jackson notes that he learned a great deal in the three years he lived with Jo Jones. "He was a fabulous percussionist. He knew all the tricks," Jackson says. "All we did was play drums. . . . He'd show me something one time, and it might take me a year to learn how to do it."

According to Jackson, Papa Jo taught him that he shouldn't try to use the same drumset when playing for both small and big bands. And that leads into a discussion of Jackson's equipment. Jackson notes, "I have three sets of drums. When I'm playing with different groups, I keep the same accessories; I just change the size of the drums. I'll use an 18" bass drum, a 20" bass drum, or a 22" bass drum, depending on what I'm doing. When I'm playing with a large orchestra or big band, I'll use a 22" or 24" bass drum, a 16" floor tom, and a 9x13 tom-tom. That gives me a bigger sound.

"The bass drum is the heart of everything. There's no way you can sit up in a big band or a large orchestra—I don't care how much electricity they put on it—and play with an 18" or 20" bass drum, because they won't be able to *feel* you. I don't mean that they won't hear you, but they have to be able to *feel* you.

"Sometimes what I'll do is put a timpani head on the batter side of my bass drum, and you can hear that for 30 miles. It gives the drum a round sound. And I don't use any mufflers. When you start muffling something, it's like putting cotton in the mouth of someone who is speaking: You're going to hear another kind of speech. So I never use mufflers in my drums; I play them wide open. But then, you always have to maintain a touch, because that way, you can play *from pianissimo* up to triple *forte*, and still *play* the drums and not *beat* them. If you play the drums wide open, it takes a lot of technique and a lot of control, because you can sound either too loud or too soft.

When it comes to cymbals, Jackson says, "I use A Zildjian cymbals. I've got a 22" ride and a 20" ride, a 20" Chinese sizzle, 15" and 16" crash cymbals, and 15" sock cymbals."

For years, Jackson used calf heads exclusively. "It was a hell of a transition for me, going from calf heads to plastic heads. But I just had to concede to it. Now, I use the standard heads, so I had to find another way—a different style of tuning and what-have-you—and adjust to the drums. You see, the drums are not going to adjust to you. They're going to sound different every night. Just like you're different every day, your instrument is going to be different every day, too. You can never get your instrument to sound the same. The environment changes, you know. If you take a set of drums overseas, and you put them down in that hold and they get cold and everything, they feel the same way you feel. They have jet lag, too."

"Usually after I get a set of drums, I tune them once or twice, and then I let them adjust to themselves. You know, if it gets kind of ridiculous, then I'll give them a couple more tunings. But I just try to play the drums the way they are. You know, if you're going to tune your bass drum to a low G, like some people want to do . . . to me, that makes it difficult. What I do is just take the drums out and play them. Then I make the adjustment."

When asked for any parting advice he can offer to aspiring drummers, Jackson reflects for a moment and then says, "Study the piano, and study the theory of music, which takes in harmony and composition. It makes a better drummer out of you, because at least, then you know where you're going. I think it makes you more sensitive. And I think it helps you to get a little more enjoyment out of playing. I think the most important thing for a drummer is to be a *musician*."



Photo by Larry Giasi

*Franco continued from page 25*

that got you into that?

JF: Ginger Baker. The first time that I heard "Toad," I thought he was playing a roll between his floor tom and right foot. So I practiced that, and I had this great double-bass roll there between the floor tom and my right foot. Then I saw a picture of the band, and he had two bass drums. I said, "Wow, two bass drums." I never knew anyone played two bass drums. When I heard what he was doing, it was like, "Oh boy, I want to do that."

Then, at that time, everyone started adding a second bass drum. I'm talking about guys like Clive Bunker—the original Jethro Tull drummer—Mitch Mitchell, Carmine—guys like that were all single-bass players. You'd see them a couple of months later, and they all had a double kit. That's when the double-bass thing started happening—the late '60s. I mean, sure Bellson started the thing, but drummers like myself didn't know who Louie Bellson was. To me, the whole thing that started it

was the rock drummers, and I think that's obviously when it became popular—with the rock thing. So I guess my setup grew as the setups of the people I was influenced by grew. The first time I saw Mahavishnu, Cobham had single bass. So I guess seeing everyone going to double bass kind of got me thinking about it.

Conceptually, everyone more or less started playing double bass the same way. What they would do was just keep time on their left bass drum and work around that. That's why a lot of drummers were leading with their left foot. That's what I did. I was just playing time with my left foot, and playing these lightning-fast rolls with my feet and playing everything under the sun on top of it with my hands, and sounding like three drummers. When people would say, "Wow, great double-bass chops," I'd think to myself, "It's kind of hard to take that compliment. I'm not doing anything. I'm just rolling with my feet." Sure I built independence to where my feet were on cruise control, but still I didn't feel like I was contributing anything special to the double-bass thing, because I was doing exactly what Baker and Carmine and all those cats were doing.

The first cat that opened me up to actually doing some different things was Steve Smith, who was probably one of my biggest influences as far as the double-bass thing went. That's strange to say, because

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the last couple of times I saw Steve, he was jazzing out and not even playing two bass drums. The Rats used to open for Journey, and Steve and I got to be pretty good buddies. We would talk about things like "Well yeah, I lead with my left foot, and it's weird when I want to do things like trade fours I want to go right, left, right, left. That seems natural, but I am so used to playing 8th notes with my left foot that I have to play left, right, left, right." Steve was saying, "Hey man, same thing. I started to lead with my left foot. I had to turn it around and put it on my right foot." He was the first guy who got me thinking like that.

Now, I didn't just start playing that way, because when you have to go up there and solo your ass off night after night, it's not the time to say, "I think I'll change my style." I remember Steve telling me about that and telling me what he was doing. It wasn't until years later that I finally had some free time to start developing it. I started getting into my whole concept with the rolls leading with my right foot and then taking notes out. You don't have to have a lot of notes in there. You've seen the things I do at my clinic where I'll just throw one note in with my left foot and make all the difference. On the new Fiona album, I played a figure with the bass drums, and it involved maybe using my left foot for just one note. So I had this nice little riff. The producer jumped up and down, and said, "Wow, now I'm a double-bass fan again." If you bring a double bass into the studio, the producer thinks you're doing a solo. It's not a drum solo. We're playing music here.

My whole idea about double-bass drumming is that you should have a system of playing. The thing about having a systematic way of doing things is that, when you need to apply it in a spontaneous situation, you don't have to think about it; you have an idea and you play it. If you have a system, whether it be for sticking or for bass drums, your ideas are going to flow quickly and you're going to be a smooth player. It's as simple as that. It's kind of like a method to the madness. I do want to mention Steve Smith again, because he really got me into thinking about alternatives with double-bass playing. He's a fine drummer, and as far as double bass goes, he's one of the best.

**WFM:** I want to get back to some of the historical things. How long were you with the Good Rats?

**JF:** Almost ten years. I joined the band in '72, and I left the band in '82.

**WFM:** You recorded six albums with the Good Rats. When you went into the studio, I imagine that the material was well rehearsed.

**JF:** Yeah, sometimes too well rehearsed. The Good Rats, because of our inability to conform with what everybody wanted, never had a record label for more than one

record. I think we did six albums on six labels. That kind of ruins the momentum. Sometimes we would be sitting around with some tunes, and we'd be ready to record them, but there wasn't a record deal happening. So near the end, when we were very big, we just said, "Who cares? Let's just record and put it on our own label. Our fans don't care what it says on that piece of plastic." After a while, we were able to call our own shots. Once we developed the kind of following that we did, we said, "Fine. They don't want to put us out. Nobody wants to put money into putting us across the country." For the last three years, we just stayed in the Northeast. It had something to do with it finally burning out, too, because you can only do that for so long.

**WFM:** Why didn't it ever pick up? Was the music too complex?

**JF:** No, it was because of the politics involved with not having a label supporting you. You don't pick up when you're throwing out records on your own label. One time we had a follow-up album, and we were ready to break. That's when we had an album that Flo & Eddie produced called *Rats To Riches*. We were gigantic. We sold out the Palladium two days in a row. I'm talking about the New York area. We were ready to break. We went to England, did this big tour with Meat Loaf over there, and did this new record at the Who's studio. We released a single, and it was all over the radio. What happens? The week that that record was released, Arista dropped Passport, which was the label we were on. We were without a label one week after the record came out and was getting tons of air play. You might say that we had some real hard luck, but man, the last thing I would do would be to cry about our hard luck. I have a lot to be thankful for. Those ten years got me out there, got me recognition, and got me where I am today, in that I built a reputation for myself in New York and stayed busy all the time on that reputation. Those were the seeds. The Good Rats were a great ten years.

**WFM:** What finally brought the band to an end?

**JF:** Obviously, when you're playing with the same guys for ten years and it is starting to go a little downhill, it gets a little stale. What made it even worse was that we were without a label. So we felt like we couldn't be creative. A band has to make a record once a year or every 18 months or so. You have to put it out and then turn the page. You have to do that just to stay fresh. We weren't doing that.

What made it worse was that the club scene started getting really bad. There's *no* club scene today, but the beginning of that started like five years ago. It started going downhill.

When I was with the Good Rats, I always had offers for other bands. I said to myself in the summer of '82, "Next thing



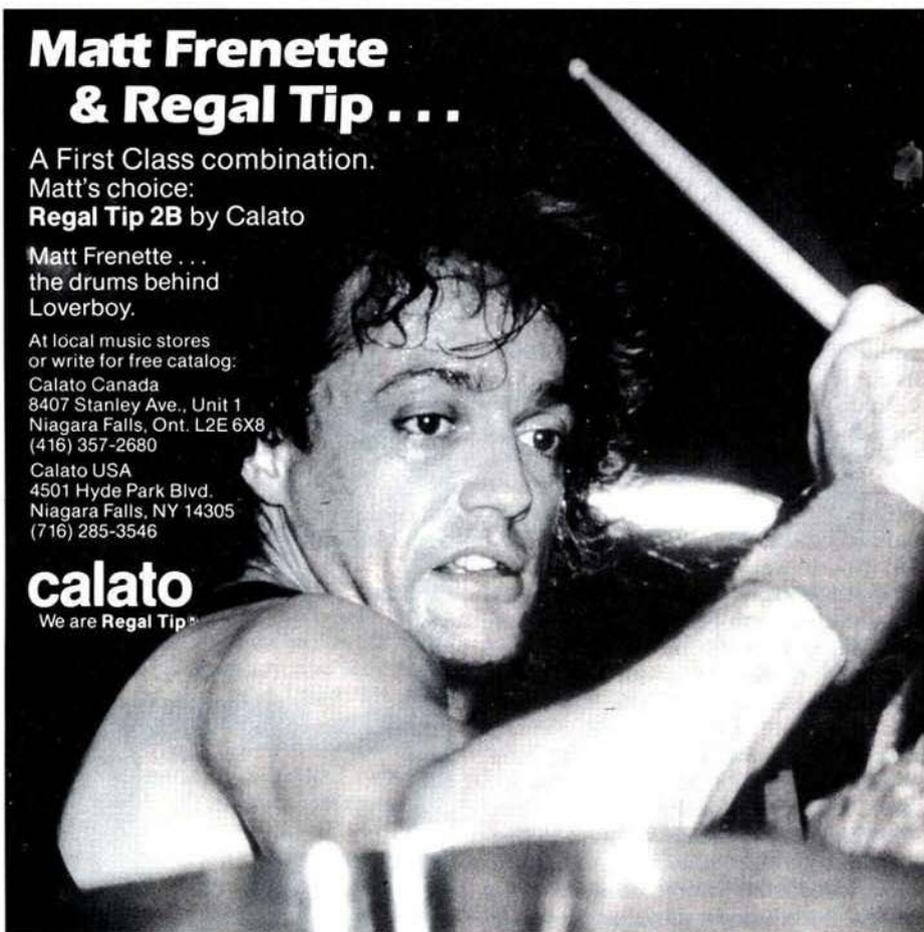
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that comes along, I've got to leave." I got a call from the president of RCA records. He was a real fan of the Rats, and he wanted to sign the Rats at one time. He said, "Joe, I've got a great situation for you—Chilliwick." Now, at that time, I had no idea of who Chilliwick was. I didn't realize, and you probably don't either, that they're gigantic in Canada—ten albums at the time I joined. Anyway, I had lunch with him, and he played the new Chilliwick album for me. I was floored. Chilliwick was a super band. So a combination of really liking the music, the musicianship in Chilliwick, and needing a change led me to that.

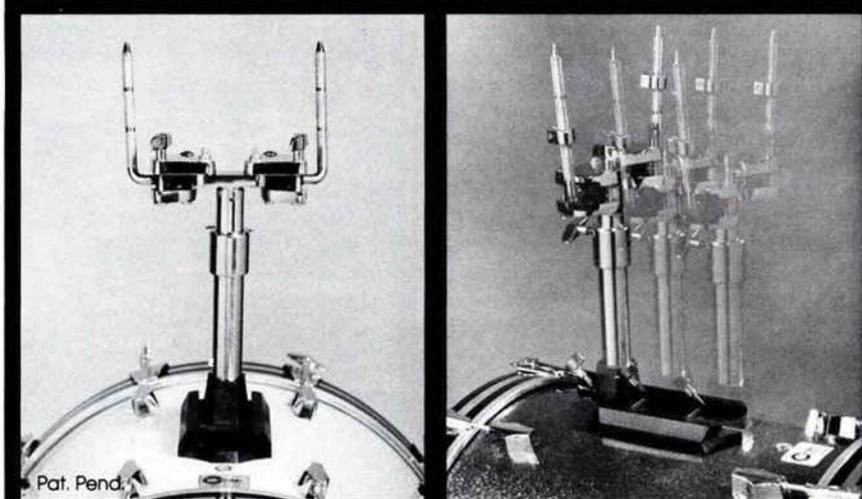
**WFM:** Stylistically, what were the differences between the Good Rats and Chilliwick?

**JF:** Chilliwick was a very four-on-the-floor kind of groove band. They wanted a rock drummer who could really groove, but could do the circus drum solo as well. They hired me for that reason. It was a real learning experience for me, because I was dealing with a very unique situation. Brian McCloud, who is the lead guitarist in the band, plays all the drum parts when the band records. He doesn't play drums on stage. He's a great guitar player, and I think he's just as good a drummer. I'm not talking chops or fancy licks, but a great groove. I really made myself play with his kind of attitude, because it really fit the music, and I loved it. I loved the way that this cat played drums. I really learned how to lay it down a lot fatter when I played with Chilliwick.

**WFM:** How long did that whole thing last?

**JF:** It lasted for one big arena tour. They wanted me to keep touring but not record. I wanted to be in a situation where I was more than just a sideman. I came back to New York and put a band together. We spent a good six months practicing and never got anything together. I did have a lot of free time. That's when I said, "Well, I was approached about three years ago to do a drum book by a publishing company. I haven't done it because I haven't had the time. This is a great time." I did the book, and then just simply said one day while watching MTV, "Hey man, I'll do my own video. It's definitely the video age. I'll pursue that." That was a year of my life that I couldn't have done if I had been on the road. I worked on different drumming concepts. I started writing. I started teaching, and I said to myself, "Okay, progress. I'm going to do this drum book."

Let me tell you, probably the highlight of my career was when Zildjian asked me to do a clinic at Berklee. I went up there, and I was a little early. I said, "Gee, do you have a place where I can warm up?" I went in a room that I could warm up in, and I saw my book up on a music stand with this double-bass kit. I found out that they use my book up at Berklee, and to me, that's *it*. To me, that's not like I lucked out and



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got asked to join this band, and I got asked to do this or that. That book was my sweat. That meant more to me than anything. When I perform at things like clinics and the PAS convention, and drummers who I admire come up to me and say, "Hey, you did a real good job on that book," man, that's the best feeling in the world. Nothing can top that.

**WFM:** Talking about the book, how long did it take you to put it together?

**JF:** Believe it or not, the better part of a year. I wanted to write a book because I thought there really needed to be a book about what I had to say. So many people were into the double-bass thing, but there weren't any practical books about playing the double bass. Any materials that were available went from doing a single-stroke roll, which was not enough, to playing paradiddles with your feet, which I thought was too much.

**WFM:** It's from one extreme to the other. Did you have any difficulties putting the book together?

**JF:** Yeah, because when you write a book, even after you get the concept, you have to figure out what to leave in and what to take out. I delivered 150 pages to the publisher, who said, "Joe, most drum books are 40 pages." So I cut it up, and I ended up taking the concepts that I had cut and including them in the video.

**WFM:** How did it progress into a video?

**JF:** Axis Video came to me, and they had some nice credentials. I liked the job they did with Bill Bruford and Max Roach. I had in mind doing one on my own, but I knew that if these people were going to do it, it would come out. If I was going to do it, it would take forever. It was taped in my basement. You'd never know from looking at it that that video was filmed right here, and the taping was completed in two days. It was very hard to do in two days, believe me, because I was more into making the playing things and the educational things really cool. I found myself with about a half hour at 4:00 in the morning to do the wraps to tie it all together. So I just took a shower, drank a pot of coffee, and went down there to do the wraps, which I thought came out a little stiff, but educationally I'm very happy. There's not a ton of personality projected, but it's very hard to do that when you're not used to working with a camera and when you have a half hour to tie the whole lesson together. I saw the editing job, and I was very happy with it.

**WFM:** Your playing on the video was very accurate. Were there a lot of takes involved?

**JF:** Not very many. The frustrating part of doing takes was this: I'd do a great take, and they'd screw the camera thing up. So it was a little frustrating when it came to that. Then, they put up these curtains that absorbed some of the sounds, and it made it hard for me to hear. Plus, we did it in

May, which sounds pretty comfortable, but it happened to be record-breaking temperature. I had this great idea. Everything would be in black and I'd be in black, but I'd have these white shoes so the viewers would see my bass drums. Do you know how hot it was? We had white lights with black velvet wrapped around me. It was painful, but it all turned out well, I think.

**WFM:** How did your current gig with Fiona come about?

**JF:** Twisted Sister's A.J. Pero called me and said, "Joe, there's this singer up at Atlantic that they're really excited about, but they've just been through two producers and none of them did the job. They

feel that they need someone who can write something for her. What's Peppi doing?" Peppi was the songwriter of the Good Rats. I said, "Hey, that's a good idea—Peppi." So one thing led to another, and a week or two later, Peppi called me: "Joe, thanks a lot. These people at Atlantic want me to take her into the studio." So, Peppi had me play on her demo. A week later, she was signed with Peppi producing her. I was asked to be the drummer on the record. That's the roots of the Fiona thing.

