

# MODERN DRUMMER™



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FEBRUARY 1987

The World's First International Magazine For Drummers



**Anton  
Fig**

**CONNIE KAY  
JERRY KROON**

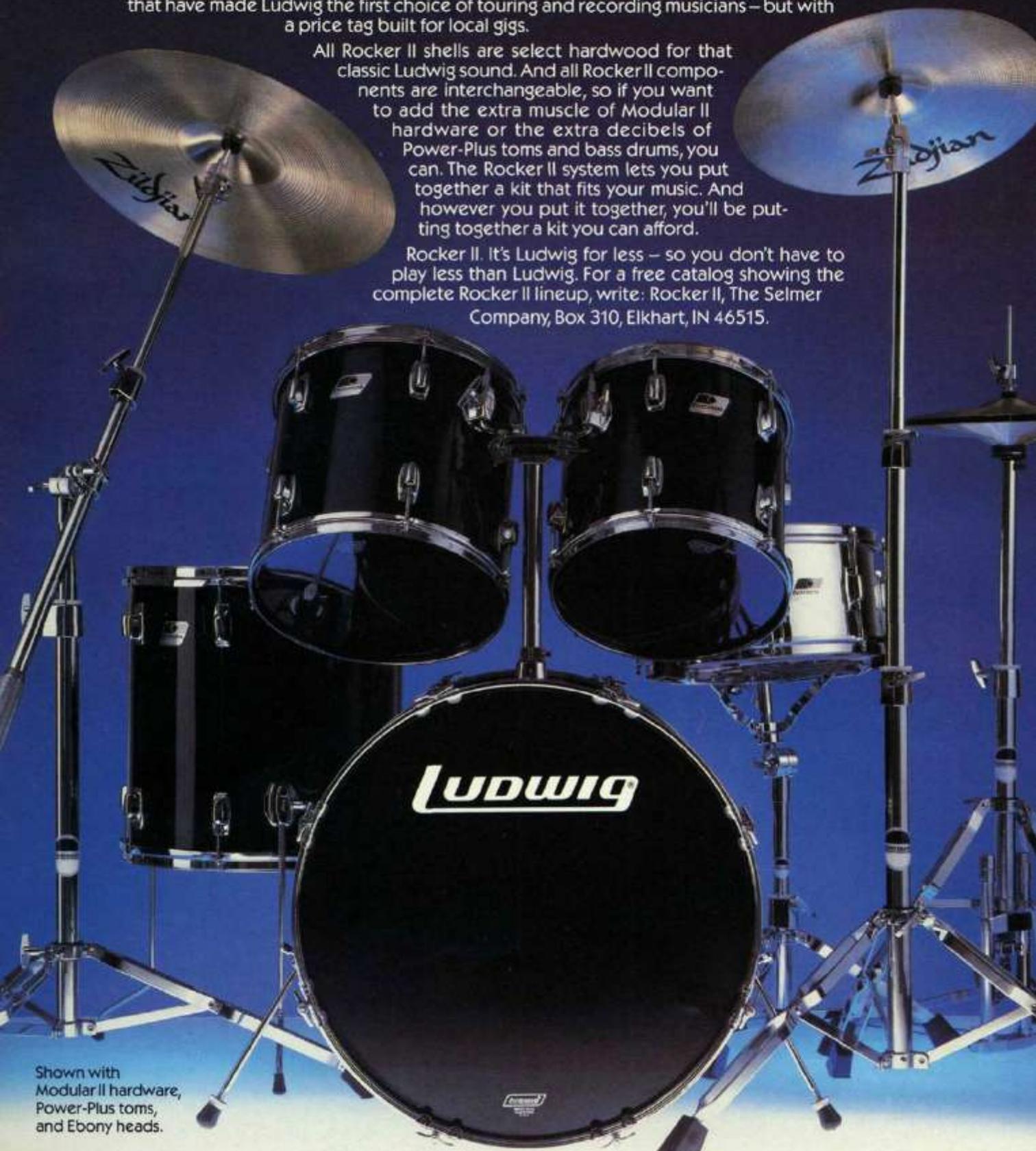
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# Features

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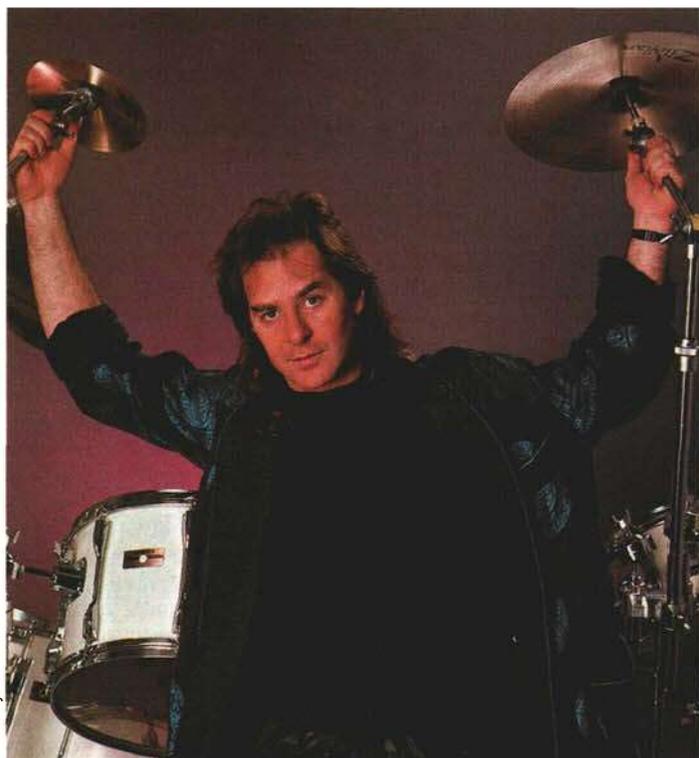


Photo by Ebet Roberts

## ANTON FIG

Taking over the drum chair on *Late Night With David Letterman* has suddenly given Anton Fig a lot of exposure, but his credits on records by such artists as Mick Jagger, Cyndi Lauper, and Kiss prove that he's more than just an overnight sensation.

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## CONNIE KAY

Best known for his work with the Modern Jazz Quartet, Connie Kay has also worked with Benny Goodman and Cannonball Adderley, and even drummed on a number of early rock 'n' roll records.

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## JERRY KROON

Although breaking into the Nashville scene can be difficult, Jerry Kroon's work with Reba McEntire, Terri Gibbs, and Ricky Scaggs proves that he had what it took.

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## NEW YORK'S HIGH SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

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# EDITOR'S OVERVIEW



## Gretsch Rescues Slingerland

For months, rumors had been circulating on the condition of the Slingerland Drum Company. The first of these rumors began to reach our office nearly a year ago, yet, *no one* could get a straight answer or a clear evaluation of the situation. Later, we learned that several firms were considering the purchase of the company, but up until very recently, many of us in the industry had just about written Slingerland off the books—that is, until up popped Fred Gretsch. Fred, owner of the Gretsch Drum Company, revealed that he had decided to purchase Slingerland in the hopes of breathing new life into the floundering firm.

Slingerland's history can be traced back to 1916, when H. H. Slingerland founded the Slingerland Banjo and Drum Company in Chicago. Just before World War II, the company discontinued banjos to devote its full energy to drum manufacturing. When Bud Slingerland, son of the founder, became president, he soon established Slingerland as one of the largest, most innovative drum companies in the world. It was during Bud's reign that the firm introduced the famous *Radio King* line, and Slingerland endorsers included everyone from Davey Tough and Sid Catlett, to Cozy Cole, Ray McKinley, and Buddy Rich. And of course, the presence of Gene Krupa behind Slingerland drums, first with Benny Goodman and later with his own band, added prestige that was pretty hard to match during the heyday of the big bands.

In 1970, Slingerland was bought by the MacMillan Publishing Company and remained under that banner until 1980, when it was purchased by music company entrepreneur Dan Henkin. Four years later, Slingerland reverted back to more of a family type operation when it was purchased by the Sanlar Company, who maintained ownership until the recent Gretsch takeover.

Determining exactly where, when, and why

things fell apart for Slingerland is not easy. We do know that it wasn't one problem that appeared overnight, but rather a series of events over a lengthy period, which ate away at the fiber of a once successful company. Valiant attempts were made by Sanlar to lift the shadow that had been cast over Slingerland during the past few years, but apparently, too much damage had already been inflicted. Dwindling sales, inefficient service, a poor image, minimal advertising visibility, and a soft acoustic market were problems that plagued Slingerland in an era of survival of the fittest. Finally, time and good fortune just seemed to run out, and a once superb reputation was not sufficient to keep this sinking ship afloat—until Gretsch appeared.

Of course, there's no guarantee that Gretsch can revitalize a company that has been in poor shape for a while now. Only time will tell. Slingerland had a great many serious problems, which did not win the company any favor among dealers who carried the line and the consumers who purchased from them. However, the Gretsch people have already been making the necessary moves for a smooth transition, which entails moving all inventory and equipment from Illinois to a 22,000-square-foot facility in South Carolina. A confident Fred Gretsch claims that he's pleased to have the company under his wing and to have the opportunity to keep Slingerland American-made.

The reality of all this is that another great American drum legacy *nearly* slipped by us, leaving us with only the remnants of a company that was once great. Not unlike Rogers Drums, which died a slow, painful death not long ago, the demise of Slingerland would have marked the end of another era that, sadly, could never have been replaced. *Modern Drummer* extends its best wishes to Gretsch/Slingerland.

RS

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*MODERN DRUMMER Magazine* (ISSN 0194-4533) is published monthly by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.** 870 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Second-Class Postage paid at Cedar Grove, NJ 07009 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 1987 by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$22.95 per year; \$41.95, two years. Single copies \$2.75.

MANUSCRIPTS: Modern Drummer welcomes manuscripts, however, cannot assume responsibility for them. Manuscripts must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

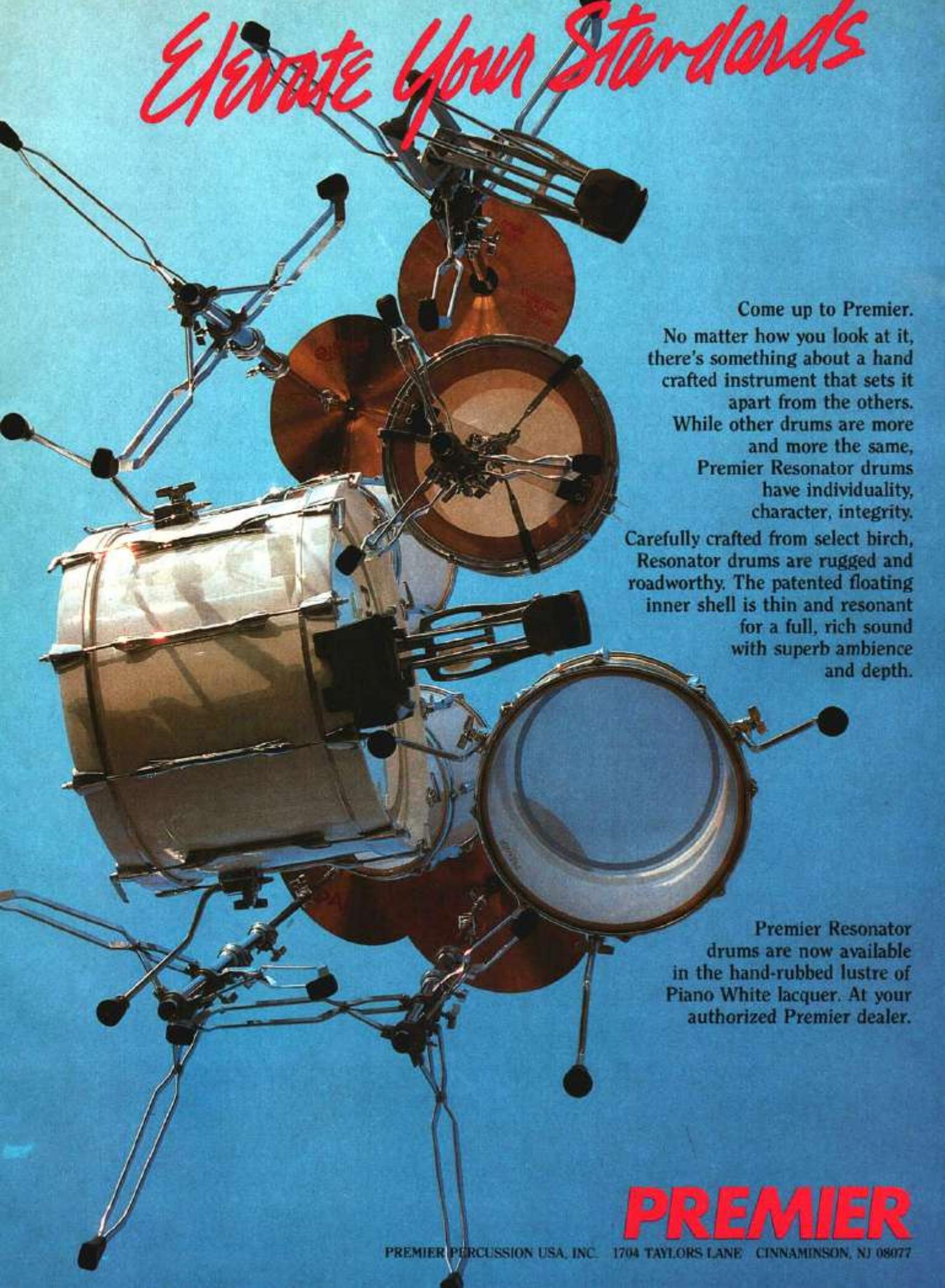
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MUSIC DEALERS: Modern Drummer is available for resale at bulk rates. Direct correspondence to Modern Drummer, Dealer Service, 870 Pompton Ave., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Tel: 800-221-1988 or 201-239-4140.

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## STAYING IN SHAPE

Thanks for the great series "Staying In Shape: Tips From The Pros," in your October and November issues. I'd like to share a tip that has proven to really work for me. I've attached my *Billy Gladstone* practice pad to the handlebars of my stationary bike. Not only does this help my chops, but it really keeps me pedaling away without getting bored at all. The coordination factor of using the feet and hands has really improved my independence, as well. I hope this idea proves useful to others.

Mike Roth  
Jacksonville, FL

## THANKS TO TERRY

It is refreshing to be able to talk to someone at an American drum company who will take the time to talk with you, make some suggestions from past experience, and take a special order—one that you get before "Ringo becomes a great-great-grandfather." Terry Thirion, at Impact Industries in Wausau, Wisconsin, makes a superior product and welcomes user feedback. I would like to thank the staff and writers at *MD*, since I was introduced to this phenomenal drum through a product review in your magazine. I know not how others may think, but as for me, I like the way you do the things you do.

Garry "Thump" Dixon  
High Point, NC

## REGARDS TO ROY

I would like to commend Roy Burns, and *Modern Drummer*, for Roy's informative and inspirational *Concepts* articles. Throughout these articles, Roy shares with us his warmth, sensitivity, encouragement, and sense of humor. His personality and

creative ability to convey a feeling of comradery and support among drummers is enhanced throughout his writings.

I empathize with Roy's philosophy of the "natural approach" to playing and instructing: setting the guidelines and then letting the students develop at their own pace in accordance with their individual talents. Adhering to this idea—freely expressing one's creativity on the instrument—encourages a musical exchange of ideas in any playing situation. It exposes the student to the most natural and conducive method of playing, thus helping him or her to become not only a better player, but, more importantly, a better person.

I know that many of my students are touched by Roy's articles and approach, and have been left with much more insight and understanding in interpreting their own individual playing capabilities. The articles have also influenced my personal approach to playing, and will continue to do so throughout my career.

Lawrence S. Levine  
Saratoga Springs, NY

## JOE MORELLO

I was a teenager playing drums in various basement bands throughout the '60s. Like thousands of my peers, I idolized Joe Morello. It was a thrill to see and hear Joe perform with the Dave Brubeck Quartet, and I took advantage of every opportunity. A lot of drummers learned the true meaning of musical creativity and technique when Joe did his thing at the concerts and clinics.

Nearly 15 years later, I had the wonderful fortune to meet Joe and to study with him. Although the drums are an avocation with me and not my life's work, Joe respected my desire to learn, and agreed to work with me. Geographic distance dictated a less-than-ideal situation, but I was

able to grasp the basic concepts upon which Joe has built his incredible technique. What Joe has taught me with respect to the drums has carried over into every other aspect of my life.

Joe's approach is truly a natural one based on logic and common sense. However, it is a departure from today's norm of "same day service" and "overnight delivery." His approach requires hard work, discipline, patience, and persistence. It requires goal-setting and it strives for excellence. These values can be of benefit to any person in any endeavor. Joe taught me the importance of these things. (By the way, I learned quite a bit about drum technique, and greatly improved my playing in the process.)

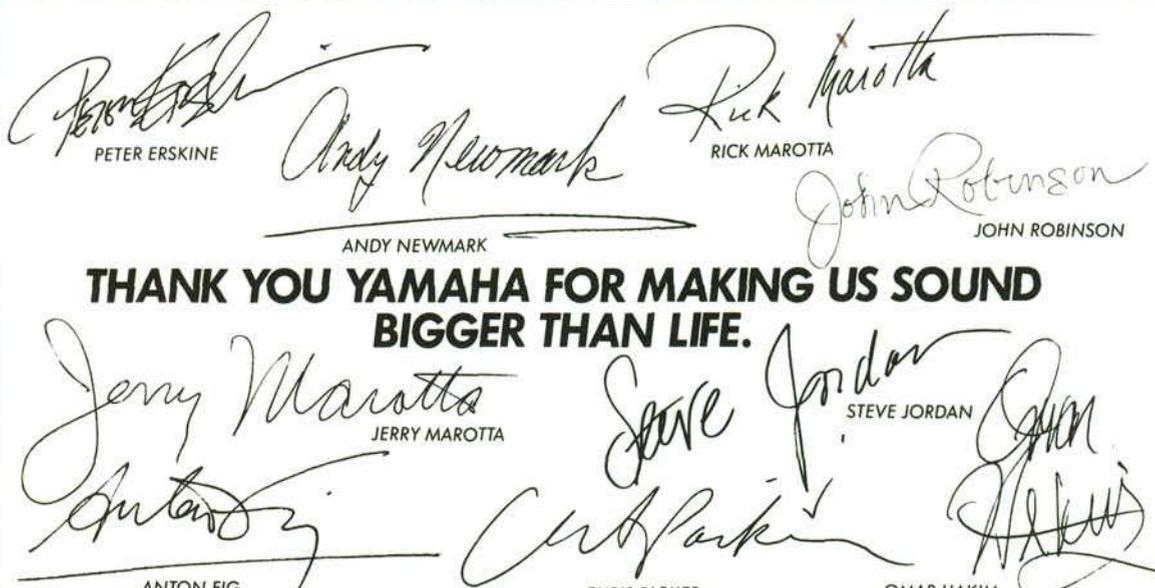
Simply stated, Joe Morello has influenced me more than anyone else I've ever known. Joe's sincerity, down-to-earth outlook, willingness to give of himself, and oftentimes prankish sense of humor make him one beautiful human being. I was very happy to see your feature article on him in the November '86 issue; my only criticism is that it was long overdue.

Joe Scott  
Chicago, IL

## KUDOS TO KENNY

My son and I recently attended a drum clinic in Louisville, Kentucky, that featured Kenny Aronoff. I have seen him on tour with John Cougar Mellencamp, but that didn't demonstrate how good he really is. My thanks go to *Modern Drummer* for the fine article on Kenny earlier this year [June '86] and also to Dave Beck at Mom's Music in Louisville for presenting Kenny's drum clinic.

Tim Miles   
North Vernon, IN

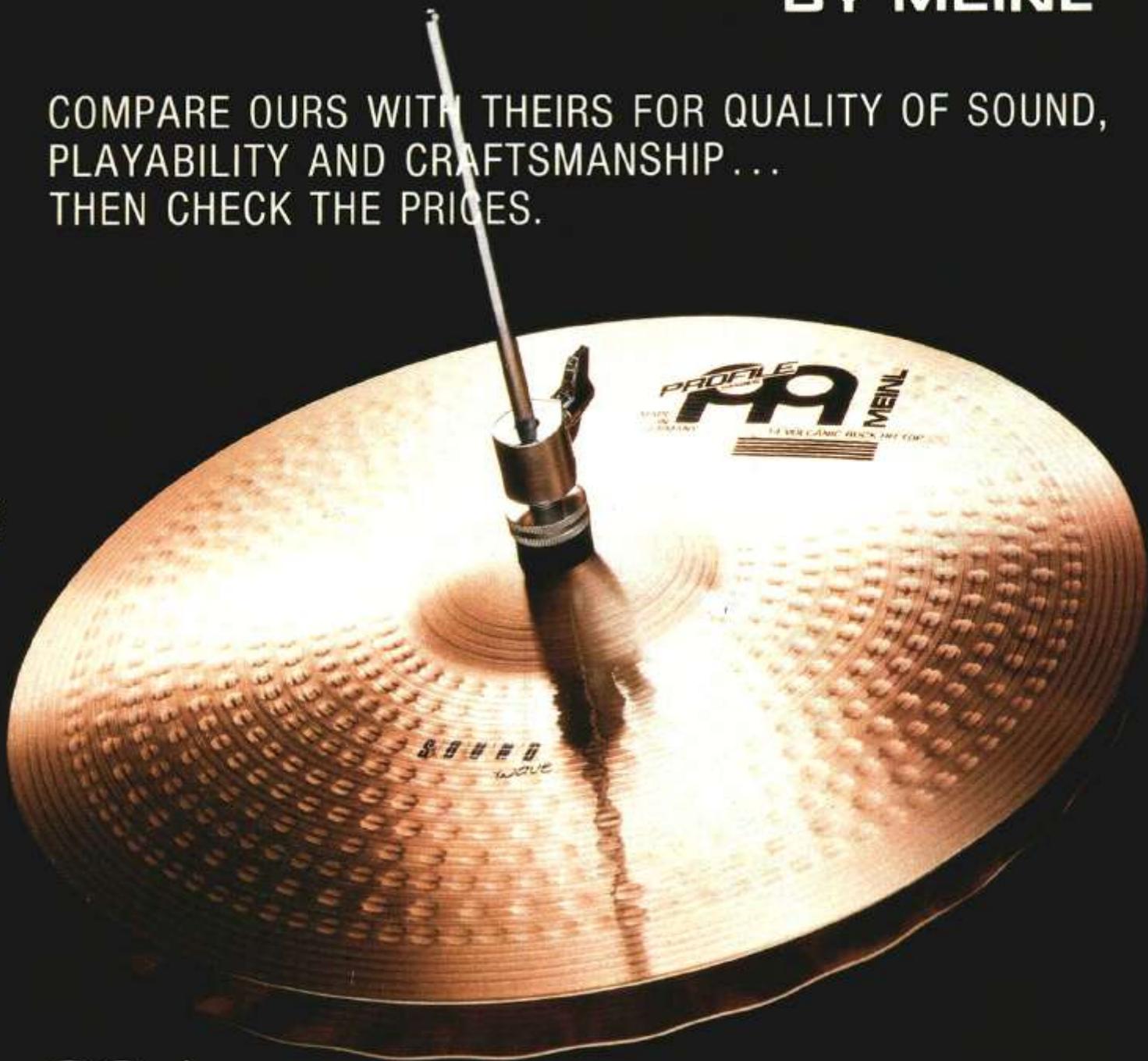


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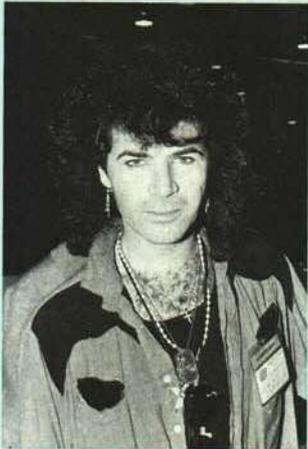


Photo by Rick Malkin

What do you do when you've been drumming in a very successful band for three years, only to find out that your services are no longer required during the recording of your group's latest LP? Well, if you're a resourceful pro like ex-Billy Idol drummer **Thommy Price**, you embark on getting your *own* band off the ground.

Price left Idol in 1986, after the sessions for Idol's *Whiplash Smile* album. "I had been in the studio with Billy on many occasions to record the songs," Price explains, "but with all the time he spent laying guitar and vocal tracks, he decided that he didn't have time for my drums. So he ended up leaving drum machine tracks on the songs." How did Thommy react to this? "It was pretty heart-breaking," he says. "What's really hard for me to accept is the drum sound he ended up getting on the new LP. There's no comparison to the drum sound on *Rebel Yell*, which was so forceful and driving."

Thommy teamed up with a childhood pal from Staten Island—longtime Utopia bassist Kasim Sultan—to form the Price-Sultan project. Thommy and Kas co-wrote and coproduced the debut album, *Lights On*, and the band has given Price a totally new outlet for

his playing. "With Billy Idol," Price explains, "I was limited to a certain playing style, because most of his stuff called for the real driving 'Rebel Yell'/'Dancin' With Myself' kind of playing. With our new record, the tempos and songs are totally different, so they lead me to be a little more melodic. I'm sounding a bit more like *me* on this record."

When the band hits the road, Thommy is planning to play guitar with the group. "I sang most of the songs on the album, too," Thommy says, noting that it's going to be a challenge to duplicate parts that were played on the record by Steve Stevens and Elliot Easton.

Because Thommy will be playing guitar at the live gigs, he and Kas had to find a replacement drummer. "We found this young guy named Jimmy Clark," Thommy says. "He had grown up being a fan of mine and admiring my play-

ing, so he had a similar style. It was wild getting somebody to play with us who was so into the whole thing to begin with, and this is like his dream. For me to walk away from the kit and rely on somebody else, I've got to feel comfortable and safe, you know? And this kid does it for me. He's great."

In addition to Price-Sultan, Thommy kept himself busy last year working on albums with artists such as Blue Oyster Cult, Ric Ocasek, Joan Jett, and John Waite. Plans are in the works for Price-Sultan to hit the road in the coming months, and Thommy is anxious to get out there and play. "I'm really pleased with this band," he says. "This music reveals a whole different side of us. It's definitely good feeling, positive-vibe music. It's music that makes you feel good about yourself!"

—Teri Saccone

"This year has been the most productive as far as working with Eddy Raven goes," says drummer **Glenn Hebert**, who has been working with the country artist for the past five years. "It's been the most productive for all of us because we've been involved with a lot more major acts. They've been fun to work with, and it's been a great opportunity for me to talk to different drummers about their concepts and backgrounds. It's quite interesting to find out that a lot of drummers who are into mainstream country came from serious R&B careers or from jazz backgrounds."

Raven is very particular and meticulous about how he wants the music on stage. "He's real groove oriented. He wants an edge on it, but he doesn't want it to rush. Every once in a while, he'll turn



around and say, 'Pick it up,' and there are times when there are volume problems, but that basically boils down to the inconsistencies with sound companies. Hopefully, in the future, we'll be getting our own sound.

"This should be a big year

for us. The new album has a lot of excellent music on it. It's a little less country than most people will expect and some stuff might lean towards a crossover situation, but there are some real good tunes on it."

Although Glenn doesn't get to do the recording, he is still able to be creative within the playing situation. "I don't do things exactly the way they're done on the records. I do stay real close because I don't want to deface the music he's created, but I have the freedom to do a few little things here and there, as long as it's within good taste.

"I would love to do Eddy's records, but when you've got the likes of James Stroud and Eddie Bayers, I don't really feel too bad about not being able to do them. I understand the scene in Nashville, and it's

the way it is because there is a success rate with it. I appreciate that, although I do feel that, if the entire band had the opportunity to go in and do an album for Eddy, we could do a real good job for him. The guys I work with are top-quality musicians. We'd really like to have the opportunity to do it, but it's just the way the Nashville situation is."

Glenn does hope to branch out into some studio work, however, in addition to his job with Raven. "I have been doing some sessions lately, but it's hard to do that when you're working for an artist and you're out on the road so much. At the same time, I've got a whole lot of time invested in Eddy, and I would really like to stick it out with him. I have a lot of faith in him and always have."

—Robyn Flans

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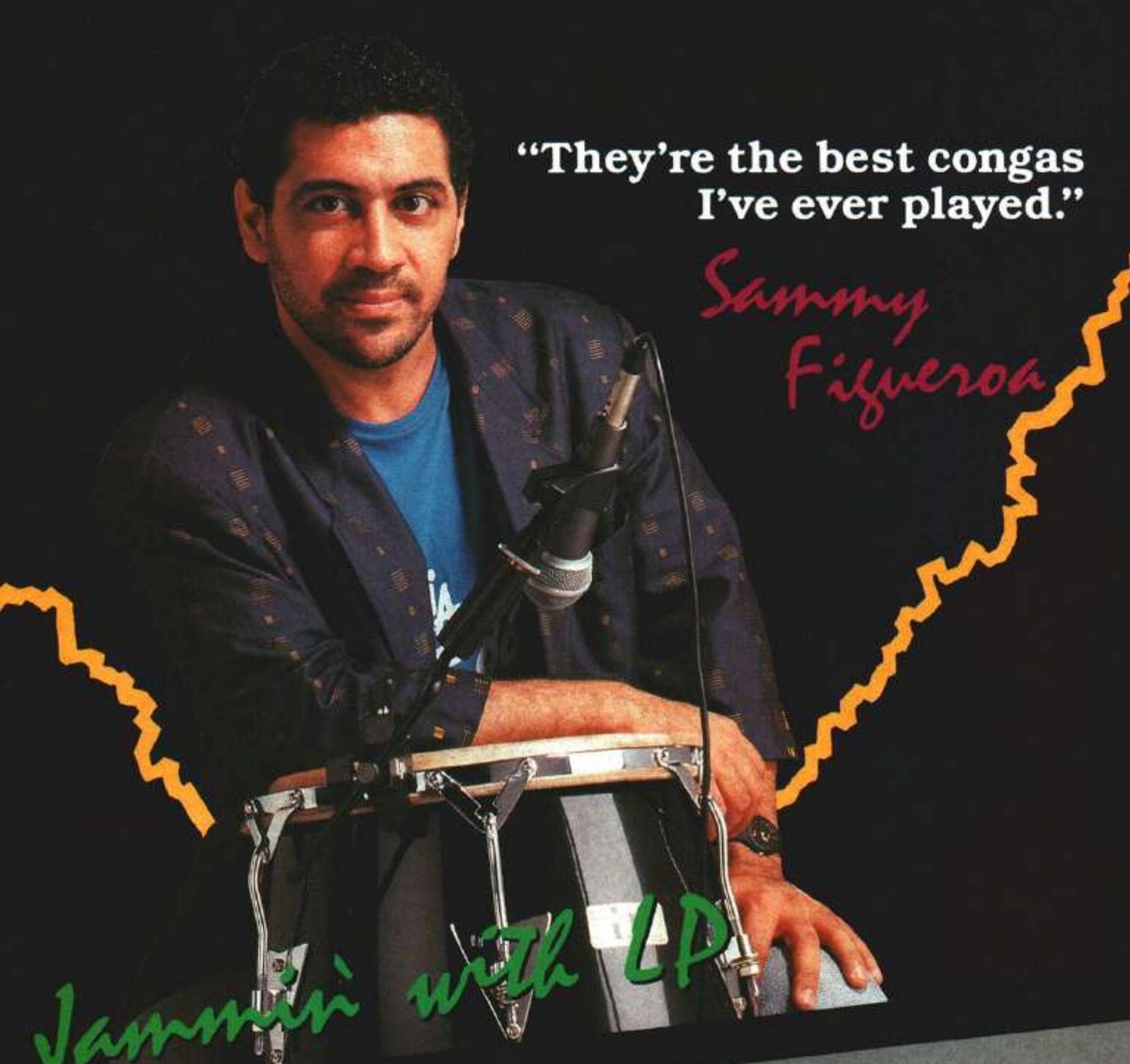
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**S**ammy Figueroa's happening. While his career began as a singer with typical Latin bands, this son of a Puerto Rican father and Masai mother has embraced a much wider range of music. His percussion credentials have got to be an inspiration for every aspiring percussionist.

Sammy's worked on three David Bowie albums, Miles Davis' "Man

*He liked them so  
much,*

*he insisted on paying.*

With a Horn." He's done two David Lee Roth projects, assisted Chaka Khan, Blondie, Culture Club, Quincy Jones, Al Jarreau and is very active with the dynamic singing and songwriting duo, Ashford and Simpson.

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buying them. That's endorsement at its highest level and speaks of the level of quality that LP continues to maintain.

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**Luis Cardenas**, having gained some notoriety as the drummer for Renegade, recently put together his own solo situation. Concurrent with the release of his debut solo album, *Animal Instinct*, Luis has embarked on a six-month tour. But what of Renegade?

"My going on tour basically gives the members of Renegade time to do some things on their own that they've wanted to do. In Renegade, we all have the potential to do a solo project. The other guys are always playing me tapes of 8-track

stuff they've been working on, and it's great. So right now, they're basically getting more ideas for Renegade and their own solo careers. Mine just happens to be the first solo project."

Not every drummer is equipped to be an artist, but Luis has groomed himself for that. "When I was growing up, I was always taking chorus classes in school, and I loved to sing. I had just never sung with a band as a lead vocalist before. I did backup vocals with Renegade, and now it's grown to where I do three lead-

vocal spots within that show. But in my solo show, I'm singing it all. It was a little tricky to learn to do it, but always drumming and singing backup vocals prepared me for it. In the solo show, there's a song called 'Still Waiting.' There's a pretty hard drum part in it, but I still have to sing lead vocals. It was a little tough getting used to it, but I am now. The solo experience is actually a lot more challenging for me."

It seems that Luis is well on his way to attaining his goal. "My goal is to have everybody like my music and respect me

as a musician," Luis says. That's why he wants to downplay his recent induction into the *Guinness Book of World Records* for the world's largest drumset. Explains his producer Kim Richards, "When they contacted him, he was reluctant to do it. I asked him why and he said, 'I don't want to be known as the drummer with the world's largest drumset. I want to be known as a drummer who can play his drums properly.'"

—Robyn Flans

**Gordon Gale** has been playing in a variety of situations recently. A little over a year ago, while playing at a local L.A. club, Gordon was spied by Danny Wilde, who had recently lost Pat Mastelotto to Mr. Mister. Gordon auditioned for Wilde and won the gig. Now, after having done scattered dates and short tours, Gordon is recording Wilde's second album.