**WFM:** Do you think your playing style had to change to fit with her?

**JF:** No. We just went in and rocked out for three days. That was the record. It was not

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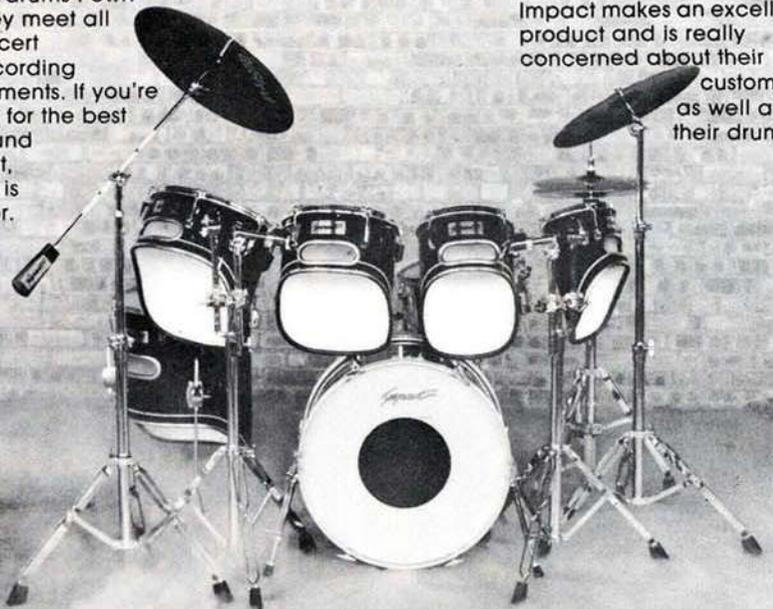
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a very high-budget record. Atlantic didn't put a lot of money into it. They saw the band a month later and said, "Wow, let's do another one and do it for real."

**WFM:** You guys did tour, and were out on the road opening for acts, playing in these huge arenas—20,000 people—and then I saw you headline at the Ritz, which was a bit smaller, playing for a few hundred. What kind of problems are there switching from being an opening act to being a headliner?

**JF:** Sometimes you don't get a soundcheck when you're an opening act. When you're a headliner, you not only get a soundcheck, but you get to jam and have fun. I

really enjoy the aspect of being the headliner—doing the soundcheck and jamming for a while in the afternoon, just really feeling loose and feeling comfortable, and being able to stretch out a little bit in the show. That's the only difference. It could be a big difference, but if you're doing something like the Bryan Adams tour, who we opened for, after the first couple of nights, it's like clockwork. You're dealing with a bunch of pros, and you can go up there without a soundcheck and still be comfortable. It's not a big difference.

**WFM:** How was the sound for you, playing both smaller and larger places?

**JF:** The sound is as good as the monitors

are. If you're dealing with professional people on the sound-reinforcement level, and you're dealing with someone who knows what you need in your monitors, it makes no difference if you're playing for 1,000 or 20,000.

**WFM:** Let's talk a little bit about your equipment.

**JF:** The drums are Premier, and for the last eight years, they have been. The Good Rats were so big in the Northeast that I got every product endorsement that I ever wanted. Premier has been very supportive of me. I have experimented with a bunch of different kits. Right now, I'm into the power, extra depth thing. My setup includes two 16x24 bass drums. Those extra two inches are dynamite. I just got into the power bass drums a year or so ago. I really like that a lot. The tom-toms are 13", 14", 15", 16", and 18". I like the fatter drums, and they're all wood. They're Premier Resonator bass drums and Premier Soundwave tom-toms.

The hardware's obviously Collarlock like all your readers know from the *Ask A Pro*. The Collarlock thing came about at a Chilliwack rehearsal, when I was up there with my mega drumset with a zillion floor stands and a zillion mic' stands. A guy said, "Look, I've been doing this thing that you might like." Everything went on three stands: one in the middle of the two bass drums, one on the left, and one on the right—all my miking, all my tom-toms, all my cymbal stands. As for the snare drums, my main snare drum is a 6 1/2X14 *Black Shadow* model.

**WFM:** For double-bass drumming, how tight do you recommend the pedal tensioning be set?

**JF:** Pedal tension is very loose. The heads are very loose. The pedal tension and the bass drum heads are very loose, because the sound is thicker. The beater stays on the drum longer. Yes, they are hard to play that way. [laughs]

**WFM:** When you want to play a single-bass pattern and you want to play doubles, isn't that more difficult?

**JF:** You get used to it. When the head is floppy, you get a thicker sound. It records better. I don't really tune my bass drums any differently in the studio than I do live. I play hard. When the drumheads are loose and you hit them hard, the sound is going to be longer. For my taste, that's what I want to do. I like to hear really fat drum sounds, whether it's live or in the studio.

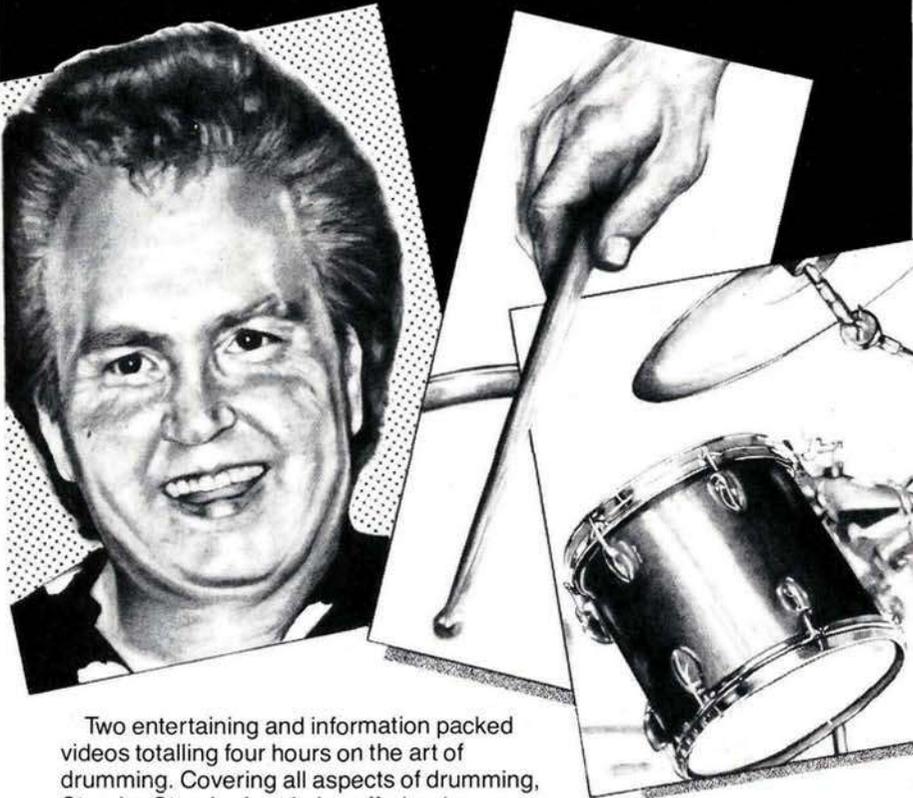
**WFM:** You've been associated with Zildjian for a long time.

**JF:** Yes, even longer than I have with Premier. I feel like Lenny DiMuzio is my uncle. It's that kind of thing with Lenny. He's such a warm guy that he makes you feel like family. As far as my cymbals go, I have a lot of great new things. They said, "Hey, we have to get you up to date," and they gave me all this new stuff. I have the 20" Z series power ride that I'm using. I

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was using a 24". I had the misconception that a bigger cymbal would mean a bigger bell, and I play a lot of bell. The bell on the 20" ride is big, and it cuts. I'm using a Z ride and I'm using *Platinum* crashes, which are basically A Zildjian crashes, but they visually match the drums better, and I'm using *K China Boys*, which are killers—nice, dark, stop-right-away kind of Chinas—17" and a 19". I'm using a 22" pang right at the end. The hi-hats I'm using are a *New Beat* top with an *Impulse* bottom, which is a very hip combination. I have every hi-hat Zildjian makes, and before we recorded the Fiona record, I went through these hi-hats and came up with that combination. It's a killer, because it's really quick. I have the new *Dyno Beat* hi-hats in the closed position on my right-hand side, next to my ride cymbal. I've got all my different ride sources—cowbell, ride cymbal, bell, closed hat—all in the same area.

**WFM:** Your involvement in electronics seems to be growing.

**JF:** Well, recently, yes. I think that the whole electronic percussion thing was real limited, but now sampling has opened it up. I'm a sampling fool. Fortunately, I was hired to do samples for a Hohner drum machine last year, and they were kind enough to give me all of those samples back. I spent two days in the studio sampling everything I had—every drum, cymbal, percussive toy. We did things that were not typical for drum machines, like buzz rolls and things like that. Now it's getting very computer oriented, and obviously I'm not at all intimidated by computers. MIDI is such a simple language. It's like eight instructions. It's very easy to understand if you have some kind of computer background. So I'm very into the new technology, and I'm able to do more. I do sessions now with drum machines, where all the sounds are my own. I feel good about that.

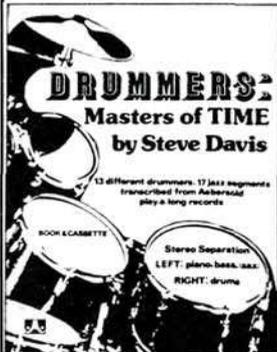
Right now, I'm using Emulator's *SP12*, and I've got my computer disc drives and I've got my sounds on floppy discs. What I intend to do with the Fiona tour is sample the stuff that's on tape and reproduce it live. It's all my own sounds, and I'll trigger those sounds with my acoustic set. It will just reinforce my sound and make it sound more like the record.

**WFM:** Is it hard to stay excited about the music business after so many years?

**JF:** I'm obviously committed to what I do. I'm lucky. I actually get paid to do something I love. Plus, they're paying for the new toys. [laughs] You know what it's like, being a kid and dreaming about what you want to be when you grow up. I went through my fantasy life of being a ball player. Then I saw Ringo, and that was a fantasy. That was *not* what I was going to do. That was a fantasy. That's not real life. But now I'm living the fantasy. That's really where it's at.



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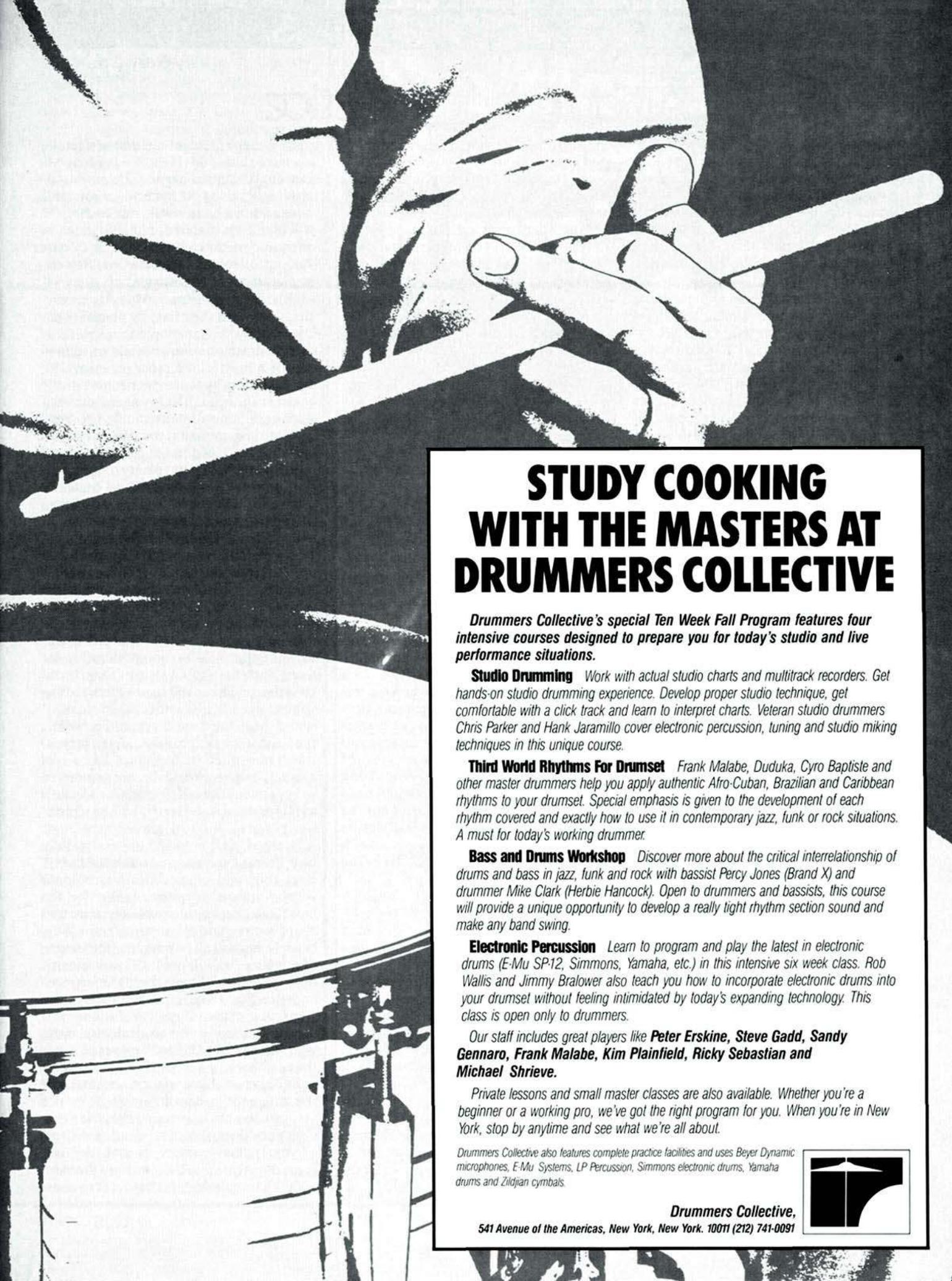
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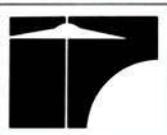
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# Apartment Practice

There is a particular experience that you, as a drummer, may go through that will have an important effect on the future of your musical development. It's not when you pick your first teacher, join a band, or get that first "break." It's something even more basic, and it may determine whether or not you will continue playing. It's called "moving out."

The first move away from home is most often to an apartment or similar dwelling. Unfortunately, apartments are not the best places for drum practice. It might even appear to you that, if you are an apartment-bound percussionist, you will be forced either to give up all thoughts of practicing at home (with the possible exception of a few taps on pillows or pads) or face neighbors clamoring for your eviction.

Don't despair, because it *is* possible for an apartment dweller to play at home on a real drumkit. Providing you are willing to modify your drums and your practice environment, use a little savvy in selecting a place to live, and communicate effectively with fellow tenants, home practice can become a reality. While the following suggestions are aimed at drummers who are planning to live in apartments, they are also valuable to those currently living in condominiums, dormitories, or other close-proximity housing.

As a drummer, you have to look for special features when searching for living quarters. You will want a room for practice that is separated from your fellow tenants' apartments by other rooms or structures. Those that are in the corners of buildings and not adjoining other apartments are the best. An upstairs apartment is usually not a good idea, since people are inclined to be sensitive to sounds above them. However, a room that sits over parking spaces or other unoccupied areas may be ideal. Keep in mind the layout of the entire building, and consider what areas will be closest to the practice room.

Avoid apartments with wood floors. Not only will there be ringy acoustics, but bass drum vibrations are more likely to be transmitted if you're upstairs. Thick shag carpeting will help absorb the sound coming from the set. Also, give the walls a few thumps to determine the strength of their composition. The thicker the walls, the better.

When looking over an apartment and considering the possibilities for practice, try this experiment: Stand quietly in the room you would practice in, with the doors and windows closed, and just listen. The

amount of sound coming *into* a room is a good indication of how much sound will go *out*. If you can easily hear outside traffic and noises from other apartments, you may want to consider a different place.

Many apartments offer storage rooms for tenants' use. If you find one that does, check to see if it is large enough to use for practicing. Use the above criteria to see if practicing there will be a problem. It probably won't, since these rooms are often set apart from the main buildings. Examine the locks to make sure there will be adequate security for your drums, and note whether there is enough ventilation for the summer months. If all these check out, you may have found an excellent place in which to practice.

A final thing to consider when apartment-hunting is the environment. Is the building inhabited by mostly older or younger tenants? What is the present noise level at the apartments? Are people casual about the volume of radios? In short, would your presence as a drummer, should occasional sound leak out, cause undue problems in the neighborhood? Do you feel that you could fit in?

Once you've found the apartment, the next thing to consider is what changes you should make to the room. One possibility is to pad the walls with carpeting to deaden sound, similar to what's done in a recording studio. Many rental agreements prohibit large-scale modifications, so carpeting the walls and ceiling using a staple gun is out. A better idea is to buy a number of inexpensive decorative rugs and hang them, interspersed, using the smallest nails possible. While the walls will not be entirely covered, plenty of sound will be deadened and there will be less chance of a landlord going into shock should he or she visit.

Another idea is the construction of a sound booth that will enclose the set on three sides. Similar devices are often used in live performances to prevent the drums from leaking into other instruments' mic's and to control volume. Three 4'x4' sheets of 1/2" plywood covered with a layer of foam and carpeting and fitted together with hinges will be very effective.

The drums themselves can also be changed to bring down the sound level. The idea here is to take conventional muffling techniques a step further. This means removing the bottom heads from the tomtoms and applying some sort of deadening. A strip of foam taped to the head should suffice. While this may be quite different from your usual tuning, the feel and famil-

arity is much greater than that of a pad or electronic kit. If this is still too loud, or you just don't want to hassle with putting on heads and taking off foam when you go to a gig, an old bath towel over each drum will muffle most sound, but still allow for adequate stick response and a certain amount of tonality. Similar muffling can be placed on the snare drum.

The bass drum is easy. Many drummers already deaden their bass by placing a pillow in it. Adding a couple more will further cut down on volume, while still allowing for a live feel. Another problem with the bass drum is the impact sound of the beater to the head. The key again is to consider how you normally muffle the bass. Two or three moleskin patches or even an old wash rag taped to the batter head will result in little sound but plenty of rebound. Putting an old sock over a hard beater or using a soft felt one instead will also help.

Bringing down the volume of the hi-hat and cymbals is the most difficult problem. The "ring" of a cymbal is what makes it a unique instrument. A technique that works surprisingly well with a ride cymbal is to take four or five clothespins and glue a small strip of felt to the teeth. These can then be clipped along the edge of the cymbal and will still allow enough vibration for a very authentic feel. A strip of foam taped onto the top hi-hat will remove most of the volume but still allow for a solid "chick" sound. Muffling a crash cymbal, however, is an either/or proposition. If you tape it, it will not sound or feel much like a real cymbal, but there will be no volume to worry about. The other option is to leave it as it is and see if the sound will be a problem.