"I've been told we sound like a cross between John Waite, John Cougar Mellencamp, and Bryan Adams—kind of poppy guitar rock. Originally, the drum parts were demoed by Danny, who has a little Yamaha drum machine and an AMS digital delay, which has a sampler in it. He had these incredible drum sounds on the demo, so

when they did the album and I got the gig, the drum parts were already written. It was just a matter of duplicating it. Pat and I have such similar styles that it was not a problem, and of course, as the gig went on, I threw in my own little style. Now, with the new material we're writing, I get to be a little more influential. We'll be doing live tracks, just like the first album, with no click track or anything."

Gordon also sings backup with Wilde. "The drums are probably the easiest instrument to play while singing. You don't have to look at what you're doing while you're singing, whereas with guitar and bass, sometimes the fingerings and the rhythms are weird when you relate them to the vocal rhythm. With the drums,



it's a little easier because you don't change as much. It's really great because it makes you feel like you're more a part of the song."

But then Gordon is a drummer who believes that a drummer's potential is limitless. Aside from singing, he plays guitar and bass, and also writes. He doesn't believe in letting a spare minute go by if

he can help it. In his free time, Gordon works with Bonnie Bramlett, who has been demoing material in pursuit of a record deal, and of late, he also has had the opportunity to gig with Kate Ceberano, lead singer of the Australian group I'm Talking. That's all in addition to having done gigs with Edgar Winter, Melanie, Leif Garrett, David Pomeranz, and Karen Lawrence.

Eventually, Gordon would like to have a band of his own. "I would love to get the leverage of being Gordy Gale from a popular band, and I wouldn't mind something where I could write my own tunes. I had a little band around town called Input Output. I wrote all the tunes, and we played the local circuit."

—Robyn Flans

**Jonathan Moffett** replaced Rayford Griffen on Cameo's current tour. Jonathan can also be heard on the Christopher Cross contribution to the soundtrack of *Nothing In Common*. **Mike Radovsky** on Phil Madeira's debut LP. **Sue Hadjopoulos** working live with Cyndi Lauper. Up in Canada, **Barry Keane** is keeping busy as usual. He can be heard on the recent Gordon Lightfoot album, *East Of Midnight*, as well as on projects by Terry Carisse, Frank Trainor, The Stoker Bros., the Spoons, J.K.

Gulley, Roni Sommers, Anita Perras and Tim Taylor, Harold McIntyre, Terry Christiansen, and Gary O. In the jingle department, Barry has done recent ones for Pontiac, Ford, Chrysler, and Budweiser, and for TV, he's done work on *TV? Serve And Protect*, *Lost*, and the series *Degrassi Junior High*. He also took part in the *Voices With Heart* record and video for the Variety Club. **Tommy Taylor**, formerly with Christopher Cross, is touring with Eric Johnson. **Steve Douglas** has

been gigging and recording with the Chris Hillman Band. **Lynn Coulter** doing some dates with Paul Butterfield. **Jeff Porcaro and Omar Hakim** on Alison Moyet's project. **Kenny Aronoff** is in the studio with John Cougar Mellencamp and also rehearsing Bartok's *Sonata For Two Pianos And Percussion* for a performance at Indiana University. **Simon Kirke** has been on the road with Bad Company. **Eddie Bayers** on the Judds' new album. **Jerry Kroon** on albums by Jeff Stevens & the Bullet

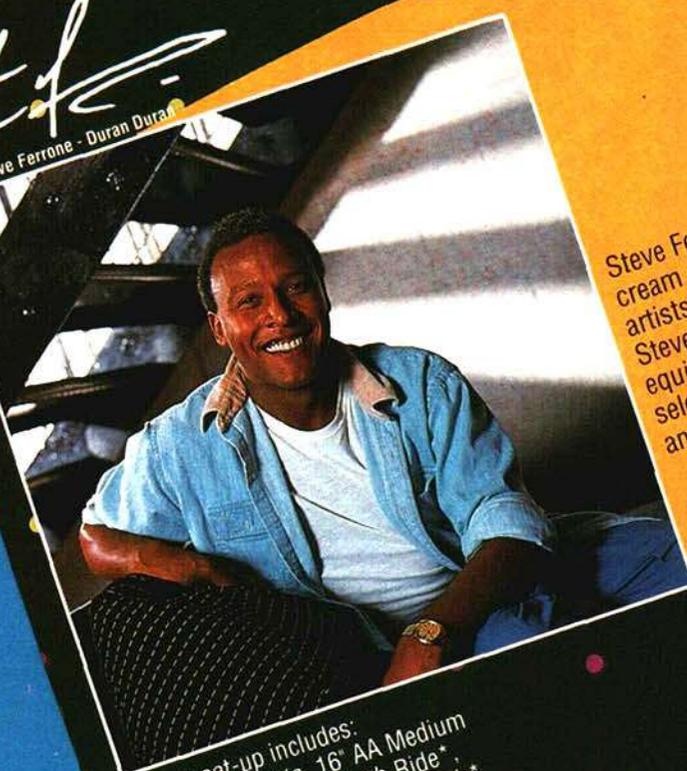
Band, Patty Loveless, Lynn Anderson, Terry Kelly, Billy Joe Royal, Keith Whitley, and Suzie Bogguf. **Jeff Boggs** recently completed a tour with In Pursuit, who opened for A-Ha. **Charlie Watts** brought his big band to the U.S. for a few dates in December. **Greg Ellis** touring with David & David. Congratulations to JoAnn and A.J. Pero on the birth of their daughter, Christina Elyse.

—Robyn Flans



# A CUT ABOVE...

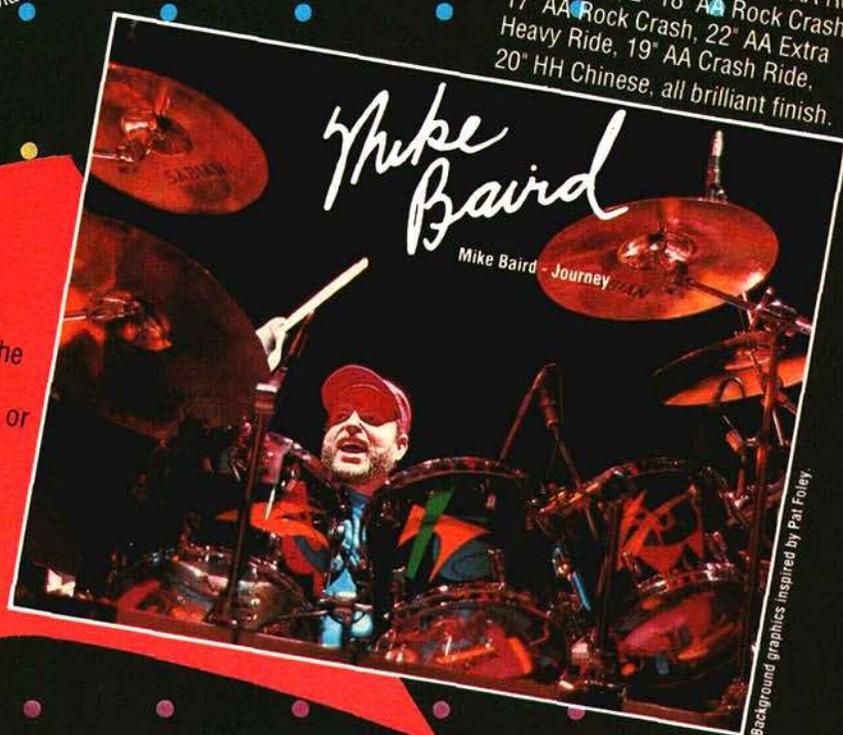
*Steve Ferrone*  
Steve Ferrone - Duran Duran



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Mike Baird - Journey

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## BUTCH MILES



**Q.** I recently purchased Mel Torme's *Live At The Maisonette* album, and am in awe of your performance on it. Could you please describe the equipment you used on that album (including heads and sticks)? Also, could you outline Mel's method of writing charts? The charts on those arrangements must have been mind-boggling! How long did you rehearse in preparation for that performance/recording?

Dana Cyr  
Lynn, MA

**A.** Thank you very much for your kind words. How did you find out it was me, since none of the musicians were mentioned anywhere on the album? It was a joy working on that record, and we had a good time recording it back in 1974.

The equipment I used at that time was all Slingerland: a 14x24 bass drum, a 9x13 rack tom, two 16x16 floor toms, and a 5 1/2X 14 wood snare drum. My cymbals were all by Zildjian, and included 14" New Beat hi-hats, two 18" crashes (one thin; one medium-thin), an 8" paper-thin splash,

and a 20" medium ride. The drumheads were all Remo Ambassadors and the sticks I used at the time were Pro-Mark 5A hickory models.

Mel writes charts in the following manner: He'll start with an idea in his head, and sketch out the chart the way he'd like it to go. Then he'll begin to write the actual parts. When we traveled, he'd either have an electric piano or use the house acoustic piano, and he'd sit, sometimes for hours, getting all the parts right. He could hear everything in his head; he just had to make sure that the notes sounded correct on the piano. He was forever asking the musicians in the different bands in which we worked what the ranges of their instruments were, and whether a given position on the trombone—or whatever—was comfortable. He was not a schooled musician; he taught himself composition and arranging. As such, it was difficult for him, but he always said that it was like anything else: The more he did it, the easier it became.

As far as the written parts for the drums went, Mel was very wise about that. He's a fine drummer in his own right, and he knew that charts are rarely written specifically for a drummer. So he'd leave a lot of things open—just doing a light sketch for the drum parts. As a result, I had a lot of leeway in a lot of different areas. We also used to do drum battles on stage! Those were a great deal of fun, because I never knew what was going to happen, and I don't think Mel did either. It was very loose.

I don't honestly remember how long we rehearsed for that particular performance, but I don't think it was very long. When you have a band made up of musicians of the caliber that that band was, and an arranger/leader of Mel's talent, it doesn't really take long to get things together.

## STEVE SMITH



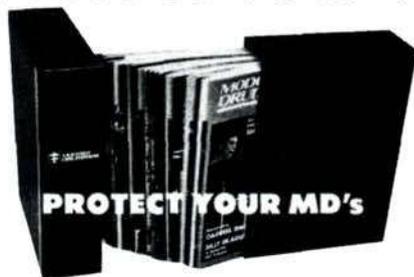
Photo by Rick Malkin

**Q.** First, let me compliment you on your finely tuned skills as a drummer. As for my questions: How do you achieve the slight tonal overring—that "thoom"—on your toms, both in the studio and live? This sounds to me the way my toms sound—open, unmuffled, and unmiked—in a live club situation. However, when the pro sound technicians I've worked with begin to mike my drums, they prefer this ring to be completely deadened. Is your successfully miked-up sound a dampening, tuning, or miking technique, a board effect, or a combination of all of them? Incidentally, my toms are by Apollo, and are standard depths. I use Evans Hydraulic heads on top, and either Remo Diplomats on the bottom, or no heads at all. My toms are tuned as follows: 13" = A, 14" = E, 16" = C#, and 18" = B. When bottom heads are used, each is one half-step lower than the top head. How widely used is this method of tuning drums to specific pitches, and how effective do you think it is?

Paul Padilla  
Moriarty, NM

**A.** Thanks for the compliment. On most of the recordings I've made, I used Remo clear Ambassador heads on the top and bottom of my toms (though lately I've been using Pin-stripes). The drums are the traditional sizes—not power toms—and the bottom heads are tighter than the top heads. I never put muffling on the toms, but I spend a lot of time tuning them so they have a nice tone, and so that the overtones are not dissonant and don't ring too long. A slight ringing is okay for most music. If your drums are tuned well, a good sound technician can reproduce and enhance your sound. I've never tuned to exact pitches and I don't know anyone who does, so I don't think that is a very widely used method of tuning.

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Q. I have double-headed power toms that do not have mufflers. I would like to know how I could make my drums muffled and still have that "drum" sound. I have tried putting cloth over the heads, but then the drums are *too* muffled. I've tried putting duct tape on the heads alone, and then the drums aren't muffled *enough*. Could you give me some other ideas?

D.B.

Elmhurst, IL

A. *There are any number of commercial muffling products on the market, some of which offer a greater degree of muffling than others. Some even offer a variable amount of muffling. These include Remo Muffls, Yamaha Ring Arrestors, Noble & Cooley Zero Rings, and Groove Tubs' Flat Rings. Generally, an item that can move independently from the drumhead works best, since it will allow the head to resonate briefly, and then quickly apply a muffling effect. (The reason duct tape applied to a drumhead often under-muffles is that the tape is attached to the head, and therefore vibrates along with it.) You want something with enough mass to adequately modify the head's resonance, but not so much mass that the fundamental tone and total volume of the head is destroyed. (The reason that cloths placed over the heads over-muffle is that they interfere with both stick impact and head resonance, and they are probably so massive—as compared to a thin plastic drumhead—that the batter head can't really produce any sound at all.)*

*Successful drum muffling usually involves a lot of experimenting with different heads (many of which have their own muffling characteristics) and different muffling devices. Fortunately, most of these items aren't terribly expensive, so you should be able to conduct your experiments—and eventually achieve the amount of muffling you desire—at a reasonable cost.*

Q. I was just rereading the Kenny Aronoff interview in your June '86 issue, and I noticed that, when he was talking about his kit, he said he had his bass drum "Vibrafibed." I have never heard of this process before and was wondering what it was. Can it be done on any bass drum? If so, who in the Seattle area does this?

D.S.

Seattle, WA

A. *Vibrafibing is a sound enhancement process involving the application of fiberglass to the inside of a drumshell, available exclusively through the Percussion Center, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. It can be done to any drum. Neil Graham, owner of the Percussion Center, describes the process in the following manner: "The drum is suspended and spun to centrifuge the fiberglass into the shell's interior. It's a fiberglass mat covered with a gloss coat of fiberglass so that it's about 1/32" to 1/16" thick. The effect is to increase the reflectiveness of the interior of the shell, which dramatically increases the overtones and projection of the drum. The amount of improvement depends on the quality of the drum to begin with. If a drum is not very resonant to start with, Vibrafibing will increase that drum's resonance a greater percentage than it would that of a drum that already sounds very good. Vibrafibing also has the effect of 'equalizing' drums. In some sets, one drum might sound good, while another does not; Vibrafibing tends to make the overall kit sound more uniform. Another unique feature is that a drummer can usually play the heads looser after Vibrafibing the drums, because the drums are fuller-sounding and dynamically more powerful."*

*Neil also points out that, while such well-known artists as Kenny Aronoff, Neil Peart, and Mick Brown have had their kits Vibrafibed, the cost is relatively moderate, and should be well within the range of most serious drummers. The Percussion Center handles service orders from all over the country, so if you are interested in having your kit Vibrafibed, you may contact the shop at 1701 N. Harrison Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46808, or call (219) 424-1125.*

Q. After a cymbal is cracked beyond musical use, is the alloy itself of any use to the cymbal manufacturer—possibly for recasting? Would the cymbal have any monetary value on that basis if returned to the factory? Also, in an article published some years ago, Mel Lewis mentioned that he periodically custom-ordered a cymbal from Zildjian that was "spun in his presence." If an individual wanted a duplicate of that cymbal spun at the same time—or any other custom cymbal—how difficult would that be to arrange, and how expensive would that cymbal be in relation to Zildjian's standard rates for stock cymbals?

G.H.

Tuscaloosa, AL

A. *We forwarded your questions to Zildjian's Lennie DiMuzio, who gave us this reply: "As far as recasting cracked cymbals goes, we do not recast cymbals. The only recasting of cracked cymbals that is done periodically is for the manufacturing of finger cymbals or crotales. It is possible to use the metals for these items, but not for recasting a cymbal. The process to re-separate the alloys, remelt them, and recast them into another cymbal would be far too expensive to even consider. It is always cheaper to make a new one, starting from scratch. Broken cymbals have a scrap metal value of approximately \$3.00 or \$4.00 per pound, so it would be much more advisable to use the broken cymbal as a practice cymbal in one form or another.*

*"In regard to Mel Lewis, we did provide the specialized customer service that you describe to Mel. He would visit the factory, and we would pretty much tune his cymbals by lathing them down. (This would, in turn, change the weight and shape of the cymbal, thus altering the pitch.) Such a service can only be provided at the factory. While it is not a very expensive project, it does require a little bit of time, and would only be available on certain models of cymbals."*

Q. I need information on how I can obtain the recording of the International Drum Rudiments, as performed by Rob Carson, from the Alfred Publishing Company.

G.S.

Cedar Grove, NJ

A. *Alfred Publishing offers the International Drum Rudiments in book form, cassette form, or both. The material was created under the auspices of the Percussive Arts Society and, according to Rob, was the culmination of a five-year research project by himself and Jay Wanamaker. You should be able to obtain the material from any music dealer who handles the Alfred Publishing Company catalog. Failing that, you can contact Alfred Publishing directly at P.O. Box 5964, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413.*

Q. The concept of the "free-floating" snare drum is truly the perfection of an acoustic snare. Are Pearl or CB-700 planning to use this concept with tom-toms and bass drums? This, to me, would be the ultimate acoustic sound.

D.V.

Bark River, MI

A. *Pearl's Al Duffy informs us that, although it would be possible to create free-floating tom-toms, it would not be practical, since the tooling costs for any given drum size are extremely high. Each die for a given tom-tom might run in the neighborhood of \$60,000 or more; a bass drum die might cost \$100,000. When you multiply that times the number of different standard diameters of toms and bass drums there are, you can see that the cost of tooling up for such models would be prohibitive. Consequently, there are no plans for such a development at this time.*



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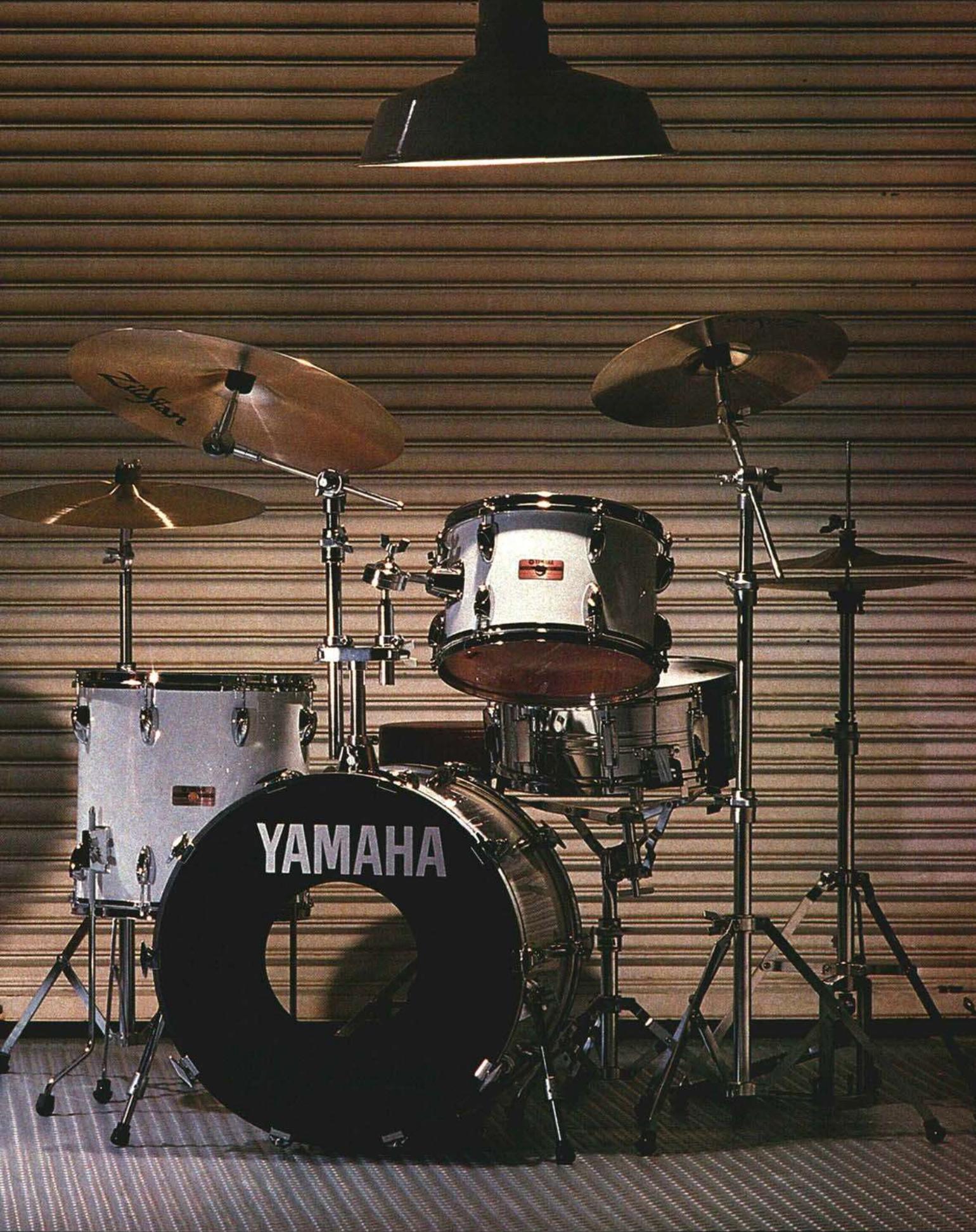


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# anton

# FIG

**T**HE scene in the dressing room area of the Late Night With David Letterman show is one of comic commotion. Zippo, the roller-skating chimp, has just bitten one of the guests—on the air in front of something like three million viewers. Now, he's being scolded backstage by his owner/trainer, who keeps calling him a "very, very naughty boy." Everyone in the room is courteous enough to keep from cracking up. It is, after all, a funny sight indeed.

Zippo hides his head in shame, until he spots the bunch of bananas that was supposed to be his reward if he performed admirably while in front of the cameras. Suddenly, Zippo zips away, and with a quick lunge, grabs a banana. He takes off to the other side of the room, where he peels it and devours it in one large gulp.

All this is too much. Everyone in the room is now in stitches, including Paul Simon, Letterman's special guest that evening (no, he wasn't the one zapped by Zippo), and his South African backup band. Later, when I tell Anton Fig, the drummer in David Letterman's superb studio band, what transpired while he was playing, he sort of shrugs it all off. "All sorts of odd things occur around here. It's a crazy place to work," he says with a smile. "But it's a great place to work, too."

Fig is the reason why I happen to be backstage. An interview had been set up for after the show. Thus, I was invited to see beforehand just what his job entailed. Fig enjoys his work, and why not? After taking Steve Jordan's place behind the drumset on the widely popular late-night talk show, Fig is in the enviable position of gaining nightly national exposure on the tube and getting a chance to play with, as he says, "artists I only dreamed about playing with. Tonight it was Paul Simon. Tomorrow night it will be someone else."

Fig, of course, didn't just stumble upon the Letterman gig. He's been in New York since 1976 doing studio work, jamming in the clubs around town, making contacts, and refining his rich, crisp drum style. "If you work hard at something, things happen," he says. "Doors start opening. Luck has something to do with it, but not as much as you'd think—not as much as hard work and being good at what you do."

Anton Fig has a most interesting past, as I found out, although, at times, it's difficult for him to talk about it. He's played with artists like Mick Jagger, Bob Dylan, Cyndi Lauper, and Kiss. He's a well-educated, highly respected drummer among his peers, and he's ambitious. Fig exudes a certain confidence that is at once noticeable. It seems as if Anton Fig knows what he wants out of drumming and is always working in some way to achieve it, even as we speak.

**RS:** Let's begin with the David Letterman show. How exactly did you get the job?

**AF:** When Steve Jordan would take a day or two off, various drummers would sub for him. Well, I'd known the bandleader, Paul Shaffer, for years. We played on records together, and I would run into him around town. Whenever I saw him, I would always ask him to give me a chance to play on the show. He'd always say, "Don't worry, your chance will come." So one day, he called me up and asked if I could sub for Steve for an entire week. I went down and rehearsed with the band. Paul said Steve would be out for not one, but two weeks. I did both weeks. Then, when Steve left the show for good, which was in March, I believe, Paul offered me the job, and I took it.

**RS:** Was it something that you especially wanted to do?

**AF:** Oh yes. It's great to play with people who make you rise above your

level and keep you on your toes all the time. For four days a week, I'm playing with musicians like Will Lee and Paul Shaffer. You can't ever slack off, because they'll hear it right away. Also, I get to play with such great guests. Playing with Paul Simon was a lot of fun tonight. In the past, it's been people like Lou Reed, Steve Winwood, Tony Bennett, Rita Marley, and many, many others. I would never have gotten that opportunity anywhere else that I can think of. Also, the visibility is great. My face is on national television every night.

**RS:** Are there any disadvantages to all this?

**AF:** Well, yes. For one thing, I can't go out on the road. I can play a few outside gigs, which might cause me to miss a couple of shows. Paul is really good like that. But I'm not able to go out on a nine-month tour with some artist. Also, if I'm doing a record in town, I might be in the midst of recording, and then I'll have to stop to come here and do the show. Some artists don't like that, and I can't blame them. But I have the whole day off, usually. I have to be at the show at 4:00 P.M., and then from 7:00 P.M., which is usually when things wind up, I have all night free. Also, I have Friday, Saturday, and Sunday off each week, and a full week off every six or seven weeks, which is really good.

**RS:** You didn't mention anything about rehearsals. How much rehearsing goes on?

**AF:** Very little, actually. Every couple of months, we might get together as a band for one night and maybe learn ten new songs. But it's nothing very structured or regimented.

**RS:** Then when do you learn the material you're going to play on the show each night?

**AF:** Well, the band will usually show up a half hour or 20 minutes before we go on the air, learn the song, rehearse it a bit with the featured guest, and be ready to go.

**RS:** Things are that tight?

**AF:** Yes, they are. We'll do that and then run through the theme song to get a balance on it. Then we'll take a five- or ten-minute break, come back, and do the show.

**RS:** It seems as if it's a pretty pressurized situation.

**AF:** In a way, it is. I mean, you have to be able to pick up the music rather quickly. Instead of being just David Letterman's band, you have to become the artist's band for that song and that moment, if you know what I mean. You've got to cop the nuances and style of the music, and you've got



Photo by Ebet Roberts

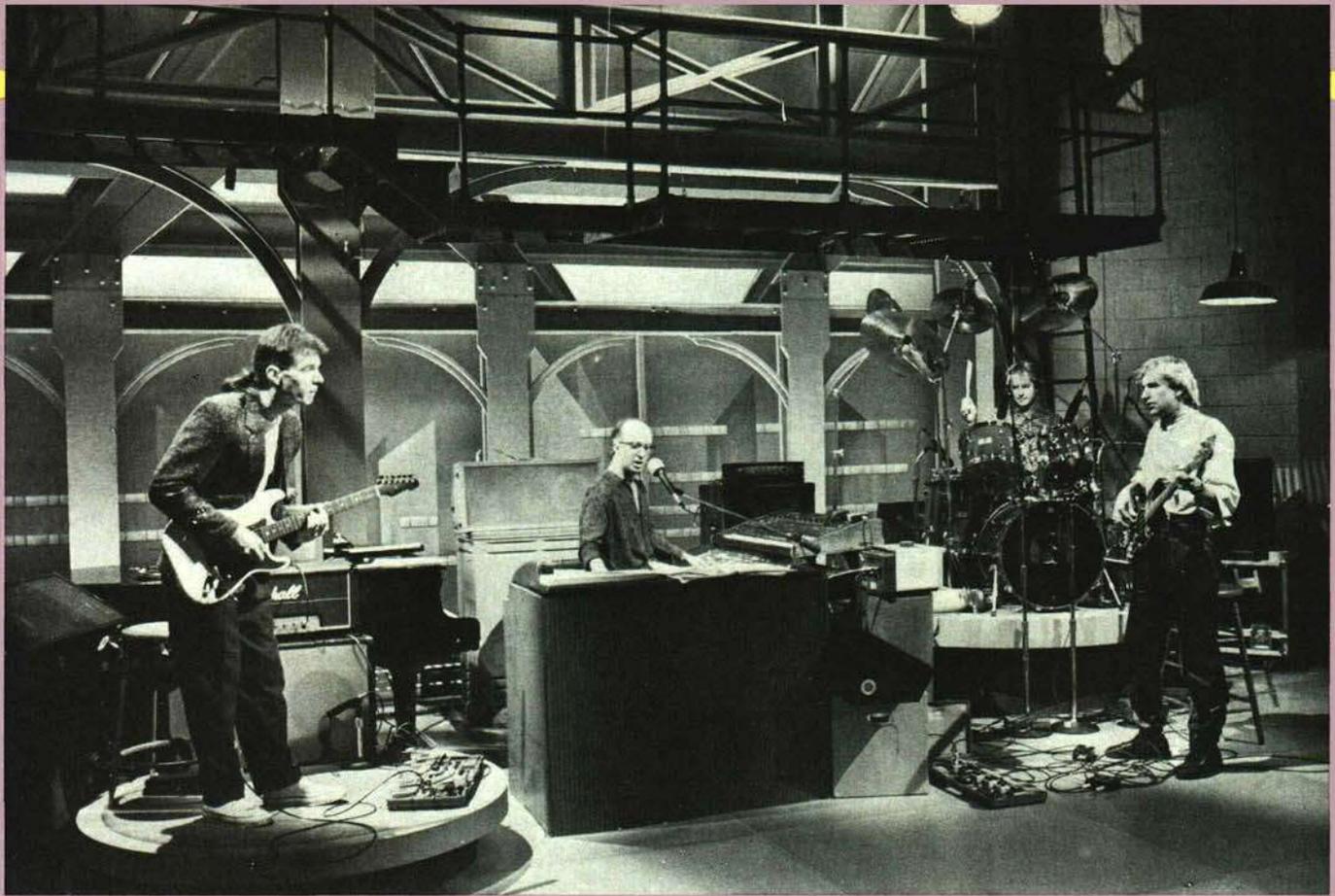


Photo by Ebet Roberts

Sid McGinnis, Paul Shaffer, Anton Fig, Will Lee

to play it like you really know it. Often, you're playing someone's single, which he or she knows very well. That person expects to hear certain things. So you really have to get inside that particular song. In 20 minutes, we have to make that song sound like we've played it all our lives. Fortunately, however, like tonight, Paul gave me a tape of the song we'll be playing tomorrow. That helps. I'll go home and listen to it, which will make it that much easier for me tomorrow.

**RS:** It still sounds stressful to me.

**AF:** I find it more challenging than stressful, actually. It keeps me very sharp. When I first started doing the show, it was slightly stressful. But now I'm more comfortable with it. Usually, I can just show up and do it, like the other musicians do.

**RS:** In addition to doing the David Letterman show, it seems that you've been quite busy in the recording studio as well.

**AF:** Yes. I did the Rolling Stones' *Dirty Work*. I did Dylan's record *Knocked Out Loaded*. I did Cyndi Lauper's two albums, and I did Patty Smyth's new one. Plus, I do jingles in the daytime whenever I can. And I'm doing a bit of songwriting, too.

**RS:** Is songwriting something new for you?

**AF:** In a way, it is. I'm co-writing material with some people. I was in a band called Spider. I don't know if anyone remembers it. Anyway, I'm writing with the singer from the band, Amanda Blue. We're writing songs for her new project. But I've also met a lot of very good co-writers along the way. I think that, if you set yourself to work in a particular area such as songwriting, you'll find that you sort of work your way into one project and then onto another.

**RS:** What prompted you to begin writing?

**AF:** It's something I started to do out of necessity, actually. I wanted some songs just in case I did my own project somewhere down the line. Songwriting is like anything else. The more you do it, the better you get at it.

**RS:** What instrument do you compose on?

**AF:** The keyboards. But I also fool around with guitar and

bass—enough to suit my songwriting needs at the moment.

**RS:** Explain, if you will, the procedure by which you take song ideas and turn them into songs.

**AF:** The ideas often come out of things I hear and really like. It could be a chord change or a piece of a song that I heard that day on the radio or in the studio. Of course, you don't want to rip off anyone's ideas or songs. But you hear something that's nice, and you use that as a starting point. Generally, I find that I'll be writing in a style of music that I've been most recently involved in.

**RS:** And you're exposed to a variety of music styles, I'm sure—the things you play and hear on the Letterman show, the songs and styles you hear in the recording studio, on the radio, and in clubs.

**AF:** Yeah, like tonight there was African music on the show. Tomorrow night, it will be country & western, I believe. And so it goes.

**RS:** You're fortunate that you're in such a position. You're bombarded with all sorts of musical ideas.

**AF:** You're right; it is great.

**RS:** You mentioned Spider before. What happened to the group?

**AF:** Every band has a hard-luck story. I thought the first Spider record we did [*Spider*, 1980] was fantastic. "Better Be Good To Me" was one of the songs we did. But through mismanagement and a basic misunderstanding with the record company, the band really didn't go anywhere. It was just one of those things. The band just fizzled out around 1983 or so. All the band members, however, still keep in touch.

**RS:** What happened next for you? Did you start doing session work?

**AF:** Well, I'd been doing session work all along. Years ago, I did Ace Frehley's solo record, and I kind of carried on playing with him. I also had a good relationship with Paul Butterfield and played quite a lot with him. When he does gigs in New York, I'll play with him; I've also played on his records. And now I play with Robert Gordon and Chris Spedding. I've been on and off with Robert, actually, since 1978. We play about once a month in New

York, usually at the Lone Star. But we'll also play other clubs in the area, like the Stone Pony in Asbury Park. We have a great live band.

**RS:** Since you played on Cyndi Lauper's *She's So Unusual*, and Mick Jagger's *She's The Boss*, it seems that your reputation has grown significantly. And, of course, now with your link to the David Letterman show, you're getting even more exposure. Do you consider any of these turning points in your career?

**AF:** I don't think that, in this business, there's one sort of magical thing that happens. There are some things which happen that are better than others. But they all require many prior steps, if you know what I mean. A few things, however, do stick out in my mind as being important. Perhaps the year I met and started playing with Ace Frehley was one. That was 1978, around the same time I got on Joan Armatrading's *Me, Myself, I* record. That got my name around. Ace's record [*Ace Frehley*] did the same. Very few people know this, but I played drums on two Kiss records when Peter Criss broke his arm. I never put on the makeup or went on tour with the group, but I played on *Dynasty* and *Unmasked*. From there, it was Spider. Then came Cyndi's record [*She's So Unusual*]. Even though the style of drums I had to play was strange for me—it was like I was a rhythm machine—it was a lot of fun. And when your name is on a number-one record, well, let's face it, it carries a lot of weight.

**RS:** How did you get to do Mick Jagger's *She's The Boss*?

**AF:** Nile Rodgers got me the gig. Jagger was brutal. He practically went through every drummer in New York. So to get on the record was really quite an honor for me.