Granted, a kit modified in this way may be different from the set you usually play. Buzz rolls and other delicate techniques will be difficult to practice. But for the most part, technical exercises, four-way coordination, and playing with records via headphones will all be possible. The degree of muffling you will need will vary according to the setup of your specific apartment and practice room. But ultimately, the steps you take to reduce volume will depend on how well you deal with those who will be most affected by your playing: the neighbors.

Effective neighbor relations can make all the difference in deciding whether or not you will be able to practice at home. You need open lines of communication with all of your fellow tenants, so that they will come directly to you if they have a problem with the sound level. If they have to com-

plain to the manager or landlord, you run the risk of being asked to cease all practicing completely.

The best advice regarding getting along with fellow tenants is this: Know thy neighbor. In some apartment complexes it is possible to live for months without seeing who lives next door. If you want to be sure that your practicing is not disturbing your neighbors, you should get to know them *before* you start. Don't do any noisy practicing until you have had an opportunity to speak to all the tenants in the apartments near yours. If you're on the lookout, you'll probably find that you'll be bumping into them regularly in the parking lot, laundry room, etc.

At this point, however, you don't want to cause a panic by saying something like, "Hey, by the way, I'm a drummer, and I'm going to be playing quite a bit." Instead, after getting to know your neighbors, you can casually mention that you are a musician, and that you will be practicing from time to time and would like to know right away if it ever disturbs them. Should they ask about your instrument, be truthful, but assure them that you want to make every effort to avoid noise problems. Offer to run a test session to find out if they will hear you. If they feel that it may be bothersome, volunteer to work out a schedule of practice when the sound is least likely to be a problem (such as when they are at work, shopping, etc.). This will prove to your neighbors that you are a conscientious member of their community who happens to play a musical instrument and would love to be cooperative. Your approach should be mildly assertive but understanding. You are going to practice, but you wouldn't dream of letting it bother anyone.

You must remember that, in consulting with your neighbors about your practice habits, you will have called attention to yourself. Accordingly, you will have to be more of a model citizen than anyone else. The erroneous—but nonetheless still popular—image of musicians being noisy, devil-may-care louts will have your neighborhood evaluating you with a more critical eye and ear. You can afford no high-volume music, practice at odd hours, disruptive parties, or rowdy band members to wreck your carefully laid plans.

Making these arrangements for apartment practice will require plenty of extra effort. But it would take much more trouble on your part if you had to take your kit elsewhere every time you needed to play. So while a move to an apartment may have you thinking that your drumming technique will suffer, you are likely to find that, not only are you able to adapt to the situation and still progress as a musician, but you will become more aware of—and respected by—those around you.



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Charlap continued from page 27

movie date, he or she might be giving up a jingle date. And New York City is a jingle town.

"I once did a Coleco ad and got paid for it for 14 years. But the money the singers bring in makes everybody else look like pikers. There are maybe only ten or 12 top jingle singers in town, and they are up to about a half million per year in income. There was a group of five or six singers who did the Nabisco logo: [sings] 'Na-bis-co!' The company *bought them out* for \$150,000!"

Although the longevity of certain residuals can cultivate a comfy financial cushion, the career stability for commercial musicians is often short-lived. "A commercial player has got about five years," Emile claims, "and then that person is gone. That's because there is always someone new in town. Dave Weckl has displaced a lot of drummers, for instance. Dave is the heir apparent. He will be *the* drummer in town if he keeps it up. But the daddy in town is Steve Gadd. I don't know if it's how he hits the drums; he just does it differently. He's what he is: 'the greatest drummer'—right? But the point is that you can hire Gadd for a country date or anything; he is unbelievable. But for most players, after five years, they wind up in a Broadway pit. I don't mean five years if they start at age 18; I mean when they make it commercially.

"There are about ten drummers who run this town now. At one time, Bill Lavorgna was the top drummer in New York City. He is now the conductor for Liza Minelli. Before that, Al Rogers was the top commercial drummer in town. He is now a stockbroker. He ran New York City; he was the best. And 15 or 20 years ago, the number-one drummer was Sol Gubin. No one could touch him; he was really magnificent. Sol played good drums and good percussion. We don't have that type anymore. Bobby Rosengarden did both well also.

"There are a lot of great jazz drummers in the book, but they aren't called like they used to be. There is always somebody to bounce you off the throne." Running his fingers down a phone list, Emile points out some of those jazz drummers who are, unfortunately, no longer in high demand for commercial work. It is sobering to see that these names are all well-known and highly respected talents.

"The way I made it in the business—and almost anybody did—was by coming along with my peers. I came up with Al Cohn and others, and they took me along. I was a trumpet player, but a rotten one.

[laughs] I was probably one of the first contractors who made it that wasn't under a corporate structure. Years ago, New York City was like California: Four or five contractors ran the town. If you wanted to work in this town, you better have known those guys.

"I'm sorry for the drummers because a lot of drum machines are used now. The Linn is our favorite machine. At one time, rhythm sections worked all the time. They did all the demos and experimentals. They don't do it anymore; it's done on synthesizers." The challenge of changing times, however, is not new to commercial players. Every generation has faced it. Although drum machines do represent an especially radical trend change that has left many by the wayside in future shock, the ability to adapt quickly has always been a sink-or-swim essential for survivors.

"The drummers I use cannot be in their own little closets," Emile asserts. "If a drummer is great on one certain style, I only have calls for that drummer about once every six months. If you are going to be in this business, you had better play everything *great*. In the commercial end of the business, there are no second-raters."

Harris continued from page 28

series, films, and specials such as *Holocaust*, *Call To Glory*, *Hometown*, *Chiefs*, and *Nurse*. "We do more television film work than theater film work in this town," he notes. Other television spots Herb handles include jingles, game shows, and soap operas. Sessions such as news, sports, and the ABC Olympics often require large ensembles. Recently, Herb pulled together a 50-piece orchestra for the TBS Goodwill Games.

Discussing modern changes in the commercial recording industry, Harris offers his theories on the reasons for today's declined amount of studio work in New York: "The first thing that appeared on the horizon some years ago was the synthesizer, of course. And now, sampling has become an even more intense expression of the computer age. There are other factors also: In the age of mechanization—of computerizing and 24-track and 36-track—one has the opportunity to record non tutti. You are able to spend as much time as you need with an individual musician to make a recording right, as they do with rock records. That technique has spilled over into jingles—and not only in New York. I know about the great number of things called 'studios' that have sprung up—small, one-room 24-tracks; I call them 'hovels.' Plus, so many of my synthe-

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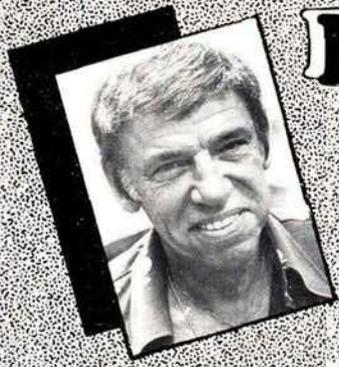
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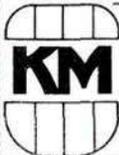
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sizer colleagues are building studios in their homes—doing their own work.

"But the important point is that it is spreading around the country. Now it's not only in New York, Los Angeles, Nashville, or Chicago, where it was before. Now it has spread to small cities. Producers don't mind paying musicians repay, but singers usually get a phenomenal amount. Now there is a lot of non-union work around the country in an effort to forestall repayments. Around the country, in smaller cities, they may not have prime musicians, but it doesn't really matter to them: They can get musicians, work with them for a couple of hours, and pay them under scale with no repay. And they come out with a tape that—for the general public—sounds good enough.

"Another factor that has changed the available work is aesthetic. First, synthesizers accosted the ears of listeners, and then rock took over—although that's on its way out in terms of being *thrust* upon everybody as it was. I hear more longhair, legato things being done now. But, as the public hears a sound, they *will* get used to it. All these things are working against the days of yore when you got orchestras together and got a live, acoustic sound.

"Furthermore, economics is a reason. I don't think the Reagan years have produced the kind of well-being that a lot of people think they have. People look sometimes only at the upper register. The musicians who are really working a lot are a very small clique. When I grew up in the recording business, it was somewhat the same, except there were a few hundred doing the top work. But at that time, they used 30- or 40-piece orchestras for TV or films, and 70- or 80-piece was the norm in California. Now, a lot of top players are playing out live more often because of the shortage of studio work."

Any cautionary words Herb offers on today's tough state of business are not spoken with a cynical tone. If a musician has something extraordinary, Herb believes, the news *will* get out if the musician diligently circulates. For young drummers who wish to venture forth, Herb's advice is a firm but practical rule-of-thumb for all musicians: "Young people come to me very often. But I don't audition unless it's for a particular job. If a friend calls me to hear his son, I may do it then. When a young person asks if he or she should be a drummer, the first thing I say is, 'If you have to ask the question, don't. You must have absolute commitment in yourself that you will be a musician no matter what. This business is too hard. There is too

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much *great* competition around to do it, unless you are so intense about it that nothing is going to get in your way, because you give up a *lot* if you're going to try to be a musician. My suggestion to someone who asks which way to go is 'Just play.' I may give that person names of a few rehearsal bands or places to sit in. As long as you get involved on any level, you will come into contact with your peers and start circulating."

*Miller continued from page 29*

tion. Forget about Broadway for the time being: Go Off-Broadway. Or forget about that and go Off-Off-Broadway or maybe cabarets. Find the people that you will 'grow up' with, because if one of them gets lucky, you might be able to come in through that person. People will usually hire musicians that they feel comfortable with—the people that they would go out to have a slice of pizza with. Most musicians don't just jump on the scene all of a sudden. When it does happen, it feeds the myth. But most musicians got where they are from a slow buildup of work.

"A drummer who wants to sub for a Broadway show often calls up the drummer who is playing: 'Hi, I would like to do this show!'—but so would the rest of the world! There's nothing wrong with calling. It is important to exercise caution, though. You don't want to put the person who has the gig on the defensive. The idea

should be, 'What can you do for *that drummer!*' That's less threatening.

"I don't like to feel hustled. A lot of people I don't know will call me up, especially when I have a Broadway show. I don't find fault with it; I've done the same thing. I can sympathize. Some people have called up, and I will make a note that I don't know how they play, but I felt I would like to hear more about them. If I hear something else good about them, I'll say, 'It's great that they're good drummers; I felt that they would be.' However, I cannot afford to 'give them a shot.' "

Once you have made that top connection, John forewarns, you are in danger of being trapped by another harmful yellow-brick-road myth. "We all buy into this myth one way or another: 'Wow, I just did my first jingle, or my first record date—I *know they're all going to come from now on!*' A friend of mine, Roy Markowitz, is a wonderful drummer. I will never forget the story he told me about how he played on Don McLean's album, *American Pie*—a gold record. When it first happened, he said, 'Man, this is *!?!*' Not only did Don McLean not use Roy on the next album, but the producer never used Roy either. This wasn't because Roy didn't play well; he plays very well. It's just that producers and others do what they do. It's up to us as musicians to get out of our heads the idea that 'Now my life is set.' That kind of myth that we are all susceptible to is counterpro-

ductive. It's better to work and continue doing all the jobs you can. The reason why musicians are here in New York is to work, not to wait.

"If you get a Broadway show, it doesn't mean you will jump right into another one. A friend of mine, Joe Malin, who contracts for Frank Sinatra, has always said to me, 'You never get rich from your last gig.' So, even if you get a Broadway gig, that show will close. Also, there have been players in shows who thought that they were *it* once the show was successful. But they started getting bad reputations. They could be great drummers, but I wouldn't hire them."

Musicians are human, and it is possible for anyone to trip up. Yet, with the high stress of studio work, newcomers feel that

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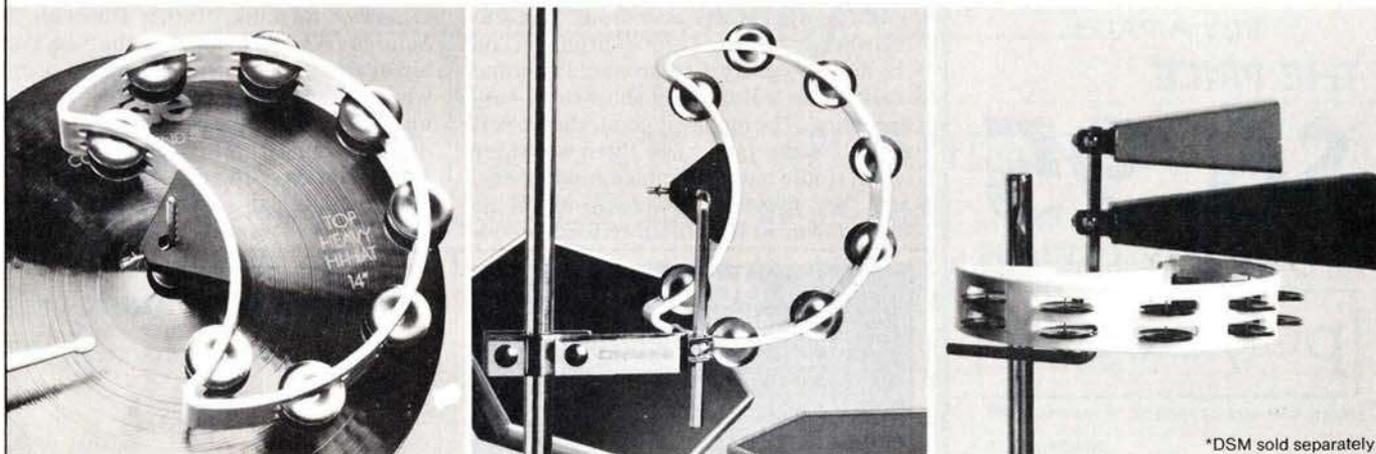
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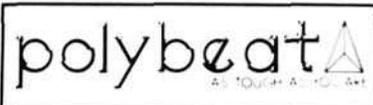
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they must face the dictum "to err is human but we won't call you again." Once someone gets that big break, the possibility of "blowing it" is a reality that must be dealt with. Drummers have probably imagined the extreme in nightmares: the clock hand is spinning like a fan blade, concentration falls apart, the wilting players see their careers flash before their eyes, their reputations stiffening into instant rigor mortis. If this should happen, will your mishap blackball you? "That's another myth that I don't buy," John contends. "I can only talk about myself. I've been on gigs in the past where I've blown it! When I started on this free-lance studio work, I was a new kid in town and I came on pretty strong. I got into business pretty fast. During my first or second year out of college, I was making 50 grand a year in the recording studios, but I didn't know some of the ropes. I did some inappropriate things. I wasn't obnoxious, but I had a lot of enthusiasm: I would *make suggestions!* I didn't realize there was an arranger and so forth, and I was there to do what I was told to do. I didn't know what the hierarchy was. I shouldn't have been the first person to jump in and say, 'Listen, I have an idea!' when the arranger said there was a problem with the music. But that's what I did.

"So, a year after that, I made 20 grand, and I didn't quite know what was happening. I asked my friend Bob Rose, a guitar player, why he thought it was happening. He looked me straight in the eye and said, 'You make too many suggestions.' We should all have more friends like that. Was I blackballed? A lot of those people stopped using me at that time. Did I have to take up air-conditioning repair? No, it didn't come to that. But I lost a great volume of work at that time. If you mess up on a date, there's an appropriate time for you to grieve. After that, there is an opportunity to learn something from that experience."

As the amount of studio work has diminished, those studio musicians who are not strictly the cream-of-the-crop constant workers have spilled over into other gigs. The result is an increased competition even for gigs far less glamorous than studio work. "There are a lot of drummers on the Radio Registry list who would now find working on a Broadway show to be very appealing. The money is good; the work is steady. Years ago, when there was more work, studio musicians made good money, and they felt that Broadway would tie them down, so they often refused Broad-

way work. Now, there are top-list players who would take a show.

"There was a time when there were three types of players who made a good living: club date, Broadway, and studio. There was a hierarchy, which I always thought was negative: Recording was the best, Broadway was okay, and club dates were the worst of the three. *Now*, you can go on club dates and sometimes find musicians who are playing the recording studios. Personally, on the deepest level, I think that this is great. It seems disappointing because we have that hierarchy myth. It was a negative thing, because it created a bad feeling about what music is. I had a great bass teacher, who once said to me, 'Serious music is what you are serious about.'

"For a new musician starting out, this is what you are up against: studio-type players in Broadway shows. This means that if you say, 'I only want to be a studio musician,' you are asking for trouble. You're living a myth from the '70s. You are in for some misery—*true* misery."

Hastily gobbling down some tuna on rice cakes, John shoulders his bass, hits the street, and hails a cab, bound for the day's studio session. Arriving at the studio, he sheds his thick down coat and shakes hands with his aforementioned friend, Roy Markowitz, who will be on drums. None of the four musicians on the date is a "superstar" name known to all. But once the session is rolling, the bass, guitar, piano, and drum quartet gets down to business, swiftly laying down a crisp, precise cut with a great feel. The chart is the new rocked-up *Jetsons* theme. The sound checks and basic track take are all completed within 20 minutes, and the players are coiling their cords, ready to leave. "Superstars" or not, they have all earned that ever-valuable approval of their peers that makes them eligible to be called for this and other commercial gigs. "There are hundreds of musicians in New York City who work a lot, and you have never heard of them," says John. "There are drummers doing terrific jingles that might not be on the 'hip' albums. It does a musician a disservice to think, 'Either I'm with the *Saturday Night Live* band or the New York hip or else I'm nowhere.' There are people who make a damn good living who are unknown outside the industry. You should not ask yourself, 'How can I be a superstar?' You have to ask, 'How can I be a working musician who has a good reputation?'"