**RS:** You say Jagger was brutal. What was he like to work for?

**AF:** He's very picky. It's not like you get to the studio, drink a bottle of Jack Daniels, and jam. It was more like drink *Evian* water and really watch what you're doing. Until he trusts you, he wants to know everything you're doing. Once he trusts you though, he'll loosen up and let you go. But until you get to that point, he'll be very particular about everything. But it was great. I mean, I played with Jagger, Bernard Edwards, and Nile Rogers.

Around that time, I was also asked to do a recording session with Ron Wood, who was doing some things in New York. Once, the phone rang and the person on the other end asked for Ronnie. I asked who was calling, and he said, "Robert." So I got Ronnie, and the next thing I knew, Dylan was there. He played with us. Then two weeks later, his office called me up and said that Dylan wanted the same band that played with Ronnie to play on his album. That's how one thing leads to another. More and more exposure helps your career very much. I know that I've been playing the same way for years, probably since I was six years old. Of course, I have a lot more experience. But when I get going, I feel like I'm the same as I was when I was six years old. But now that my name is getting around, people think that I suddenly got much better on the drums.

**RS:** How do you perceive yourself when it comes to drumming? Do you see yourself as a session drummer?

**AF:** No, I'm not a session drummer. I'm a drummer who happens to do sessions. I'm a rock drummer who has a degree in classical music, too. I've played on a lot of different albums, and I've played on a lot of different jingles. But I don't feel like a session drummer. It's a strange thing.

**RS:** You might not be a session drummer, but you certainly have the versatility of a session drummer and the experience in the recording studio that a session drummer has.

**AF:** Yeah, I do. I think the music dictates how and what you're supposed to play. You play your own style, but you do so to accommodate whatever it is you're playing. No one is comfortable playing someone else's style. You have to play your own style all the time, so that what you play sounds like you. But on the other hand, it must fit in the music. That's very important. I like to feel that people hire me to play on their records because of the way I play my drums, not for my ability to sound like other drummers, because I don't think I can do that. Besides, it's not what I want to do. I believe that, if people genuinely trust you and your abilities behind the drumset, they'll give you the keys to their song and allow you to be free. If someone is constantly down on you, breathing down your neck, it bottles you up. There's no doubt about that. You can't really ever let yourself go and show what you can do best.

**RS:** Before, when you were talking with members of Paul Simon's backup band, you mentioned that you were from Capetown, South Africa.

**AF:** Yeah, that's right. But it's a difficult thing to talk about. I'm not so sure I want to.

**RS:** Why is that?

**AF:** It's one thing being a black person from South Africa. It's another being white, especially today. My great grandparents came from Russia. They came to South Africa, much the same way that other Russian immigrants came to, say, Long Island. So I guess I'm European. But I was born in South Africa. Besides hearing all the fantastic African drumming around me, which I'm quite sure influenced my style, the country has extremely negative aspects. I left as soon as I was able to. I left in 1970, before America and other countries were hip to what was happening down there.

You saw out there on stage tonight that I played with Paul Simon's South African backup band. They're black, and yet there are no ill feelings or bad vibes whatsoever. The music transcends politics. But I'm an American citizen now, anyway. I have an American passport. I left my South African roots behind back in 1970. The best thing I can do is to conduct myself like a decent human being. You see, I was in the studio once, and this guy was very friendly to me until he asked me where I was from. When I told him I was from South Africa, he got really weird. But then again, once when I was playing with Willie Weeks and he asked me where I was from, I told him and it surprised him. But it didn't stop us from becoming really good friends.

**RS:** Well, it's obvious you're Americanized. If anything, you're a New Yorker now.

**AF:** Yes, more than American, I feel like I'm a New Yorker. The one thing

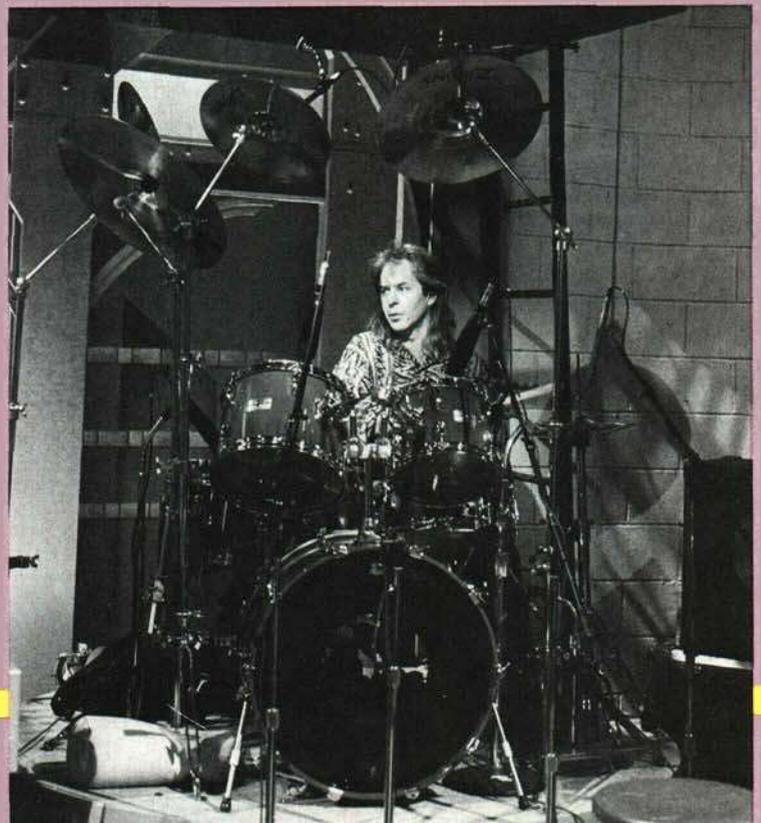


Photo by Ebet Roberts

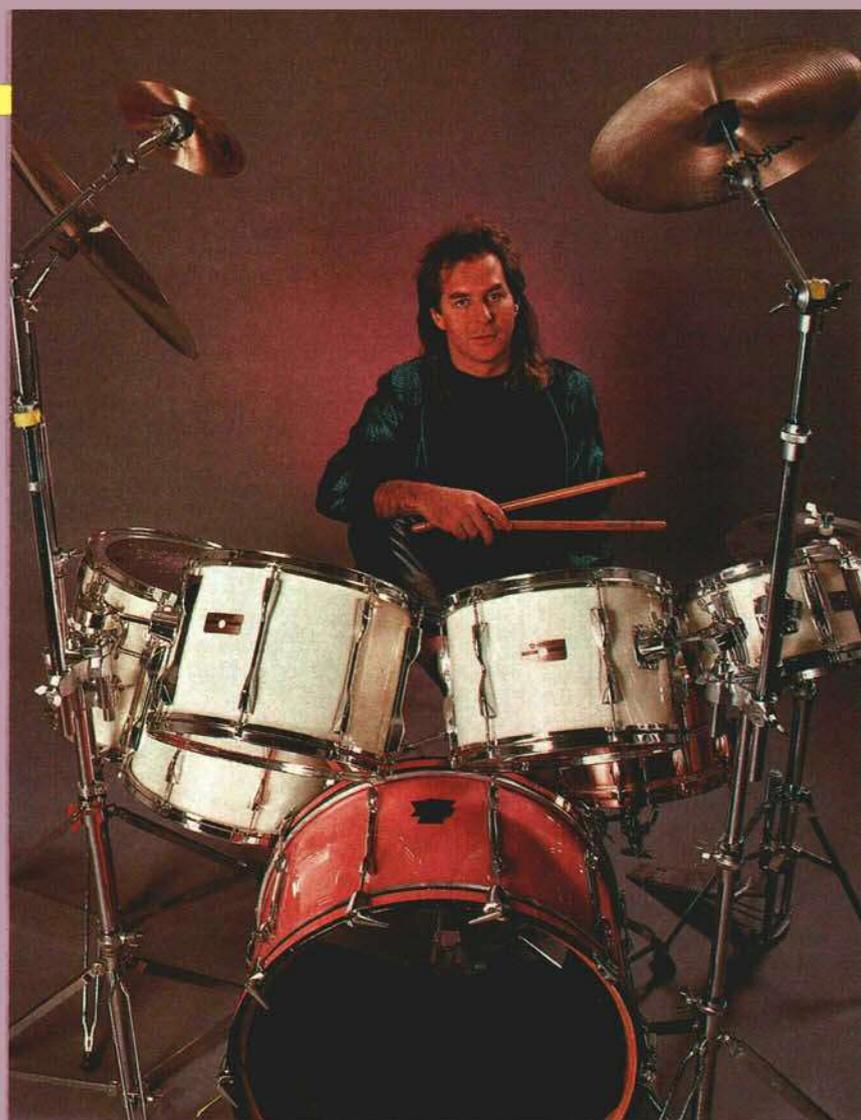


Photo by Ebet Roberts

that I can be thankful for is that I heard a lot of African music when I was a child in South Africa. I also listened to what a lot of other kids in the States and England were listening to at the time—the Who, Jimi Hendrix, Cream. I don't want to leave anyone with the idea that the *only* thing I heard was African music. I even listened to a lot of jazz. But it was the African music that was all around me. I couldn't help but be influenced by it. That was a real plus in my background. Surely my drum playing would be very different had I grown up somewhere else.

**RS:** Can you be specific and point out a few examples of where one can hear those African influences in your drumming?

**AF:** I don't know if I can actually pinpoint places. What I can say is there is a lot of that 12/8 sort of polyrhythms and cutting across the time. There are certain kinds of fills and rhythms that I play that can be traced to my African influences, I'm sure. It would take some time to dissect it, but it's there. When I hear music from Africa, I feel as if I can really understand it and get inside of it.

**RS:** What made you decide to become a drummer in the first place?

**AF:** I never decided to become a drummer. It's almost as if the drums chose me. As a kid, I'd always play on wastepaper baskets turned upside down and things like that. I guess I must have been doing it a lot, because when I was five, a friend of my folks bought me a toy set of drums. Then, when I was six, my grandfather bought me a bass drum and a snare, and every birthday from then on, he would add a drum to the set. I was doing gigs by the time I was nine years old. So I've always been playing, it seems. I never made, however, a conscious decision to pick up the drums and start playing.

**RS:** When did you start your formal training in music?

**AF:** When I came to America.

**RS:** What prompted your move here? Was it purely to study?

**AF:** Well, I didn't see that much future in South Africa, either as a country or a musical place for me. I figured that America was the place to go if I really wanted to play a lot. So I went to Boston and studied under Vic Firth at the New England Conservatory. I also did a jazz program while I was up there. But I never studied the drumset. It was always timpani or mallets—the formal stuff.

**RS:** Was it your intention to go into classical music?

**AF:** Actually, when I applied to the New England Conservatory, I applied to the jazz program. But for some reason, they accepted me into the classical program. I've never been able to find out why or how that happened. I was just happy that they accepted me. So when I got there, I did both programs—jazz and classical—at the same time.

When I finished, they said to me, "You've got the credits for two degrees, but you've only paid for one. Either pay for the second or choose just one." So I figured the classical degree was more valuable than a jazz degree. I got my degree in classical music, and I got it with honors. But when I entered the program, I knew that I was going to school to become a better drummer—a better rock drummer, to be more precise. I wasn't trying to land a gig in some orchestra or even in a jazz band. I knew there was more to music than what I'd done in the past. That's why I went to school. I wanted to get more influences in my music.

**RS:** So you're saying you went through all that training and studying so you could graduate and get into a rock band?

**AF:** Well, I just wanted to play, you know. I didn't really know where it all would lead. When I was in Boston, I was only playing jazz after completion of my studies at the New England Conservatory. I didn't play any rock at all.

**RS:** By choice?

**AF:** Yeah, I'd say so. At the time, I was very, very heavily into Miles Davis and Weather Report, as well as Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, and Jack DeJohnette. These were the drummers I was listening to all the time. I'd also listen to Miles Davis records constantly. And whenever Weather Report was in town, I'd go to the show. Boston is a very transient town, so when I got my degree, I decided I'd come down to New York. I was sitting in at jazz clubs. This was at the time everyone was talking about getting back to their roots. I figured my roots were in rock music. So I started playing rock and eventually formed the group Spider. I also started playing with Robert Gordon about then. The minute I started doing the rock stuff, a whole lot of doors started opening for me.

**RS:** Did you have any rock drummers that you especially admired and looked up to as a kid?

**AF:** I used to listen to Keith Moon, Mitch Mitchell, and John Bonham. These were the drummers that impressed me the most. Moon and Mitchell, I think, had a pretty big effect on my style and the way I viewed my drum playing. Bonham was great, too, but I only came around to appreciating him the way I ought to later on. I really liked Mitch Mitchell, because I always felt his style was a little jazzy. I liked Keith Moon, because he was so nuts behind his drumset. He didn't deal with drums. What he dealt with was sound—pure sound. And he did whatever it took to achieve a particular sound or sounds.

**RS:** When you formed Spider and committed

yourself to rock, did you ever look back and perhaps wish that it was jazz or even classical music you had pursued?

**AF:** No. I continued to listen to jazz, especially Miles, and I still bought every Weather Report record that came out. I felt, however, that I belonged in rock. I use the term "rock," however, quite loosely—probably more loosely than most. I mean, Weather Report's *Mysterious Traveler* had a lot of rock influences in it as far as I was concerned. And a lot of things that Miles was doing had a rock influence.

**RS:** Some people might give you an argument on that one.

**AF:** Yeah, I realize that. It's just the way I looked at the situation and the sounds he was coming up with. But it's only one person's opinion, isn't it?

**RS:** That's right. Let's talk a little bit about your equipment. Can you give me a rundown of what you're presently using?

**AF:** Well, maybe I'll start with cymbals. I've been using Zildjian cymbals for a very long time now. To me, they're the best and certainly the most versatile cymbals you can get. I use a 13" hi-hat with an *Impulse* on the bottom and a K on the top. I'm also using 18" and 15" A's, a 22" K ride, and a 22" China. They're all from the *Platinum* series, because I think they look really good on camera. I have, more or less, the same setup at home that I use for recording.

**RS:** And your drums?

**AF:** I use a Yamaha set. It's the *Custom Tour Series*, I believe. They're working out really well, I must say. I also have a Ludwig set, which I use when I play with Robert Gordon, as well as a Gretsch set. I think it would be best if I gave you the details for the Yamaha set, since I use that set the most and it's the one most people see me playing. It has a regular 5 1/2" snare. As for toms, I use a 10", 13", and 16", along with a 22" bass drum. I also use a DW pedal system. I've found that DW makes the best pedals I've seen. It's a double pedal, and DW gave me this hi-hat with only two legs so that I can get from pedal to pedal.

**RS:** What are the differences, if any, that you're faced with playing drums on a TV program as opposed to playing behind a band in a club?

**AF:** The Letterman show feels to me like it's a live gig. And of course, it is a live gig. What it might not have is the spontaneity of a club because of commercials and such. When I played the Live Aid concert with the Thompson Twins, that was probably the show in which I played in front of the most people. Besides the 100,000 or so in the crowd, there were 1.5 billion people watching along on television. I guess that was sort of a magnified version of the Letterman show. Each night, there are two hundred people in the crowd and another three million watching on television. I must say that I was a bit nervous for the Live Aid gig. The Letterman show doesn't get my nerves going anymore; I've gotten used to the situation, as I mentioned before. The crowd isn't as energized, because there are a lot less people sitting there watching you play. And I usually forget about all those people watching the show at home. To tell you the truth, I don't think it really matters how big the audience is as

long as they're into the music. When you play with a hot band, you know that, every time you go out there in front of the cameras, it's going to be good. There is definitely a certain sense of security you feel. Even though we're often winging it, we know we're going to pull it off.

**RS:** The Letterman show, it seems, is almost like a job where you punch in and punch out. Do you ever view it as just a job?

**AF:** I look at it and see that it requires responsibility. It's great to play whenever you feel like it and whatever you feel like playing. And I certainly do that a lot in clubs and by jamming. At the same time, however, rent and food are expensive in

New York. If you have a regular job—a regular gig—it means that you're going to get a regular paycheck. I look at the show as an exercise in responsibility. I mean, I can play all night if I wish. I have plenty of time. I only work for something like three hours a day. But when I'm here for these three hours, there's a certain thing that's expected of me. I'm expected to be awake and sharp, and make it sound like the music is fresh every night.

**RS:** Do you have much of a rapport with David Letterman?

**AF:** He's made a few jokes on the air about me. He called me Anton Zip for a while.

**RS:** Why did he call you that?

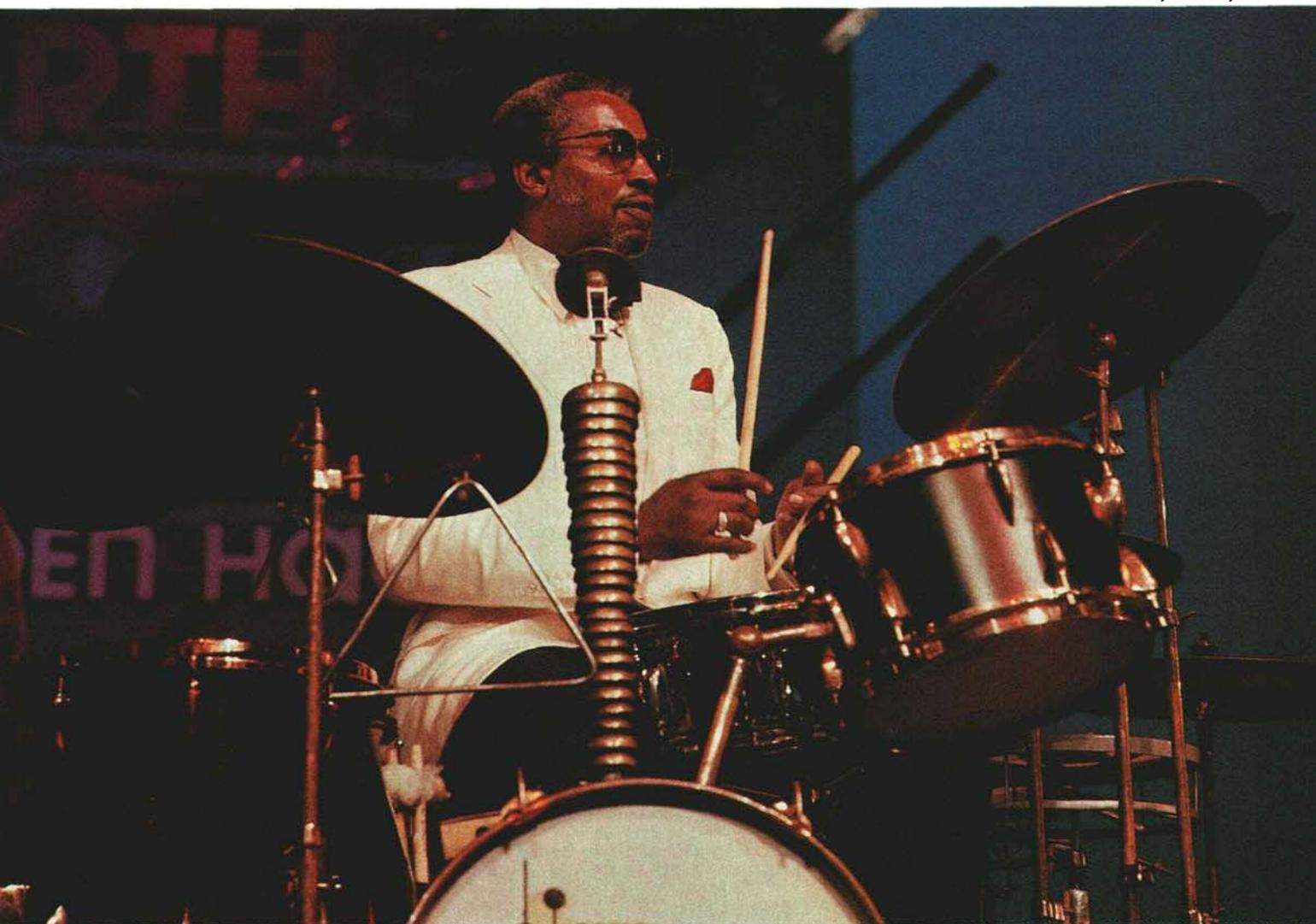
**AF:** I don't quite know, to be quite honest. Maybe he thought that Anton Fig wasn't quite weird enough. In the beginning, there was no rapport, but as he warmed up to me, we developed a rapport. He wants me to catch his cues and all that. So I feel very accepted by him, which is really nice. But except for the odd quip here and there, he communicates mostly with Paul Shaffer. Shaffer is a great bandleader. He's the reason why the band sounds so good each night. Paul puts it

**"I'VE BEEN PLAYING THE SAME WAY FOR YEARS. BUT NOW THAT MY NAME IS GETTING AROUND, PEOPLE THINK THAT I SUDDENLY GOT MUCH BETTER."**

Photo by Ebet Roberts

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"WE will not see their like again," lamented the epitaph on the poster that announced the Modern Jazz Quartet's 1974 farewell concert at Lincoln Center. Luckily, this was wrong. After a period of a little over six years, the group—famously known as MJQ—reunited in 1981, further securing their reputation as the world's longest-running jazz quartet. Originally formed in 1952, MJQ's sound was grounded on the carefully crafted compositions of leader/pianist John Lewis, who combined elements of jazz and classical music. In 1955, Connie Kay replaced drummer Kenny Clarke, and the lineup of Lewis, Kay, vibraphonist Milt Jackson, and bassist Percy Heath hasn't changed since.

Lyrical, intelligent, compositionally balanced, and swinging as well, MJQ's music crossed over to audiences other than just jazz fans. By the late '50s, the group's normal venues became concert halls and festival stages more often than jazz clubs. Offers to play with symphony orchestras poured in. With their chamber-like approach to jazz, they were the most appropriate candidates to meet the challenge of fusing the formats of symphony orchestra and jazz quartet. Black tuxes and bow ties became a trademark of the quartet's presentation.

Delicate and caressing, yet with a clean, assertive pulse, Connie's drumming was the perfect support for MJQ's concept. By adding percussion such as triangles and hanging chimes to his drumset, Connie added further coloration and texture to the self-

contained four-man orchestra.

Born Conrad Kirnon, Connie grew up in Manhattan and the Bronx, although he actually first came into the world in Tuckahoe, New York, on April 27, 1927. Nicknamed "Connie" as a boy, his full professional name later came about at Birdland. Pee Wee Marquette, Birdland's famed emcee, never pronounced "Kirnon" correctly in his introductions. "I got tired of hearing it wrong night after night," says Connie. "So I told him, 'Just call me Connie K.'" The name stuck from that moment on.

In his early professional days before MJQ, Connie worked with Charles Thompson and the young Miles Davis at Minton's (1945) during bop's formative years. Later in '45, he played with Cat Anderson's dance band and then joined the "Pres," Lester Young (1949-50). Short stints followed with Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, and Stan Getz, after which he rejoined Young and stayed from 1952 to 1955. In between MJQ's breakup and reuniting, Connie played for four years with Benny Goodman, worked as the house drummer at Eddie Condon's (1975-81), gigged briefly with Soprano Summit (late '74 to early '75), and cut a long roster of records. Outside the dozens of MJQ albums, Connie has also cut discs with such artists as Cannonball Adderley, Roy Eldridge, Bobby Timmons, Randy Weston, John Coltrane, Herbie Hancock, Gerry Mulligan, Sonny Stitt, Benny Goodman, Alberta Hunter, Sylvia Syms, Sonny Rollins, Red Norvo, Lester Young,

# S O P H I S T I C A

# CONNIE KAY

by Jeff Potter

and Tommy Flanagan. Since the reunion, MJQ has released four fine albums on Pablo records: *Live At Montreux (1982)*, *Echoes (1984)*, *Topsy (1985)*, and *Live At Budokan 1981 (released 1985)*. A videodisc shot live in Tokyo will soon be released in Japan.

There is another long list in Connie's discography of which the public is largely unaware. Most MJQ fans only know Connie's drumming in the context of such elegant John Lewis classics as "Fontessa." So it should blow their tuxedo socks off to learn that this is the very same drummer who cut the raucous original of "Shake, Rattle And Roll" with Big Joe Turner, Laverne Baker's "Tweedle Dee," and several Clyde McPhatter and the Drifters hits. Later endeavors with rock figures included album cuts with Van Morrison and a regrettably unreleased session with George Harrison.

Connie has an evenly paced, slow-going manner that belies the fast pace of his life. To see him settle down into a soft chair for conversation, one would guess he was ready to ease into Sunday afternoon front porch yarns rather than to speak of jetting around the globe with a jazz band. The phenomenon of MJQ's crossover appeal made them popular at Birdland as well as Symphony Hall, and requests for the favor of their company came in from John Lennon as well as the White House. Academic analysis of MJQ's music aside, it's clear from talking with Connie that the reason for MJQ's success and longevity really boils down to the sincerity of the band towards their music, and—as with a good marriage—the members' willingness to give and take musically for the good of the whole. And after 26 years of harmonious music making, that's a recipe for togetherness that can't be disputed.

**JP:** The Modern Jazz Quartet has been such a solid, long-running institution in jazz. The group constantly worked, and played all the best festivals and concert halls. What was the main reason for the group's breakup in 1974?

**CK:** There were many reasons, but the basic reason was financial. By the time we broke up, we had done almost everything we could do in terms of winning awards and being accepted. But the financial rewards didn't seem to be keeping up with the recognition. When we saw what other musicians were doing financially, our situation just didn't seem right. People who had come along in only the last few years were making millions of dollars. There we were, supposedly one of the greatest jazz quartets ever, and we were making peanuts. We were making a living; no one was starv-

ing, and we were secure. But still, it just didn't seem right. Also, we just got tired of the road. We traveled quite a bit and none of us were young anymore. Plus, Milt's [Jackson] record was doing pretty well, and he wanted to see what he could do on his own.

**JP:** So he initiated the breakup?

**CK:** Yeah, more or less, although his solo career never had been hampered by the group before because we always took summers off. So all of us had our own shots at making records. But Milt wanted to try something on his own, which was alright. We each went our separate ways and did what we wanted to do. John taught school, Percy and his brother, Jimmy, started The Heath Brothers, and Milt did his solo thing. I stayed around New York playing and also worked with Benny Goodman for four years. Benny's schedule wasn't like the MJQ's. Benny used to work maybe two or three concerts a week. He wasn't constantly on the road like the MJQ were. It allowed me to have weekends for myself.

I also kept busy as the house drummer at Eddie Condon's. That was a place for me to keep playing, and I could take time off when I wanted to. When I started playing there, it was fun because all the musicians around town used to come in and jam when they got off from their gigs. People like Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, Milt Hinton, and Illinois Jacquet would come by.

**JP:** It's a shame to see that Condon's was torn down recently.

**CK:** Well, I guess they call it progress. [laughs]

**JP:** You recorded so many albums with MJQ. If you were asked to recommend one or two that you feel are especially good examples of the group and/or your playing, could you single any out?

**CK:** I like a lot of them, but I like the live ones best. *European Concert*, the double album, is one I like. That shows the full spectrum of MJQ music. It contains different pieces and sounds, and it has that live, spontaneous feel. I also like another live one, *At The Lighthouse*. In the studio, you sometimes want everything to be perfect, and you know you can stop and do it over again if you make a mistake. When it's live, that's it! So, as a result, you don't concentrate that much on what's being recorded. You're more concerned with projecting to the audience and getting feedback. The live record MJQ made with Sonny Rollins, *At The Music Inn*, is another one I like. That one was spontaneous because nobody knew what the heck Sonny was going to do. He just came out and played.

One live record I like that is not an MJQ recording is *J.J. John-*

# T E D                      S W I N G

son *And Stan Getz At The Opera House*. I did it while I was still with MJQ. It was a Jazz At The Philharmonic concert. Oscar Peterson, Ray Brown, and Herb Ellis were in the band. I like it not so much for what I played, but for the whole feel of the thing.

Some of the live records stink, too. Sometimes it has to do with the person recording it: The sound is bad. And sometimes it's the music that's not the greatest. But basically, the live ones still remain my favorites.

One of my favorite studio records is the last record Paul Desmond made before he died, *Desmond Blue*. The feel was nice and the players were good. I always liked playing with Paul and listening to his lyrical style of playing. The way he flowed reminded me of Lester Young.

**JP:** Your drumming adapts well to those flowing, lyrical types of players because, as with the MJQ, your playing is very sensitive to the harmonies, textures, and the finesse of it all, rather than just bashing over the music.

**CK:** With the instrumentation of the MJQ, you can't actually bash. I don't think a drummer should bash playing *anything* really. If you do, you should know *when* to bash. A lot of drummers bash when they should be doing something else. A drummer's fundamental purpose is to keep time and keep the rhythm. You should listen to what is going on around you and try to fit what you play into that. A lot of musicians today just play—not only the drummers, but everybody. They pick a tune, and the bass player, piano player, horn player, and drummer are each playing something different. Nobody wants to give an inch.

**JP:** You're certainly an authority on give-and-take ensemble playing: MJQ made their mark for their chamber-like approach.

**CK:** Even when it's not chamber style—when musicians come in to have blowing sessions, they have to listen, too. Then when you have your turn to play, you play. But there's a limit to that also. If you're doing a drum solo within a certain tune, you should play a solo that has something to do with what the tune is about. A lot of drummers play with the tune during the melody, and then when it comes to doing a drum solo, it's not in the context of the composition; it's just a drum solo. If you're playing a 32-bar song, you should play a 32-bar drum solo. If you play ten choruses, each one

*Photo by Charles Stewart*



of those choruses should be 32 bars. A lot of drummers just count off to get back in or play a cliché thing to signal the other musicians when to come back in. But that can be cutting right into the middle of the song. When I played with Lester Young, he told me, "When you play a song, Lady Kay, you should know the words to the tune."

**JP:** Lady Kay?

**CK:** That was one of his expressions. He called everybody "Lady." Just like he called Billie Holiday "Lady Day," he called me "Lady Kay." When Horace Silver was in his band, he called him "Lady Silver." It just stuck with Billie Holiday, of course. He never called anybody Mister or Miss. Anyway, he always learned the lyrics to the songs he played. I went over to his place once, and he was listening to a Frank Sinatra song. He had the turntable set so that it played over and over. And when I finally heard Lester play it, it was like he was actually singing it.

**JP:** Your career has been well traced on recordings from your early years to the present. Listening back to those earlier records, do you find a certain point where you feel your drumming bloomed into its mature phase?

**CK:** I don't think I have felt that yet, man. There are things I hear on old records that I forgot I could even play, which might not be necessary in my playing today. There aren't too many records I've made where I can't see something else that I should have done. I don't think I have ever made a record where I sat down and said, "That's perfect; that's exactly what I wanted!"

That's true with MJQ. The more we play a piece, the more I find different things to do or change. It's funny because a lot of people think that MJQ's music is mechanical—that it's all written out. But that's a lie. We do have a format, but after I get that together and stop looking at the chart, there is room for expression and ideas. Sometimes John writes a tune, and I say, "John, how would it sound *this way*?" He might say, "That's better," or, "Hey! That's what I meant to put down." That often happens because, with this kind of music, you can get it technically right on paper but it might not be exactly what you want. There might be a note there, but you can't get a feeling—or soul—on paper. A certain feel or beat might be needed, or he might want the cymbal to sound a certain way, but you can't get that on paper. So it is up to the player to bring it out.

**JP:** How specific did John get with the written drum parts? Many MJQ arrangements involve much more than typical blowing formats.

**CK:** When I first joined MJQ, John used to write a lot of notes in the drum part. But after I was there awhile, he hardly wrote anything for me unless it was something very specific. So a lot of the parts became just bars.

**JP:** In Arthur Taylor's book of interviews, *Notes And Tones*, Richard Davis says, "Some drummers play at you. When you play with certain drummers, you get a caressing feeling that everything is going right . . . . When I play with Connie Kay, I call him the security officer because he gives you a sense of balance and makes you feel secure."

**CK:** [laughs] He always called me that. I used to get a lot of jobs on account of that quality. The point wasn't so much whether I played that good or not, but people liked me because I kept good time. Basically, that's what most people want. My favorite drummer used to be Big Sid Catlett. He kept good time, and it wasn't forceful. A lot of drummers keep time, but they force it on musicians. That's not good either. You should be able to keep the time but, at the same time, make the musicians feel free. Time that is too heavy is as bad as no time at all. It feels like a hammer on your head.

**JP:** Besides having good time, you received a lot of attention for your coloration and use of percussion instruments integrated into the trap set. How did that all come about?



Photo by Tom Coppi

**CK:** That was something John wanted in the music, so he asked me if I could do it. I told him I would try. In a lot of instances, he wanted me to be playing time while doing these things. Today, you have one person keeping time and someone else handling percussion. In a quartet, I couldn't do that. I had to do everything.

**JP:** What are some of the extra percussion pieces you use with MJQ now?

**CK:** I use a bell tree, woodblock, triangle, finger cymbals, and tunable toms. At one time, I had miniature timps that were made for me by Sonor. They were tuned by turning a knob by hand. One was about 10", and the other was 14". This was before *RotoToms* came on the market, which I have also used before. I also use two Greek darabucca drums made of pewter.

I'm a Sonor endorsee, and for the drums, I use an 18" bass, 6 1/2" snare, 12" tom, and a 14" floor tom along with five Zildjian cymbals: a sizzle, ride, flat-top, crash, and swish. Sometimes I use an extra floor tom made by Sonor with pedal tuning that works like a timpani. We try to lighten up on the setup for airline travel. Some of the percussion is used only for one tune, and at some concerts, we might not even play the tune, so it would only sit there all night.

**JP:** Those miniature timps are unusual. Were they ever marketed?

**CK:** No, they never were. The only problem with them was that, at that time, Sonor drums were made on the metric system, so when the heads broke, you couldn't find heads to replace them. That's what made me stop playing them.

**JP:** And you used them as tuned pitches just as they would be in orchestral playing?

**CK:** Yes. I also used crotales for certain pitches. Sonor also made pitched wooden pieces for me that were like individual marimba keys. I used those for certain tunes in which John had indicated that he was looking for that sound.

**JP:** Did you study mallets?

**CK:** No, but I started on piano so that made it easy. I really taught myself how to play drums. I bought drum books, and practiced all the rudiments, reading, and so forth. When I got older, and I was playing jobs and had a little money, I started going to a teacher. Before that, I couldn't afford it. Seven bucks for a lesson at that time was rough. The first job I played was seven bucks a night, four nights a week. I didn't realize that that was good: There were peo-

ple working for three bucks a night.