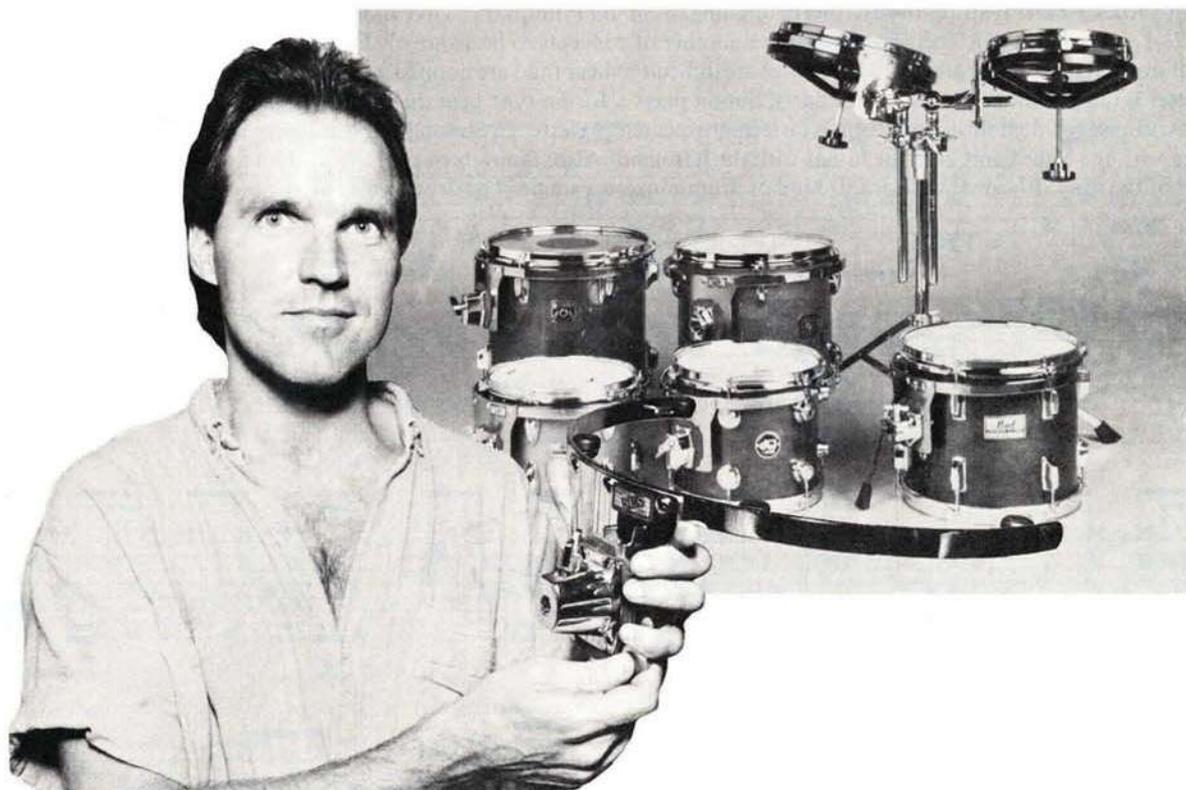


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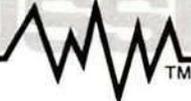
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Transcribed by William F. Miller



## Simon Phillips: "Give Blood"

This month's *Rock Charts* features the exciting drumming of Simon Phillips on "Give Blood," from Pete Townsend's album *White City* (Atco 90473-1, recorded 1985). This chart contains a number of concepts to be aware of. First of all, Simon's use of ghosted notes on the snare drum works to lock in the groove. These notes are difficult to hear (and are notated as accurately as possible) and are important to the feel. At letter B (and at other points in the chart), Simon plays a fusion-type beat that resembles a Latin pattern. Also, Simon's use of double bass drums is evident throughout and is tastefully executed. At letter G, Simon performs this pattern by playing the ride cymbal and snare drum with the right hand, and the hi-hat with the left hand. Also, Simon's overall use of dynamics with all four limbs adds to the excitement of the song. It's great to hear this kind of drumming on a single. The drums enter after the synthesizer and guitar intro.

Open O  
H H  
12  
Open R Cym Cr Cym Swsh  
H H T T  
S D T T  
F T  
B D  
H H  
w/foot

$\text{♩} = 120$

Ghosted

1st 2nd B D

A 5 times

B Cym. bell

This page of musical notation is for a bass instrument, likely a double bass or electric bass. It consists of ten systems of staves, each with a treble clef and a bass clef. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamics like accents (>) and slurs are used throughout. A common time signature (C) is present at the beginning of the third system. A specific instruction "Cym. bell" is written above the seventh system. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a "3" above it in the second system. The notation is dense and detailed, with many notes and rests.

First musical staff, bass clef. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure. The bass line consists of chords with 'x' marks on the strings. A repeat sign is present in the second measure.

Second musical staff, bass clef, marked with a 'D' in a box. It continues the melodic and bass patterns from the first staff, with a repeat sign in the second measure.

Third musical staff, bass clef. It continues the melodic and bass patterns, featuring a natural sign (o) above a note in the final measure.

Fourth musical staff, bass clef. It continues the melodic and bass patterns, featuring a triplet of eighth notes in the second measure.

Fifth musical staff, bass clef. It continues the melodic and bass patterns, featuring a slur over a group of notes in the second measure.

Sixth musical staff, bass clef. It continues the melodic and bass patterns, featuring a series of slurs and accents over the melodic line.

Seventh musical staff, bass clef, marked with an 'E' in a box. It continues the melodic and bass patterns, featuring a series of slurs and accents over the melodic line.

Eighth musical staff, bass clef. It continues the melodic and bass patterns, featuring a double bar line with a repeat sign in the second measure.

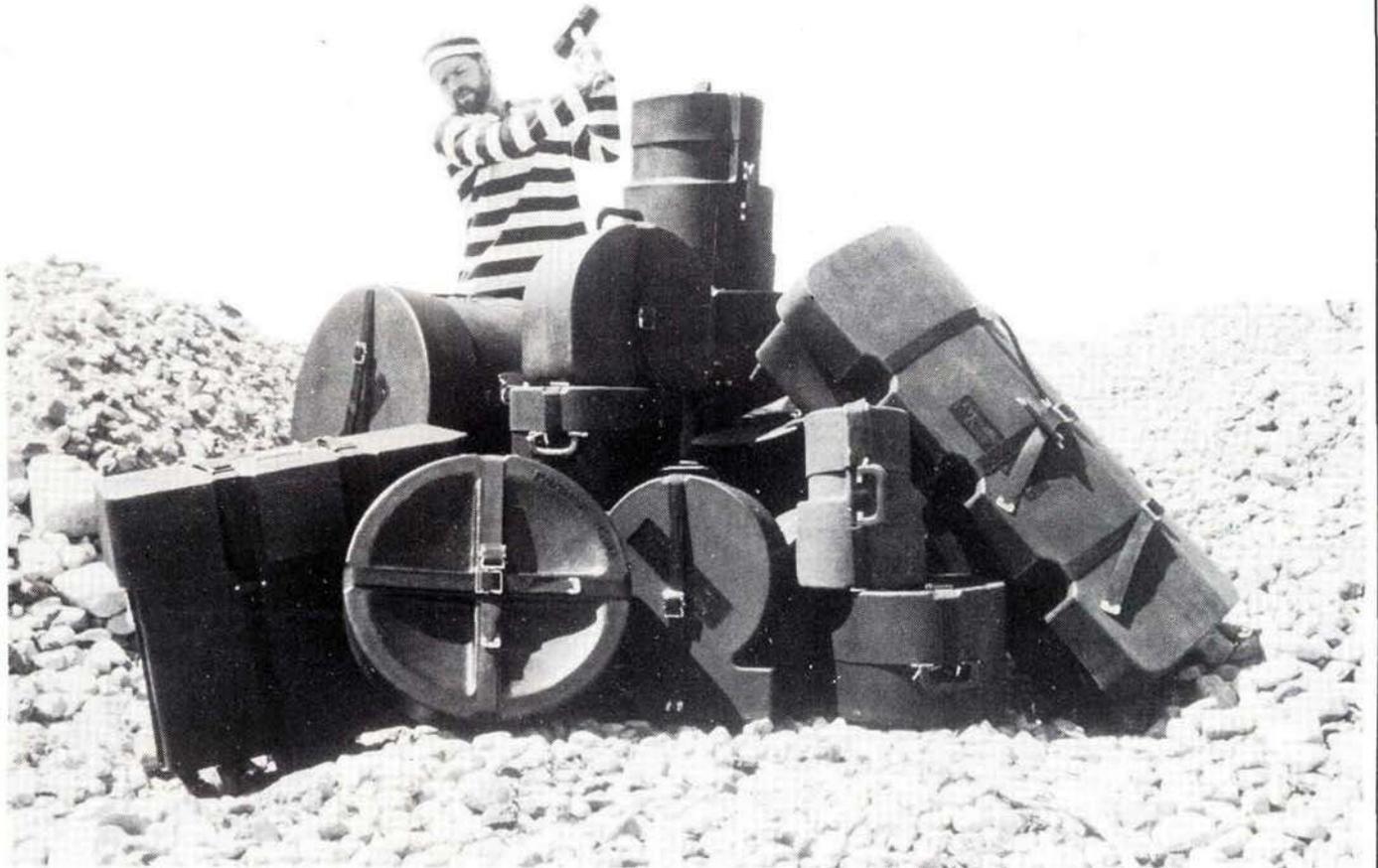
Ninth musical staff, bass clef. It continues the melodic and bass patterns, featuring a series of slurs and accents over the melodic line.

*crescendo*-----

Musical score for guitar, consisting of ten systems of staves. The notation includes bass clefs, various note values (eighths, sixteens, and sixteenth notes), rests, and dynamic markings such as accents (>) and breath marks (e). A key signature change to G major is indicated by a 'G' in a box. The piece concludes with a 'Repeat and fade' instruction and a final double bar line with repeat dots.

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you can dress up the music with it. I play the repeater drum the most, even more than the funde. So you have the bass drum, the funde, and the repeater. And all of these drums are of the akete [a-ket-tay] order.

**RS:** Is it common to use, say, more than one funde drum on stage?

**RM:** Yes, sometimes we have a brother playing another funde drum. Sometimes we have three funde drums being played. And sometimes we even have the congas to fill out the sound. And when we electrify our sound—meaning we use the electric guitar, bass, and keyboards—then we use a drummer who plays a regular drumkit. All these drums work together; all bring

order and a spiritual message of love to the listeners.

**RS:** How do you fit a drummer playing a standard drumkit into your music?

**RM:** It's not really difficult. The musician who plays behind the drumkit—well, his role is to keep on top of the music. He has the special relationship with the electric guitar, bass, and keyboards. He keeps the backbeat, but he must work with the one-drop riddim and work with the rest of the drummers on stage. Sometimes he works hard; sometimes he cools out. It looks difficult, true. The guitar player and the bass man move off his groove. He give the music the "pop-pop" sound. The snare drum is a good drum for reggae, y'know.

And my drums—the akete—go on top of his beat. If the trap drummer doesn't have the timing of our drums in his head, he cannot play with us. He can't get confused. Timing is important—very important. As one brother says, "Know when to hit; know when to hold."

**RS:** Is the repeater your favorite drum?

**RM:** Well, I love them all, y'know. But yes, the repeater is my favorite drum. If you listen to the old tracks I cut at Studio One [Kingston recording studio], you can hear some of the best repeater drum playing I ever did that came out on record.

**RS:** Are these records still available?

**RM:** Well yes, but I did not record them under the name Ras Michael & the Sons Of Negus, but rather under the name Soul Vendors. I did those sessions with Coxone [Clement Dodd, legendary reggae producer]. The man love my drum sound.

**RS:** Can you trace the roots reggae drum sound back past Count Ossie? How far back does it go before you reach purely African drumming?

**RM:** Hard to say. Some people trace roots drumming back to the Maroons [runaway Jamaican slaves who lived off the land in the island's interior prior to emancipation and kept alive many of Jamaica's African traditions]. They are a very historical people, and the drum meant so much to their survival, especially in the days when they were being hunted down by white slave owners. They had many drum rituals, and they communicated with drums, too, y'know. But it is not just them who passed on the tradition of roots drumming. There were others. But I can trace the akete straight back to Africa. Once when I played the drums in Antigua, some people came up to me there and said it was an African beat I played. Yeah mon! Olatunji and Hugh Masekela respect my drum playing. They tell me they know the African vibration is very much present in my music. Well, that makes me feel good. I am part of history; I carry on a tradition for future sons and daughters, brothers and sisters to hear. That is my contribution—roots drumming—in the natural style.

**RS:** Have you ever performed in Africa?

**RM:** No, not yet. That is a future step. Before he died, Bob Marley used to say, "Ras Michael, them playing your music and your records in Africa, y'know. You must go there." He said that over and over. So yes, I must go there, it's true. And the time is coming up quickly. So the African people—the Nigerians, the Kenyans, the Ethiopians—they know about Ras Michael. They know that they have blood brothers in Jamaica. Soon all black people will be of one nation.

**RS:** Is it true that you build your own drums?

**RM:** Yeah mon.

**RS:** Can you explain to me the process by which you construct one?

**RM:** Well, you can use the wood from the cottonwood tree. The wood from that tree

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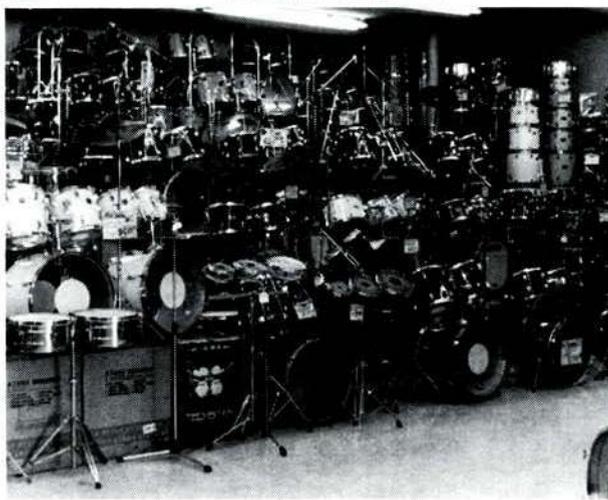
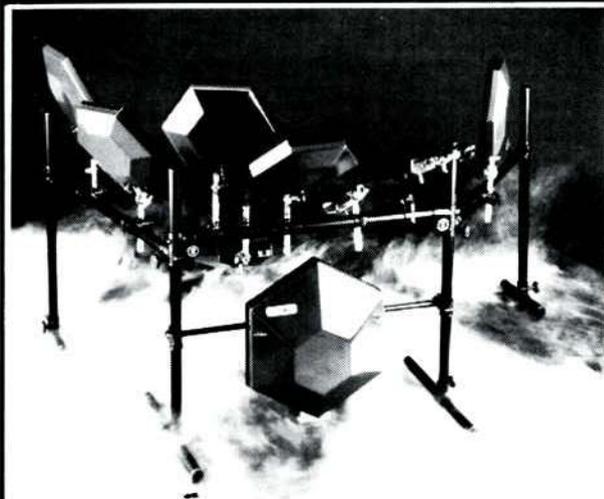
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is quite light after it is cut down, dried, and dug out. You know, you can also make a drum out of a barrel. You get a big barrel, and you take out a few of the ribs and re-stabilize the barrel to get the right sound. The ribs are like big fingers, y'see. I put the putty and the glue and the ribs back together. And outside of it, I use an iron casing that is used to draw the goatskin on top.

**RS:** When you decide to make a drum out of cottonwood, is there a special place in Jamaica where you go to get the wood, or do you simply pick a tree out in the woods and cut it down?

**RM:** Well, lately I make my drums out of barrels. But if I find a cottonwood tree that looks good, I can dig it out, burn out the inside of it, and make the drum from scratch.

**RS:** And where do you get the goatskins?

**RM:** Well, to get the goatskin you have to be smart. [laughs] You have to be a scientist to get all the hair off—a secret remedy. Some people don't understand how I do it. But I do it like this: I throw ashes from burning wood on the hair part of the skin, and then I use a bottle to rub it right off.

**RS:** The ashes burn the hair off?

**RM:** No mon. You rub the ashes on the hair, and then it helps ease it up. You use a stout bottle with a round mouth. But you have to know how to use it skillfully. You push the bottle and rub in the direction that the animal's hair grows.

**RS:** Is it a long process?

**RM:** No, not a long process. If you have the right style and the right feel for it, it take but a short while.

**RS:** Where did you learn the process?

**RM:** From some ancient drummer man in Kingston. He works a little bit outside Kingston, actually. He dedicated himself to making drums; he's very good at it.

**RS:** Do you concern yourself with miking your drums on stage, or do you rely solely on their natural acoustic volume?

**RM:** I try to balance the sounds of the drums naturally. But yes, I do use microphones because I want a delicate balance with all the drums. The bass drum takes time to be miked properly; otherwise it can dominate all the other drums. We keep the mic' a distance away. When you use microphones on the drums, it's a question of balance, that's all. That's what Bob used to say, too—a question of balance.

**RS:** You've mentioned Bob Marley's name quite a bit during this interview. It seems as if you two were very close.

**RM:** Yes. Bob and me came from like one family of people. We grew up together. And while he was of this life, we would always meet. We had a special vibration that we shared. Bob played the guitar and I the drums, but we were on the same musical level.

**RS:** When you and Bob were growing up in the '50s, there was no such thing as reggae. And there were few places, if any, I pre-

sume, where you could go to hear other musicians, except on the street. Is that correct?

**RM:** Yeah mon, it's true. It was the ghetto, but it was very rich with music. But I'm going to tell you something about how far ghetto music can expand. I made a song called "Time Is Drawing Nigh" and the Beatles got that song somehow. And they name the song "Norwegian Wood." They made a lot of money from it.

**RS:** You're saying you wrote a song that the Beatles, shall we say, "borrowed" from you?

**RM:** They take it and make it a big seller, mon! But it's my music, and I sing it with the pure drums.

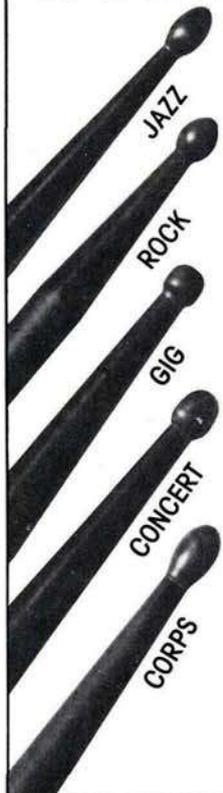
**RS:** When did you write it?

**RM:** When I was a youth, in 1963 or 1964. [He starts singing the melody to "Norwegian Wood" with the words, "Time is drawing nigh for us to go where we belong/hear what the Rastaman say."] When I hear that record, "Norwegian Wood," I get a shock!