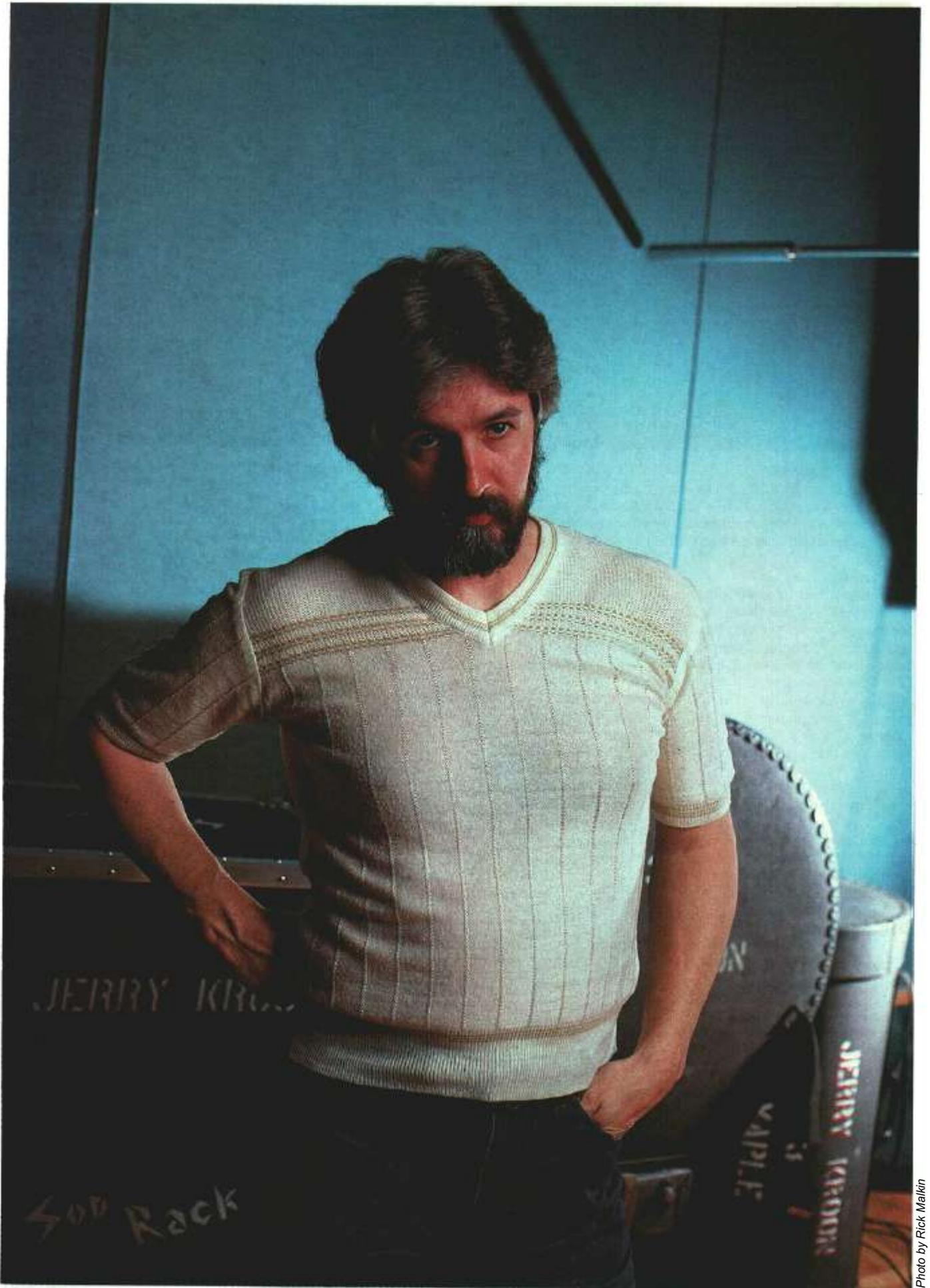
**JP:** Once you started collecting all the percussion equipment and working it into the music, did you at first find that it prevented you from concentrating on your role as security officer? Like a pit drummer, you had to figure out how to get from one instrument to the other without breaking the flow.

**CK:** Somehow I got around that. Sometimes you have to let the time go and keep it in your head, so that when you do get back to the set, you're there. John usually wrote those things in a way that wouldn't throw me. But sometimes he would ask me to do certain things, and I would think, "I'll never be able to do this!"—like keeping the hi-hat going while I played something else. After a

*continued on page 72*



Photo by Tom Coppi



# Jerry Kroon

**T**HIS interview should be required reading for anyone contemplating moving to Nashville to attempt to break into the studio scene. Studio drummer Jerry Kroon addresses issues of, problems with, and feelings about his work, the artists, producers, players, and environment of the Nashville studio in his candidly blunt way.

"It's just a matter of waiting your turn. I'm not saying it's always fair to the new person, but we've all had the same chance. I came here from South Dakota with nothing but a U-haul trailer, my wife, and a dog. I didn't know anybody. I didn't have anything handed to me, so I worked my way up. A lot of people say, 'You got where you are because of Larrie Londin.' He recommended me for a couple of years before anybody would take a shot at me. I've recommended people like Tommy Wells, who is a real good player. I've been recommending him for a year or two, and he's actually played on bigger records than I did when I started. It's just getting that chance and getting people to use him more."

Jerry shares the frustrations and insecurities he has, even though he is playing for the major accounts such as Earl Thomas Conley, Lee Greenwood, Reba McEntire, Ricky Skaggs, Sawyer Brown, Mel Tillis, Ray Stevens, Merle Haggard, Alabama, George Strait, and Lacy J.

## THE BUSINESS OF MUSIC

FEBRUARY 1987

Dalton. He makes it obvious that, even though at the top of his field, he is compulsive about growth. Almost to a fault, Jerry is a perfectionist, struggling to be satisfied with his own capabilities.

"In *Modern Drummer*, I read about all these guys I idolize, and I wonder how they're so good and how they got that way. Then I get to thinking that there's room for people like me. In a way, guys like me are a testament. I don't play like Jeff Porcaro or Steve Gadd. I'd love to, but as hard as I try, I can't. But is there still room for somebody who can't be that phenomenal? To me, those guys are great drummers. There are good drummers, and there are great drummers. People use the term 'great' too loosely."

**RF:** But you can't consider only what Steve and Jeff do as being great. What about extending the term to apply to someone like you who is great at what you do, not great at what Jeff does?

**JK:** You're right about that, but I honestly believe that there are certain players out there who denote the word "great." As a session player, I have to say that players like Jeff and Johnny Guerin are really great because they do what they do so well. They're the cream of the crop because they're so versatile. I wish drummers in Nashville had the opportunity to play that stuff. That's the only drawback to Nashville, I must say.

**RF:** Why didn't you go to L.A.? Why Nashville?

**JK:** I honestly didn't feel I could handle L.A. I felt intimidated by the city. I had been out there before and played at a club with a band. When it came time for us to move, I wanted to take my wife into con-

sideration also. She would have gone with me wherever I wanted to go, but I felt my chances at working were better in Nashville. As it turned out, it was a very good move.

Nashville, to me, isn't a large city. It's an overgrown town, and it's more family

oriented. You can sit down, talk to the people, get together with them, and do things. It's just home. It still feels good even with the growth we're experiencing. I like to think I have lots of acquaintances but precious few friends. And they're people I don't see a lot, like Larrie and Debbie Londin, but we're there if we need each other. That's important in this "I've got to do x amount of sessions a week" place where every kid who comes into town, I feel, is like a gunfighter out to shoot me down. That's a realistic feeling that people need to know about. It's not all big money and stardom. It's a job, and I need to look at the long haul. I've been really blessed with the work, but I have to keep pushing and keep playing.

**RF:** It seems that Nashville is comprised of just a few drummers who monopolize the scene.

**JK:** When I first moved to town in 1971, the scene was fairly monopolized by certain players. I say this with all due respect to the players, but Buddy Harman, Kenneth Buttrey, Jerry Carrigan, Jimmy Isbell, and Willie Ackerman were popular. It was a very close-knit circle. Larrie was one of the first new guys I knew of to break in. Then came Kenny Malone and some others. I see more new players showing up on sessions now than ever before. But in response to your statement about being monopolized by a few, it does seem that there are four or five drummers who end up doing most of it. That's not to slight the other players, but I think the producers—and there are a lot of new producers doing things—are still using those same people because they have complete confidence in them. There are a lot of new players here who are great rock 'n' roll players, jazz players, or whatever, but the people who are doing most of the work still have a good country feel for doing the straight-ahead country sessions. Someone might be into kind of a pop/rock thing or contemporary country and sound fine, but if you throw that person in on a George Strait or George Jones session where you've got to play something real simple, it won't feel right. I'm not saying that everyone is like that, but I believe that has a lot to do with

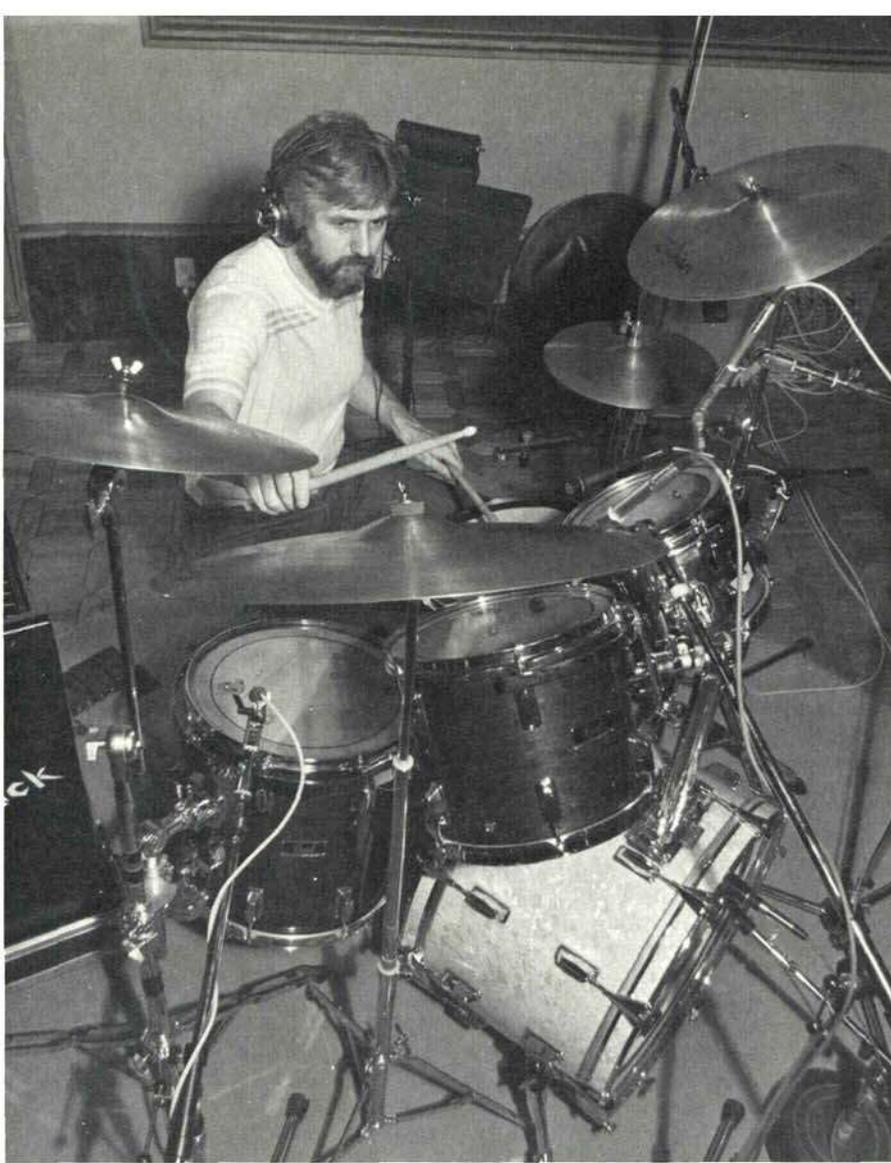


Photo by Rick Malkin

it. I think the people who are working the most seem to be able to cover a more varied spectrum of playing than some of the others who are specialists.

**RF:** You've done a real variety of music from the traditional George Strait stuff to the more contemporary music of, say, Earl Thomas Conley. What is the difference in your approach to the drums on these two opposite ends of the spectrum?

**JK:** My background is bar bands and the Holiday Inn circuit. The groups I played in were always variety bands—human jukeboxes. We played whatever the Top 40 was. When I first came to Nashville, I got into a country band in the Western Room in Printer's Alley, so I learned the Loretta Lynn style, Tammy Wynette, Barbara Mandrell—the real stone country feel. That helps me now when I play on a date. If it's traditional, like Ricky Skaggs or the early stuff we did with George Strait, I'm not going to be dragging in Simmons or trying to play all these hot licks. Let's get to the meat and potatoes—the bottom line of the tune.

Country songs are not that rhythmically complicated, but they have a nice little groove all their own, which is very impor-

tant to capture. I'm not a hot-licks player. I know hundreds of drummers who can just eat me up with chops, but I always play for the song. If I can say anything I like about myself, it's that I always try to be a good background player. I don't have star quality in me. If it only calls for a stick

**“THERE ARE A LOT OF NEW PLAYERS [IN NASHVILLE] WHO ARE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL PLAYERS, JAZZ PLAYERS, OR WHATEVER, BUT THE PEOPLE WHO ARE DOING MOST OF THE WORK STILL HAVE A GOOD COUNTRY FEEL.”**

and a brush and that makes the song happen, as long as it's tight and doesn't rush or drag, I'm real happy. I hesitate to say this because I don't want to make anybody mad or put anybody down. I respect all the drummers in town, but some of the newer

people think playing country music is kind of boring. I respect them if they can make a good living and not have to play that kind of music. I'd love to do the L. A. pop stuff, but I get called for what I get called for, and there's no sense in my trying to push a square peg in a round hole.

**RF:** When you're dealing with a George Strait song and an Earl Thomas Conley song, what does each one of those call for?

**JK:** Earl Thomas Conley has evolved over the last several years I've been doing him. He has been going into the more pop end and wanting to get a bigger sound. The producer and Earl have dictated: "We're going to stray a little bit further from where we've been. We want a bigger drum sound, we want more aggressive tom fills, and more power. We want this to really compete with the bigger power ballads." But when I did the Reba McEntire album that Harold Shedd did with "How Blue" and all that, Reba said, "Look, this is country. This is who I am. I want to get back to my roots and do what I do best." That tells me right away what Reba wants.

**RF:** What specifically does that tell you?

**JK:** That tells me to keep it nice and simple. Let's keep the verses one way. Let's not get too big on the fills going to the chorus. Just keep it right in the groove. Let the vocal take over, and let the acoustics and the lead guitarist take it. To me, that's simple. It's from all the years of listening.

**RF:** How did you break into the scene?

**JK:** It's been a long process for me but a continuing growth. I came here in '71 and went on the road for about three months with a country artist, Nat Stuckey. He had a record out, and he was real country. Then I worked in Printer's Alley with a group called the Nashville Cats, six nights a week, for \$135 a week, five hours a night, playing stone country. Back then, like I said, we were doing the Loretta Lynn and Tammy Wynette material. I was there for two years, and during that time, I started doing a few little custom sessions, which are sessions with an unknown artist, usually from out of town, who doesn't have a label. Usually the artist or the producer is paying for it and marketing it. So I gained a little experience there, and then I got on a few demos. Then I went on the road with Ray Stevens, who worked maybe 110 days a year. Then I started getting more demo work. My thing has been strictly word of mouth. Larrie recommended me for a couple of years before anybody took a chance on me. Then once other people heard me, they'd say, "Oh yeah, we'll try him. I've heard of him."

**RF:** It really was a long process. Did you ever get discouraged?

**JK:** I probably get discouraged more now than when I started.

**RF:** Why?

**JK:** I just have so many things I want to do: other goals and different record things I want to play on. As I look back, other peo-

ple have come to town with track records, and they've jumped right in there. In a year or two, they've gotten the big dates. When I look back over my career, I find that it's been very steady and consistent. Thank the Lord that I've never been out of work. After five years with Ray, I got to the point where I could not afford to go out and play with him. In '79 I quit, and it's been really good ever since. There are frustrating moments. I have a family that's dependent on me. It's frustrating, but I'm doing what I want to do. I'm real grateful for the consistency of it. I've had good friends who have come here and done well for a couple of years. Then all of a sudden, it's slowed down and been a struggle. Consistency has always been a strong point for me. And the work has gotten better and better. I'll be honest with you. When I am passed over by some of these people, I say, "Wow, how do they get to do those? I wish I could do that. I know I could do a good job." But by being patient and trying to wait, it comes around. This year has been wonderful. I've played on a lot of different things and with new people.

**RF:** Such as?

**JK:** At the end of last year, I did my first movie score, playing music cues for the Jerry Reed movie *What Comes Around*. That was with a 30-piece orchestra and it was great.

**RF:** That must have been a nice stretch for you.

**JK:** Yes, because I'm a self-taught reader. I've learned to read over the last five or six years. We don't get to read much here, so it was a little tense for me, but it was a real challenge. I wanted to really do it to prove to myself that I could, plus I wanted to be a

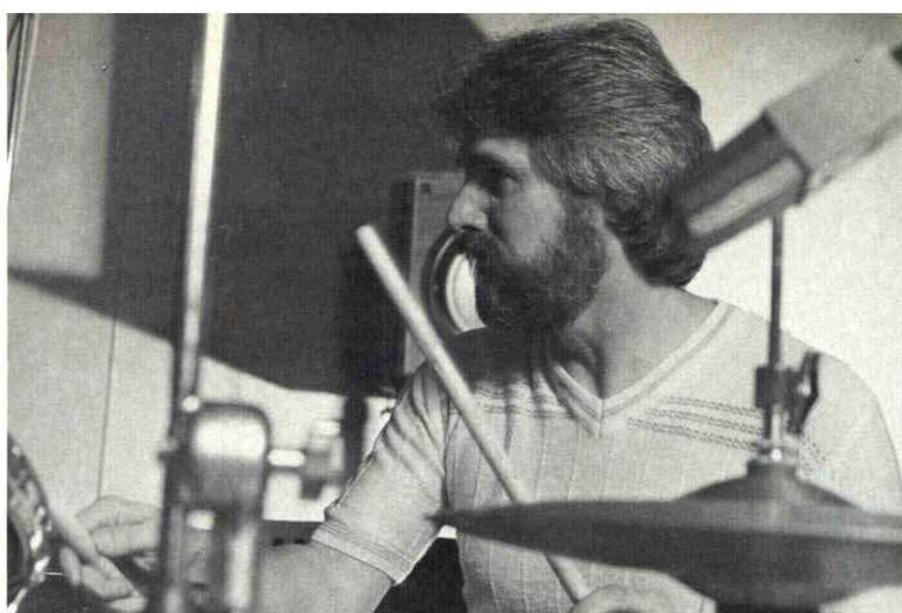


Photo by Rick Malkin

part of something exciting. It really came off well, and it was a real boost to me. I recently did a big band swing album with Buddy Emmons, who is a steel-guitar player. He's a great jazz player. That was the first time I played with a big band. We did stuff like "Undecided" by the Ames Brothers and all these things I always wanted to play. I was a little intimidated because I didn't have the experience, but it came off great.

A great thing that happened was that Eddie Bayers hired me to play drums on a Sonny Throckmorton session. That's really neat when another drummer thinks that much of you—especially of Eddie's caliber. Several months ago, I worked with Paul Worley on some Coors jingles. And Paul uses a real tight section. Paul and Eddie Bayers go back a long way. It's little things like that that are so neat. They prob-

ably don't mean much to most people, but when you've been doing sessions, it's hard to stretch out and break new ground.

So there are little confidence builders and things like that that let you know you are getting somewhere. It has nothing to do with the money, but those little things mean a lot to me. I'm the kind of person who has never banged on doors. I don't have anything against people doing that, and it seems to be a new trend for Nashville, but when I came to town, I wanted to make sure that I didn't come in like some hot dog trying to take other people's jobs. I wanted these people to respect me, and I wanted to earn my way. I didn't want to go in the back way. It's not that I was intimidated by them or afraid they weren't going to like me, but I respected Buddy Harman and all those guys, and I didn't want to

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Photo by Rick Malkin

# New York's High Sch

Justin DiCiocio

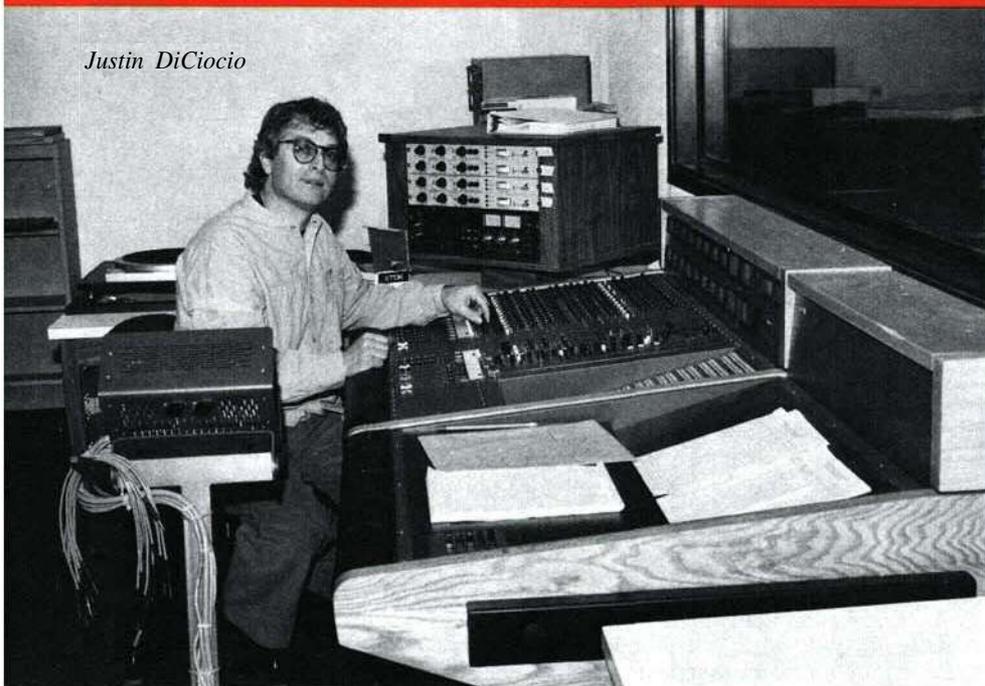


Photo by Laura Friedman

It was Fiorello LaGuardia, mayor of New York City from 1934 to 1946, who originally had the concept of a public high school dedicated to the arts. He wanted a specialized high school for students who were both academically and artistically gifted. The original school, called Music & Art High School, offered only instrumental music and fine arts, and was located uptown, at 135th Street. Several years later, the Performing Arts school opened in the Midtown theater district, on 46th Street. Graduates of these two schools can be found today in many areas of the arts, including music, dance, theater, films, etc. A quick list of names you might recognize includes Hal Linden, Diahann Carroll, Laura Nyro, Peter Yarrow, Billy Dee Williams, Janis Ian, Erica Jong, Carol Bayer Sager, Marcus Miller, Dave Valentin, Peter Nero, Fred Lipsius . . . The list goes on and on. Names specifically notable in percussion include Billy Cobham, Dan Druckman, Charlie Draden, Susan Evans, Steve Jordan, Alvin Stoller, David Van Tiegham, Kenny Washington, and Buddy Williams.

The two campuses—fictionally combined into one—formed the inspiration for both the film and TV-series versions of *Fame*. But in 1983, the opening of the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School Of The Arts brought everything together in reality. The new school is now located in modern facilities adjacent to Lincoln Center and is the most expensive high school ever built in the U.S.

The school is what is sometimes termed

a "magnet" facility, drawing students from all the areas of New York City. Mayor LaGuardia's concept of an arts-oriented public high school was the first of its kind. All the performing arts high schools that have developed around the country are built upon this model. But just what kind of programs are offered to aspiring musicians in this unique facility? Justin DiCiocio, Jazz Studies and Percussion Program Director, outlines the format.

"In a sense, you can look at our program as a double-tracking system. We have what is comparable to a music major in a conservatory, and then we also have what is comparable to a liberal arts major in a large university. So we can offer a 'vocational' track or a 'liberal arts' track. We want to offer both tracks to our students, because some of them don't know what they want to do. Some kids are hot in junior high, when they are very young. Then, all of a sudden, they come here and realize that the competition is tough. You have to remember that *every* kid who comes here was the 'star' in his or her previous school. When you put all the 'stars' together, you still have a top and a bottom. Often, kids who were the hotshots in their schools suddenly begin to wonder, 'If I'm not so hot here, what must it be like "out there"?' So they look for other directions.

"And then there are some kids who just like music. They aren't interested in it in terms of becoming professionals. They just want to be well-versed, and that's okay, too, because we need better, more intelligent audiences who understand

music. So in a sense, we are helping to fill the seats in the concert halls because obviously, the majority of kids who graduate from a place like this *don't* go into the field professionally. That's impossible."

In order to enter the program at LaGuardia High, a student must be a resident of New York City, and must enter the school in grade nine or ten. The faculty believes that, if a student enters later than that, he or she cannot receive the full benefit of the complete curriculum. Eligible students audition in December and January for the following school year. Regarding the auditions, Justin says, "I try to pick the most talented people, and I try to keep it so that we don't overextend ourselves. If you have too many percussion or drumset players, then nobody gets a chance to play, because there aren't enough performing groups. Then we're defeating what we're trying to do. I try to keep a grip on enrollment, so that everybody is playing all the time. I think that's very important, not only from an instruction point of view, but also just for the *experience* of playing—in all the situations, like big band, combos, orchestras, new music ensembles, etc."

Each incoming student has a sight-singing class, a theory class, and a performing class of some kind—band, orchestra, or an instrument class. The band can be a jazz band, a concert band, etc., depending upon the student's interest. "If a student has a keen interest in jazz," says Justin, "I try to gear him or her toward that to give as much experience opportunity as possible. Some students are more interested in classical music. I believe that everyone should study everything and learn everything that he or she possibly can, but obviously some kids lean more toward certain aspects.

"In this school, we have three concert bands, four complete symphony orchestras, two string orchestras, and a couple of chamber music classes. We also have two jazz big bands, a combo improvisation class at three different levels, and a styles studies analysis class where we analyze solos and styles of different jazz players. Because we have three combos, drummers get to play drumset in a combo situation. If they're interested in mallets or piano, they can also do that, to learn their harmony or how to improvise on melodic instruments. That's great, because they're learning the heads for playing. We use the classic tunes in the small-group jazz repertoire."

With all the orchestras, bands, and combos offered in the various programs, students do a good deal of doubling in these various situations. By the time a student is in his or her junior year, that student is

playing in at least one concert big band, one symphony orchestra, and at least one jazz band, along with taking various other music classes.

In addition to jazz and symphonic percussion, the school also offers Latin and hand percussion as part of the jazz studies curriculum. But according to Justin, "Right now, we don't have too many really good Latin percussion players. I think that goes in cycles for some reason. We used to have some outstanding bongo, conga, and timbale players. They don't seem to be auditioning for us anymore. As a matter of fact, the numbers on all the instruments don't seem to be what they used to be."

As a music educator, Justin holds some strong opinions regarding the concern of the music industry—and especially within music education circles—that the influx of young people into music has diminished over the past few years. Since the late 1970s, budget cuts have been affecting arts programs throughout the country. In the city of New York, there are no more elementary school music programs and very few junior high school music programs. Education in the arts has been cut all over the country, and it's just ridiculous. That's number one.

"Number two is that parents don't push the kids into music anymore, because it's very expensive. Instruments are expensive, and lessons are expensive. Any decent teacher is going to charge a minimum of \$25.00 per lesson, and people just don't have that kind of money. Also, some parents don't want the kids 'hanging out with junkies' or playing 'that crazy rock 'n' roll music that drives them nuts.'

"Number three is the influence of electronics. Kids don't have the discipline to sit in a room like they used to years ago and practice on acoustic instruments. Besides, the music they hear doesn't lend itself to doing that sort of thing. What they hear all the time is the electronic music—the synthesizer. If you have any kind of imagination or creative ability, you don't have to play an instrument anymore; you don't have to know *anything* about music. You can go out and get a little Casio keyboard and program it like a mini-synthesizer, one note at a time. Before you know it, you have the complete pattern of a tune, and that's become the standard. Couple that with the influence of electronics on the whole consumer market—computers and so forth: All of that has affected the music business.

"Now, a lot of people run scared, saying that drum machines and synthesizers are

going to put everybody but keyboard players out of business. And they are, to a certain extent. But I think that the technology is far superior to the musical knowledge. In other words, the people who understand the *electronic* technology don't know anything about *music*, and the *musicians* don't understand the *technology*. But what is starting to happen is that musicians are getting schooled in electronic technology through the universities, music schools, and conservatories. Now *we're* going to start to be creative. Instead of the instruments being used 'in place of this musician or that instrument, musicians are going to find creative outlets—ways to use a synthesizer to extend the palette of the acoustic instruments, rather than in place of acoustic instruments. I think that's the direction that's going in, and I don't think it will put that many people out of work along the way—perhaps in the jingle industry, yes. But I think that in the overall scope, when some, really innovative, creative musicians come on the scene—who understand the technology—they will find another outlet for electronics."

In that case, does Justin think that instruction in electronic technology should begin here at the high school level? "Yes, and we're already doing it. We now have an electronic music studio equipped with synthesizers and electronic percussion from Korg, Roland, Yamaha, and other companies. We hope to be teaching a complete synthesizer and electronic music program by the time this article reaches publication.

"Electronics are a part of today's music. I think that coming up as an acoustic musician and just playing your axe is not quite enough anymore. As a musician today, you have to have a knowledge of composition, arranging, and keyboard instruments. And you definitely need to have a knowledge of electronics in the studio. I really think that the musician of the future will be the person who sits behind the board—I mean the person who has a knowledge of engineering and is *also* a musician in the traditional, instrumental sense as well."

Should the percussion instruction program at LaGuardia High be geared toward that approach? Justin believes so. But he also feels that a thorough knowledge of drumming history is important.

"I think we need to incorporate what's contemporary. But I also believe that young drummers should know about bebop and swing, too, because that's also a very, very important part of what jazz is. In fact, I think a lot of what's wrong with



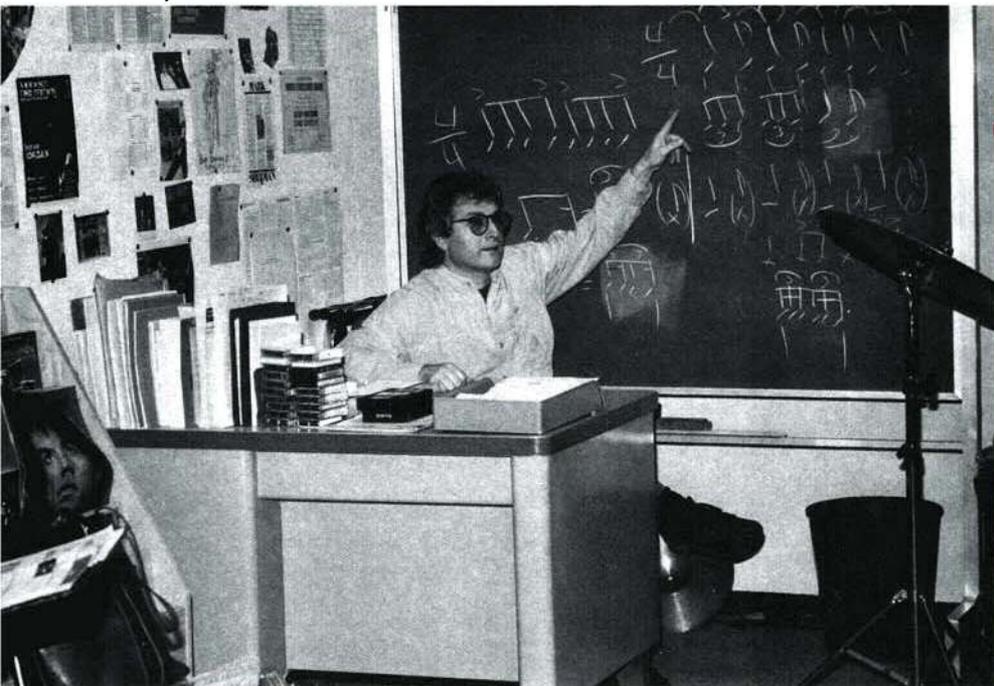
Gabriel Kosakoff

Photo by Laura Friedman

contemporary drummers today is just that they haven't heard Jo Jones, or Gene Krupa, or Philly Joe—those 'roots' people who created the essence of so much music.

"The roots of this music are so important: understanding where everything comes from; understanding the relationship of styles and how they have evolved—one thing leading to the next. In my teaching program, I show how Baby Dodds led to Jo Jones, and how Jo led to Kenny Clarke, and how Kenny led to Max Roach, Art Blakey, and Roy Haynes, and how Philly Joe was an extension of Max, and then how Tony Williams came on and was an extension of Philly, and how Elvin Jones fits into that picture—all logically and stylistically, based on how those drummers play. We analyze why Elvin sounds like Elvin and not like Max, or why Buddy Rich sounds like Buddy as opposed to Elvin: They're both great players, but what do they do that's *different*? Kids don't know that, so I point out why those drummers sound the way they do, how they approach the kit, and what their thoughts are—as well as we can conceptualize and express through words. When it comes down to it, you have to feel it to express it.

"I'm also a bug on being able to understand what you're supposed to listen *for*—and *how* to listen. I remember that, when I was coming up, cats would say, 'Oh, man, you gotta listen to Max.' So I'd go out, buy a Max record, put it on, and listen. But I didn't know what to listen *for*. It was



something completely foreign to me. So I take my students back stylistically, using stick control exercises. We start with Baby Dodds, circa 1926. Then we go through 1930 and on from there, talking about how things started: how drummers played four on the floor, and then how things shifted to the ride cymbal, and how the hi-hat came about. They get a whole history of drumming through playing and technique development. We go from the '20s right through to the '80s." Since this is the '80s, many of the school's young drummers are interested in rock. Justin points out that rock

playing is included within the jazz department, which really covers jazz, rock, studio, pop, and commercial music. "It's more of a 'contemporary music' program," says Justin. "It's called 'jazz studies,' because that designation has become the accepted norm for such programs in music schools and conservatories. But it's not just jazz. We do recitals where kids will play original pop material—things they wrote. In the combo ensembles, they'll play rock, funk, etc. I encourage the kids to do their own material; I like the idea of their being original and inventive. There's

nobody who's original anymore; when you listen to the radio, it's people copying each other."