**RS:** Did you ever record your version of the song?

**RM:** Yes. But the company I did that music with in Jamaica burned down, so I have no case. It was known as West Indies. Now it is called Dynamics. All the masters burned. The only way I can prove that the song is mine is to trace some Rasta brothers who live in the hills. People tell me that one of them has a 45 of the song. Someday

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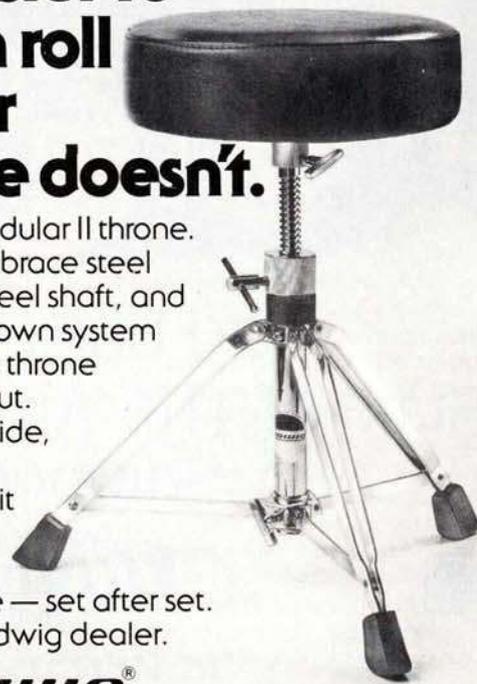
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I'm going to venture there and contact him.

**RS:** Do you know how John Lennon or Paul McCartney might have heard your version of the song?

**RM:** No. The only thing I know is me and some brothers were playing at the library in Kingston, and a lady hear me sing and play that song. She said, "Ras Michael, I love that song." Then, I start to hear the Beatles song on the airwaves and also I hear it in advertisements for a travel service. I don't know how they got it, but they did. As time goes on, things improve. What can I say?

**RS:** With that in mind, what are your feelings about rock 'n' roll and how, over the last five to seven years, so many artists and bands have "borrowed," shall we say, large elements of reggae, and made fortunes from it?

**RM:** Well, you see, when you talk about reggae, you have to understand that it is a message music that appeals not only to Jamaicans and not only to black people, but to all peoples, of all colors and all creeds. So, I cannot be angry that bands like the Police and UB40 come in and take reggae and interpret it with a rock 'n' roll feel. Reggae is an appealing music; its beat knows no bounds. These musicians, they want to spread the message of love and peace? Well, that's good, y'know. But I say this: I think in due time the people who buy Police records and UB40 records will come searching for the real thing and try to discover the place where these groups got their inspiration from. They're going to discover the roots reggae. They're going to want to know where it all comes from and who are the ones who supply these white bands with the sound. Do you think this will be true someday?

**RS:** It's difficult to say, actually. However, in the 1960s, many white rock fans, after hearing American and English blues-rock groups play their versions of blues, went searching for the original black blues artists. And what they found in cities like Chicago were artists such as Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon, and others. Perhaps the same thing will happen with reggae. I hope so.

**RM:** That would be nice, yes. Perhaps roots reggae artists in Jamaica can hope for the same thing. It would be nice if everyone shared in the wealth. [laughs]

**RS:** Speaking of going back to the roots, even roots artists such as yourself can look behind you and find, say, drummers whom you were inspired by or borrowed from. Have you ever spoken to any African drummers about reggae or the art of playing drums?

**RM:** I speak to many Africans, yes. They tell me that the kind of drum style I have comes from West Africa—Senegal, Nigeria, and all them places. But it is also true that the vibe of my music—the spiritual thing that is found in it for those who truly listen—comes from the East. It's Eastern

business. This is true especially when we chant along with the beat of the drums. This sort of thing can be traced back very far in history. My African name is different from Ras Michael. I hold my African name strictly for myself. I don't usually share it, y'know. I hold it for a brighter day. My ancestors were drum builders, drum players, and also builders of churches and holy places. With the beat of their drums, they scolded the wicked and glorified God. That is how it was. And that's what I try to do whenever I play drums for people. [He starts singing.] "Keep cool Babylon, you don't know what you're doing. King Rasta come now soon."

**RS:** Will you go to Africa soon? I heard through the grapevine that perhaps this is the year you'll play there.

**RM:** Nothing has really been scheduled yet, but it is in the making, and the reason why that is so is because, when I go to Africa, I want to go for a very long time. When I was in Paris to play a concert, I met brothers from Cameroon who want me and my band to come there as their guests and stay for a long while. I think it would be very, very good to do that. So I hope I can travel there soon. We are making the arrangements.

**RS:** Do you look forward to trading ideas and maybe performing with African drummers?

**RM:** Oh yeah! I long to play with them on African soil. And I think they long to play with me. I know that because, when I was in England doing some lectures on drumming, I met visiting African drummers. They say, "Ras Michael, we love your style, mon." Yes! That was good news. They say, "How can you play drums so good? You were born in the West!"

**RS:** I remember reading somewhere a long time ago, perhaps it was in Jamaica, that you feel you and all drummers were born to be drummers—that it is a drummer's destiny to "carry the heartbeat of life from one generation to the next." If you indeed did say that, do you still believe it to be true today?

**RM:** Well, it is said, "Leaders are not made; they are created." It's like that with drummers. You cannot make a man a drummer. A good drummer has natural talent and a natural ability to keep the beat—the heartbeat of life. Others can play the drums for enjoyment. It's true y'know; there are many people who do that. But the innovators and the ones who blaze new trails are born with their power. There is no mistake about that. It's God's will. Drummers, I can tell you, are different than the rest.

**RS:** Do you ever see yourself experimenting with electronic drums in the future? When we discussed this before, I got the feeling that you were leaving the door open.

**RM:** I've got to tell you something. I am working on my next album. Actually, it is

mostly finished, but there are certain other things that have to be done and things that have to be changed. Well, on it I play the Simmons drum in some places. I use it with my akete. It's something different, but, you know, it works nicely and sounds good. It can be done. I am meant to explore these things. If I don't, I will not do justice to the ability and foresight God has given me to play the drums.

**RS:** You've obviously accomplished much in your role as a roots reggae drum master. Looking into the future a bit, do you have any personal ambitions or things you would like to achieve as a drummer?

**RM:** I would like to tell Africans how important the drums are in my culture. And maybe when I go to Africa, I can do that. I would also like to do my part in telling young musicians so that they understand from the start very clearly that the foundation of all music is the beat of the drum. Young musicians need to be conscious of that, whether they play the drums, bass, keyboards, guitar, or a horn. But most of all, I would like to do my part as a spiritual musician, so that the world can communicate with music and it will be a better place to live. The whole world is a garden and all the people who inhabit it are its flowers. They all beautify the garden, regardless of their color or creed. Rasta Fari!



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The routine is broken into five major areas: Continuous, Combination, Accent, Roll, and Single Strokes. Play each exercise at your top speed and at a moderately loud dynamic level. Repeat each pattern for a full minute and proceed directly to the next one without a pause. There are four, 30-second rest periods—one between each set of exercises.

Be sure to follow the directions of the warm-up routine exactly as prescribed. Try it before your next performance. You'll be surprised at the results.

### Continuous Strokes

Repeat each example for one minute.

①   
 R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R

②   
 L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L

30-second break

### Combination Strokes

Repeat each example for one minute.

③   
 R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L

④   
 R R R R R R L L L L L L L L

⑤   
 R R R R L L L L R R R R L L L L L L

⑥   
 R R R L L L R R R L L L L L

⑦   
 R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L

30-second break

### Accent Strokes

Repeat each example for one minute.

⑧   
 R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R

⑨   
 L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L

⑩   
 R R R R L L L L R R R R L L L L L L

⑪   
 R L L R L L R L L R L L L L

⑫   
 L R R L R R L R R L R R R R

⑬   
 R L L L R L L L R L L L L L L L

⑭   
 L R R L R R R L R R R L R R R R

30-second break

### Roll Strokes

Repeat each example for one minute.



30-second break

Single Strokes

Repeat the following example for one minute, increasing from slow to fast.



Also, double bass drum players may want to do this entire routine with the feet (with the exception of Roll Strokes). Follow the same instructions.

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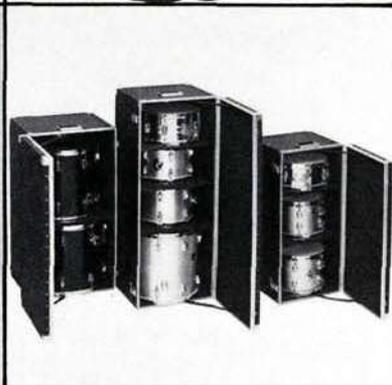
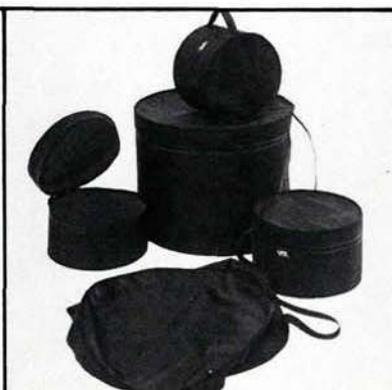
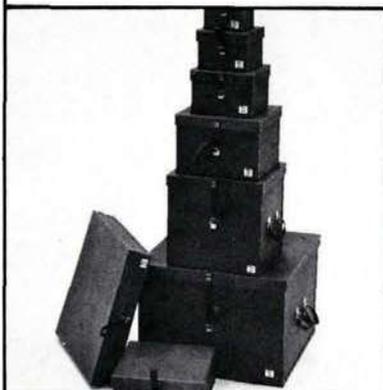
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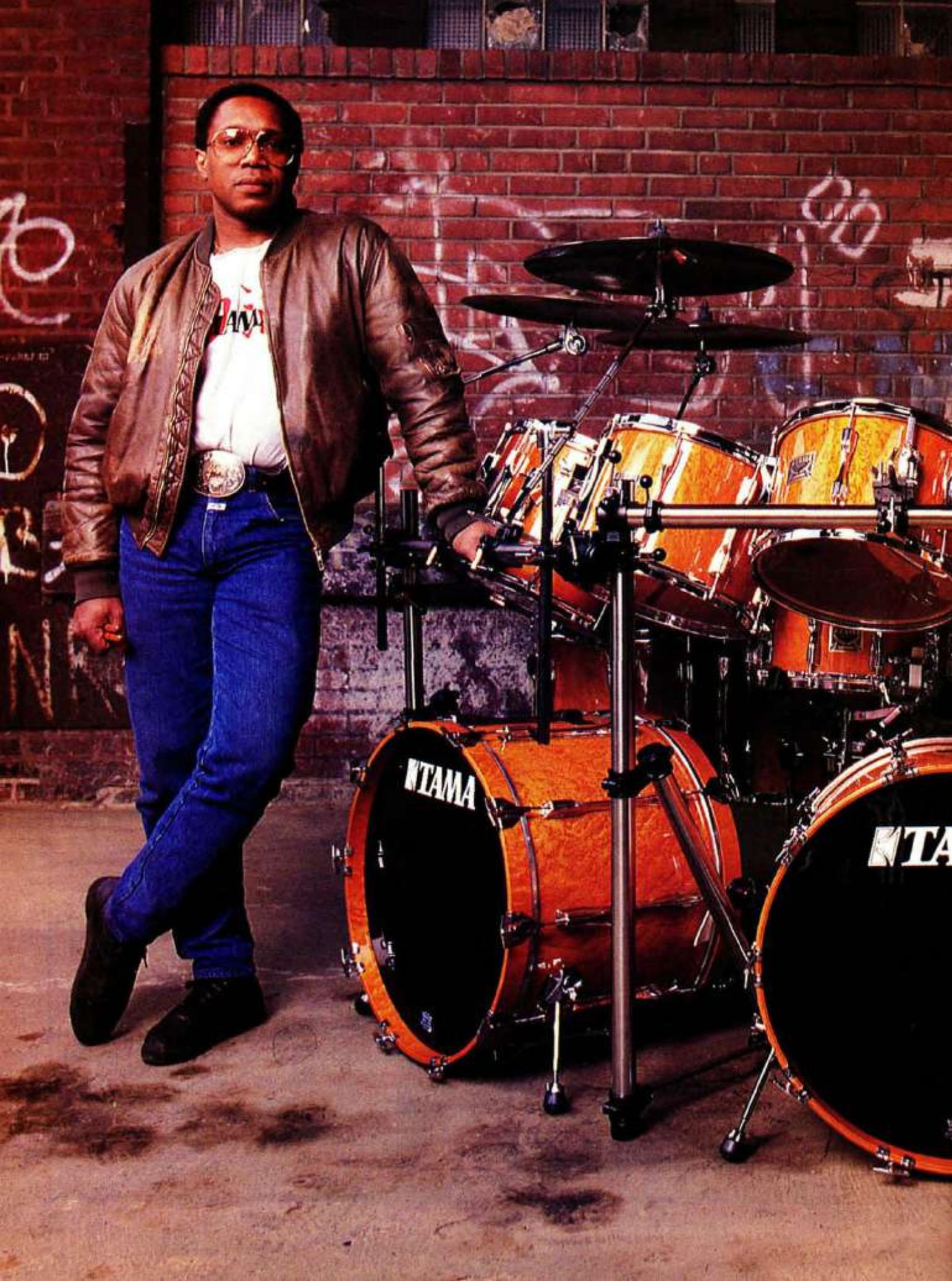
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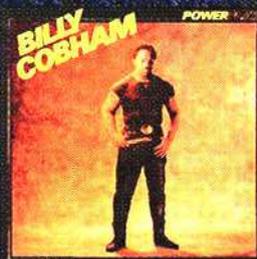
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so people are going to listen. I was the last person who thought "I Want A New Drug" was going to be a hit. I heard two songs off that album being hits: "Heart And Soul" and "If This Is It." I said, "Hell, no, 'Heart Of Rock And Roll' is not going to be a hit. There's no way. 'New Drug'? Forget it." I thought people wouldn't even play that song. Then all of a sudden—boom. You never know.

**RT:** The fill you do on kick drum and snare on "Heart Of Rock And Roll" sounds kind of like one you do on "Who Cares," from the band's first album.

**BG:** Yeah, I like doing stuff like that.

**RT:** How would you compare the sound of the drums on the first record to what you're getting now?

**BG:** About that big [holds his thumb and forefinger an inch apart] compared to about this big [spreads his arms wide]. We did the first record at a little studio in L.A. Oh man, it was like an army surplus studio—big rotary faders, rotary pots, and each different section of the EQ had different little sliders and knobs. It was the funniest looking place. And we went in there wanting to get a real live sound. What we got was a real dinky sound, you know.

**RT:** Did you know much about recording drums at that point?

**BG:** No, not much at all. Our first big mistake was having somebody else produce it. But after that album, we started producing ourselves. We spent more time, and got Jim Gaines to engineer. He really knew how to get a good drum sound. And then I just started getting more interested in figuring out how to get the best sound. I wasn't really that interested then. I had never cut a record before that album, so I really didn't know how. But now I know how. I just got my new Yamahas, too, and they are fantastic—big, deep toms. I'll be using them on the new album.

**RT:** Does Jim Gaines just record your drums the way you have them tuned, or do you work with them?

**BG:** I have to work with them. I've played Sonor drums for the last eight years, and they took a bit of work. We just demo-ed up a couple of tunes last week, and I took the Yamahas in to record with them. I couldn't believe it. I just set them up and did a little bit of tuning, but they were even all the way down the line. It was great. I can't wait to get in and really work with them. Gaines was what we needed. He's the link between us and the studio; you know, you've got to go through the board—this big piece of technology—to get it onto tape. And if you don't have that down, you're in a world of trouble. That's really all we needed. We knew what we wanted to play and what we wanted to sound like. We just needed someone to get our sound through all those circuits and make it sound right. Jim really knows how to do it.

**RT:** Where did you record the drum tracks for *Sports!*?

**BG:** We did all the drum tracks and basics at Fantasy Studios, and all the overdubs were done at The Record Plant, in Sausalito. But nowadays, it's kind of sad because it really doesn't matter where you do the drum tracks. They'll just take the tracks you have and trigger off an AMS machine. Like on "The Power Of Love," it's not my snare drum or kick drum. It's me playing, but they just trigger off the AMS, and it's Andy Newmark's snare drum, and somebody else's kick drum that they have sampled into the machine. Yeah, it's getting real technical.

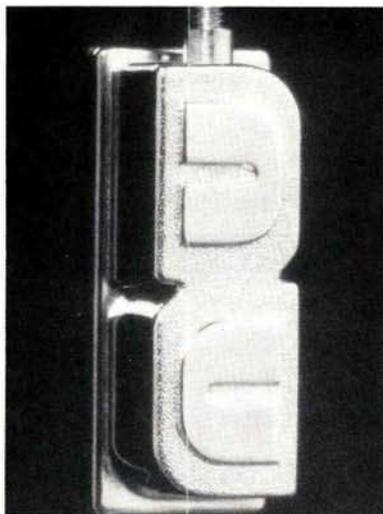
**RT:** What do you think of all that?

**BG:** As long as it's me playing, I really don't mind how they get the tone, although I'd rather spend the time and get it right initially. Nowadays, it doesn't seem like they spend that much time trying to get the tone initially. They just think, "Okay, we got the track; we'll just trigger it later."

**RT:** They can save some bucks . . .

**BG:** Yeah, or just get the fantastic tone by triggering. I guess that's cool; I don't mind. But what I'd like to do is get a couple AMS machines, go into the studio, and have *my* sound in there. Then I can trigger my sound instead of having Huey come back and say, "Yeah, man, how about that snare drum? That's Andy Newmark's." And I kind of go, "Uh, yeah." I also program. We use the Linn on some tunes. We'll use the Linn snare and kick, and I'll

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go in and overdub cymbals. "Back In Time" [from the movie *Back To The Future*] is all LinnDrum, with me playing overdubbed live toms and cymbals. The rest of it is Linn; it's not me playing at all.

**RT:** Was that a first for you, or did you do it on *Sports*!

**BG:** We did it on "New Drug." I fooled Jeff Porcaro on that one. He and Paul Jamieson said, "Man, you played great on that one. It's right in the pocket." I said, "Yeah, thank you." [laughs] But we do do that on some of the tunes that call for just a real steady beat. Now what we're getting into more is just having the beat going on the Linn, and I'll play to it, which is still me playing, but it goes in and out a little bit. It sounds more human, but it's still steady.

**RT:** One tune you sound great on is "I Want You," from the band's first record. It's rocking.

**BG:** Yeah, we played that in our old band. Brian Marnell, who wrote the song, played in Soundhole, too. I played with him for years and years. Yeah, that was a tune he wrote for the old band. We thought it was a good rock tune and might sound good. We pull it out and play it live every so often. It's a good coliseum tune. There are a lot of fills and stuff. I wish we could rerecord that now, because it sounds so dinky on that album. There are a lot of good tunes on that record, man; it's just that they're all so fast, small-sounding, and dry that it just doesn't do them justice.

**RT:** Are they faster than you would play them now?

**BG:** Oh yeah. That was back in our frenzied days—our punk rock days. We were playing everything fast and jumping around like maniacs on stage. We play everything much slower now. "Trouble

In Paradise" rips on our first album, man.

**RT:** The song "Change Of Heart" on *Picture This* is high-energy, and you and guitarist Chris Hayes push it along.

**BG:** He hangs right in there with me. He's really good rhythmically. He's always right in there, and he can play anything he wants. He's a fantastic player and very tasty.

**RT:** That's a nice beat you play on "Whatever Happened To True Love" [*Picture This*], with the tom-toms and tambourine in there.

**BG:** That was Huey's idea for the tambourine. We demo-ed that song up ten times, ten different ways, with ten different producers, and it never sounded right. Finally, we produced it ourselves for the record. We still have yet to nail that song. It's a better song than we have recorded.

**RT:** The sounds on the *Sports* album are much bigger—the overall drum sounds.

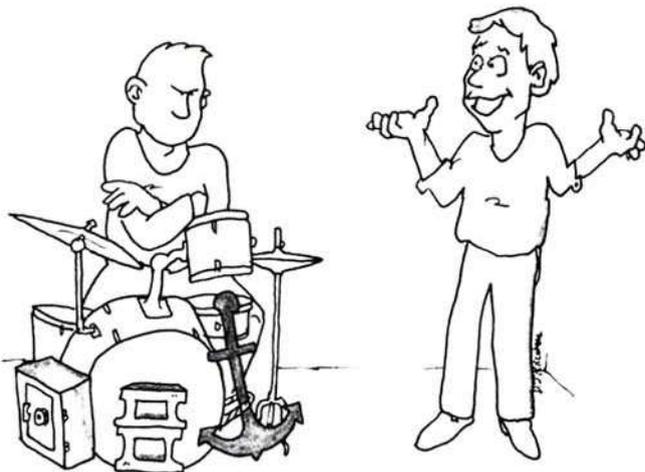
**BG:** It's that big room over at Fantasy: Studio A. It's a big, square room—fantastic drum tone.

**RT:** What about the tom-tom sounds on "New Drug"?

**BG:** All the toms are live, cut in the hallway at the Record Plant. Actually, I did go back and overdub the snare drum over the Linn, all the way through. So there's a Linn snare drum and a real snare drum.

**RT:** Did you record in the hallway because you didn't like any of the studios for recording drums?

**BG:** Yeah, the rooms are horrible for drums. So we had to wait until all the other sessions were over. It was about 1:00 in the morning before I could set up in the hallway there. It was real bright, but



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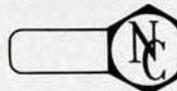


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**RT:** I just picked up the extended dance mix of "Power Of Love" done by Jellybean Benitez. What does doing a dance mix involve for you?

**BG:** Nothing for me, usually. Those guys just get back there, and start cutting and putting stuff in. It's really absurd, man. I hate that. "New Drug" lends itself to that, but "Power Of Love" is not a disco song, and they just started cutting it up and putting this absurd arrangement on it. I listened to it and thought, "This is absolutely meaningless." I thought it was terrible. They'd do a dance mix on anything. They'd do a dance mix on "Satin Doll" if it was just released. Those people get in there and go crazy. They put their own arrangement on it, and sometimes they add parts, too. They'll go in and record on your tape. They put a keyboard part on "Power Of Love," and I thought that was taking it a little too far.

**RT:** One of the strongest drum tracks on *Sports* is "Heart And Soul," with the well-placed crashes, and open and closed hi-hat work.

**BG:** Yeah, emphasizing the 2 and 4 on cymbal crashes sometimes in the chorus. That's fun to play. I'm sick of the song, but it's fun to play that part.

**RT:** When you record, how much do you put down live?

**BG:** We'll put down the drums, keyboards, guitar, and bass. And nine times out of ten, we'll go back and scrap everything but the drum track. Well, if somebody hits his part we'll keep it, but nine times out of ten, we'll redo most of it, except for the drums.

**RT:** Mario seems like a fun bass player to work with. He's not flashy, but he's right there with you.

**BG:** He's very strong and very solid. He's not flashy at all, and that's what I like about him. I'm not flashy. I like to think that I play tastefully, but sometimes I know I don't. I like the "Heart And Soul" track. I went back and overdubbed all those agogo bells, timbales, and stuff.

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**RT:** Those fills are nice in there. Those are timbales?  
**BG:** Yeah, and agogo bells and cowbells—a bunch of stuff. That was fun.  
**RT:** Do you have any electronics in your set now?  
**BG:** I use three Simmons pads, and I trigger off a low tom. I just started doing this before the last tour. Before that, I had a couple of Syndrum pads, and I triggered off the sounds of my Linn machine. But now I'm using a Simmons low tom, a *Clap Trap*, and agogo bells triggered by a Simmons pad for "Heart And Soul." I got the agogo bells chips installed in my Simmons, and I trigger it with a pad. It sounds like agogo bells to me.  
**RT:** Do you see yourself doing anything new with drum sounds on the next album?  
**BG:** No, I think it'll pretty much be like *Sports* as far as what we do. I'm sure it's going to be a better album, because every time we go in the studio, it sounds better and better. I think it'll probably be pretty much the same approach. I have a whole Simmons kit, but I don't like the sound of the whole kit. I much prefer acoustic drums. But you can use a couple of tones tastefully, and incorporate them in your set. Everybody uses Simmons—everybody—and that's why I've shied away from them. I don't want to sound like Animation or INXS.  
**RT:** Tell me about your new drumkit.  
**BG:** It's a Yamaha kit with a 24" kick. I've played a 24" kick ever since I got my Sonor kit nine years ago. I've got the deep toms; I think they're called the *Power Recording Custom*. It's quartz grey, which is a new color they've got out. Until recently, I was playing with two rack toms and two floor toms, but I've now added a third rack tom. They're 10 x 12, 11 x 13, and 12 x 14. And then I have a 16 x 16 floor tom and an 16 x 18 floor tom. I use Zildjian cymbals: one 16" K crash, one 18" K crash, two other 18" A's, and a 21" Rock ride. Leon back at Zildjian turned me on to 13" hi-hats; I've been playing 14" hi-hats for years.  
**RT:** What do you like about the smaller hi-hats?  
**BG:** They sizzle. They just seem to cut a little more. I have a bunch

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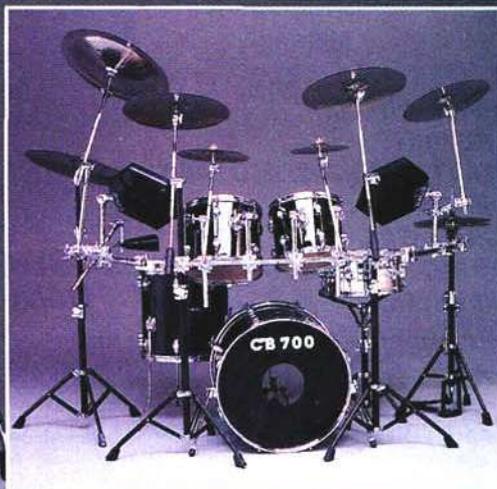
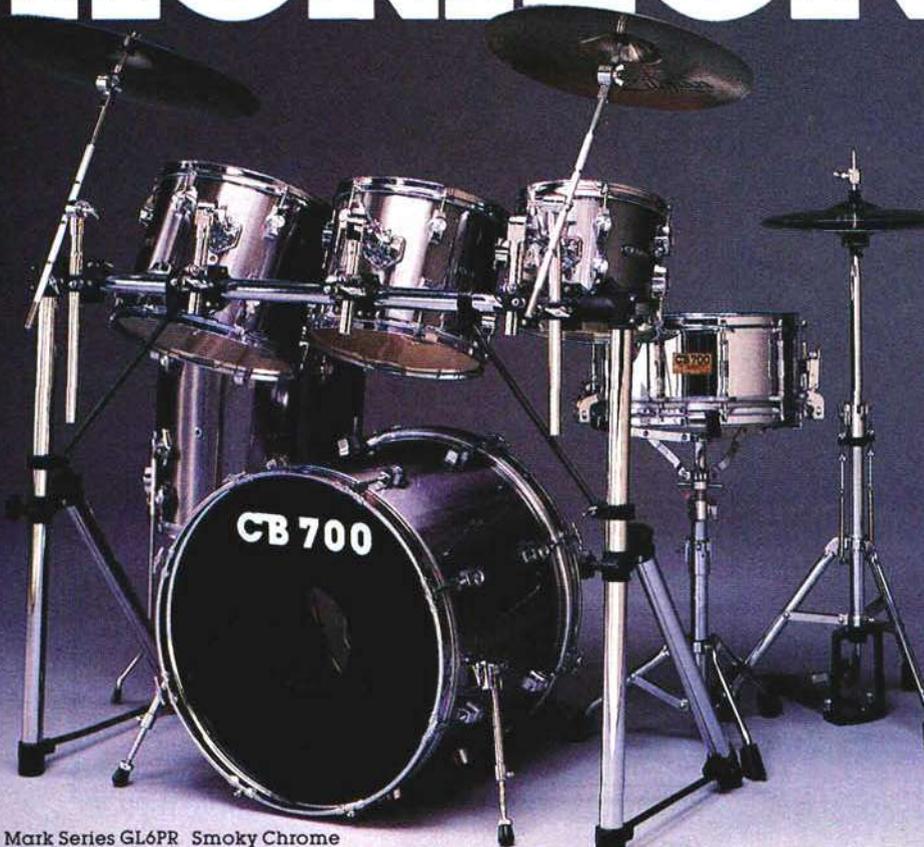
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of smaller cymbals that I may break out for recording, but I don't think I'll use them live.

**RT:** What type of pedal do you use?

**BG:** I use one of those Drum Workshop chain-drive pedals.

**RT:** Is there any stick that you swear by?

**BG:** Regal Tip 5Bs. I've tried a lot of other sticks, but those are just the right size and the right feel. I like nylon tips. Wood tips don't get it on the cymbals for me. I like that real bright nylon sound.

**RT:** What kind of snare drum do you use? Is it a deep one?

**BG:** Yeah, it was custom-made for me by this guy in Santa Cruz named Johnny Craviotto. He collects old shells and stuff, and he built a drum for me that I just love. It's an 8 1/2x 14. It's beautiful. I had him put on a Tama roller strainer, where the snares go all the way across the bottom. It's a wood drum. I can't remember what kind of hardware he put on it. He just custom-builds everything. I got that snare right before we left on this last tour and used it for the whole tour. Everybody said the snare sounded great. I paid \$400 for it, and I think it's worth it. I like the sound of wood snare drums. You can make them sound like chrome drums; you really can. Tighten them up a lot, and you can really get them sounding close to metal drums.

**RT:** I interviewed a great guitarist from Marin County who knows you: Terry Haggerty.

**BG:** I know Terry very well. I used to be roommates with him. He was in The Sons of Champlin—one of the best bands around.

**RT:** Bill Champlin has gone on to a real successful studio career, and is now in the band Chicago.

**BG:** I almost played in his band once, right after he quit the Sons and put out a solo album. That was right when I wasn't doing anything, and he called me one night to talk about playing. But he got Jeff Porcaro and the Totos to play on the record.

**RT:** There are a lot of good musicians up here in Marin County.

**BG:** Yeah, there are. It's just that Marin's a very hard place to break out of. We were really lucky to be able to do it out of our own backyard.

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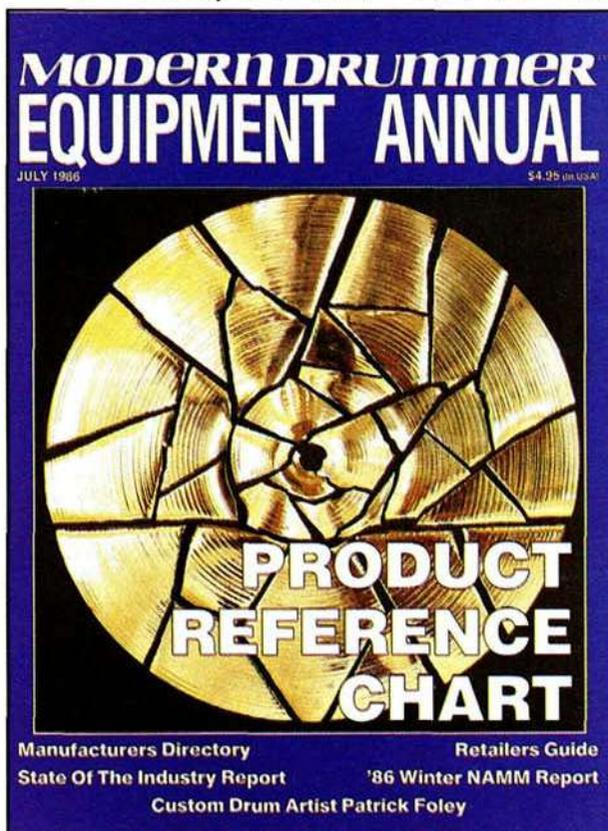
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by Roy Burns

## Breathing And Energy

Energy is, and always has been, very important to drummers. Years ago, the toughest task for a drummer was to play an extremely fast tempo, while one horn player after another attempted to "cut" or "top" the previous soloist. These super-fast "cutting" sessions could last 30 or 40 minutes. The volume level was not too high, but the energy requirements were great. Drummers used to spend hours honing their fast-tempo skills in order to avoid being embarrassed at a jam session. The only thing tougher than the fast-tempo jam session was playing fast tempos with brushes. Piano players were famous for saying, "Just play brushes." (In fact, my auditions for Benny Goodman, Teddy Wilson, and Joe Bushkin required me to play fast tempos with brushes before I played anything else.) I spent many an hour playing brushes on the back of an album cover along with the fastest records in my collection.

Today, it's different. The killer is not fast tempos, but volume. Instead of worrying about their right hands tightening up, today's drummers have to be concerned

with their entire bodies. Playing with amplified instruments has placed new demands on a drummer's supply of energy and endurance. Practicing and playing do help to build both strength and stamina. However, practicing alone will not completely prepare the young drummer to meet the energy needs of contemporary music.

Several things rob us of energy. For example, tension—which can be the result of fear or of trying too hard—takes away endurance. Smoking cigarettes takes away energy by robbing the lungs of oxygen. Alcohol, excessive amounts of coffee, or drugs will all take away energy in the long run.

Learning to breathe in a healthy way can bring about both relaxation and a renewal of energy. The best way to learn this is to lie on the floor on your back. Make sure that your clothing is loose enough to allow for a deep breath, and loosen your belt, if necessary.

All healthy breathing begins with a slow and complete exhalation. You first have to empty a container before you can fill it. After slowly exhaling the air in the lungs, draw the abdomen and stomach up and in to "push" the stale air from the lungs. (Many of us only breathe about halfway, which results in our carrying around a lot of stale air containing no oxygen.) This exhalation must be silent. If you can hear yourself breathing, you are going too fast; if it is silent, it will be slow. The more you exhale, the more fresh air you will get into your lungs when you inhale.

Now inhale slowly and silently. When the lungs feel full, expand the abdomen. When it is full, expand the ribs slightly. Then, raise the shoulders and the collar bones easily to fill the upper part of the lungs completely. Now exhale, slowly and silently, pushing out all of the air with the

abdomen. There should be no gasping; the air should enter and exit your lungs slowly and silently. This gives the lungs the maximum opportunity to take in oxygen.

You can do this exercise for as long as you wish. It should not induce any discomfort or fatigue. Early in the morning and before going to sleep are good times for this exercise; it will help you to relax and to enhance your level of energy. However, you can do this exercise *any time* you are tense or tired. Once you have learned it, you can perform it while standing, walking, or sitting. It's a great one to do between sets or just before a big concert.

Remember to breathe slowly, continuously, and easily. Do *not* blow yourself up like a balloon. Ideal breathing is *deep, slow, silent, and easy*. Such breathing will aid relaxation and help you to be more alert.

Breathing in a rhythm or to a count can have a positive effect on your energy level and endurance. A good way to start is as follows: four counts (slowly) for breathing in, two counts for holding the breath, and then eight counts for exhaling. Holding the breath for a couple of counts allows the lungs more time to assimilate oxygen. As you practice and improve, the counts can be extended. For example, six to breathe in, four to hold the breath, and 12 to exhale. Allow twice as many counts for exhaling as inhaling. Just remember that, if the breathing becomes audible or if you take in too much air, you are "forcing" it. Silent and slow is the best way.

Concentrate only on your breathing. You need to think of nothing else. When playing the drums, concentrate on your drumming and the music. Breathing naturally while playing is the result of practicing the breathing exercises when *not* playing. Best of all, if you do it easily, there are no negative side effects. It's also free.

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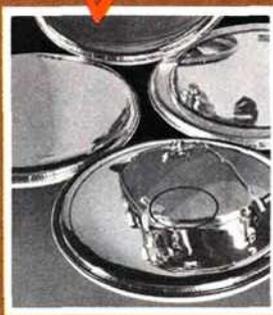
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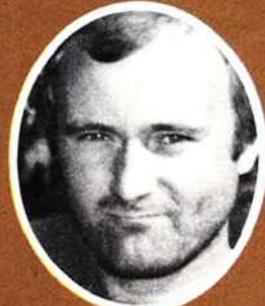
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by Rick Van Horn

## Model Setups

See if this situation sounds familiar: You've been playing around town for quite some time with your group. You work in an established "circuit," so you've become familiar with all of the stages on which you perform. Even though your band has quite a bit of equipment, you've managed to work out a fairly comfortable arrangement for every stage. Suddenly, you find yourself booked into a room you've never worked in before. The stage is an unusual shape, and there are some architectural features that prevent you from using any of the setup configurations that you normally employ.

There are some variations on this scenario. One is moving into a familiar club, but having new equipment to add to your setup for the first time. Another is coming into a familiar club, only to find that renovations have taken place, and your comfortable arrangement no longer works. And finally, there's the situation of being on the road, and coming into unfamiliar territory with virtually every new gig. No matter which variation of the basic scenario applies to you, the inherent problems are the same: You have a short time in which to set up a lot of equipment and a whole new set of circumstances to deal with.

What's the best way to approach this problem? Well, you *could* start with a basic setup that you're familiar with and try to adapt it to the new stage. Of course, this means a trial-and-error process that involves a lot of lifting and carrying, and may ultimately result in a less-than-optimum setup (to say nothing of short tempers, time pressure, and back strain).

You might also try to "eyeball" the space available and come up with an on-the-spot new arrangement, but the risk you run is that what you come up with on the spur of the moment might not be the best possible arrangement for a long-term engagement, sound- and space-wise. Again, it involves a lot of trial and error, with all of the inherent negative aspects that go along with it.

A solution I've employed over the years involves a technique used by theatrical set designers, and also by major tour-support companies that have to deal with literally thousands of pounds of equipment getting on and off trucks, and into and out of various arenas and other concert venues. That technique is the use of scale models.