With so many opportunities to play and be creative, it's possible that students who have been at LaGuardia for three or four years could get an idyllic impression of playing music as a career. Justin tries to impress upon them the fact that, as soon as they go out the school door into the "real world," their situation is going to change.

"I try to present a clear picture of what it's all about. I deal with them from a real, professional standpoint, and I think that's why we've had so many who have gone right out of here and into the professional world successfully. They're prepared. The music we play is of the highest caliber, and we talk about what playing is all about. I mean the *essence* of music: articulation, phrasing, groove. We don't just talk about reading, or chords, or technique in regard to weight lifting or something. We develop *musical* technique—things that are important."

In order to maximize the students' contact with the music profession, Justin arranges for professional players—many of whom are graduates of the school themselves—to speak in Master Class sessions. In addition, performances by professional jazz groups, pop groups, string quartets, and classical groups are a part of the regular program. As Justin explains, "We try to keep it well-rounded, because the way I



## "Education in the arts has been cut all over the country, and it's just ridiculous."

look at it, the only thing in music that changes is the style. It's still quarter notes, crescendos, articulation, phrasing—but the groove changes. The essence of all that stuff is the same; it's just the interpretation that's different. If you're a classical player, you have to know that, if you play Beethoven like you play Bach, it's absolutely wrong. It's the same thing with us in the jazz studies department: Basie's played one way, Charlie Parker's played another way, Earth, Wind & Fire's played another way, and Sting is played another way."

One interesting aspect of the School Of The Arts is the diversification of the student body. Because they come from all areas of New York City, the students also come from all kinds of ethnic and economic backgrounds. Some of Justin's students were brought up listening to nothing but Beethoven in their homes and going to the New York Philharmonic every Tuesday night, along with going to the opera and to Broadway shows. Others enter the program knowing nothing but rap music from the streets. And of course, there are some who can appreciate both. "Our job here," says Justin, "is to take the most talented kids—not the best readers or the best technicians, but the people with the most potential. We try to develop that talent, as well as to give each student the best, most well-rounded education possible. I want my percussion students to understand how to play timpani and percussion in an orchestra, how to play drumset, how to play in a studio, how to read for both concept and interpretation, and how to solo. And I mean how to solo *musically*, playing on the form of the tune. Young kids today think a drum solo is a show-business event based upon how fast you can play. I like to call that 'athletic technique.' I don't deal from that standpoint; I deal from a *musical technique*. I think a musician is a musician. I also think that, as drummers, we've been taught incorrectly all these years; we haven't been taught as musicians. Most of us who have become successful did so because we learned how to be musicians *afterwards*. First, we learned all the athletics: 'How fast can I play single strokes? Can I play a paradiddle faster than the other person?' That's an important part of developing muscles, but it can be taught in a musical way to build musical technique instead of just athletic technique. And that's what we're trying to do here."

It's important to note that students do not gain a musical education at the School Of The Arts at the expense of their academic education. The academic program is exactly the same as in all the other high schools in the city. All entering freshmen take five academic majors: English, his-

tory, social studies, math, and language. Before graduation, each student must have eight semesters—four years—of English and social studies. Some people still feel that academics should take an even higher priority, but Gabriel Kosakoff, Assistant Principal In Charge Of Music, sees a negative element in that.

"Every time they increase the academic requirements in the school day, we don't have as much room to do what we'd like to do musically. With the academic requirements as they are *now* our kids get into Princeton and Yale and Harvard. Any additional academic requirements might subtract from our musical offerings. I feel that, from the point of view of the parent, why did you send the child here? It's a musical program. Why should we water that down, if we're giving our students all the academic requirements they need to get into the top colleges, *in addition to* a music education program that no one else can offer? Every time we take a little bit off that music program, we're subtracting from the reason for this place. Generally speaking, the parents are on our side. Nobody has to come here; the kids audition to get in, and it's tough. When they come here, we want them committed to us, because when we accepted them, we denied somebody else who might have profited from being here. In other words, you don't stop practicing the day you get in here and start worrying about getting into college."

Justin points out that the program offers a great deal of flexibility. "If students are interested in a performing arts career, there are ways to juggle their curriculum so that they can lean more towards their studio courses. Some kids lean more toward an academic career, and they'll take more academics. The student can opt to build his

or her own emphasis. We have some kids who are brilliant academicians *as well as* musicians. They pass out of things; they take advanced placement courses—self-paced independent-study courses—in lieu of sitting in class. That leaves them more room to manipulate their daily course schedules.

"Our program isn't quite what it looks like on the television show *Fame*. I'm afraid that show blows the students' participation in the arts segment of the curriculum all out of proportion. I was involved with the movie version: I pretty much put all of the bands together. Those were my students playing in those 'school bands' in the movie. I was also involved as a consultant in the transition to the TV series. Initially, it was pretty authentic, but it started to become a bit more 'Hollywood' as it went on."

Some of that "Hollywood" effect is the impression that many students step right from the School Of The Arts into major stardom. Gabriel Kosakoff puts the situation in a more realistic perspective.

"On a yearly basis, a very small portion of the students today go into professional music. In some cases—especially in the jazz field—it can be done. But in the symphonic field, it's impossible. We like to consider ourselves a pre-conservatory. We want to give our students a conservatory experience and say, 'If you're really serious—if you want to go on to Eastman, or Berklee, or wherever—this is what's going to happen to you when you get there.' We don't discourage anybody, but we do try to make them realistic enough to know that it's a different world out there. Some of these kids see their names on marquee already. And their *mothers* . . . ."



Photo by Laura Friedman



by Tracy Borst



# Barrett Deems

Chicago after World War II still had an area in the Loop that abounded with bright lights and jazz. The big swing bands played at the Hotel Sherman, and clubs such as the Capitol cocktail lounge, the Brass Rail, the Prevue Lounge, and others featured the finest jazz artists in the world.

Diagonally across from the Sherman Hotel, neon lights beamed: "Randolph Square—World's Busiest Nite Life Corner." And underneath that were the words: "Barrett Deems—World's Fastest Drummer." If you were involved in the world of drums, it was a lure you couldn't resist.

Inside Randolph Square, Barrett Deems did indeed propel a quartet of Chicago musicians with a clean, swinging performance—and it was done effortlessly. When you returned to the street, you weren't about to argue with the premise of the sign. If anything, Barrett's smooth work probably inspired a generation of drummers to do a bit more woodshedding than they had originally intended.

Barrett Deems is in town. In the ten days that he is spending in the Los Angeles area, most of the veteran drummers in the city will see and talk with him. Some will see him at the NAMM Winter Show near Disneyland that Barrett attends each year. Others will make a point of stopping in at the Professional Drum Shop in Hollywood—knowing that he will spend several hours there each day.

When Barrett is talking with friends, he will idly pick up a drumstick with his left hand and begin a precise, even pattern of multiple-bounce strokes on a nearby pad, done with the speed and smoothness of raindrops cascading down a windowpane. It is not done for show; it's what Barrett does rather constantly: practice. The

younger drummers that drift in and out of the shop cast furtive glances at him. Some pretend not to notice, but soon their curiosity must be satisfied, and they find themselves staring at this slightly built, pixieish man with the gray goatee. He could be a Hollywood character actor or perhaps a retired university professor. But that left-hand finger control is *astounding*, and Barrett Deems is still influencing another generation.

Later, in his motel room on Sunset Boulevard, Barrett relaxes after a long day at the NAMM Show. "I go to both shows each year. I like to see all the stuff they show. I saw a set with three bass drums and a dozen toms. I couldn't play a set like that; I never needed more than a couple of toms, and two or three cymbals. I still have five sets of *Radio Kings* at home. All the companies forgot about the old guys—and we helped make them. I've been with Zildjian for 55 years, and I'm working with Pearl drums now. Pearl has treated me very nicely."

He sits on the bed, leaning on his left elbow. With a stick in his hand, he taps on a small, hard rubber pad about the size of a shoe heel. Two large cymbal bags are on the floor, but no cymbals are in evidence.

"I travel light. Everything I have is in those bags; I don't like suitcases. I took the train out here. That was the first time I'd been on one in 30 years. I had a nice compartment; it gave me a chance to practice."

Barrett made his earthly debut in Springfield, Illinois, on March 1, 1913, just a little later than a number of other Midwesterners who would be making jazz history within the next two decades. Goodman, Krupa, Tough, and various friends were to bring about the Chicago style in the northern part of Illinois; Iowa, Wisconsin, and Indiana would produce Beiderbecke, Berigan, and Hoagy Carmichael. It was a time when—if you were associating with the musical world—it would be difficult *not* to find good players.

Barrett had already worked with most of the fine players in his area when famed violinist Joe Venuti came through Springfield in 1936 and offered him the drum spot. "I

joined him in New York in '37 and stayed until '45. Kay Starr was on the band—great singer."

When Barrett decided to settle in Chicago, the Windy City percussion scene was producing players known for their ability to really take care of business. Red Saunders knocked out anyone who saw him work at the Club De Lisa, and he sometimes filled in for Sonny Greer when Ellington was in town. Bob Tilles was becoming known for his radio work—and would later branch out into television and the educational field. Ellis Stuckey could cut burlesque and vaudeville shows, and then handle the percussion work at the famed Chez Patee supper club or at the Sherman—when the hotel's policy changed to the songwriter "Salute" shows. With this mob, you delivered the goods, and you did it "straight."

Says Barrett, "I never took a drink in my life and never fooled with dope. You don't need that stuff. Practice—that's it. With drums, you get better. I don't know about other instruments, but with drums, you've just got to get better. My chops are better now than they were 30 years ago."

But nearly 40 years ago, Barrett Deems was being billed as the "World's Fastest Drummer"—and his business card still states that. When the operators of Randolph Square put it in lights, Barrett was on his way to becoming one of the best-known drummers in the jazz world. "I did a show with Gene and Buddy in about '48. They said I was fastest of all."

Barrett also booked his own group into The Dome restaurant of the Sherman Hotel. He worked with Jack Teagarden, Muggsy Spanier, and other jazz greats that came through Chicago—often recording and touring with them. In 1953, he joined Louis Armstrong's All-Stars and spent the next eight years traveling the globe with the great jazz master. "We used to fly a million miles a year with Armstrong—great players. We played everywhere in the world. We were always treated better [overseas] than we were here."

Barrett appears in many film clips dealing with Armstrong's career that have

# How to go from Acoustic to Electronic

## Major Discovery!

I can use my acoustic drums as triggers to an electronic drum system! Octapad is the brain of the system. I can connect up to six mikes from my drums to the back of the Octapad (inexpensive transducer pickups work great for this!)

Can trigger a MIDI drum system from the Octapad using a TR-505 Rhythm Composer as a sound source. For about \$1000. - I could buy an Octapad & a TR-505 & have an electronic drum set & still use my acoustic drums. Octapad has no sounds of its own but can control any MIDI instrument. MIDI makes the Roland system wide open.

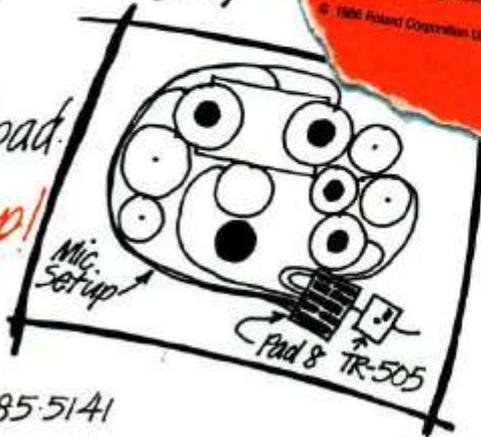
It's not like other drum systems where you are locked in.

## Expansion City!

Can play the TR-505's Snare, Bass, & Tom sounds from my own drums & use pads on the Octapad to play other TR-505 sounds.

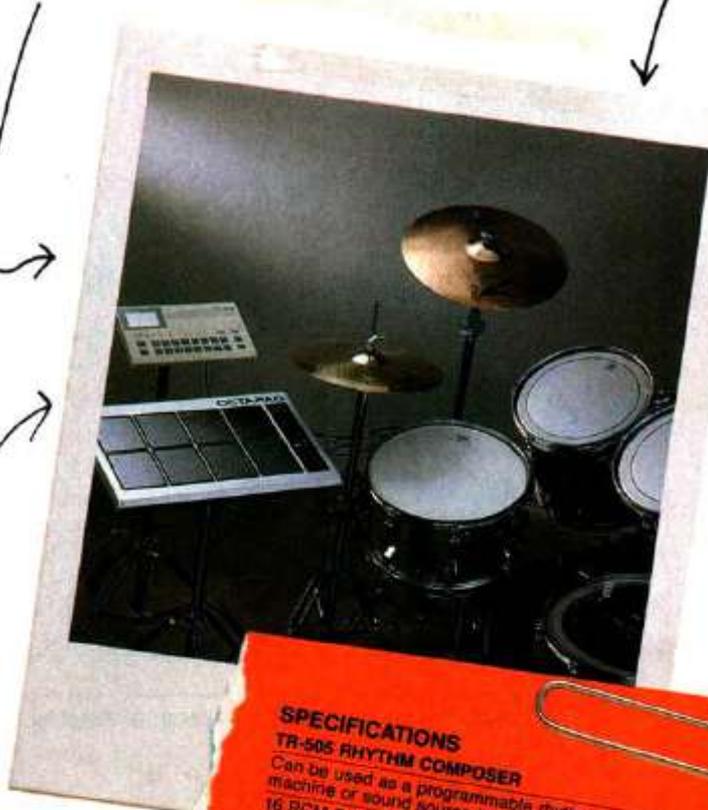
Later I can connect extra pads for more sounds, program sequencers or play other MIDI instruments - all from the Octapad.

## My Setup!



Drums w/ mikes connect to Octapad

TR-505



### SPECIFICATIONS

#### TR-505 RHYTHM COMPOSER

Can be used as a programmable rhythm machine or sound source for the Octapad.

16 PCM Digital Sounds: Bass, Snare, Lo/Mid/Hr Toms, Timbales, Rim Shot, Hand Clap, Open/Closed Hi Hat, Lo/Hr Conga, Lo/Hr Cowbell, Crash/Ride Cymbal

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turned up on television. He can also be seen in the 1956 movie *High Society* that the group did with Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. Excellent examples of Barrett's work with Armstrong can be found in the Columbia Contemporary Masters Collection *Louis Armstrong: Chicago Concert* (Col C2 36426). For years, Barrett has traveled the world, appearing at many major jazz festivals. He toured Europe in 1976 with Benny Goodman and appears on the Continent virtually every year. Yet he says, "I don't like the traveling. You play at night. Then you have to get up early the next morning to fly somewhere else. I'm a night person; I like to sleep nine or ten hours. In Chicago, I get up about one o'clock and listen to the Cubs play ball. You can practice while you're watching television."

A few years ago, Barrett helped put together a big band to perpetuate the name and style of Gene Krupa. "I was a pall-bearer at Gene's funeral. I made a deal later with his estate to use some of the original manuscripts. I had a special arrangement made of 'Sing, Sing, Sing.' We got some work; the band sounded good. But you have to be a really big name to get any money. I've been a sideman all my life, and I couldn't ask those guys to go out on the road for what they were offering us.

"There are rock players making \$10,000 a week, while some great jazz guys barely make \$400 to \$500. The only thing I like about rock is the drumming: Some drummers play good figures. Other than that, I can't stand anything electric. I won't let anything on the bandstand that's electric."

Early in '86, Barrett spent six weeks touring Europe during the filming of a two-hour video show: *The Wonderful World of Louis Armstrong*. It has already been shown in England and Australia, with plans for American distribution now under way.

In the summer of '86, Barrett appeared with Eddie Miller, Milt Hinton, Art Hodes, Jimmy McPartland, and others at George Wein's Newport Jazz Festival in New York at Mahogany Hall. A video and two record albums have been prepared from that appearance. Then it was on to the annual Dixieland festival in Sacramento, California, to appear with Norma Teagarden. Barrett is booked well into 1987 with all-star festivals in Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. He also tries to visit with "old friends" now and then. "Buddy played several dates in Chicago just recently. I traveled around on the bus with him. He had me sit in. I always got along with him very well. The older we get, the better we play." And Barrett seems inclined to "keep getting better" indefinitely. As he says, "If I live to be 90, I'm determined to play." And the billing will still read: "World's Fastest Drummer."



# Electronic Percussion and Sampling

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S-10 & S-50 Samplers allow sampling of any kind of sound, then those sounds can be assigned to a drum pad by MIDI. The built-in disk drives let me store samples & have tons of sounds available at a gig.

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By combining the DDR-30 with a drum machine or a sampler, I can assign more than one sound to a drum pad. This demo layered a Timbale with a Snare with an orchestral hit from the sampler - all under one pad - KILLER SOUND!



## Idea!

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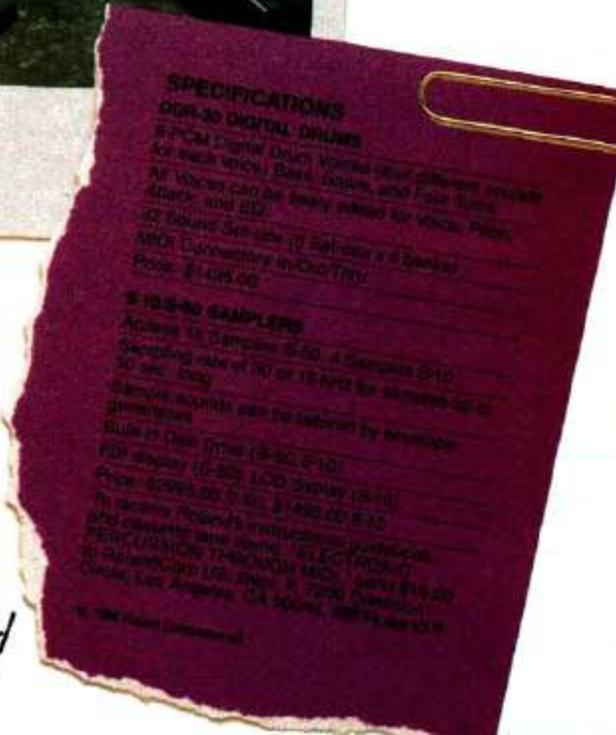
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# LISTENERS' GUIDE

## MARK HERNDON

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

Album	Artist	Label	Catalog #
My Home's In Alabama	Alabama	RCA	AHL 1-3644
Feels So Right	Alabama	RCA	AHL 1-3930
Mountain Music	Alabama	RCA	AHL 1-4229
The Closer You Get	Alabama	RCA	AHL 1-4663
Roll On	Alabama	RCA	AHL 1-4939
40 Hour Week	Alabama	RCA	AHL 1-5339



Photo by John Lee

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

Album	Artist	Drummer	Label	Catalog #
Hemispheres	Rush	Neil Peart	Mercury	822547-1
Exit Stage Left	Rush	Neil Peart	Mercury	822551-1
Frontiers	Journey	Steve Smith	Columbia	QC 38504
Phoenix	Dan Fogelberg	Russ Kunkel	Epic	PE 35634
Minute By Minute	Doobie Brothers	Keith Knudsen & Chet McCracken	Warner Bros.	BSK3193
Heavy Weather	Weather Report	Alex Acuna	Columbia	PC 34418
Another Mother Further	Mother's Finest	Barry Borden	Columbia	PE 34699
Imaginary Voyage	Jean-Luc Ponty	Mark Craney	Atlantic	SD 19136
Exit	Tangerine Dream	Unknown	Electra	5E557
Montrose	Montrose	Denny Carmassi & Tommy Aldridge	Warner Bros.	BSK3106

## BUTCH MILES

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

Album	Artist	Label	Catalog #
Butch Miles Salutes Gene Krupa	Butch Miles	Famous Door	HL142
On The Road	Count Basie	Pablo	D2312112
Hail To The Chief	Butch Miles	Famous Door	HL145
Back Home	Dave Brubeck	Concord	CJ103
Milt Jackson & Count Basie & The Big Band (Vols. I&II)	Milt Jackson/Count Basie	Pablo	2310822 & 2310823
Live At The Maisonette	Mel Torme	Atlantic	SD18129
A Classy Pair	Ella Fitzgerald & Count Basie	Pablo	2312-132



Photo by Dennis J. Williams

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

Album	Artist	Drummer	Label	Catalog #
Are You Ready For This?	Buddy Rich & Louie Bellson	Buddy Rich & Louie Bellson	Roost	Out of Print
Dave Brubeck At Carnegie Hall	Dave Brubeck	Joe Morello	Columbia	C2S-826
Drums Unlimited	Max Roach	Max Roach	Atlantic	SD-1467
Basie In London	Count Basie	Sonny Payne	Verve	MGV-8199
Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band	The Beatles	Ringo Starr	Capitol	SMAS-02653
Between Nothingness And Eternity	Mahavishnu Orchestra	Billy Cobham	Columbia	KC 32766
Four & More	Miles Davis	Tony Williams	Columbia	PC 9253



# Roland Electronic Percussion Workshop Session 3

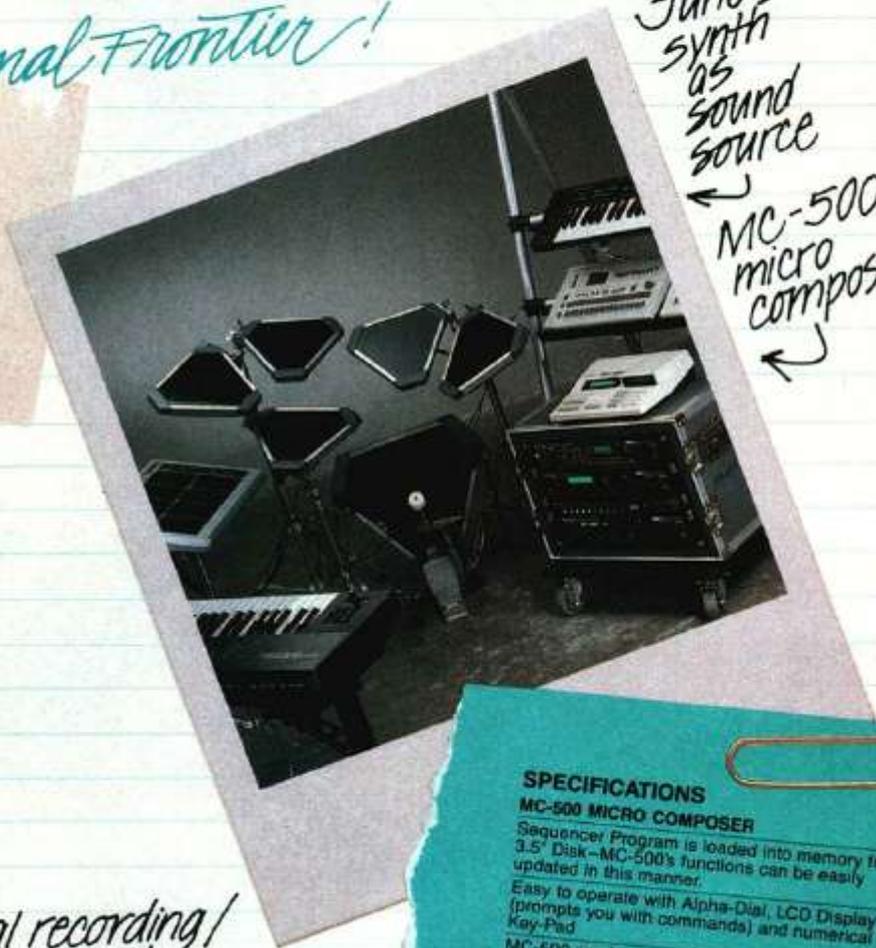
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Juno 1 synth as sound source

MC-500 micro composer

### SPECIFICATIONS

#### MC-500 MICRO COMPOSER

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# ARTSTAR II



# Multi-Instrument MIDI Percussion Systems

Setting up a MIDI percussion system can be fun, mainly because so many possibilities exist. Sometimes the setup and expansion capabilities seem downright endless. Of course, all of this flexibility and power can also get confusing sometimes. In my last few columns, we've looked at the basics of the MIDI communication scheme and a few examples of some simple percussion setups. In this month's column, we're

going to expand on that information and take a look at a few powerful multi-instrument techniques. This will allow you to make maximum use of your equipment and, if desired, produce easily controlled drumkit sounds almost indistinguishable from normal acoustic kit sounds. Also, you will find Figure 1 (a MIDI note number guide) a very useful reference for this and following articles.

As you may recall, a basic system is built around a pad-to-MIDI converter and a MIDI-compatible voice unit (such as a synth or drum machine). Generally, all of the pads will be assigned a different MIDI note number but will communicate on the same MIDI channel. This allows you to play a marimba patch, for example, on your friend's *DX-7* from your pads. What if you want the marimba sounds on only a few of the pads, and "normal" snare and kick sounds elsewhere? Well, at this point, your only choice would be to procure a multi-timbral keyboard—such as a sampler—and assign the sounds you want to the appropriate keyranges. This works perfectly well and is quite cost-effective. However, if we start communicating note information on several channels instead of just one, we will be able to do a whole lot more.

Let's say that, along with your synth, you'd also like to access a drum machine. The trick here is to set a different base channel for these two voice units. (As I explained in my last column, if we use the *same* channel, we will get a multi-voice effect; i.e., one pad will produce two distinct timbres simultaneously.) By setting different base channels, we can access the voice units separately. This requires a pad-to-MIDI converter that has a programmable channel for each pad input, such as the Roland *Octapad* and the Simmons *MTM* and *TMI*. Also, we need to get out of the normal MIDI mode one (*Omni/Poly*) and use mode three (*Omni Off/Poly*). Mode three, as you may recall, is channel selective: A voice unit will only respond to note messages that are broadcast on its base channel. We can, for example, set our synth to channel one, mode three, and our drum machine to channel two, mode three. Now, when we program our interface unit, we will set all the pads that are to control the synth to channel one, and all of the remaining pads that are to control the drum box to channel two. Channel and mode numbers are somewhat analogous to freeways and traffic cops! Note that, if you didn't set *both* units to mode three, you would get some of the multi-voice effects again. (A judicious selection of note numbers and modes can produce some very interesting results, as we shall see.)

It's time for an example. Let's say that a rich uncle (whom you never really liked)

## Multi-Sampling And Mapping

One thing that always confuses people who are learning about sampling systems is the jargon. In an effort to keep things clearly in focus, I'd like to spend a moment discussing *multi-sampling* and *mapping*.

Samplers simply record sounds in a digital form (much like a Compact Disc). The sounds are then played back by playing a key or by sending a "MIDI note on" command. This is much like a tape recorder. Samplers also have the ability to play back the sample at a higher or lower pitch than it was originally recorded at. (This is somewhat analogous to changing the pitch control on a tape deck.) In this way, a single marimba sample could be used to produce several different marimba pitches. The problem that arises is that extreme pitch shifts sound unnatural, and a single sample will usually produce very poor-quality marimba sounds at high and low pitches. The effect is similar to playing a tape at double speed: People aren't singing an octave higher; instead, they sound like chipmunks singing an octave higher.

In order to avoid a "chipmunk marimba," you can take several samples of the instrument—say at half-octave intervals. This way, each sample plays back over a shorter range, with the net result being a higher level of realism. This procedure is called *multi-sampling*. Multi-sampling can be used for a mono-timbral setup—such as our marimba—by getting all of the samples from one instrument. A bi-timbral setup would have samples from two different instruments—like a marimba and a set of vibes. In this case, half of the sampler is played with marimba sounds and the other half with vibes sounds. If we make each sample a different instrument (snare, kick, cowbell, etc.), we have a multi-timbral setup. A multi-timbral arrangement is most often used for making up a drumkit or an assorted percussion layout.

Whether we choose a mono-timbral or multi-timbral setup, each sample will need to have a defined note range. In other words, we need to tell the sampler which key should produce the sample's *normal* pitch, and which keys define its *highest* and *lowest* pitches (thus determining its range). This procedure is given different names by various manufacturers. The term I prefer is *mapping*. To map a sample means to define where on the keyboard its normal, lowest, and highest pitches will be. A map might tell a sample to play over a two-octave range, a four-note range, or even a single note (for which the normal, high, and low pitches would all be equal). Interestingly, you can define the normal pitch (or root note, as it is commonly referred to) at a key other than the normal sample pitch. In other words, you can place a C sample on an F root key. This isn't typical, but it will allow you the "luxury" of playing a C scale with F fingering! (Of course, the opposite may also be done.)

Appropriate maps and samples can produce things like five snare pitches from one snare sample, 12 toms from one tom sample, four kick drums from one kick drum sample, etc.—all available at once on the keyboard or through MIDI. You can even use one group of samples to set half of the keyboard to a drumkit and another group of samples to set the other half of the keyboard to a multi-sampled xylophone. By setting your pads to the right note numbers, you can be playing a kit, a xylophone, or both! Your limitations are primarily the sample time available, the number of multi-samples available, and how adventurous you are.

dies and leaves you a Sequential Circuits *Prophet 2002* sampler, a *Prophet VS* digital synthesizer, an E-mu *SP-12* drum machine, a Roland *Octapad*, and six Simmons drumpads. (How could you not like him now?) Anyway, you decide, after fiddling with the gear and studying the owner's manuals, that you'd like to set the *Octapad's* on-board pads to a C major scale starting at middle C (C3) and that this is to access a vibes sound created on the VS. Also, you'd like to access the *SP-12's* snare and kick sounds from two of the Simmons pads. Finally, the remaining four Simmons pads are to access some tom and cymbal samples loaded into the 2002, mapped one-and-a-half octaves above middle C, starting at G (G4). The 2000/2002 is particularly good for cymbals because it is one of the few affordable samplers capable of a 41KHz sample rate. This produces a much brighter and more realistic top end than the typical 28-32KHz rates used by most machines. Okay, how do you do this? No, prayer is not the answer. Listen up.

First off, the *Octapad* has inputs for six pads, so we can plug the six Simmons pads right in with no problem. Now, we need to set our base channels. Let's set the *VS* to channel one, the *SP-12* to channel two, and the 2002 to channel three. Remember, each unit must also be set to mode three.

Now to program the controller. To do the following, we need to get into the individual edit mode on the *Octapad*.

**Step one:** C3 major scale on the VS. Middle C is MIDI note number 60. The next C up will be 12 semi-tones higher, which puts us at note number 72. The first pad will be set to note number 60 with the sending channel set to one. D3 is the next note in the scale and corresponds to note number 62. (C#3 is 61.) Therefore, pad two will be set to note number 62 with the sending channel once again set to one. The six remaining pads will be assigned their own note numbers in turn (64, 65, 67, 69, 71, 72). Each pad will, of course, be set to transmit on MIDI channel one. Since each voice unit has its own base channel and is operating in mode three, only the *VS* will respond to messages from these pads.

**Step two:** *SP-12* snare and kick sounds. The *SP-12* allows you to move your sounds around, but let's assume that we're using the factory default settings of the snare at

Figure 1: MIDI note number reference guide.

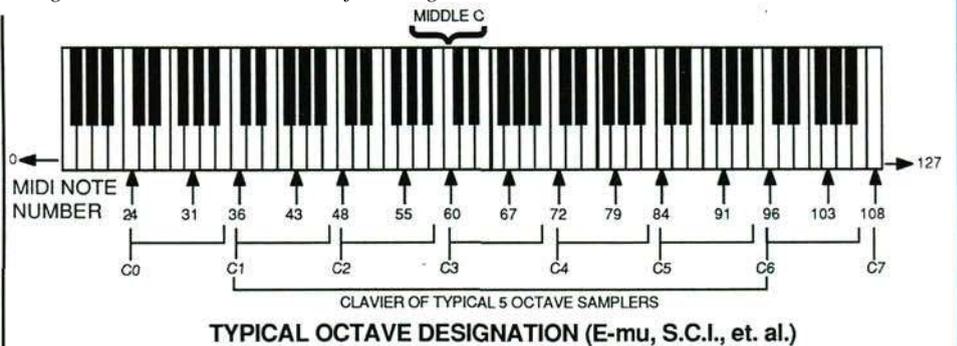
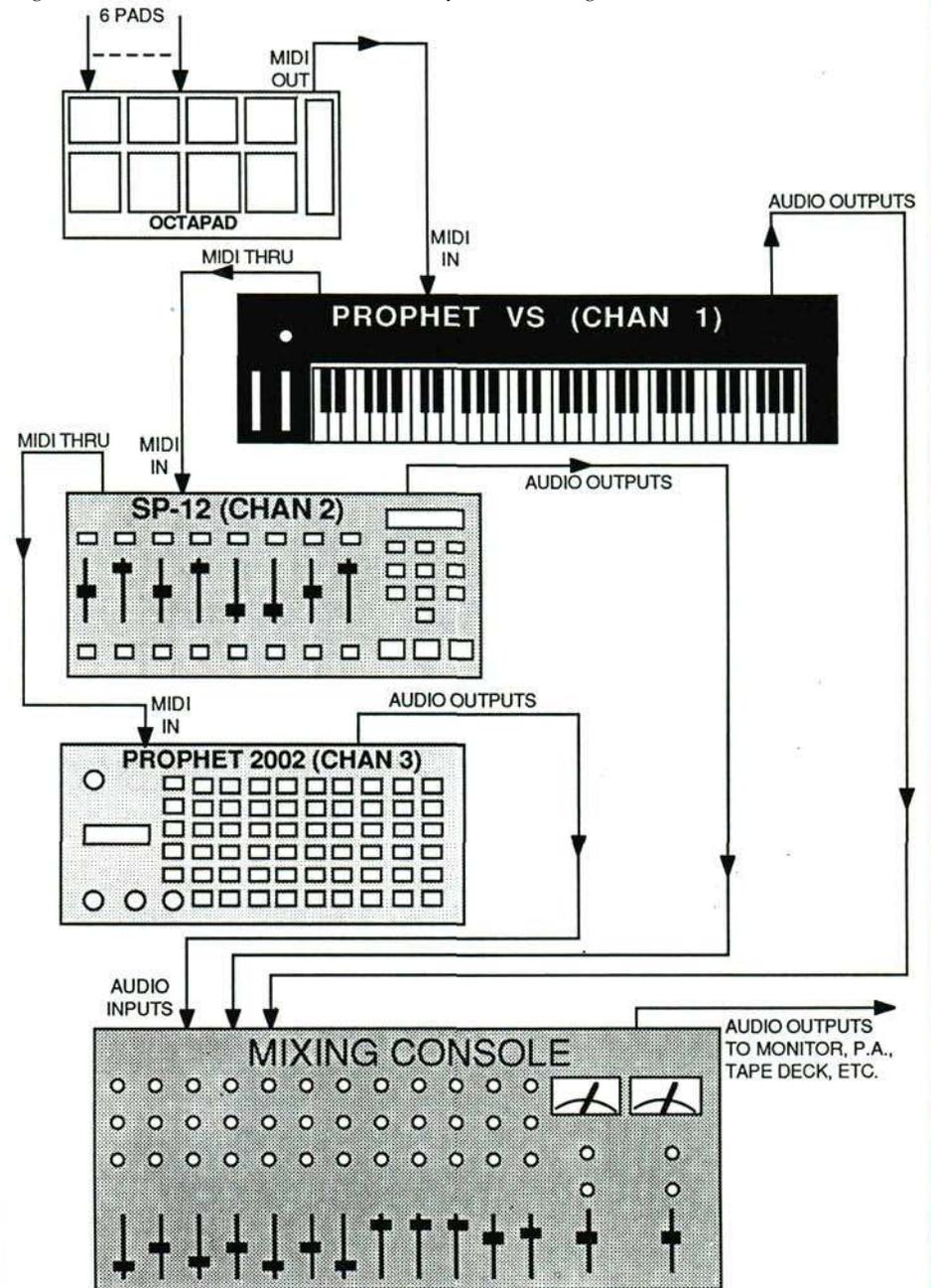
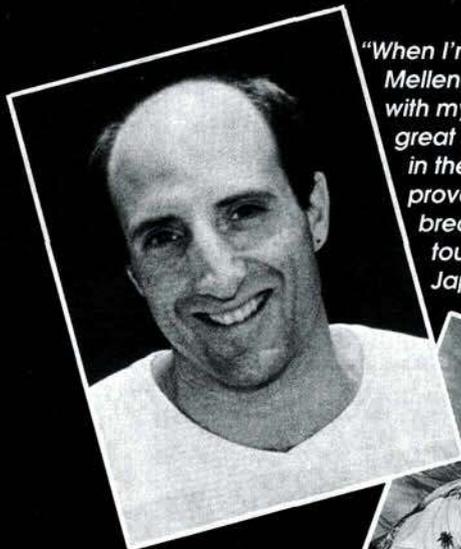


Figure 2: Multi-instrument/multi-channel system utilizing MIDI mode 3.