Long ago, when I described some of the items I carry in my "Drummer's Survival Kit," I mentioned that I have a 6' measuring tape among my hand tools. I received several letters about that, saying, "I can

understand screwdrivers, wrenches, etc. But why a measuring tape?" I used the tape to create scale models of every piece of equipment my band employed and also to create floor plans of every stage on which we regularly played. Whenever a new piece of equipment was added, I took its measurements and made a new model to add to the existing ones. On occasions when we were booked into a new club, we wouldn't set anything up until I had a chance to measure the dimensions of the stage and create a quick floor plan.

If this sounds a bit complicated, and perhaps like a lot of extra work, let me just ask you this: Would you enjoy spending several hours schlepping heavy equipment around on stage, searching for a comfortable and acoustically practical arrangement (that might ultimately still elude you)? Or would you rather sit down at a table for half an hour, move some cardboard models around on a sheet of paper, and then go right to a predetermined setup that only requires you to move each piece of real equipment once? Personally, I think of myself as a musician and not a stagehand, so anything that can reduce the amount of load-in work I have to do appeals to me.

### Making The Models

Creating models of most band equipment is not difficult, since amps, speaker cabinets, electronic equipment racks,

sound boards, and similar equipment are basically cubic in design, and call for simple measurements of their various surfaces in order to create the models. Obviously, drums are a different story, but you don't actually need to make models of each drum. What you need to do is figure out the amount of floor space that your drumkit takes up and simply make a model for that. I suggest that you also measure how high your stands extend, and make your model a cube, showing the total airspace occupied by you, your drumkit, your riser (if you have one), etc. If other equipment shares space with your riser, or is fitted in around your drum stands, you'll have to make some allowance for that.

It's important to make three-dimensional models, since sound equipment is often stacked, and you need to know what

Figure 1

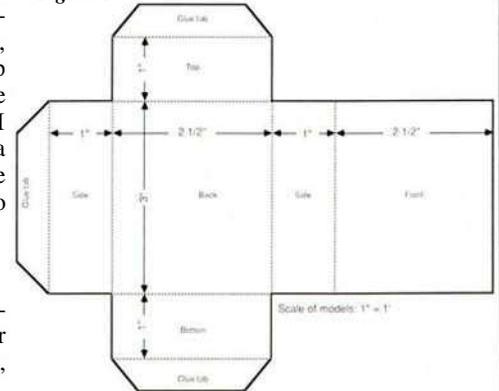
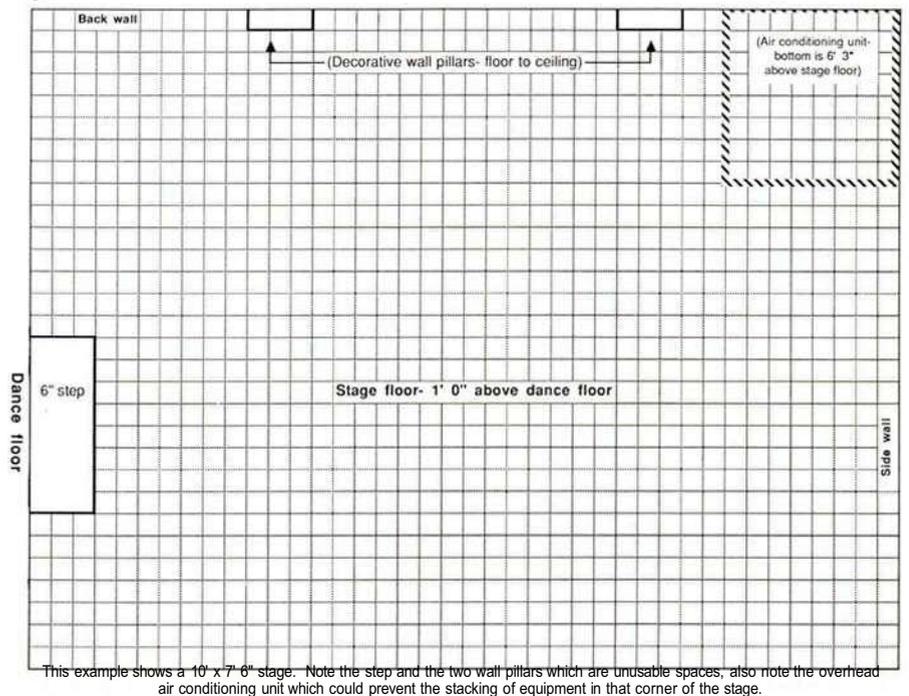


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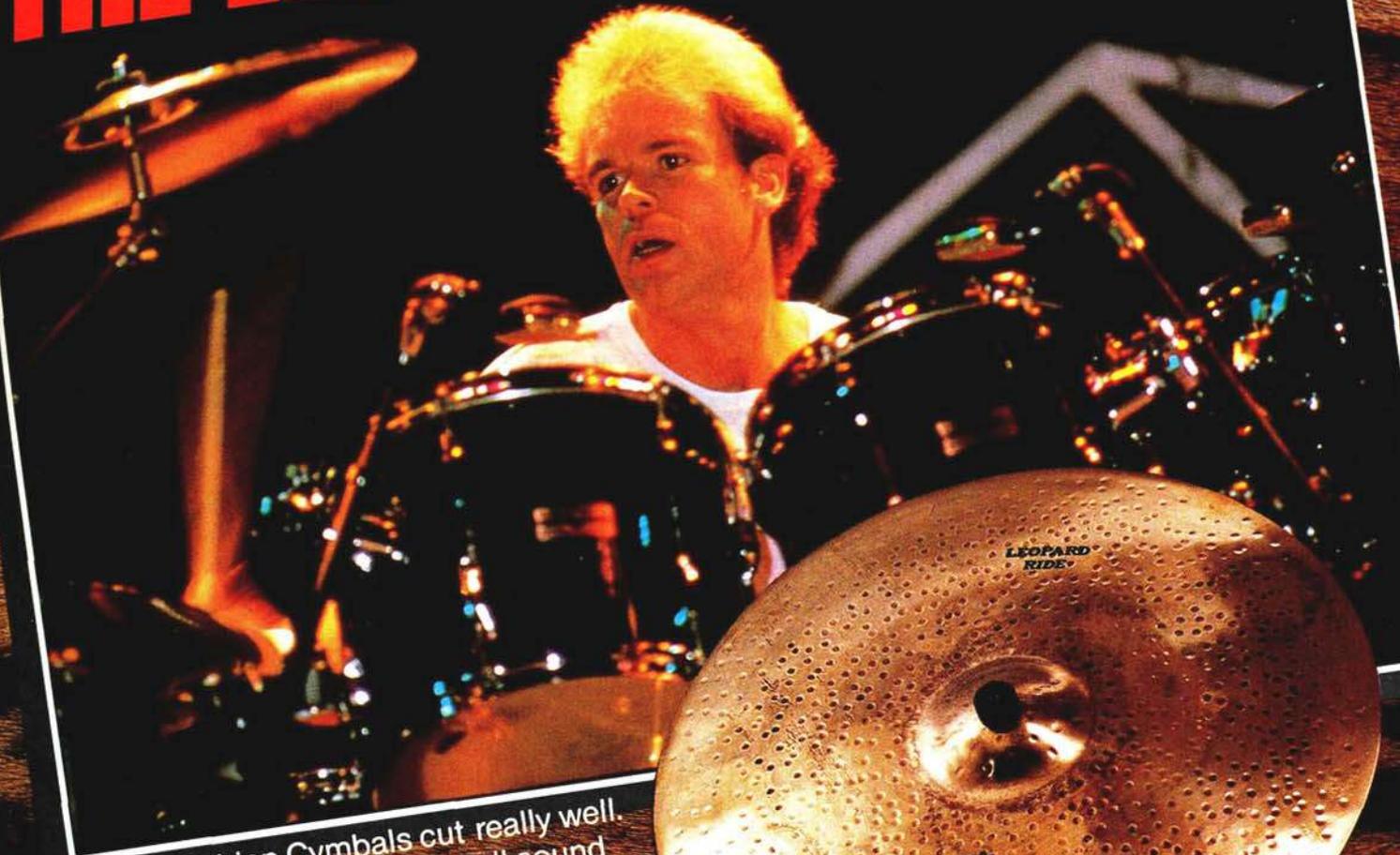
This example shows a 10' x 7'-6" stage. Note the step and the two wall pillars which are unusable spaces, also note the overhead air conditioning unit which could prevent the stacking of equipment in that corner of the stage.

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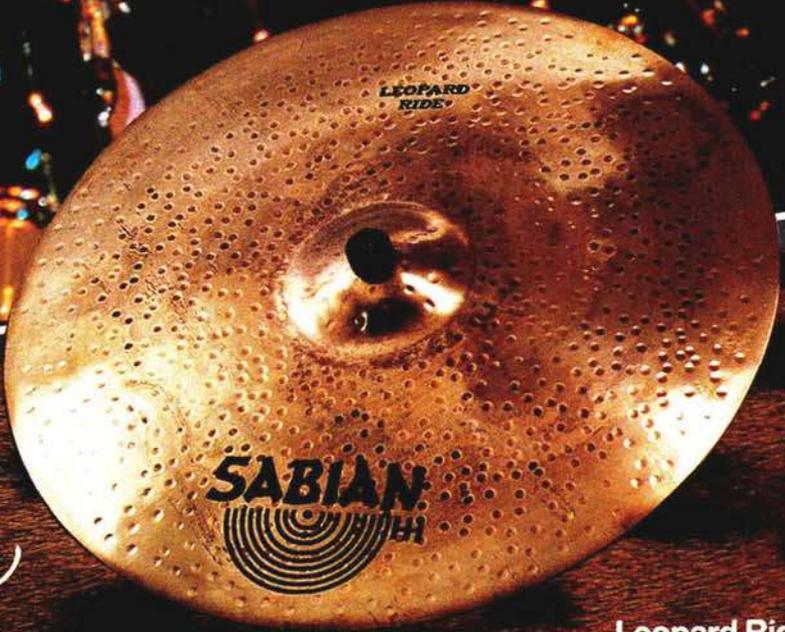
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can stack on what and how high it can go. Don't forget that club stages are often tucked into alcoves or have other similar architectural height obstructions, and you need to know whether or not your stack of P.A. speakers is going to fit where you want it to.

I've found that the easiest way to create models is by the use of a heavy paper called tagboard. It's a material with some stiffness and durability so it can hold a shape, but it also can be drawn on, cut, folded, and glued easily.

To create a model of a piece of equipment, you first have to measure all of its surfaces. Then it's just a matter of using a particular scale to miniaturize those measurements. I've found that a scale of 1" = 1' works very well, because in that scale, it's fairly easy to transfer measurements as small as one inch accurately. (In one-inch scale, 1/2" = 6", W = 3", 1/8" = 1 1/2", etc.) Also, this scale works well in conjunction with floor plans on W graph paper, which I'll explain later.

In order to make a model of a typical speaker cabinet, the measurements must be laid out—in scale—on your tagboard, creating a pattern such as is shown in Figure 1. This design makes for a fairly strong model, because it's actually one single piece of tagboard, rather than several pieces glued together. For our example, I've used a theoretical speaker cabinet that is 3' high, 2 1/2' wide, and 1' deep. Thus, our model will be 3" high, 2 1/2" wide, and 1" deep. Note that on Figure 1 the solid lines indicate where the model is to be cut out; dashed lines indicate where the tagboard is to be folded. Gluing tabs are also indicated; these are used to allow you to glue the various surfaces together. (Before you cut out the model, it's a good idea to label it according to what piece of equipment it represents.)

Cut out the pattern as indicated. Then, crease all the various folds sharply toward you. This should allow you to create the model's three-dimensional shape. Glue the surfaces together where the glue tabs meet an opposite surface, and voila! You now have a miniature version of your speaker cabinet. Repeat this process for each and

every separate item involved in your stage setup. It may be a bit tedious at this point, but it will save you hours of back-breaking labor in the future. Once you have the models, you need never make them again (provided you take care of them); you'll only need to add new ones if and when you add new equipment.

### Creating The Floor Plan

A floor plan is nothing more than a diagram of the shape and area of the stage. If you play on several different stages regularly, you'll need a floor plan for each one. All you need to do is measure the periphery of the stage, being sure to take the measurements of any posts, moldings, steps, or other architectural features that affect the area. If you're already set up in a club now, get the measurements while you're there, so that you'll be able to make a floor plan for the next time you return. If you know where you're going next, visit that club, get the measurements, and make your floor plan ahead of time, so that you'll be able to plan your next setup before you break down from your current one.

Obviously, if you're on the road, you may not have the convenience of being able to run over to the next club and get measurements ahead of time. But I've been on the road, and I know that my days were often quite boring—living in a motel room in a small town for two or more weeks—and I found myself looking for things to keep me occupied. If your next booking is within a reasonable day's round-trip driving distance, it might be an excellent idea to occupy yourself by making an excursion to scout out the premises and get the measurements you need (noting any other problems that you might encounter with your setup, and perhaps meeting the management at the same time). I stress the point that this should *only* be done if the trip is practical for you and does not jeopardize your being back in time for your current gig. But if you can comfortably make the trip, the information you'll gain might save you hours of tension and hard work when you move into the next location. (Even if you can't, the time it will take to measure the stage

when you first arrive will be well spent.)

Once you have your measurements, it's a simple matter to lay them out on a sheet of paper, which then becomes your floor plan. I use W graph paper, which offers the advantage of breaking the dimensions down into a quick visual-reference format. In one-inch scale, each square on the graph paper represents a 3" x 3" square area on stage; four squares equal 1'. Using this scale, it's not only easy to see how the equipment will best fit onto the stage, but it's also easy to determine how much floor space will be available for people to stand, move, etc. (Using graph paper also makes it easy to create a floor plan quickly upon arriving at a new club, without the need for drafting tools.)

If, when you were taking your stage measurements, you found that a low ceiling extended over part or all of the stage, or a fan or lighting fixture blocked a certain area, or any other height limitation existed, that should be notated on the floor plan in the appropriate area of the floor over which the obstruction exists. That way, when you place your models on your floor plan, you can quickly determine whether or not you have the height you need to stack items in that area of the stage. (See Figure 2.)

### Using The Models And Floor Plan

The whole idea of using the models and the floor plan is to allow you to design—in advance—the placement and positioning of your equipment. Whenever possible, this should be done before you leave your current gig, when there is plenty of time to experiment and discuss options. If that isn't possible, it should still be done before you begin your setup at your new gig. Any time lost to working with the models will be more than made up in the efficient, organized setup that results. This, in turn, should reduce the pressure that comes with a rushed setup in an unfamiliar situation, along with reducing the sheer physical strain of repeatedly moving heavy equipment.

If you play several clubs regularly, you'll quickly acquire a file of floor plans with which to work as you travel "the circuit." You may discover that, when you come into a new club (either in town or on the road), the dimensions of the new stage will be so similar to one you already have diagramed that you can use the familiar setup from that club. But you *won't* discover that unless you have the measurements of the new stage, the floor plan of the old, and the opportunity to work with your models. So take the time necessary to create the models you need to represent your band's equipment, and then make it a point to create floor plans for your stages. Use these tools regularly to help you plan ahead, and you'll find that your load-ins will quickly become "model setups." 

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**4 THURSDAY SEPTEMBER**

SEPTEMBER 1988  
 SUN MON TUE WED THUR FRI SAT  
 1 2 3 4 5 6  
 7 8 9 10 11 12 13  
 14 15 16 17 18 19 20  
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27  
 28 29 30

8:00  
 8:30  
 9:00  
 9:30  
 10:00 RALPH HUMPHREY - Studio Drumming Video  
 10:30  
 11:00 PRACTICE SESSION - LAB 13  
 11:30  
 12:00 Sign up for Demo recording  
 12:30 LUNCH  
 1:00  
 1:30 HI TECH CLASS  
 2:00 -Play Linn Arrangement  
 2:30  
 3:00  
 3:30  
 4:00 SEMINAR  
 4:30 w/ROD MORGENSTEIN  
 5:00  
 5:30  
 6:00  
 6:30  
 7:00  
 7:30  
 8:00  
 8:30

*I'm Savoring The Whiskey 10pm!*

**5 FRIDAY SEPTEMBER**

OCTOBER 1988  
 SUN MON TUE WED THUR FRI SAT  
 1 2 3 4  
 5 6 7 8 9 10 11  
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18  
 19 20 21 22 23 24 25  
 26 27 28 29 30 31

10:30 BAND REHEARSAL (work on "Tom Sawyer")  
 11:00 PLAYING TECHNIQUE VIDEO  
 11:30  
 12:00 PRACTICE SESSION - LAB-11  
 12:30  
 1:00 PRIVATE LESSON  
 1:30  
 2:00 LUNCH  
 2:30  
 3:00 JEFF PORCARO - OPEN COUNSELING C-12  
 3:30  
 4:00 ROCK PERFORMANCE CLASS  
 4:30  
 5:00  
 5:30  
 6:00  
 6:30  
 7:00  
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 8:00

SATURDAY  
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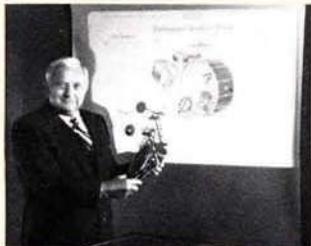
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## WILLIAM F. LUDWIG, JR., PERCUSSION LECTURES



ting the stage for latter-day mass merchandising of drum outfits). The first drum pedal—designed by Mr. Ludwig's father, William F. Ludwig, Sr.—was passed through the audience, while Mr. Ludwig, Jr., offered a running commentary on the formation of Ludwig & Ludwig in those distant years.

The Selmer Company recently sponsored a series of percussion lectures by William F. Ludwig, Jr., President of Ludwig Industries. The lectures, aimed at university-level percussion students and method classes, took place during the 1985-86 school year, and consisted of a history of percussion from 1776 through the silent picture era and up to the present time. With the aid of 150 color slides, Mr. Ludwig took the viewer on a walk through history from the days of Revolutionary War-era rope-tuned drums, to the sound effects of the silent movies, and up to and including tours of both the Ludwig drum plants and the Musser mallet instrument factories. Along the way, a presentation of pages from the Ludwig catalog of 1926 explained how the first drum outfits were put together (set-

Mr. Ludwig also brought sound effects from his private collection to enhance the excitement of the presentation. Included were such rare machines as the steam locomotive effect, the cuckoo contraption, and various animal calls. Students had an opportunity to handle and play these rare artifacts. The percussion lecture was designed to encompass a normal, 60-minute class period, but could be expanded to include playing demonstrations when time permitted. Ample time was always set aside for questions from the audience.