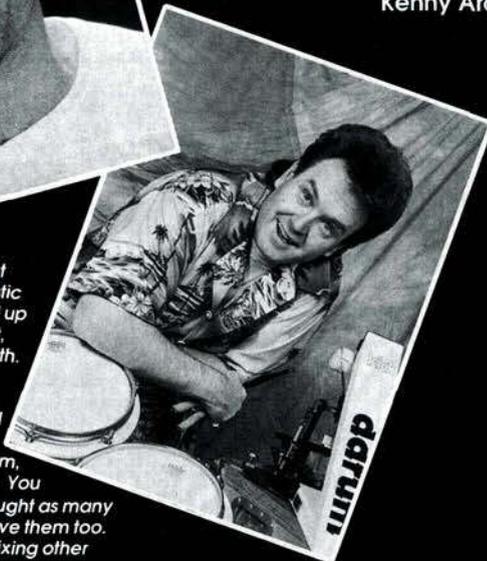


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note number 40 and the kick at 36, respectively. Again, due to mode three operation, only the *SP-12* will pay attention to these two pads.

**Step three:** Four samples starting at G4 on the 2002. The note number for G an octave past middle C (G4) is 79. If we mapped our four sounds right next to each other, we would need to set our remaining Simmons pads to note numbers 79, 80, 81, and 82 (i.e., the first four notes in a G chromatic scale). The transmit channel for these pads will be number three.

Generally, it is desirable to map a sample over a range of notes instead of a single key. This allows you to get a range of pitches from only one sample. In other words, one tom sample could produce 12 differently pitched toms if that sample is mapped across one octave. If our four samples are mapped for around half of an octave each, we may need a note number sequence like 79, 85, 92, 98, depending on our choice of pitches. Some of these note numbers might even be the same as sounds that we're trying to access on a different instrument, like the VS. This will cause no problem, because the note numbers are transmitted on different channels. The voice units will ignore all messages transmitted on channels other than the base channel. This is like your TV: The antenna might pick up ten different stations, but you ignore everything except the station that you're tuned to.

Your next logical question would be, "How do I wire this together?" The system described can be set up using a simple daisy chain connection. Simply plug the *Octapad's* "MIDI out" signal into a "MIDI in" (say, on the VS). Plug that instrument's "MIDI out" into another "MIDI in" (the *SP-12*), and complete the chain by taking this instrument's "MIDI out" to the final instrument's "MIDI in" (the 2002). That's it. If you have no plans to set up the system for multi-voice (same channel) operation or to use the instruments to generate MIDI signals, it really won't make any difference in which order you connect the three units. Where available, a "MIDI thru" connector should be used in place of the "MIDI out" in systems like this. When connected in that manner, each voice unit is being used as a slave and is not producing its own MIDI signals, which tends to optimize communication speed. Figure 2 shows the general connection scheme.

In larger systems, it may be necessary to filter or alter MIDI data. MIDI filters, blenders, and effects devices can help produce some amazing systems and sounds. The MIDI program change command can also be very effective in live situations. We'll take a look at these items, MIDI mode four, and much more, in future installments. (Just as a teaser: How many different ways can you think of hooking a set of MIDI organ bass pedals into your drum system?)



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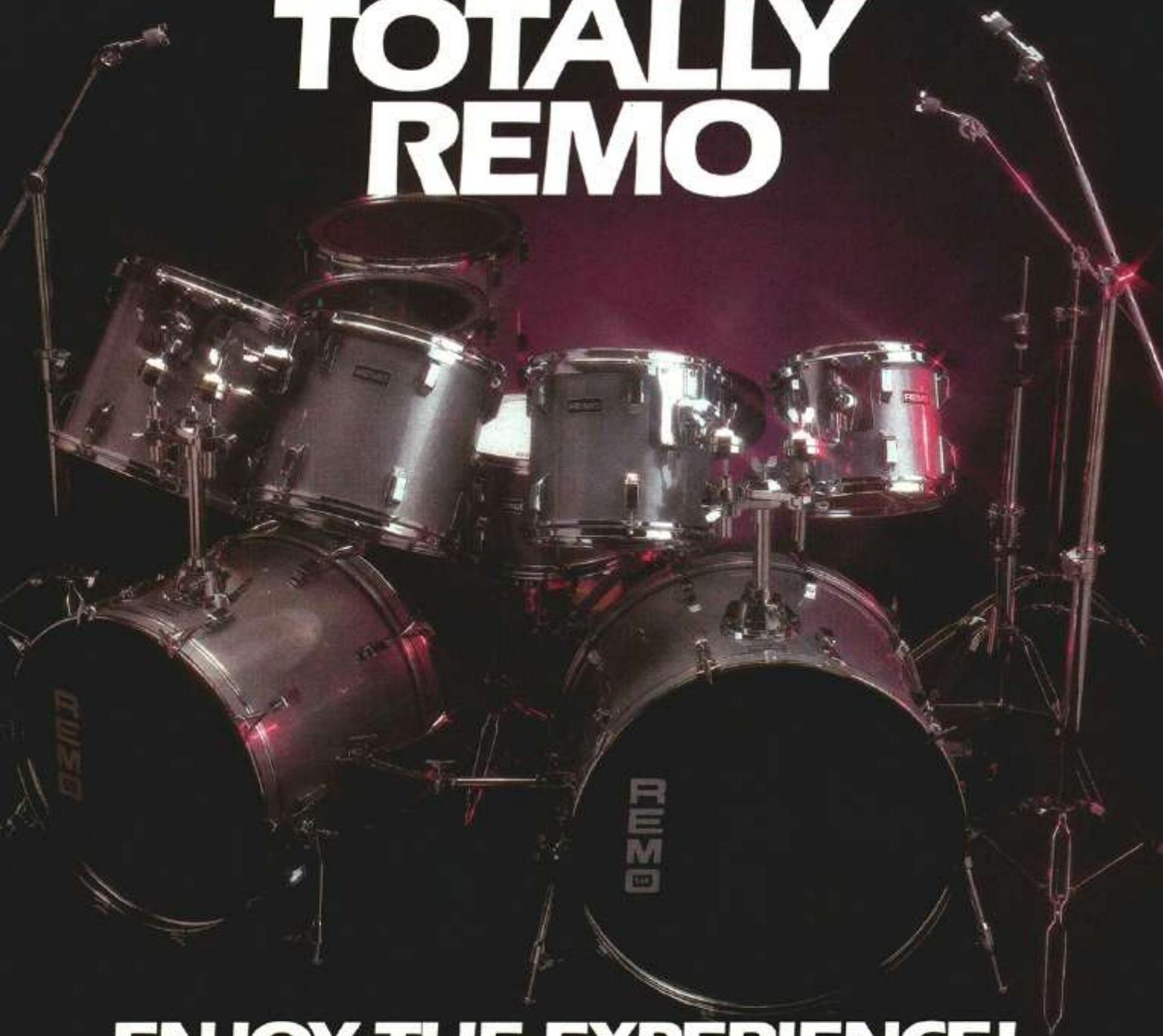
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# Creative Triplets For The Advar

**MUSIC KEY**



The following two-part article has been designed to help you improve your ability to fill or solo using syncopated jazz figures amidst an underlying pulse of 8th-note triplets. The ideas presented here will help you solo more effectively, aid in your interpretation of jazz phrasing, improve eye-hand coordination, and benefit your reading ability as well.

Let's first look at a basic figure. Keep in mind that *all 8th-note rhythms throughout this article are to be played with a jazz 8th-note feel.*

Written:

Played:

Let's take it one step further by playing a few bars of 8th-note triplets without accents.

At this point, we will combine the triplet feel and the rhythmic figure by playing the syncopated rhythm in the form of accents above the 8th-note triplets. Be sure to play the non-accented notes much *softer* than the accented ones, so that the syncopated figure stands out above the underlying triplets. (Use alternate single sticking throughout: RLRL, etc.)

Once you've fully absorbed the concept, you should apply the same idea to more complex figures. Try the following examples, and play them slowly at first. Increase the tempo *gradually* with each of the ten rhythms below.

After you've gained facility with all of the preceding rhythms, go back to the first exercise and add the bass drum on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, and the hi-hat on 2 and 4. Take each one slowly and strive for accuracy.

# ted Player: Part 1

Now, get out your copy of Ted Reed's *Progressive Steps To Syncopation For The Modern Drummer*, and turn to page 33. Begin on page 33, and proceed through page 36 playing each four-bar exercise in the same manner as previously outlined. The triplets and accents are *not* written for you at this point, so proceed cautiously, making certain that each exercise is being executed accurately. After you've mastered each pattern from the book, you should be ready to move on to a 16-bar solo exercise. Don't forget the bass drum and hi-hat.

For further practice, proceed through each of the syncopation solo exercises from the Ted Reed book (pages 37 to 44) using the same concept.

In Part 2 of this article, we'll look at applying a unison bass drum part, moving the figures around the drumset, and the use of triplet pulsed rolls, to further extend the use of this technique.



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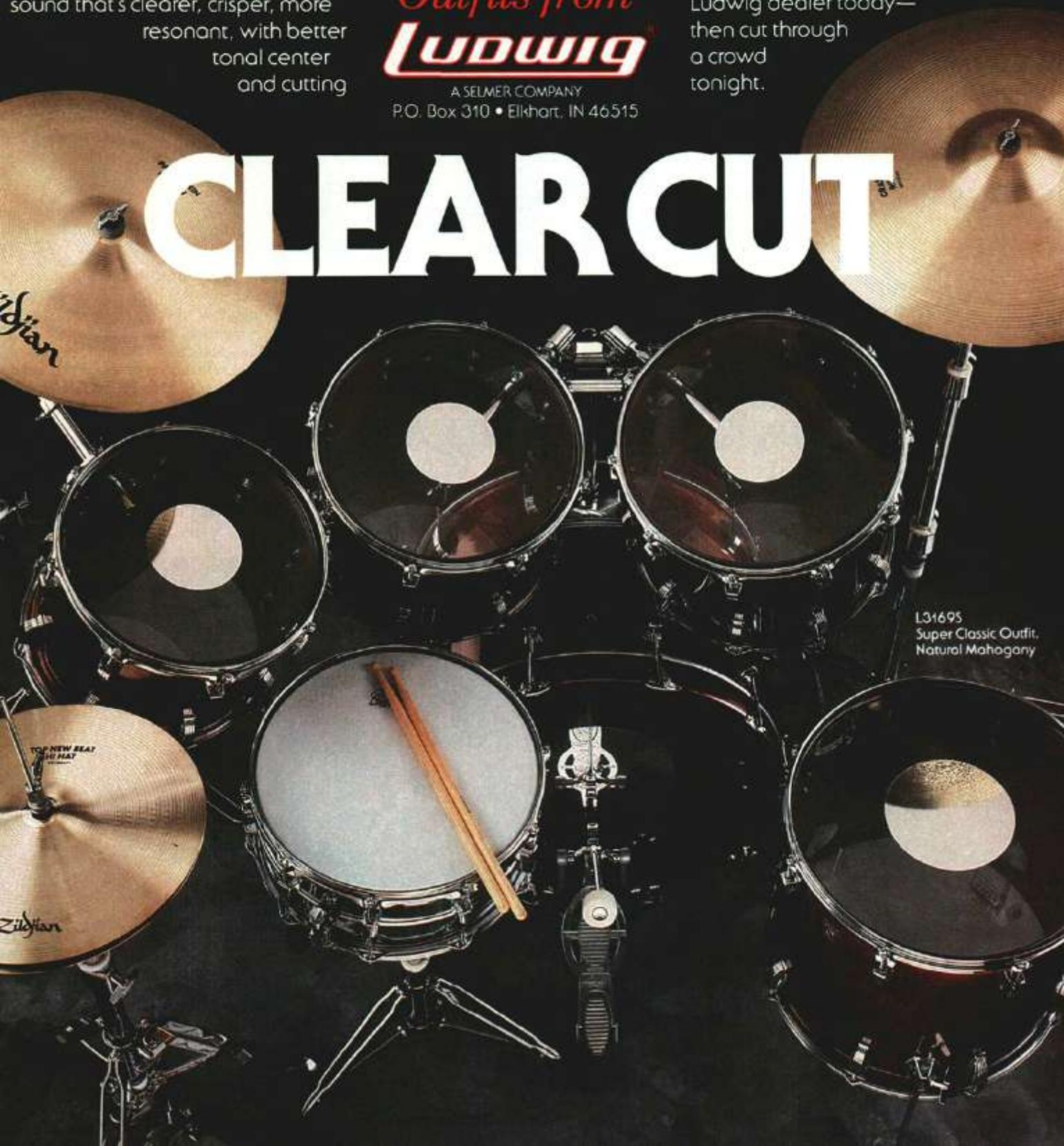
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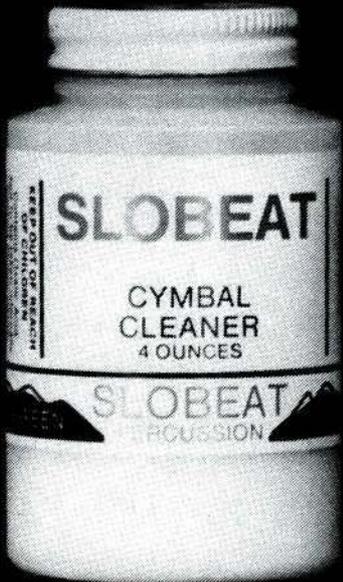
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Photo by Ebel Roberts

*Fig continued from page 21*

all together. I give him a lot of credit.

**RS:** You were talking about studio work before. What is your routine when you are asked to do a session? How do you approach the task?

**AF:** An artist will often have a demo of the song we're to record. I'll listen to it a few

times before going into the studio, and then I'll make my own chart. If there are certain things that the drummer on the demo did before me, or if there is something that I hear on the drum machine that sticks out, I'll ask the artist I'm working with what things he or she specifically wants included in the song. I'll make my

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own little notes. If there is no chorus pattern, I'll come up with my own. If there is one, I'll know what it is, of course, and work from it. I'll run down the song a few times and try to get it so the transitions from one section to another are kind of seamless. This is really important and something that I think every drummer ought to pay serious attention to.

I find that I don't play a song many times. I think I do my best stuff in the first few takes. I really like recording that way. Chris Spedding uses pretty much the first take of whatever it is he's recording. Dylan doesn't do more than two takes; that's it. The amazing thing about it is that the first take might be the first time everyone is playing the song. With Cyndi Lauper and Patty Smyth, it's a matter of them putting down a guide for the song, and then I'll go for a drum performance. I'll work up my part, and the producer will go over it backwards and forwards, and most likely suggest ways to make it more effective. When there's a whole band in the studio, we'll usually play the song a few times. Usually, the engineer will tape what we do just in case there's anything good that happens. I really believe, though, that the first and second takes are the ones. See, you can get the song right, have all the parts right, and not have any life or feeling in the song. With Paul Butterfield, just about everything was a first take. But I realize that singles have to be really crafted. Often, just playing the song isn't good enough. Sin-

gles, I've found, are very parts-oriented songs.

**RS:** Do you find time and room in your career to work with drum machines?

**AF:** Yeah, I have a Linn at home. I use it mostly for demos. I can't really play the drums where I'm living. Sometimes in the studio, I'm asked to play with the machine. When the Linn first came out, I figured I might as well make a friend of it, rather than be scared of it. I learned how it worked, and I'm fine with it today. The Linn is great for certain kinds of music, while acoustic drums—real drums—are great for others. And then, in some cases, they work great together.

**RS:** How do you approach miking your drums in the studio?

**AF:** It depends on the kind of song and the engineer I'm working with. Some people like small drum sounds. When I was working at the Power Station here in New York, I found that they would mike the drums close as well as far away. Basically, I'll tune the drums, or I'll work with Artie Smith. He'll get a good sound for me. Smith is a superb drum technician. Without him, life for me as a drummer would be very difficult. He sets up my drums to my specifications. He's just great. With him, I can come into a gig or session, and just play. He does Gadd and all the top drummers in New York. I'm happy to be part of his little drummers' family, so to speak. He knows that I like to get the drums so they sound really good in my headphones.

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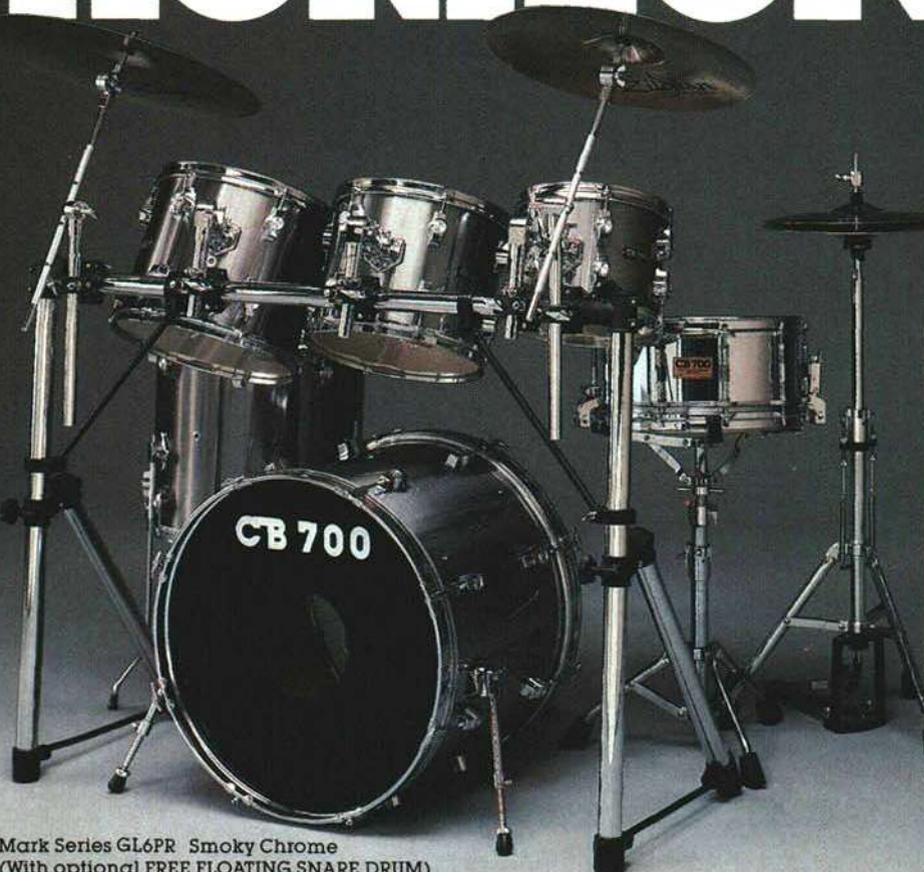
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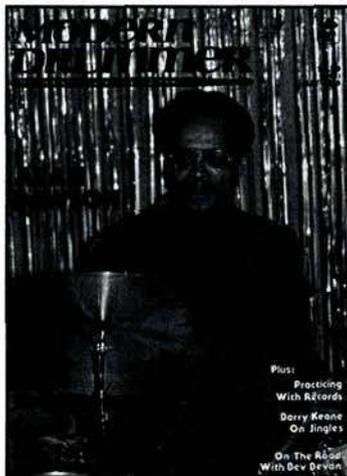
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I have to hear them clearly and have it so that I'm comfortable when I play. The sound in those headphones is very important, as far as I'm concerned. This usually requires a little reverb on the drums, so when I hit them, the sound is very expansive. I like that.

**RS:** Do you do any warm-up exercises prior to playing?

**AF:** No, but I think that, if I were doing a gig that required an extra-special technique, then I might be inclined to warm up a bit. When I was on the road a lot, I used to warm up because I used to hit so hard right in the beginning of the set. The music called for such a thing most of the time, so I did it. Now I just sort of drum away. But with the Letterman show, the band plays for 20 minutes prior to the start of the show. And then we play for the live studio audience for about ten minutes before the cameras go on. So by the time everything is rolling, I'm totally warmed up and ready to go. And on recording dates, I usually have a few minutes to run through some things and just fool around a bit before we do a take. That's usually sufficient. But generally, I'm not one of those drummers who needs time to get into the swing of things. I can pretty much sit down behind my kit and be ready to go.

**RS:** With all the experience you've had and all your formal training, do you consider yourself a serious student of the drums?

**AF:** No, not at all. That doesn't mean, though, that I'm not interested in learning new things. My formal studying was done, remember, a few years ago, and I studied mostly timpani and mallets. However, I did study for a few months one summer with Alan Dawson. He showed me all the rudiments. And I did study *Stick Control* with Vic Firth. But I'm not one of those drummers who will amaze you with all kinds of complicated, technical things. I can't fly around the kit, going backwards and forwards. I never thought of myself as having really good technique. I think of myself as a "feel" player more than anything else. I wish someone could take the time to show me more technical aspects of drumming. I wouldn't mind that at all.

**RS:** Speaking of Vic Firth and sticks, don't you use his sticks?

**AF:** Yeah, I use his *Thunder Rocks*. Usually, I go for something that is pretty thick and quite heavy at the end. That way, the stick goes down faster and comes up faster. I turn the stick over in my left hand. I seem to get a better sound from hitting the rimshots with the stick that way. Most of my backbeats are rimshots. So the left-hand stick is always reversed for me, while the stick in my right hand is always held the regular way. Although, come to think of it, occasionally on the Letterman show, I'll have to do a roll. Then, I'll turn both sticks upside down.

**RS:** Since jazz is such a large part of your background, do you harbor any aspira-

tions to play jazz-fusion sometime in the future? I get the feeling you would like nothing more than to do a tour or a record with a band such as Weather Report.

**AF:** Yeah, that would be great, wouldn't it? But seriously, I don't know about fusion, but I'd definitely be interested in rock-oriented jazz—the stuff you can hear on the *Mysterious Traveler* record. That would be very exciting to play; there's no doubt about that.

**RS:** And what about forming a band of your own—a rock band? Do you have any plans for putting together another band in the future?

**AF:** Perhaps. At the moment, though, I'm

doing the show and writing songs, working with Amanda Blue, who is a great singer and who has lots of potential, and of course, working on studio album projects. Basically, I'm doing what I'm doing and waiting to see where it will take me. Whether it will be a band I put together or an existing band I join up with and become simply a band member, I don't really know. I'm not ruling out any possibilities. I'm still fairly young, but I'm aware that time is marching on. I'm certainly not sitting back and watching the days pass by. I'm trying to do everything I can to make myself a better player and get ahead in the music business just like everyone else. 

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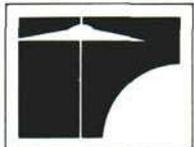
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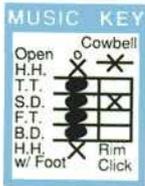
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# Latin Drumset Beats



When playing Latin rhythms on the drumset, the drummer must try to sound like a Latin rhythm section. This seems to be an impossible task when you consider that there are generally at least three players in a Latin rhythm section. However, by understanding what each percussionist contributes to the music, the drumset player can more closely simulate the overall

rhythm and feel.

In addition to the basic beats, the drumset player must use the set to reproduce the sounds of the Latin rhythm section. The conga drum sound is played with a rim click on the snare drum (snare off) for the slap sound and on the toms for the open sound. The use of cowbells is also important. The drummer wanting to reproduce Latin rhythms as accurately as possible should have at least one cowbell. Two cowbells are better, and they should be a cha-cha (high pitch) bell and a mambo (low pitch) bell. The hi-hat can be used to simulate the sound of a guiro, as well as to play paila rhythms. Also, using timbale sticks and rimshots on the toms will help to contribute to a more authentic sound. The following rhythms will demonstrate these ideas.

Before we look at the rhythms, we must understand a basic idea that underlies all Latin music. That is the Clave. The Clave is a two-measure rhythm used as a reference for the entire band. This two-bar phrase outlines the key accents in any Latin pattern.

### 3-2 Clave

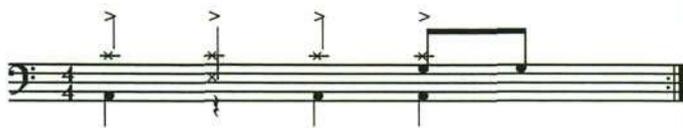


### 2-3 Clave

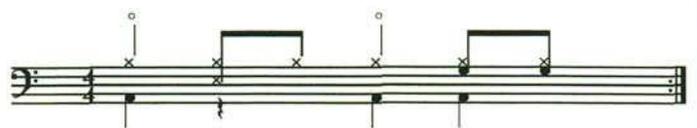


Now that you have a basic understanding of the Clave, the following Latin rhythms should make more sense. The Clave is written below some of the following patterns, so you can see and hear how the rhythm relates to the Clave.

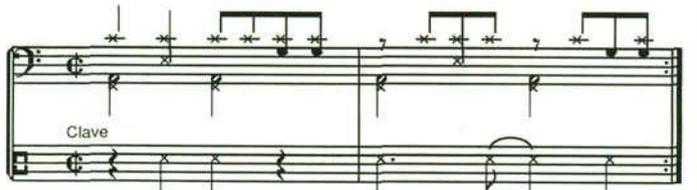
### Cha-Cha



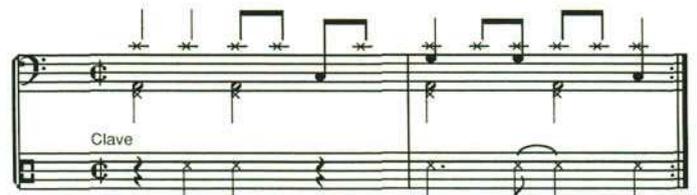
### Cha-Cha (using hi-hat)



### Mambo



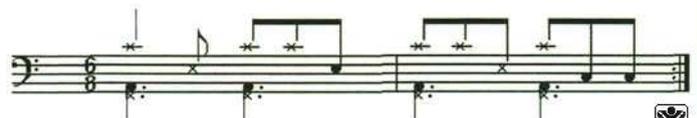
### Guaguanco



### Merengue



### Nanigo



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<b>FINISHES</b>	Clear White Coated	Clear White Black Blue Red Chrome Gold	Clear White Black Blue Red	Clear White Black Blue Red

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<b>ATTACK</b>	Maximum	Moderate	Moderate	N/A*
<b>SUSTAIN</b>	Moderate	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
<b>RESPONSE</b>	Maximum	Moderate	Moderate	N/A*
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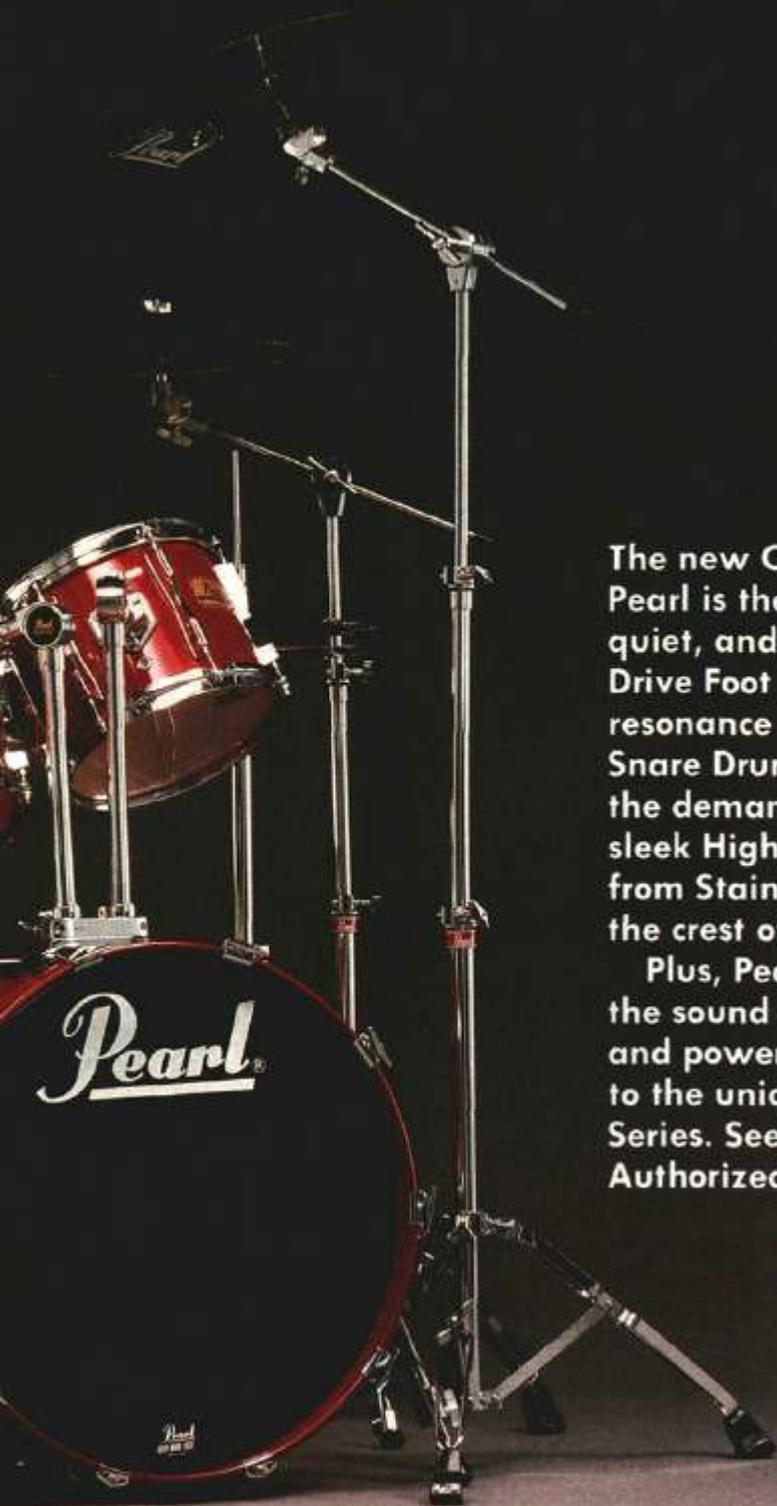
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*I don't know why it is that so many people think that it must be a great thing to work for a rock band. Mind you, I don't know why so many people think that it must be great to be in a rock band! But there you go: Like the appliance salesman who inspired the "Money For Nothing" song, people like to think that lots of other people have it easy and only they have to work for it! As one who has held quite a variety of "straight" jobs—from weeding potato fields to selling tractor parts—let me enlighten any who feel that there are plenty of jobs more difficult than being a serious musician. (Emphasis on serious) I mean, how many other jobs would people work at for ten years or so for less than nothing—just to be doing it—and even then feel lucky to be able to make a living at it? Not doctors or lawyers—maybe Indian chiefs.*

*If one believes the people who claim to know about such things, a musician ranks about third as the most stressful of jobs. I believe it could be true. If one is serious, the pressure of creativity and the drive for technical excellence—to be delivered on demand—is very great. That being the case, working for a musician must rank close behind.*

*I would like to try to shed some light on what goes on behind the bright lights that shine on a successful musician and on the nature of the job of Larry Allen, in particular. Larry looks after my own equipment, with all that is involved in that simple job description.*

Larry has been with me now for about eight years. He began as a friend without any experience as a drum tech, but with a willingness to learn and a personality sufficiently opposite to mine to permit us to work as closely together as such a relationship demands. Here, then, is a picture of the way that job and relationship function today, as viewed on Rush's recent *Power Windows* tour.



As it did for all of us in the Rush organization, the tour began for Larry literally months before the first concert. While we in the band were still in the studio putting the finishing touches to the album, Larry was already busy arranging to have the drumkit refinished, checking on new equipment in which Yours Truly had expressed an interest, and checking over our inventory of spare heads, sticks, cymbals, and parts. Though we dealt directly with Tama, Zildjian, and Pro-Mark, many of our special needs were still filled by the *Percussion Center* (Fort Wayne, Indiana), with whom I've dealt for about ten years now. Even in the days when we were pretty small-time, no matter what I needed, they came up with it—even if they had to invent it themselves!

While in the studio, I had been reading about the new Simmons

EPROM unit, the SDS9 modules, and the new generation of pads, all of which I wanted to try out. I called Larry at his home in San Antonio, and left it to him to get all the information for me.

We had used a lot of special effects and sampled sounds on the album that I wanted to be able to reproduce live, such as the African drums on "Mystic Rhythms" and the "voice drums" on many of the other songs. The EPROM unit looked like the perfect answer to that problem, with the ability to make our own digital chips of any sound we needed. Larry arranged with Doug Hill, the Simmons representative in Toronto, to acquire the necessary hardware and to help us get it all going in conjunction with our existing SDS5 and SDS7 systems.