A continuation of this lecture series is planned for the 1986-87 school year. Interested parties should contact Jim Catalano, Marketing Manager, Ludwig Division of The Selmer Company, Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515.

## PHILLIPS, BRZEZICKI TOUR FOR ZILDJIAN Z CYMBALS

Simon Phillips recently conducted a series of clinics in Europe and the U.K. to introduce Zildjian's Z series cymbals. He was joined in the U.K. by Big Country's Mark Brzezicki. The clinic tour started at Blazer's Nightclub in Windsor (England). Over 1,300 drummers packed the club to see Mark and Simon in action.

Mark demonstrated his sense of time and dynamics, along with explaining the importance of the rhythm section to any band. He illustrated this by playing with his brother, Steve, on bass. Then Simon excited

the crowd with his energetic playing, after which he explained in detail the design philosophy and construction techniques involved in the various models of the new Z series cymbals. For those unable to attend, Zildjian videotaped the event; drummers will be able to view highlights at Zildjian dealers in the near future. Following the Windsor performance, Simon went on to performances in Frankfurt and Koblenz (Germany), Paris (France), and Amsterdam (The Netherlands), where he was met with record attendances in each venue.

## SHAUGHNESSY ENDORSES PRO-MARK

Ed Shaughnessy, driving force behind the *Tonight Show* band and his own Energy Force big band, has joined the Pro-Mark family of endorsers, according to Pat Brown, Pro-Mark's Artist Relations Manager. Brown says, "Ed is truly one of the most respected professionals in music today, and is an impor-

tant influence on those drummers and educators fortunate enough to attend his many clinics. We are especially honored and enthused to be associated with Ed. His choice of sticks is the brand new Pro-Mark ZX Series 707, which, we're proud to say, bear his name."

## CARL ALLEN CLINIC



Mozingo Music, of St. Louis, Missouri, and Sabian Cymbals recently co-sponsored a clinic by jazz drummer Carl Allen. Carl's presentation was directed at drummers of all ages, and included some audience participation. He began with a solo and then went on to explain all the different aspects

of the solo he had just played. He explained in detail his concepts on drumming and how they should be applied to playing all areas of percussion.

In a second portion of his clinic, Carl focused on Latin percussion, explaining and demonstrating the congas, timbales, shakers, and also Latin beats on drumset. At this point, Carl chose volunteers from the audience to accompany him on various percussion instruments. According to Jeff Mozingo, owner of Mozingo Music, "Carl is one of the most versatile and talented percussionists I've ever heard, and his knowledge of percussion shows in everything he plays. This was by far one of the best clinics ever to happen in St. Louis."

## NEW SABIAN ARTISTS

Sabian Cymbals recently announced that rock legend Carmine Appice (now with King Kobra), Richie Hayward (formerly of Little Feat and now with Robert Plant), Pat Mastelotto (Mr. Mister), and Donny Baldwin (Starship) are among an impressive group of artists now playing Sabian cymbals. Also recently added to the

Sabian artist roster are Bob Becker (a founding member of the percussion ensemble Nexus), Jim Blair (Animotion), Anders Johansson (Yngwie Malmsteen), Mugs Cain (Eric Martin), and Kathy Burkly (Girls' Night Out). Sabian cymbals were also featured recently on the Monkees 20th Anniversary Reunion Tour.

## NEVITT AND RIFF RITE, BARCUS-BERRY

Stu Nevitt, drummer for the jazz-fusion group Shadowfax, is now using Riff Rite graphite drumsticks exclusively. According to Stu, "My Riff Rites give me a brighter cymbal sound with better definition, and a drum sound that's very

punchy. Also, the sticks are very durable; I get a good eight to nine months of hard playing out of every pair." Stu is also using Barcus-Berry's professional drumhead pickup to fill his triggering needs for electronic percussion.





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## NEW PEDALS FROM PEARL

Pearl International recently announced the introduction of three new pedals: the *P-880* chain-drive bass drum pedal, the *P-882TW* double chain-drive pedal, and the *RH-800* remote hi-hat. The single pedal features a durable plastic half-wheel cam with a molded, felt-lined channel to guide the chain, rather than the conventional sprocket. A new, lightweight footboard reminiscent of the "old" Gretsch/Camco design is included, along with other improved design features.

The *P-882TW* double pedal is a combination of the *P880TW* Slave Unit and the new *P-880* single pedal. The double pedal system features a telescopic, hexagonal connecting shaft that is secured by two

drumkey-operated set screws, two standard equipment universal joints protected by lubrication-filled "rubber boots," an adjustable Slave Beater Ball, and other design improvements. The Slave Unit is adaptable to most conventional pedals.

The *RH-800* remote hi-hat features cable-operated action, a durable chain connection between the footboard and the cable on the slave unit, fully adjustable spring tension, a 6 1/2" cable, and an extra nut to secure the bottom cymbal for tilted hi-hat positioning. For further information on this unit, or any of Pearl's products, contact Pearl International, Inc., P.O. Box 111240, Nashville, TN 37222-1240, (615)833-4477.

## AKG D-112 MICROPHONE



The new AKG *D-112* Dynamic Mic' was designed to be a companion to the renowned *D-12E*, which is so popular as a kick drum mic'. The *D-112's* frequency response (20-17,000

Hz) is tailored to reproduce a kick drum's natural punch and quick attack, without the typical need to use high and mid band equalization. It is well suited for use on instruments where clean low frequencies and quick transient response are required. Sound pressure levels greatly exceeding the threshold of pain are handled cleanly and without distortion. The mic' is low impedance (210 Ohms) and comes fitted with a standard three-pin male XLR connector. Its design is unique and utilizes the construction techniques of the *D-300* series of performance mic's. Contact your AKG dealer for further information.

## LARRIE LONDIN VIDEOS

Larrie Londin has recently completed two, two-hour videos, *Step By Step By Larrie Londin* and *The Other Side Of The Sticks With Larrie Londin*, both shot in Las Vegas during actual clinic appearances by Larrie. In the videos, Larrie talks candidly with the viewer about his success in music and the importance of going that "extra step" to perfect your

talent. He takes the audience step by step through three separate sets of drums (stage, studio, and electronic), and discusses the use of cymbals, snares, and pedals, along with how to tune drums. Both videos are by Glendower Productions, and should be available in major music stores and video markets that offer music/instructional videos.

## DW TWO-WAY BEATERS



Drum Workshop's new *101* Two-Way Beater makes it possible for you to get a different sound out of your bass drum without changing beaters. The two-way design offers a choice of using the hard solid side or the softer felt side. According

to the company, both sides hit a larger area of the bass drum head than do conventional round beaters, so you get a more powerful attack and a bigger, fatter sound. The beaters are made with a "stress proof" shaft that is standard on all DW pedals, and come in straight or bent-shaft models for single or double pedals. Contact Drum Workshop, 2697 Lavery Ct., Unit #16, Newbury Park, CA 91320, (805) 499-6863 for additional information.

## NEW PRODUCTS FROM DYNACORD

Dynacord recently introduced three new products in its electronic percussion line: a totally redesigned pad drumkit, the *ADD-one* Advanced Digital Drum computer, and the *Rhythm Stick* remote MIDI controller. Dynacord's new *Power-Pads* feature a futuristic, ultra-slender design and a new playing surface that includes a spring design (compliance-controlled suspension) to create a playing surface that "gives" under impact, but returns to the original state without subsequent reverberation. Also new with the kit is the *Power-Kick* bass drum unit, designed to respond just like a natural bass drum head. The very low, spring-mounted mass lends the pad ultra-rapid rebound. Dynacord's *Drum-Caddy* mounting system completes the new electronic drumkit. It is a tripod-base rack system that allows multiple custom mounting of the *Power-Pads*. (The *Power-Kick* unit stands independently.)

As a source of percussion sounds, Dynacord offers the *Add-one* Advanced Digital Drums fully programmable percussion computer. This unit features full MIDI implementation, programmable eight-channel routing, a sample library expandable to 90 sounds in memory, programmability to 128 patch positions of drumsets, multiple sample triggering from single pads, separate mas-

ter and monitor outputs as well as a headphone amplifier, eight VCFs, eight VCAs, eight LFOs, 24 envelope generators, and eight programmable digital delays. Each individual channel features a wide variety of programmable parameters, all displayed on a high-contrast, 80-character LCD. The unit even includes a "Help" mode to ensure user-friendliness.

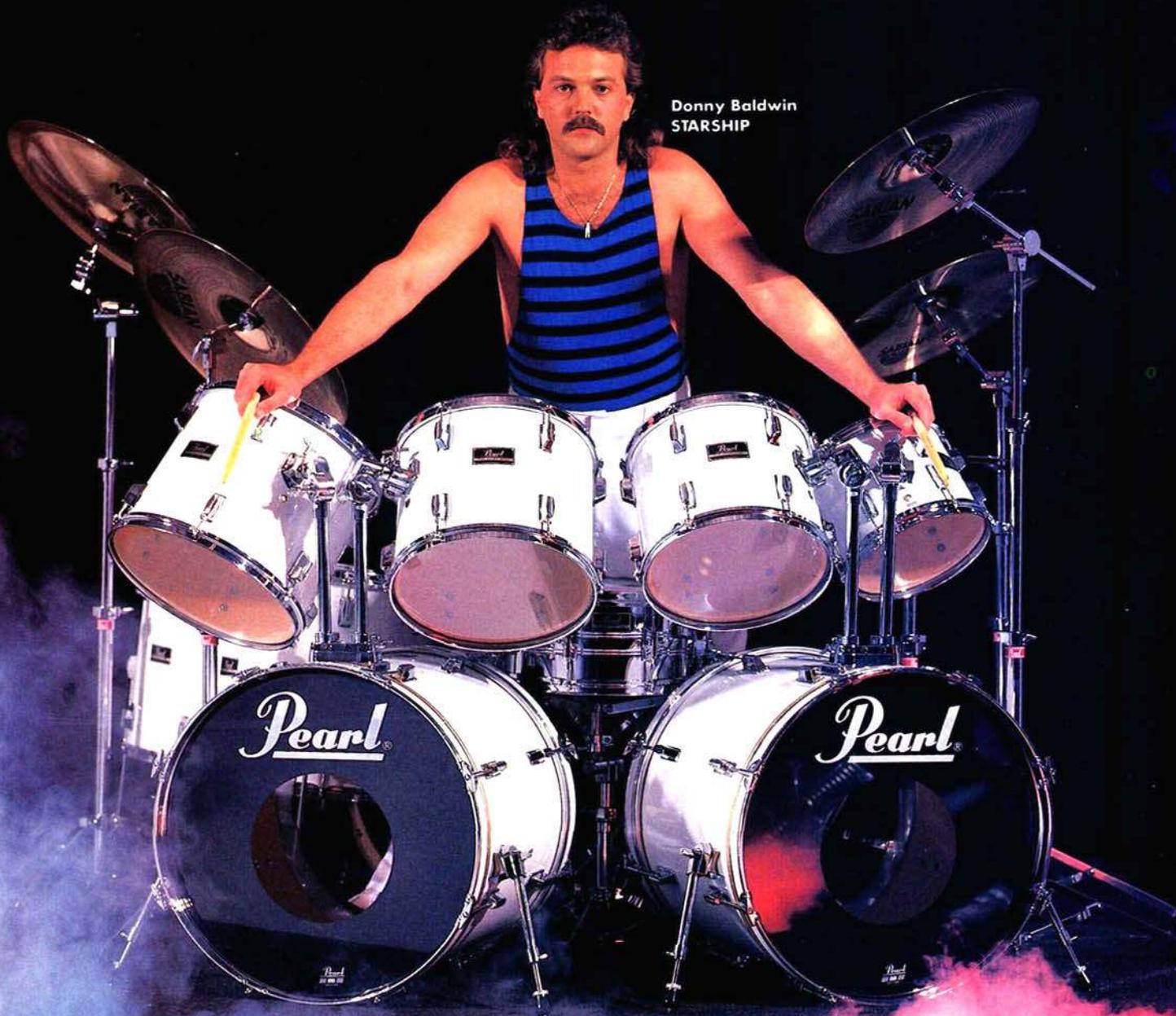
Also new from Dynacord is the *Rhythm Stick* remote MIDI controller, a guitar-shaped unit that allows the drummer/percussionist to play any MIDI instrument (rhythm machines, drum processors, keyboards, etc.) from the front of the stage. The controller features eight trigger selectors to specify the "instruments" used, and two slap sensors with which the selected sounds can be played. All eight sounds can be triggered simultaneously. The *Rhythm Stick* remembers all programs entered in its user-programmable memory. A three-digit LED display shows the program or preset number. A "peak" LED indicates the maximum value for velocity MIDI data, so that it is possible to adapt to different playing techniques without sacrificing dynamics. For more information on any of Dynacord's new products, contact Europa Technology, Inc., 1638 West Washington Blvd., Venice, CA 90291, (213) 392-4985.



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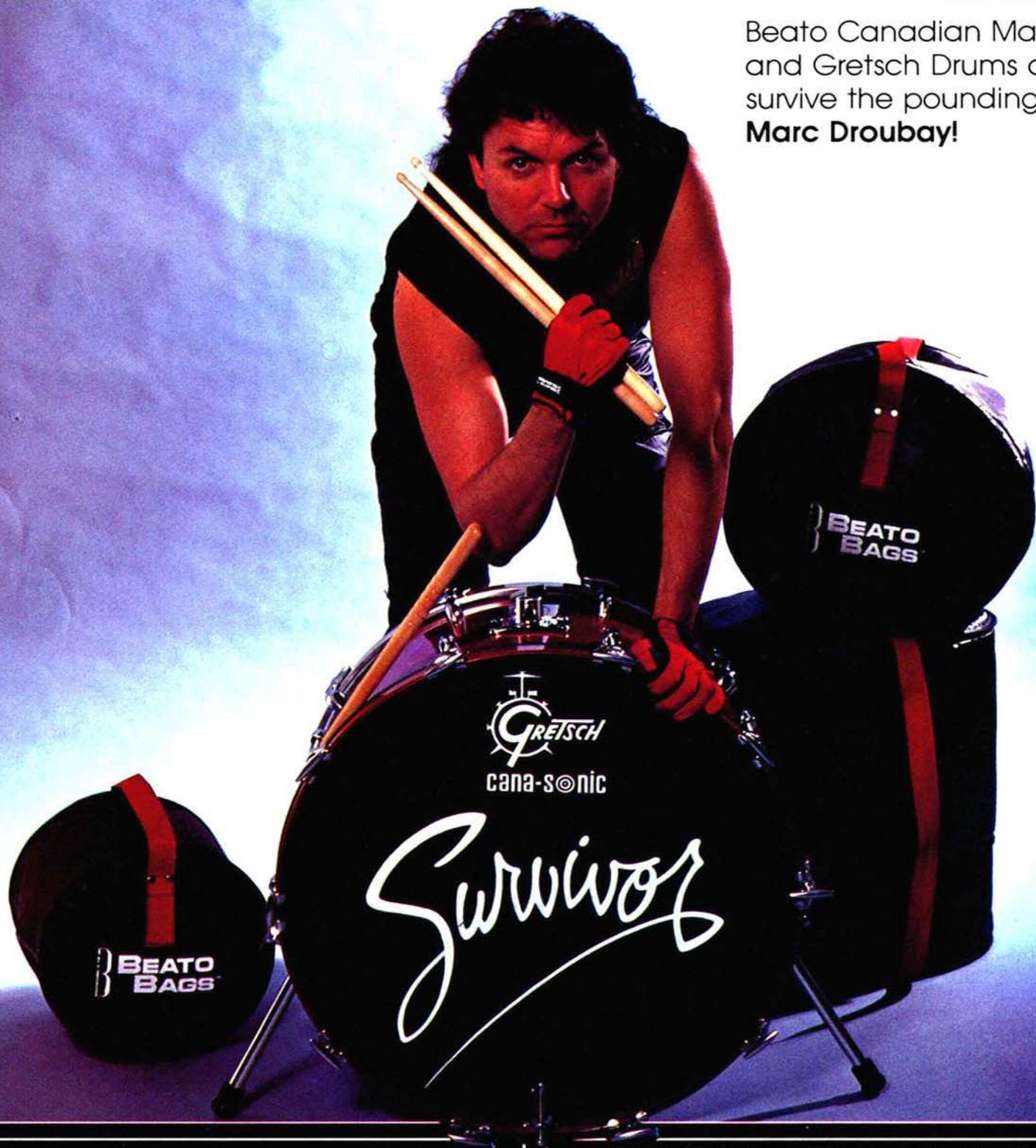


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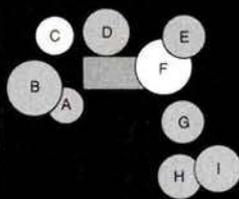
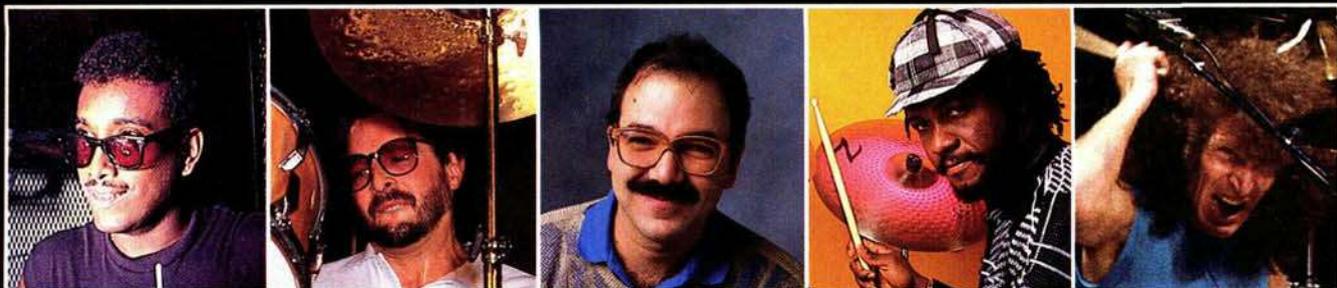
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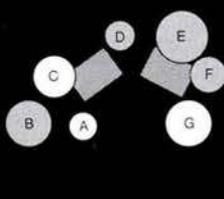
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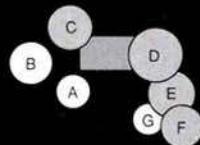
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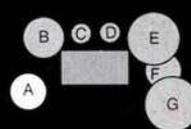
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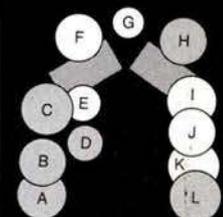
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