The next undertaking was rehearsals for the video of "The Big Money." There may not seem much point in rehearsing for a modern rock video, when the performance is just "sync'd" to the record, but of course for a *drummer*, there's no faking it; you're either playing or you're not. For myself—I'm *playing!* So we rented a rehearsal hall for a few days, and Larry set up the kit and my rehearsal sound system and headphones. It was here that he learned that the new paint job hadn't set properly before shipping, and had turned all "orange peel" instead of smooth and shiny. What a drag—the one time of the year when you want it to look its absolute best from close up. Too late to do anything about it now.

I spent the next few days playing along with the song again and again to make sure that I could reproduce all of the fills and patterns exactly in sync, with the proper feel and energy. Apart from preparing me for the video, it was also good general practice.

# Job

After that, of course, Larry had to tear down the kit again, and set it up early in the morning at the film studio, polishing up the hardware and each of the cymbals. After a day as long and tedious as only a video shoot can be, he got to pack them up again and send them back to Tama for yet another refinish.

At this point, I took off for a real getaway: a bicycling trip through northeastern China. When I returned, I was all excited about some big temple blocks and small Chinese cymbals I'd seen there. I asked Larry to see if he could find anyone who dealt in obscure eastern instruments. I try to keep things interesting for him!



Two weeks before official band rehearsals began, Larry and I started to iron out our new technology while rehearsing the old and new songs (giving me a chance to build up my calluses). We had Doug Hill over to help us make all the new chips we needed and found that we wouldn't be able to replace my old SDS5 sounds with the SDS7 modules. We had to find a way to switch between the two, as well as a way to trigger a number of different effects from the one pad that I could conveniently reach from the front kit. Larry created the new "Sidney" mini-pad, a miniature trigger that we could mount between my front toms. We also began work on a switching box to save Larry all the manual repatching between pads and modules. The *ideas* were coming together; it was just a question of closing the gap between theory and practice!

Every day I would come in and play through each of the songs a few times, playing along with the tapes. Since each of those performances represents me at my strongest and best, remembering and keeping up with them is good practice indeed. When I finished, I would leave Larry with a list of things to sort out for the next day: things to pick up, things to fix, and things to improve upon. He modified some bicycle racing helmets to hold my headphones in place for the two songs in which I used them; this was a big improvement on the baseball caps we had been using previously (perhaps even better than Keith Moon's method of *taping* them to his head [!]), plus I got to feel like Greg Lemond winning the Tour de France when I wore them!

When the third week came and we began rehearsing as a band, the fun really began. Larry had to prepare a list of cues for each song: Simmons settings, pad repatches, *Clap Trap* settings, EPROM settings, and which keyboards and sequencers I needed to

hear in my monitors. (When I am expected to play in sync with these things, they become necessities rather than luxuries and *have* to appear at the right times.) We prepared a list of "emergency" alternatives if any of the Simmons programs failed to appear, and Larry began the elaborate process of choreographing his moves through the two-hour set—when the riser rotated for the back kit, when I needed the headphones or mallets for the glockenspiel or crotales—as well as recording all the above setting changes and monitor cues. For that he made a little set of cue cards for each song, with all of the information and diagrams on them. (His making a mistake can be just as disastrous to the performance as my own not-infrequent mistakes!)

by Neil Peart

Photo by Paul Natkin



During the last week of rehearsals, we moved out again to film another video, this time for "Mystic Rhythms." Once again, it was an endless day of "hurry up and wait," made challenging for Larry only by being called upon to perform some tricks with the rotating riser, spinning and stopping it on cue—but from behind a curtain where he couldn't even see if it was stopping in the right spot or not. Fun stuff. Then it was up to Larry to tear the kit down again and pack it up late in the night, only to set it all up again early the next morning for the band to start rehearsing.

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The tour began in Portland, Maine, and we set up there three days before the show for full-scale rehearsals and last-minute refinements. For Larry, the headaches were large and numerous. The splitter box between the Simmons brains was not working properly, the SDS5 sounds weren't coming up properly, the Clap Trap was picking up radio frequencies and producing frightening noises, the drum boards on which he sets up the kit had somehow warped like crazy, one of the cases containing our Simmons pads had been left behind and he had to scramble to find some other ones (at 8 o'clock on a Sunday night, of course!), and the monitor feeds from the keyboards were not coming through properly. Oh. Perfect. But it was all in a day's work—or three days' work.

*But now—it's showtime! The houselights go down. The crowd shouts a deafening welcome as the "Three Stooges" intro tape starts and the curtain goes up. Pull back the bass drum "door" and light a path down the ramp. Here they come. Get him settled in behind the kit. Then, behind the monitor board, triple-check the levels, get ready to bring up the sequencer for the chorus of "The Spirit Of Radio," and keep a constant eye up there for any problems or that "look" over his shoulder. Take a deep breath and concentrate—no mistakes tonight. Let's start the tour with a perfect one. It's tough when how good a job you do depends on so many other people and things: how the electronics behave, what kind of night he has, how the acoustics are, will the feeds come through from the sequencers and the projector? Did you overlook just one of those thousand-and-one little things he'll give you the "look" for? Take another deep breath.*

*The first few songs give you a chance to concentrate on the monitors, before things get crazy when we get to the new songs. For "The Big Money," you need the EPROM ready with the "jingling coins" sample, the SDS7 patched to the right module for the "voice drum" sample, the Clap Trap on the right setting, and the monitors ready for the sequencer. And he'll be wanting the towel and a drink about now . . .*



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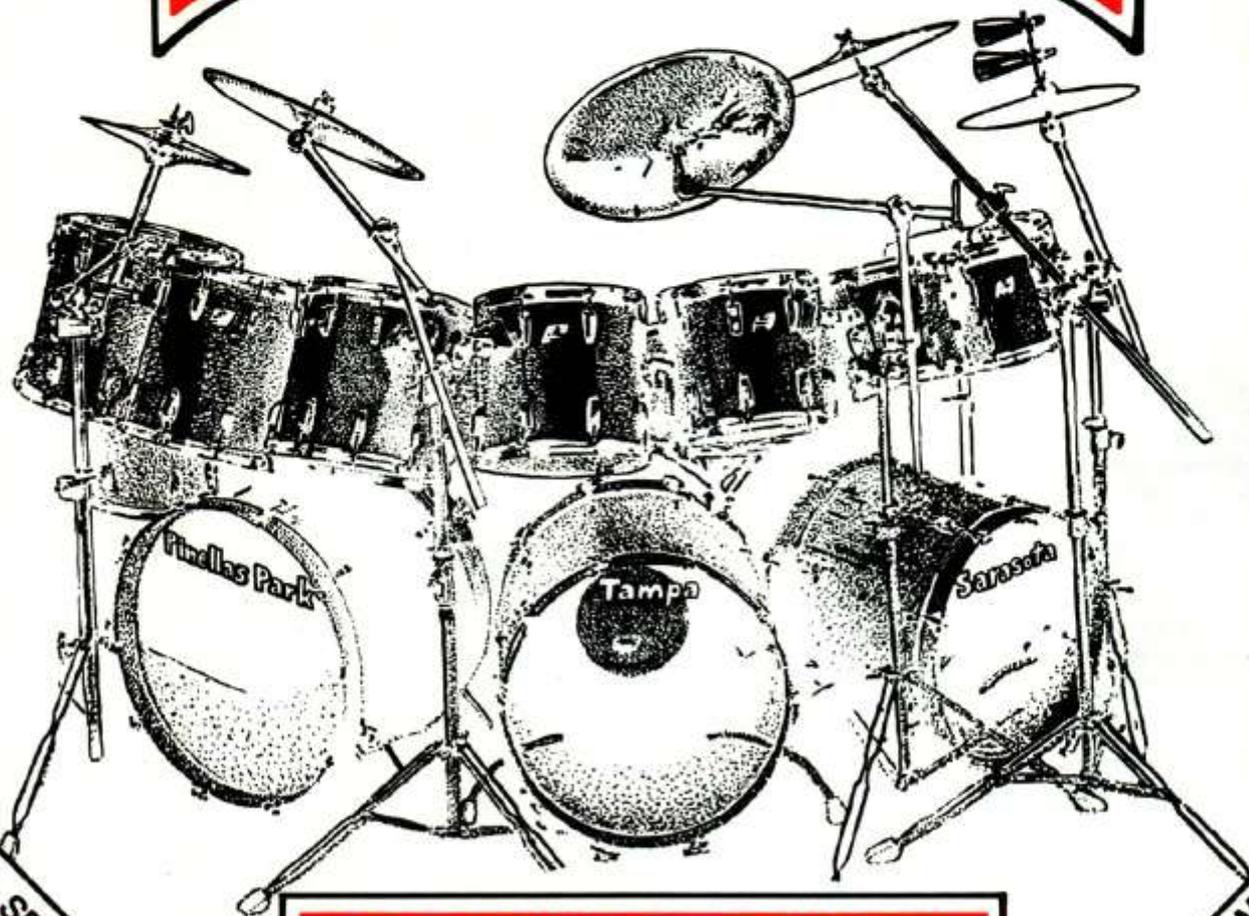
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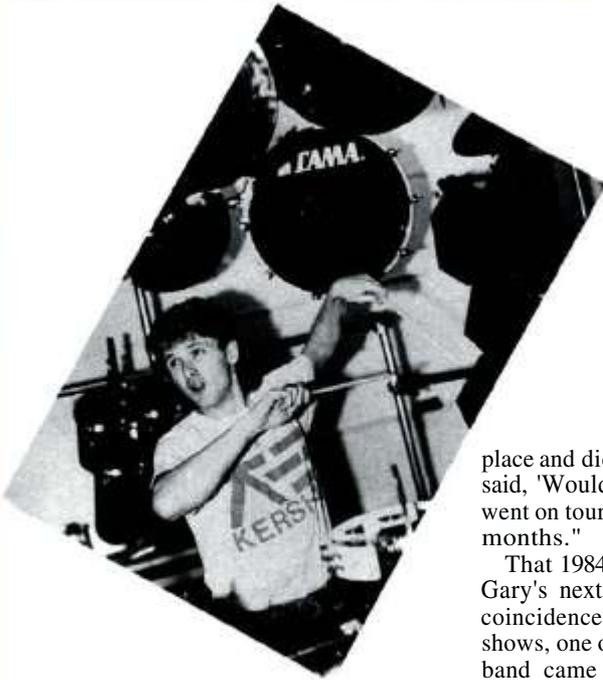
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### THE PRO'S CHOICE!!

by Claudia Cooper



# Gary Wallis

One might assume that Gary Wallis, at the age of 22, is just past the beginning stages of his drum and percussion session career. However, he passed that point long ago. Ever since he received his first drumkit (a Broadway) when he was three, Gary has been hitting those beats—and hard.

Gary is from London. "Everything about me is. I was born in London, and I've lived in London all my life. I guess I always will." His early influences included Billy Cobham and, especially, Jo Jones. But it was not until he was about 13 that Gary began to take lessons. "I went to The London School of Symphony Orchestra. I was classically trained there. Steve White [from The Style Council] and I both trained together for three or four years—strictly classical."

It was at the start of these lessons that Gary also began to play in little clubs with various bands around the pro circuit. He left school at the age of 16 and joined The Truth, playing drums. For the next two years, he played the small rock 'n' roll club circuit, while picking up an odd session here and there. It was through one of these sessions that his percussion career was born. "By accident, I happened to play some percussion for a session one day, and it developed from there. Then I quit The Truth, and through the contacts I had made over the years with the band, I started to do a lot of sessions."

Gary then met up with The Style Council's Paul Weller. "Paul came around one day and said, 'Look, your percussion is not bad. Would you like to come down and play on a track?' I went down to Paul's

place and did some percussion for him. He said, 'Would you like to do the tour?' So I went on tour with The Style Council for six months."

That 1984 tour also provided the path to Gary's next project. "It was a complete coincidence. At one of The Style Council's shows, one of the lads from Nik Kershaw's band came down, basically because his wife was taking care of the press. Nik had said that he was looking for a percussionist. So he auditioned me for two days, and then I did that tour. I think we toured for 11 months in all."

Gary recently played on Nik's album *Radio Musicola* and began an intensive 12-month tour late in the fall of 1986. To date, Nik Kershaw's band is his favorite gig. He enjoys the challenge. "I think Nik is by far the most outstanding artist I've worked with, just for musical content and requirement. The role he asks you to play in his band is very demanding. He expects you not to drop below the level he sets for the whole time you are on tour or in the studio. He keeps you really on your toes, and he demands really interesting parts. That makes you innovative. He makes you approach each situation in a fresh way. Whereas you may be inclined to approach a particular tune a certain way, he will say, 'Well, alright, everybody does that. Why don't you approach it *this way*?' Nik's whole show is done to a click track, because he is such a perfectionist. You have to play with a click track going all night and have to be *spot on* that click, because if you are on either side of it or you miss a beat, the show is finished."

While on tour with Nik Kershaw, Gary again met up with someone who would lead him on to his next job. "I was in Australia, and I bumped into Julian Lennon's band. The bass player, Carmen Rojas, who had played with Bowie, said that he really enjoyed the show. After chatting, I said to him, 'Well, look, if you ever get any work, here's my number—just in case.' So we both finished our respective tours. Then Tony Thompson, who knew Carmen from

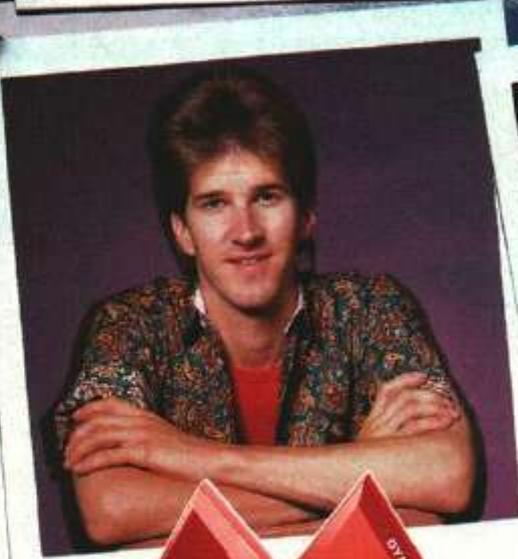
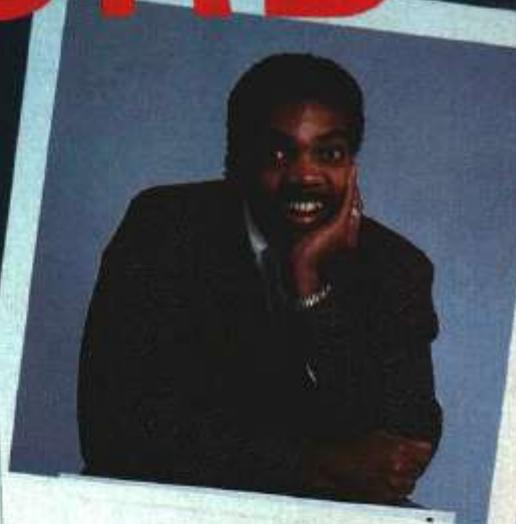
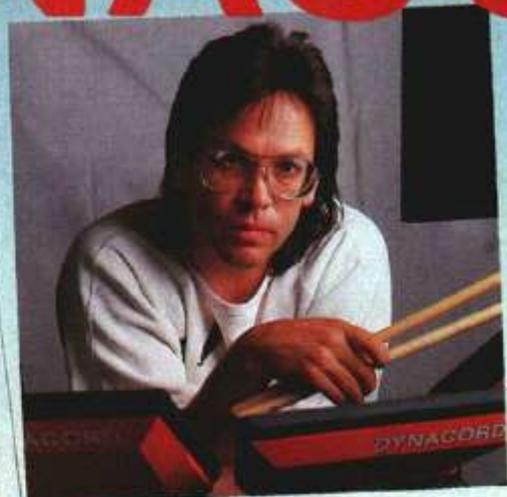
touring with Bowie, told him that he needed a percussionist for the Power Station tour. Carmen said, 'I've seen this kid in Australia. You have to ring him up.' The next thing I knew, Tony rang me up and said, 'Your ticket is on the way. You have a place in New York. Get out here *now!*'"

It was during The Power Station's tour that Gary played for Live Aid—not once, but twice. "Live Aid was quite interesting. The Power Station had a four-day break in the tour to go to Philly, and I was supposed to play with Nik in London. Anyway, I was on The Power Station's tour, and Andy Taylor said to me, 'Look, would you play with Duran Duran?' I said okay and rehearsed with Duran Duran while in Philly. It was really good, but it was also really strange. I remember going out on Live Aid about six o'clock at night for The Power Station set, which was great. Two hours later, Duran Duran went on, and I got a chance to go out again. That was really the best thing."

Since the 1985 Power Station tour, Gary has been very busy with various projects, including Bucks Fizz's hit single in the U.K., "New Beginning." He also has three albums in the pipeline to work on and has been doing many one-off sessions. He has also taken on another role. Gary dabbles at playing keyboards and programming their sequences (besides playing the bass guitar), which has taken him into producing, arranging, and programming keyboards for other people's songs. One song, "A Stab In The Back," by Logan, did very well in Europe and other areas. "Producing has been taking up a lot of my time. I've had to learn all the tricks that go with putting a record together, including how to get the most out of people when you are in the studio."

With all this, one might wonder why Gary is not working on a solo project of his own. "Maybe in years to come," says Gary. "So many drummers who were in band situations or who are known as session players do albums and become very

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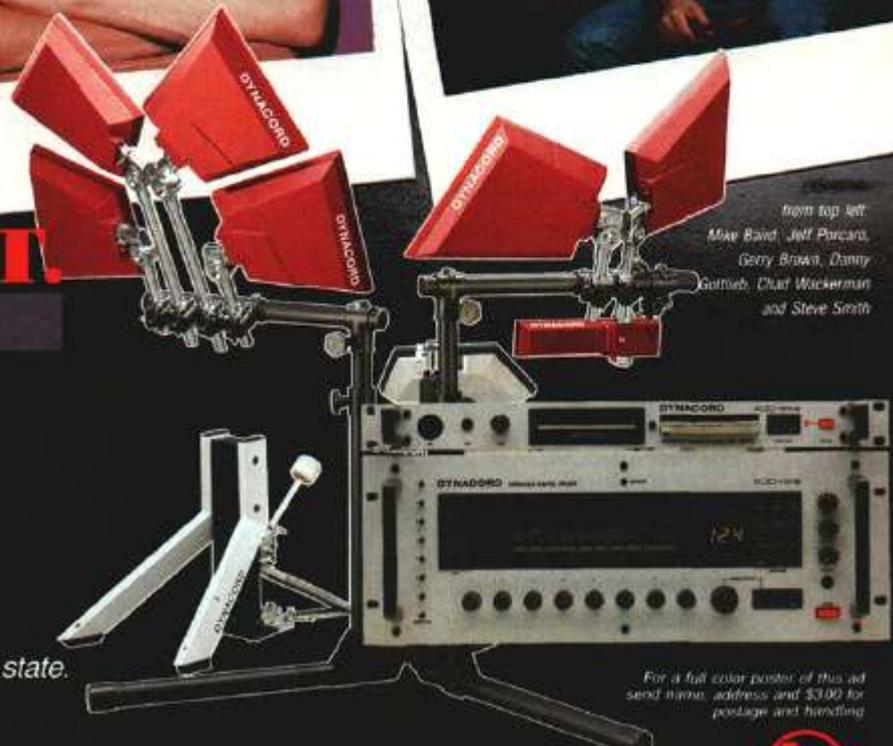
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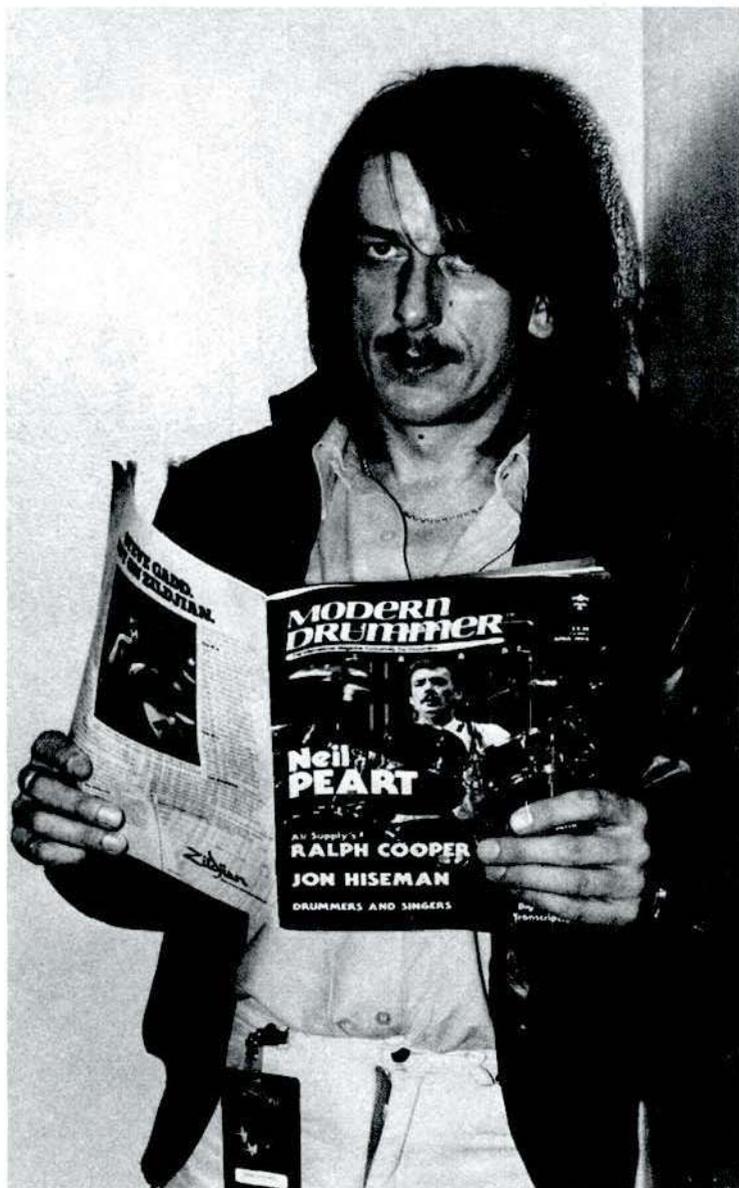


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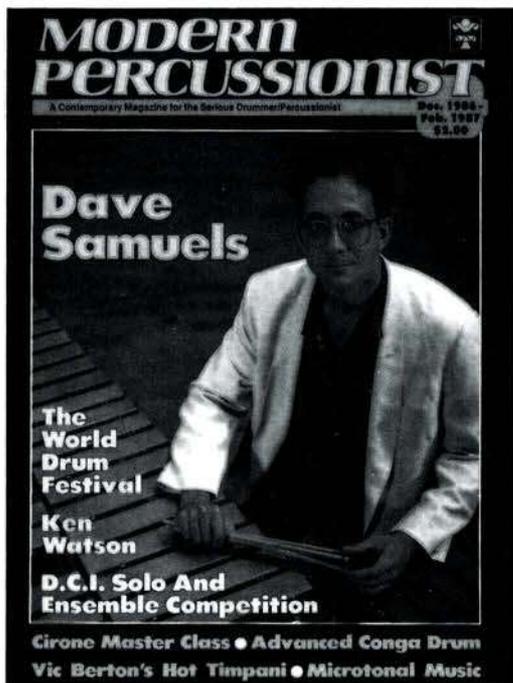
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self-indulgent. I wouldn't want to do an album like that. If the occasion did arise where I found myself capable of a commercial project, then I would do a solo album. I can't really justify that until a few years down the road, when I have seen a bit more, done a bit more, and heard a few more things."

In regard to his session playing, Gary is allowed free rein. "Nobody governs what I do at all; only my musical tastes govern that. I can't do sessions just for the sake of earning money. The music has got to be fulfilling or demanding in some way. I can't just go and play what I term 'nothing' music: music by people who haven't bothered to study music or the ins and outs of how to play it properly. There are a lot of people who turn up at a session not really knowing what they want. They just say, 'Look, could you make me a hit record? I need this there and this there . . . .' I can't stand that. Apart from that, I'll do anything, as long as it is nice to play and it's something I haven't done."

Gary's kit drumming tends to be for sessions, while his percussion work is mainly live (with an occasional session here and there). "I think it's mainly for the showman aspect—the different angle I approach percussion with. I get a lot of work, because I jump up and down, twirl my sticks, and make it look like fun."

Gary believes that the increase of work for percussionists over the last couple of years is due mainly to modern recording technology. "Many people are using sequenced percussion on a lot of their tracks—what with the development of the Linn 9000 and other sampling equipment. People are now sequencing and sampling large amounts of percussion. Consequently, more players are required to go out and recreate these sounds live. The percussionist's job has become more demanding these days. Where it used to be that you just turned up and played your congas or timbales, now they require such things as very elaborate electronic setups. You have to know a lot about programming and sampling, and how they fit into contemporary music."

Gary plays Tama drums and is now

using a nine-foot high *Power Tower Cage* to support his massive percussion setup. That setup includes a tower built of 18 various colored Simmons pads to look good on stage. These pads trigger racks of Simmons and sampling devices—two *SDS7s*, an *SDS5*, an *MM MIDI* brain, a *Prophet 2002* sampling matrix, a *Rev 7* reverb, and ten noise gates.

Gary also has two timbalitos and two timbales by LP, three Gon Bops congas, 14 cowbells, some custom-built, strange-sounding percussive instruments by Jopa, two rack-mounted snare drums, a piccolo snare drum, two mounted gong drums, four tom-toms (8", 10", 12", and 14"), and eight *Octobans*. Behind him is a series of triggered foot pedals that link back to the Simmons equipment. Since his percussion setup is so large, he uses these to gain additional access to the electronic instruments.

Gary's Zildjian cymbals consist of eight Chinese cymbals ranging from 14" to 20", one 13" and two 14" crashes, a rack of extra-light splashes ranging from 6" to 12", and a set of Z series hi-hats. The cymbals are a mixture of K's and A's in Zildjian's *Platinum* finish to look good on stage.

Slightly to one side of the percussion setup is Gary's Tama drumkit, consisting of a 22" bass drum, 6 1/2" Bell Brass snare drum, and 8", 10", 12", 14", and 15" rack toms. The cymbals are Zildjians again, including three crashes, two Chinese, a couple of splashes, and the hi-hats.

Gary's setup in the studio consists of a Tama *Artstar* kit. He also uses synthesizers, as well as a Yamaha 9000 kit, and nine snare drums for different occasions, different songs, and various types of miking. He'll choose his cymbals depending on what's required for each track.

Gary enjoys being inventive when it comes to percussion sounds. For an effect, he once smashed a ten-foot sheet of glass with a hammer and recorded the sound into a sampler. Another bizarre sound—which can be heard at the beginning of Nik Kershaw's song "Bogart"—is Gary hitting an empty fire extinguisher with a stick. He also has cymbals bent inside-out, and an amazing set of saucepans right out of



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the Kershaw's kitchen. They have a metallic sound like a cowbell, but their shape, along with actual resonance, is what makes them so "off the wall." Gary has them mounted, and he uses them on tour. (It is not surprising that Gary likes more outrageous percussionists such as Manolo Badrena and Mingo Lewis.)

Gary Wallis live is something not to be missed. He puts on quite a show. "I enjoy the exhilaration of a live performance; you get so much out of playing in front of people. I'm still quite young, and still have the stamina and the energy. But then again, it's nice to make records, so that you can turn around in 20 years' time and say, 'That's me.' No doubt, in years to come, I'll get far more out of making a record."

Gary's general view on music is that everyone should be aware of *all* the various styles, because there is a lot to be learned. He feels that the older types, like The Beatles, etc., are now being neglected by today's generation (who are also turning their noses up at classical music), while that standard of musicianship, belief, and years of hard work and dedication should be recognized. Gary was first influenced by The Mahavishnu Orchestra, Chick Corea, and other fusion artists. Then he went into pop and a Beatles stage. Presently, he favors Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, and especially Charlie Parker. He is into the real bebop style, which he feels is nice to incorporate into pop music.

It's *swinging* that Gary really likes. "Everyone goes for this complete *perfection* today, which is great. I think you

*should* play to a fantastic standard. But people forget how to *swing*. This is why I urge people to listen to some '50s jazz, just to hear the way the whole band swings and how the drummer pushes the band along to *make* them swing. No matter what you are playing—pop music, funk, or reggae—it's all got to swing—to groove."

Having achieved so much at such a young age, Gary Wallis is still very ambitious. (He has always wanted to learn the saxophone.) But mainly, he'd like to bring his standard of drum and percussion playing to a level that would be unrivaled, not for egotistical reasons, but "for the benefit

of up-and-coming kids, so they could have someone to look up to. Unfortunately, as of late, there haven't *been* too many people to look up to. There are a lot of good kids out there, but many of them are misled. They think that, because they have an electronic drumkit, they've got it knocked. They have to learn that one needs some people to *listen to*; they need to realize that music is not all gadgets and that not *everybody* can do it. I think it would be nice for kids to develop a standard where they would say, 'Oh, I want to learn how to play like that, and I have to spend the next eight to ten years sitting there practicing.' "



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by Simon Goodwin

# Setups For The Jobbing Drummer

Because I am writing this column I might be accused of bias, but I am confident that I will receive a certain amount of support when I say that we jobbing drummers are a rather special breed of people. Many of us are "hopefuls" who are working towards that big break; many of us have settled into careers as "jobbers," because it suits our life-styles and gives us the flexibility to pursue other things. There are even some among us who have tasted the "big time" but, for one reason or another, have had to scale down our musical operations. For all these differences in age, background, and outlook, there is an important thing that we must all have in common: We need to be multifaceted players. Most people have a particular style in which they like to specialize, but the jobbing drummer needs to be able to turn his or her hand to almost anything. This lack of specialization means that there is really no *typical* jobbing drummer's kit. A heavy metal drummer is generally expected to use a particular type of setup; a small-group jazz player is expected to use another. But with the wide variety of jobbers' gigs and the different types of people who do them, jobbing drummers' equipment can vary enormously.

Something else that all jobbing drummers have in common is that—unlike many top players—we have to buy, maintain, and transport all of our equipment ourselves. We also have to adapt to different musical and acoustic situations, often without the aid of a sound technician. And we often have to cope with stages on which there is hardly room to swing a drumstick, let alone to accommodate the two 24" bass drums, eight toms, nine cymbals, snare drum, and hi-hat that we would ideally like to be using on the gig. So it is for reasons of space and convenience of transportation that we tend not to use such large kits. (Cost is clearly a consideration as well, but this aspect was dealt with in some depth in the Sept. '85 issue. So for the purposes of this discussion, let us just assume that money is no object!)

There is a lot to be said for using no more equipment than is strictly necessary for the job you are doing. But I have heard differing views about this from top players whom I have interviewed. Jon Hiseman said that, for a period while he was with John Mayall, he only used a bass drum, snare drum, hi-hat, and one cymbal. Simon Phillips, on the other hand, said

that, no matter what he is doing, he likes to have the ambient resonance of his full kit—even when he is only *using* a small part of it. (This was mentioned in connection with recording, but it must have some relevance in a live situation, too.)

Apologies to those of you who will insist that the sound you make is all that matters, but there is also the important matter of *image* to consider. There *are* situations in which a large, flashy-looking drumkit would look out of place. But on the other hand, you can sometimes gain credibility with an audience (and I'm afraid, sometimes with other musicians, too) by having a lot of equipment on show—whether you actually need it or not. Even quite sensible, tasteful musicians get enjoyment from the reflected glory of standing next to a large, showy drumkit. But be warned: Musicians *can* also be contemptuous if they think that the drummer is overdoing the visual side of things. Twenty years ago, as a teenager, I was called to sub with a quartet who were all 30 or 40 years my senior. When I set up my very modest four drums, two cymbals, and hi-hat, the elderly gentleman with the upright bass said, "What do you want all that stuff for? Our regular drummer only uses a bass, snare, and hi-hat!" More recently, a friend of mine was asked by a club manager to reduce the size of his kit, because "it makes the stage look untidy!"

Some drummers pride themselves on being able to do any job with the same setup, heads, tuning, cymbals, and sticks. They depend on their versatility of touch and musical good taste to make the sound they make fit wherever they want it to. With some people, this works very well. It doesn't in my case. I am continually taking advantage of the variables of no damping, slight damping, or heavy damping, medium or lightweight sticks, different tom-tom heads, front head on or off the bass drum, or a head with a cutout. I also switch the cymbals around for different musical needs, and I will change the standard, medium hi-hat cymbals for a pair of *Sound Edges* if I think that the room's acoustics require a louder "chic." I consider it important to have a flexible setup, but I do like to have consistency when it comes to the physical placement of the items of the drumkit. I know that some drummers can adapt between extremes (such as a nine-piece rock kit and a four-piece jazz kit that have completely different heights and angles), and be quite com-

fortable. But as far as I am concerned, it is important to know that whatever items I *am* using are going to be positioned where I am used to having them—even if other items are not there at all.



I am using my own kit as an example here because it makes more sense to talk in specifics, rather than in general. I wouldn't be so conceited as to suggest that other drummers ought to copy it; in fact, I would say the opposite. You shouldn't copy someone else's setup in detail unless you happen to be exactly the same size and strength with exactly the same musical requirements. The photograph shows my full kit: bass drum, snare drum, floor tom, four rack toms, hi-hat, two crash cymbals, two ride cymbals, a China cymbal, and two cowbells. The only slightly unusual thing here is that the largest rack-tom (a 12") is directly in front of the snare drum, while the other three are clustered on the left above the hi-hat. The reason for this is to facilitate a ride cymbal mounted on the bass drum. I like to use two ride cymbals: usually one with rivets and one without. By having one placed on the bass drum—to the right of the 12" tom—I can have the other one on a stand to the right of it, at the same height and angle. Thus, I can reach either cymbal without having to stretch. This means that the 10" tom is further to the left than a lot of people would like, but it is common for drummers to have a rack tom in that position as well as one on the right of the bass drum. I find that having the 12" tom directly in front of me, beyond the snare drum, with the 10" slightly higher on the left and the ride cymbal slightly higher on the right, is very comfortable. I can play long sets involving a lot of ride cymbal work without my right arm getting

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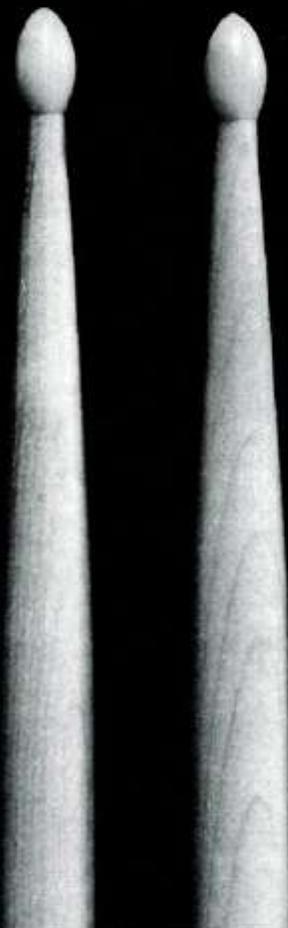
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tired. (I know from experience that it would if I were reaching over a tom-tom to play it all the time.) Fatigue while playing is a very important consideration. If you find that this is being caused by the way your kit is set up, it is the strongest possible reason for having a rethink.

Coming back to my setup: When the three smaller rack toms are removed, I am left with the traditional four-drum configuration. All the drums and cymbals are at the same angle with the four-drum as they are with the seven-drum set. When I reduce the number of drums, I usually reduce the number of cymbals as well. The China type is the first to go, and sometimes I do without the second ride cymbal. In cases of extreme crowding on stage, I'll make do with the one crash cymbal on the left.

Some years ago, my drum teacher told me that, if you have fewer *sounds* to use, it encourages you to be more creative *rhythmically*. It is always interesting to play on a scaled-down drumkit to see just how true this theory is. Unfortunately, however, most jobbing drummer gigs emphasize being *functional* rather than creative. It is therefore advantageous to have a variety of sounds at your disposal. If you need a deeper/louder tom-tom/cymbal sound, it is preferable to have the suitable instrument on hand rather than having to get around the problem somehow by being creative.

I was once called upon to play a bongo solo during an overture to a theater variety show. I didn't have bongos with me, and if I did have them, they would have to have been mounted on a stand and played with sticks, because there was no time to pick them up. I managed to achieve the desired effect by playing on the snare drum with the snares off, but I wasn't happy. This sort of situation can only make you uneasy and thus make the job harder. Now you see a 6" and an 8" tom-tom over on the far left of my kit. The 8" is directly beyond the 6", rather than forming an apex between the 6" and the 10", because I like to be able to play from one to the other in either direction, with either hand, without crossing over. The 6" is also very useful for playing ride patterns in Latin numbers: It gives a high-pitched sound like a tamborim, and is a pleasant alternative to playing across-the-drum rim clicks on the snare drum.

There is a natural feeling among non-musicians that more drums mean more noise, but as we know, this doesn't need to be the case. You can do a straight-ahead, hard-hitting rock 'n' roll gig on a small kit and be very loud. Conversely, you can play a quiet gig in which many different nuances of sound are required and use a large kit in order to achieve that variety. Now, assuming that we do need this range of sounds for our jobbing, there still remains the question of how to actually hold the various components of our kits in place. A certain number of stands is necessary, but we

have the option of reducing these by using the wide range of clamp-on attachments that are currently available. (The double tom-tom stand, in the photo, is converted to triple stand by means of one of these.) The advantages of using these attachments are: (1) You have less bulky hardware to carry to the gig, (2) you can save floor space on stage by having fewer stands cluttering it up, and (3) there is the possibility of getting items on the kit closer together (in some cases) than would be possible if they were all on their own floor stands.

There are some disadvantages to clamp-on systems. For one thing, no matter how sturdy the stands and attachments are, when you have two or more percussion instruments joined together by pieces of metal, you are bound to get a certain amount of sympathetic vibration between them. This means that if, for instance, you have a tom-tom and a cymbal mounted on the same stand, when you strike one of them, the other is going to vibrate—probably not enough to be heard clearly in its own right, but enough to *alter the tone* of the other instrument. As long as good-quality hardware is used, this isn't usually enough of a problem to cause trouble in a live, acoustic situation. But if you are playing miked-up, or you are recording, it can be a different matter.

Another problem that I have found is in the amount of time it takes to set up the kit. The average attachment to add another



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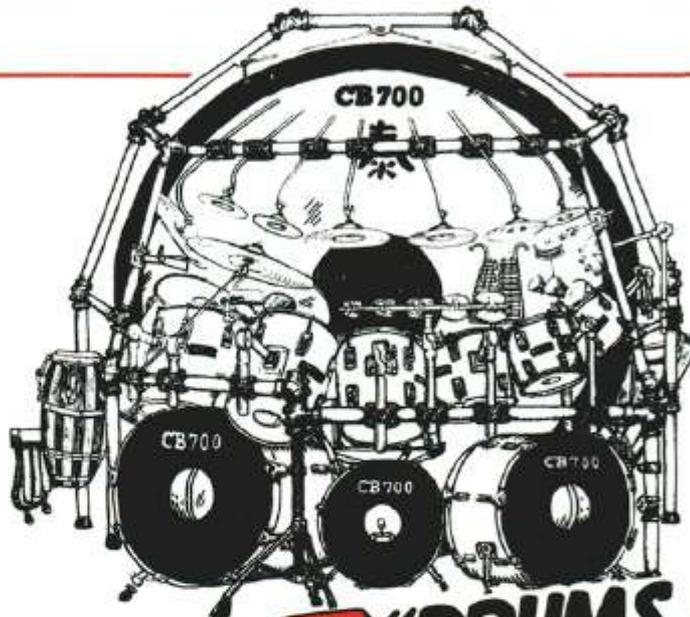
instrument to a stand usually consists of a bracket that clamps onto the stand at one end and an extension arm with a ratchet or ball-socket at the other. This ratchet connects to the business end, which has a cymbal tilter or tom-tom arm. Even with the excellent memory locks and clips that these attachments come supplied with, it is usually a much more "fiddly" job to get one of these assembled and positioned correctly than it is to put up another floor stand. I have been through the stage of having a minimum of stands and a multitude of attachments, and I now use what I consider to be a reasonable number of both.

So far—at least by implication—I have limited this discussion to acoustic drumkits. However, when we are talking about the potential for obtaining *as many sounds as possible* (while, hopefully, being able to economize on the bulk of equipment carried and stage space taken up), we mustn't forget electronic drums. There can be no doubt that the ratio of number of available sounds to number of items used for producing them is highest with electronic rather than acoustic instruments. There is the added advantage that electronic pads tend to be smaller than acoustic drums, so you may be able to get away with carrying less. Certainly, the pads can be set up closer together, and with a bass drum that is a fraction of the depth of its acoustic counterpart, less space will be taken up. There is, of course, the matter of *amplifying* electronic drums. You need a control unit and, at least, a fair-sized combo amp that will handle the bottom end of the sound. Most drummers say that, by the time the amplification is added to the drumpads, they are back to the same amount of bulk to carry as with an acoustic kit. (Of course, if you want to amplify an acoustic kit, you've got mic's, their stands, and the amp and speakers to worry about. An electronic kit will give you the amplified sound without the physical bulk of the acoustic drums.) There is also the interesting possibility of actually being able to play *quieter* on electronic drums: You can turn down the volume to a level below that which you would be able to play comfortably on acoustic drums.

As long as you can produce the sounds

you require from your electronic drums and you are happy playing them, the only disadvantage you are likely to encounter is one of acceptance by other people. It comes back to the matter of image; there are certain types of bands in which an electronic kit would look out of place (a Dixieland band, for instance). But if you have no intention of playing those types of music, there is no problem. Also, most owners of electronic kits retain their acoustic ones, so that they can be brought out of storage (or the practice room) if necessary. Having said all that, the most usual thing for a drummer to do is to combine some electronic pads with the acoustic kit, thus getting the best (and worst) of both worlds.

After all this talk about equipment, we mustn't forget the most important element: the player. I know a drummer who uses a '50s vintage kit with a mixture of the original calf heads and some not-very-new plastic ones. His cymbals are old and would be classed as "budget." I have sat behind this kit and wondered *how on earth* anybody could be expected to play it. However, when the owner plays it, it not only sounds okay, but it sounds damn good. There is more respect due to a drummer like this—who can coax great sounds out of what looks like a load of rubbish—than there is to someone who has all the latest, smartest equipment—but makes it *sound* like a load of rubbish.



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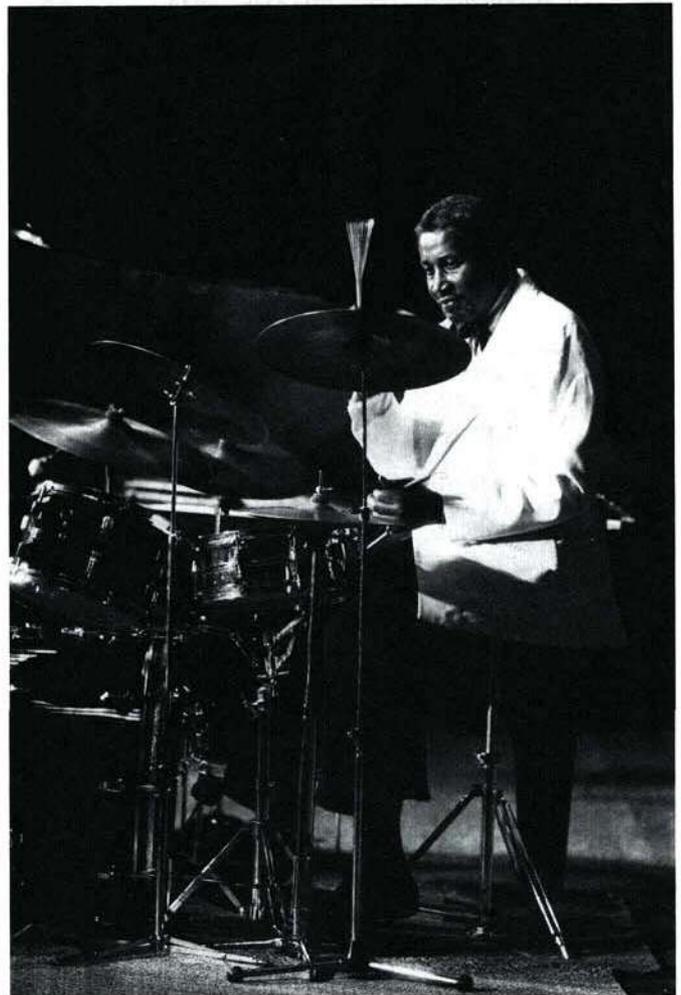


Photo by Tom Coppi

Kay continued from page 25

while, though, it just fit in. I find that the main thing about those situations is just not to panic. If it is going to happen, it will happen. It will all evolve.

The good thing about playing with the MJQ is that you're not in the situation where, if you don't get it tonight, you will never get another chance. It's not like a one-nighter where they throw a chart up. You get a chance to try the music different ways. It is hard to get groups to stay together like the MJQ have.

**JP:** Because the MJQ did have that rare long-running stability, it's disappointing to hear that finances originally broke the group up, especially considering that they were one of the few jazz groups to break into a regular concert-hall circuit.

**CK:** We were a corporation. We were paid 365 days. No matter what we actually brought in from dates, we made the same amount of money every week, even on the road. We were paid enough, but it wasn't the kind of money where I could go on a yacht cruise when I wanted to or buy a Mercedes without worrying about it. It wasn't like the situation Mick Jagger or some other top musicians were in.

Even though we crossed barriers with our audiences, most people still don't seem to realize what jazz is and what it takes to play this music, so they don't appreciate it like it should be appreciated. And classical symphony orchestras across the country—except the top ones like the New York Philharmonic and Boston Symphony Orchestra—most of them are in financial trouble. Yet, that's supposed to be *the* music. So if classical music is in trouble, what can you do with jazz? A lot of the concerts MJQ played with symphony orchestras were benefits for the orchestras. I guess they felt that, by having us play, it would attract both the jazz and the classical audiences.

**JP:** Playing with symphony orchestras presents special challenges for a trap drummer. When playing swing feels, how did you handle

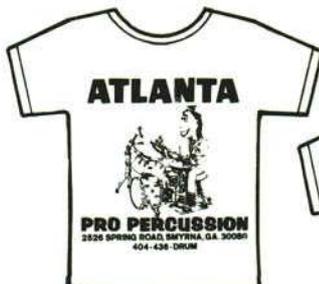
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the push and pull that goes on between the different time conceptions of an orchestra and a jazz quartet?

**CK:** I find that that situation is getting better these days. Many symphony orchestras now are getting members from the younger generation as the older players retire and die out. And the younger people—maybe thanks to rock music—have some sense of rhythm other than symphony style. In the old days, the players tended to know and listen to only classical music, although they might have known a little bit of Glenn Miller. The new players grew up with rock and also jazz, so they have more of a feel for it. They understand what you want. Plus, a lot of kids also played in stage bands at school while they were studying classical music.

**JP:** How about the early experiments, pairing up with symphony orchestras before the new breed of players. Was it rough?

**CK:** Time-wise, yeah. But you get through it. First of all, you approach it knowing that it won't swing like it would if you were just playing with the quartet, so you don't even worry about that. You go in with the intention of holding it all together, so that everyone starts and ends together, the overall sound is correct, and when it comes time for you to do what you've got to do, you do it. If you go on tour with one of these symphony orchestras, as the MJQ did, you get to play the stuff two or three times a week, and you find that, the more they play it and listen to what you're doing, the tighter it gets. So it's like playing with a group in that sense. I have done concerts with some orchestras where, by the third night, it was much freer, everyone knew what was going on, and it began to swing. And I thought, "Gee, two more weeks of this, and it will be beautiful!"

Another important factor is that there are good conductors and bad conductors. I have played with some orchestras in which the conductor comes down for 1 and the orchestra is always a fraction behind. In fact, I find that that happens in most symphony orchestras. I would hit the bass drum on 1 and then hear "da-dat" when the orchestra entered, as if their first beat were on the & of the

conductor's 1. That can throw you off. Then you get conductors who wave. You never know where their 1 is at because they are doing all these acrobatics. Then there are good conductors who forget that they are conductors and follow the drummer.

The MJQ played with the Boston Pops, and the "Old Man" [Arthur Fiedler] was conducting. At rehearsal, there was a part where the orchestra played and we laid out. So I was behind the drums with my arms crossed, just sitting there listening. He stopped the orchestra and said, "Mr. Drummer, you have to keep your feet patting over there, so I will know where the time is." I kept my heel going, so that he could watch out of the corner of his eye.

**JP:** Europe was such a big market for the MJQ. MJQ combined jazz and classical elements in their music, and Europe has a sense of history for its classical heritage, which in turn, enhances the appreciation of jazz.

**CK:** Yes, they have an appreciation for both. To the Europeans, jazz is an art form; it is American classical music, whereas we take it for granted. We're still stuck in the old maze thinking that European classical music is *the* music and everything else is not quite as important.

**JP:** After almost seven years apart, what sparked the decision to reunite the MJQ?

**CK:** After we broke up, there were some promoters in Japan who had been trying for years to get us to come to Japan to do a reunion concert. We never could get together to do it. Finally, in 1981, they offered such a nice piece of change that we decided, "Okay, we'll get together for just this tour, come home, and go our separate ways again." We went to Japan, and we all enjoyed playing together again. In 1982, we were offered another tour. So we decided that, since jobs were coming in and the money was nice, we would stick together and do them on a limited basis—work as MJQ but allow everybody to continue with whatever they had going on their own.

**JP:** What are some of the independent projects you have been able to do between the cracks in MJQ's schedule?

**CK:** I worked with Zoot Sims a few times, and I played in Nice recently with Joe Newman, Major Holley, George Masso, George Kelly, and Hal Ashby. Then I played gigs with John Bunch and Warren Vache, and I did some records with Scott Hamilton.

**JP:** Your brushwork has such a lilt. It gives a clean, crisp lift to the music.

**CK:** That comes from Sid Catlett. I used to follow him around like a puppy—not in an obnoxious way, but any opportunity I had to be around him, I would be around. When I was about 17, I met him when he was playing on 52nd Street. He couldn't get a taxi home from the gig. I had a car so I said, "I'll give you a ride." On the way home, we started talking, and he found out I was trying to play drums. When I got him to his door, he said, "Hey, Bub. See this building here? I live on the ground floor on the right. Anytime you want to, come on by." I was there the next day. I could hardly sleep that night after I had dropped him off.

In all the years that he and I were friends, I never once asked him anything about how he did certain things on the drums. It was just osmosis, man. I learned from him from having conversations on anything: baseball, women, life in general. Just being around this guy, man, you could see why he played the way he played. I didn't want to impose on the cat to make him think I was trying to pick his brain. I figured that, if I was going to get lessons, I should pay him. If he had asked me if there was anything I wanted to know, then I probably would have asked him how he did certain things. But he never asked me. Basically, I wanted to be his friend.

At one time, he asked what I had been doing lately, and I told him I had a gig. I said that, if he wasn't doing anything, he should come by and tell me what he thought of my playing. Sure enough, he showed up. I was shocked, man. He heard a set, and after I got off, I sat down with him. "You play good," he said. "There's only one thing I think you should do: You should do more with your left hand." That was the only advice he ever gave to me. Other than that, it was all osmosis and knowing him as a man.



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**JP:** What was his quality, as a person, that came out in the drums?

**CK:** He was just a beautiful cat, man. Everybody loved him. I never met anybody who didn't love Sid. Another thing was that we used to go around at night from joint to joint. When he walked in, guys would ask him to sit in. This guy played everything. He would go to 52nd Street and play bebop with Bird, then go to Nick's and play Dixieland, and then go to another place and play something else. That opened up my eyes. When I grew up, bebop was just evolving. That was the hip thing: to play bebop like Max. Anything else to me was corny; I didn't want to play it. I would go around thinking, "I've got to be droppin' bombs and play all the hip shit!" But by being with Sid, I saw he could play both the old and new, and that changed my whole thing. Years later, a lot of guys used to come up to me while I was playing the older style at Condon's and say, "I didn't know you could play that!" But if you're going to play this music, you should be able to play it all. It's not that you should have to go out and perform it, but that you should be able to play it.

**JP:** Outside of your Birdland dates with Lester Young, you also made many Birdland appearances with several other artists, including Coleman Hawkins.

**CK:** The Coleman Hawkins performance at Birdland was just for a week, and the band included Howard McGhee and Horace Silver. I have a record of that. At Birdland, there was an enclosed sound-proof glass booth from where Symphony Sid broadcasted records. But on every Friday night, they broadcasted live music from the club for an hour. Some enterprising guy got an air check at a studio and made a disc out of that years later.

**JP:** From which you never saw a dime?

**CK:** Right, not a dime. There are about ten Lester Young albums like that from broadcasts that somebody put on disc. They put "rhythm section unknown" on the records, so as not to invite trouble from players who might want their money. I'm sure someone must have caught the week I did down there with Stan Getz and

possibly the week I did there with Miles, too.

**JP:** Most people only associate you with bebop and swing. Yet, you recorded with Ray Charles.

**CK:** That was during my rock 'n' roll days. I made most of the Atlantic hit records in the '50s and did most of their studio sessions. I was Atlantic's house drummer until I joined MJQ.

**JP:** Speaking of "rhythm section unknown," it's frustrating that they never credited the session men on all those early classic rock and R&B records.

**CK:** Oh, they never put your name on a record, anyway. I made Ray Charles' "Greenback Dollar Bill." I did four tunes with him, including "It Shoulda Been Me." I did all the Ruth Brown records, including "One Mint Julep." I did "Crying In My Own Tears," too. I also played on the Clovers' records. I started a certain beat that they began using on other records. I was talking to Dr. John about that. Over in Nice, I helped him get on the bus, and I had just watched his show. So I told him I enjoyed his set. He said, "Hey man! I know you! You're Connie Kay. I know about all those rock 'n' roll records you made on Atlantic. I'm hip to you!" [laughs] He said that he had worked at a record company a long time ago, and the company was trying to find out who the drummer was on one of the records I had played on. Dr. John said, "You were the first guy to do hip shit on rock 'n' roll records. You freed up the guys so they could do something."

You see, instead of playing 2 and 4, I used to play on 2, leave the space, and play a bass drum pattern in the space. The 2 and 4 stayed in the hi-hat. I'll tell you how that beat evolved. In the early '50s, this sax player named Frank Culley offered me a job down South. He had a lot of jobs for a two-month period, and he was getting a band together. I had never been down South, and I wasn't doing anything at the time; things were slow. He was kind of a wild dude, man. He was one of the forerunners of guys like Big Jay McNeely. He would run around with the sax and walk on the bar. So I was kind of skeptical at first, but then I said, "What the heck!" I was young, without responsibilities, and could get back if I got stranded. Plus, Randy Weston was in the band, and he was my friend.

When we got back, Atlantic wanted Culley to do a demo record with a group from Washington called the Clovers. We went to the studio for the date to back up the Clovers, and the bass player never showed up. So, I tried to fill in the parts on the bass drum that the bass would have played, along with one beat on the snare. They liked it, and after that, everybody wanted it. Every time I went in the studio, they would tell me, "We want the Clover beat." All the other record companies were asking, "Who's the drummer on that record?" because nobody knew what the hell I was doing.

During that time, I started playing with Lester Young, and I kept doing the Atlantic sessions while I worked with Lester. Later, when I joined the MJQ, I had to leave, and the record people said, "We might have to wait until he comes back!" But MJQ turned into a long-term thing. You would be surprised how many session drummers were glad I got the gig with MJQ. [laughs]

**JP:** Those fledgling days of Atlantic must have been interesting: low-tech classic rock and soul. What were the sessions like then?

**CK:** At that time, single-track tapes had just come around. They had just advanced from acetate to tape recorders. Everything was mono. There wasn't any four-track or laying down of tracks for the singer. If a cat goofed or a singer forgot the words, then we would have to do it again. There were times in those studios where we got to take 65! The singer would be put in isolation, but it all went on the same track.

Atlantic used to be on 56th Street at that time. The studio wasn't any bigger than this living room. In fact, in the daytime, the studio was their business office. The sessions all started around 8:00 at night after office hours. Then, we would go in there and put one desk on top of another, stack the chairs together, and push the sofa in the corner. They made a lot of money in that room.

**JP:** Between playing record sessions and working with Lester Young, you had a good musical situation going. How did you make the transition to the MJQ, and what made you drop every-

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thing else for the group?

**CK:** I went to see MJQ play at Birdland, and Kenny quit that night. They had a gig the next night, so they called me the next morning and asked me to work on the upcoming gigs. It happened very quick, and as far as I was concerned, I was just filling in until they got somebody steady. But after the gigs, I stayed because I could see the future in the MJQ. I looked at things in the long run. I knew they were going to happen. I loved playing with Lester, but I could see something in the MJQ. Also, right away I was making more money than I was with Lester.

**JP:** When making the decision to leave, did it cross your mind that you might not be able to really play out and lean into the groove with MJQ like you did with Lester?

**CK:** No, you should be able to get some kind of groove no matter how you play. There was a period for a while when John didn't want me to play sticks at all. He wanted all brushes—even on the cymbals. I didn't dig it that much, but I could see what he was trying to do, so I did it. After a while, he realized that sticks were needed for some tunes. Now, there are a lot of tunes that I think need brushes, and John says, "No, play sticks."

**JP:** A delicate chemistry is needed for the MJQ sound. It's such a personalized sound that a lot of other drummers—although they may be great players—would not have sounded right for the group.

**CK:** There comes a time in life when you say to yourself, "This is a good thing; whatever makes it go is what I'll do, whether I dig it or not." I think that's wise. A lot of times, there were things in the band that I had to do that I may have wanted to do differently. But I had to sacrifice my ego and do it. A lot of other people might have said, "This is the way I play, and if I can't do it, forget it!" That's one of the reasons why Kenny Clarke left. He wanted to play a certain way, and he didn't dig what was happening, so he split.

**JP:** Benny Goodman has been quoted as saying, "It has always been my enigma—drummers." He was known to have been a

tough bandleader.

**CK:** He liked to be correct. He didn't want any bull, and he wanted his music played the way he wanted it to be played. So if you call that tough, he was tough. I have no qualms about that part of it because I don't want to play anything if it's not going to be right. Benny could be a little eccentric at times, but that was mostly off the bandstand. You could either put up with it or ignore it. I chose to ignore it.

When you play in someone's band, the leader has hired you for the way you play, but it is still the leader's band. So you have to feel it through and realize what the leader wants. As a drummer, you are accompanying, not soloing. If you're accompanying, you have got to give the soloist some space.

I think bandleaders *should* tell you if they want something. If you don't dig it, you can either do it or quit. But some leaders just go off the bandstand and complain. This is the worst thing of all—when you play with leaders who don't dig what you are playing but *don't* tell you. That makes it hard because you don't know if you're cool or not. That doesn't help you or anyone else in the band. When a bandleader just stays bothered by a drummer and doesn't say anything, you can tell by looking at the bandstand: Everyone looks mad, and the music comes out that way—uptight. The tempos never land in the right slot.

In some situations, though, you're not there to please the leader. I used to play for burlesque and striptease dancers. No matter who messed up in the band, they would always say, "That damn drummer!" I learned early that the situation was: To hell with the bandleader and everyone else. Please the dancer! The club owner is going to keep the dancer. The dancer is the one bringing in the money, and the club owner isn't going to give a damn who's up there playing the drums. So if you want the gig, please the dancer, [laughs]

**JP:** Was burlesque some of your first work in New York?

**CK:** It was one of the gigs I played for money. I was young and still living with my parents at the time, and I needed some money to be independent. I also played taxi dances on Broadway where guys came to buy tickets for a dance, and we played all night nonstop. The very first gig I ever had was in a Bronx nightclub with chorus girls, comedians, tap dancers, and singers. One night, the house band's drummer didn't show up. There was a bar in the back corner of the club, and the band members were hanging there saying, "Man! We need a drummer quick!" Someone sitting at the bar heard them and said, "There's a guy around the corner who I hear every time I walk by." My street was on the way to the subway, so everybody heard me practicing.

So these guys ran over, rang my bell, and asked me if I played. I told them, "Well, I'm trying to, although I have never played professionally before." In fact, I had just gotten my first set of drums only a week earlier. They asked me if I wanted to make a gig around the corner. I said, "Yeah, but I will have to ask my parents." [laughs] I went over there, and it had one of those old bandstands with the drum platform way up in the air. I didn't have time to rehearse anything, and the guy just talked the show down to me. I was so jittery playing the show that I was playing 1 and 3 on the hi-hat instead of 2 and 4, and I couldn't get coordination in my feet. Finally, I relaxed and played the show. I got through it, and that was my first and last time being nervous playing the drums. I ended up playing there every weekend for a long time. My father told me, "Just be careful in there," and sure enough, one night while I was in there, a man got killed.

**JP:** So for your first gig, opportunity literally knocked at your door. It was a long musical step from there to playing Birdland with Lester Young.

**CK:** One of the things that I regret is that I wasn't older when I played with Lester Young. I was young, so I didn't realize what the hell was going on at the time. For me to play with him was great, but I didn't realize *how* great it really was until later. As I got older and listened back to some of the records I did with him, I could see so many things I left out or could have done better. I was in my formative stage—which I still am.



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# Hand-To-Foot

MUSIC KEY



Good hand-to-foot coordination is a plus for any drummer playing music today. Developing a creative hand-to-foot technique can open up many new possibilities. What I mean by a creative hand-to-foot technique is the ability to instantaneously create hand-to-foot patterns as easily as you create hand-to-hand patterns, thinking of your foot as another hand. The exercises that follow were chosen not only to aid in the development of a good hand-to-foot technique, but also to illustrate some possibilities that you may not have thought of for their application.

The first set of exercises is designed to develop basic hand-to-foot coordination. Play the patterns first between your hands (playing the bass drum part with your right hand), then between your left hand and your foot, and then substitute your right hand for your left. The patterns should sound and feel the same as when you played them with your hands.

Next, combine both the right- and left-hand stickings together in the same pattern.

In the following examples, the tom-toms are added.

The following drum solo illustrates the creative hand-to-foot technique. Notice that the solo does not contain any of the patterns presented so far, but requires the same hand-to-foot technique to play it. When creating hand-to-foot patterns in a solo, try not to play bits and pieces of memorized exercises, but instead, use the technique gained in practicing the exercises to create new and exciting patterns.



Transcribed by Ted Moore



Photo by Tom Copi

# Elvin Jones: "Cross Purpose"

**MUSIC KEY**

R.C.	◆
T.T.	●
S.D.	○
F.T.	○
B.D.	○
H.H.	X
w/ Foot	X

C.C.

This month's *Drum Soloist* features the incomparable Elvin Jones, performing on his album *Midnight Walk* (Atlantic Records). On this particular track, Elvin takes eight-bar solo breaks over the form of the song. These solos are notated below. Elvin's use of interesting triplet phrasing is obvious here.

The image displays a page of musical notation for a bass line, consisting of eight staves. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns and articulations:

- Staff 1: A sequence of seven groups of three eighth notes, each marked with a '3' above it.
- Staff 2: Starts with a triplet of eighth notes (marked '3'), followed by a quarter note, then a group of four eighth notes (marked '4'), and ends with a triplet of eighth notes (marked '3') with accents (>) above each note.
- Staff 3: Features a series of eighth notes with accents (>) above them, grouped into pairs of triplets (marked '> 3 > 3'). The staff concludes with a triplet of eighth notes (marked '3') with an accent (>) above the first note.
- Staff 4: A sequence of eight groups of three eighth notes, each marked with a '3' above it.
- Staff 5: A sequence of eight groups of three eighth notes, each marked with a '3' above it, followed by a group of four eighth notes (marked '4').
- Staff 6: A sequence of eighth notes with accents (>) above them, including some beamed eighth notes.
- Staff 7: A sequence of eighth notes with accents (>) above them, including some beamed eighth notes, and a triplet of eighth notes (marked '3') with an accent (>) above the first note.
- Staff 8: A sequence of eighth notes with accents (>) above them, including some beamed eighth notes.



by Chuck Kerrigan

# Maintaining The Flow: Part 1

**MUSIC KEY**

R.C. C.C.  
 T.T.   
 S.D.   
 F.T.   
 B.D.   
 H.H.   
 w/ Foot

This article will deal with a method of interpreting charts and cutting band figures, while maintaining the time flow. In these exercises, the ride cymbal and hi-hat will keep the time flow moving, while the left hand and bass drum play the figures. Part 1 will deal with triplet-based figures, while Part 2 will examine 8th- and 16th-note feels.

### Jazz Feel

In this section, the right-hand/ride cymbal and the left-foot/hi-hat parts play the typical swing pattern:

The left hand/snare drum and the right foot/bass drum will interpret the written figures against this part.

The following figures are to be played in this manner: (1) All 8th notes in the figure will be played as single-strokes on the snare

drum with the left hand. (2) All long notes (notes with a duration longer than an 8th note, including 8th notes tied to other notes) immediately following one or more 8th notes will be played as single-strokes on a tom or as a buzz-stroke on the snare drum with the left hand. (3) All isolated long notes (not immediately preceded by one or more 8th notes) will be played on a crash cymbal with the left hand and on the bass drum. Be sure to precede each exercise with at least two bars of time.

### 1. Written Figure:

### Interpretation:

### 2. Written Figure:

**center rolls music  
 rolls music center  
 music center rolls  
 center rolls music**

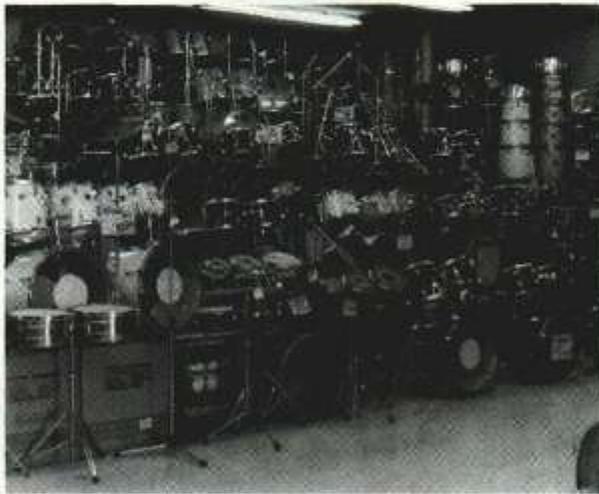
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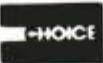
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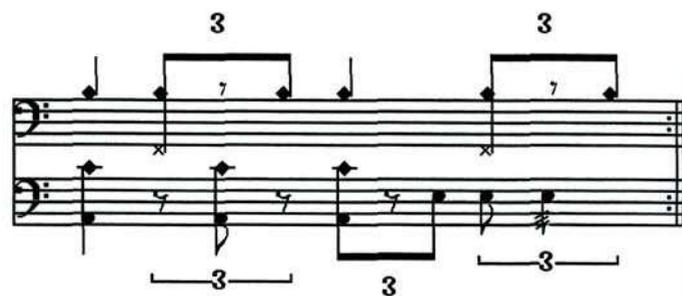
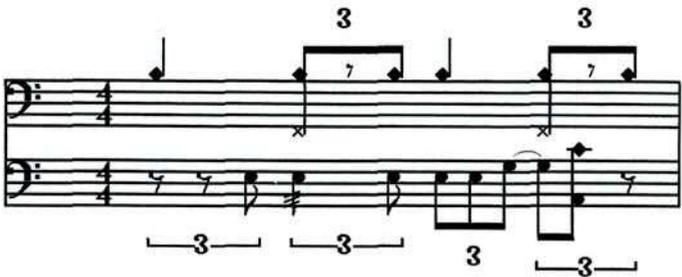


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Interpretation:



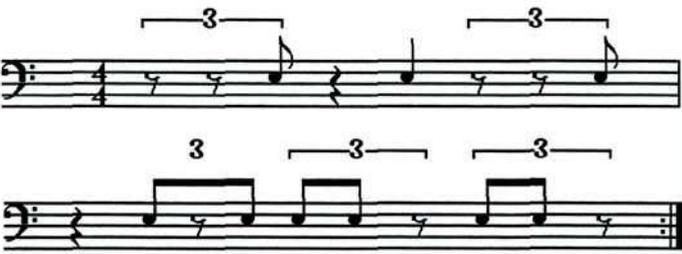
Shuffle Feel

In this section, the right-hand/ride cymbal and the left-foot/hi-hat parts play the shuffle pattern:

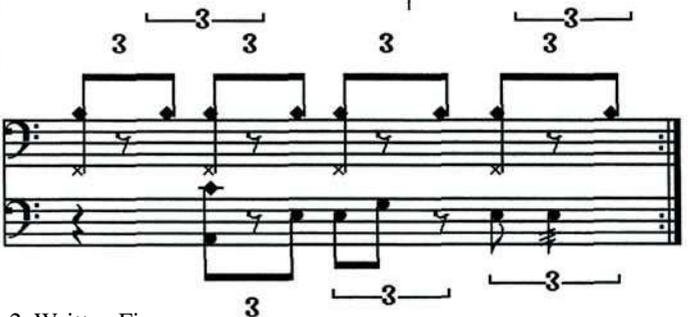
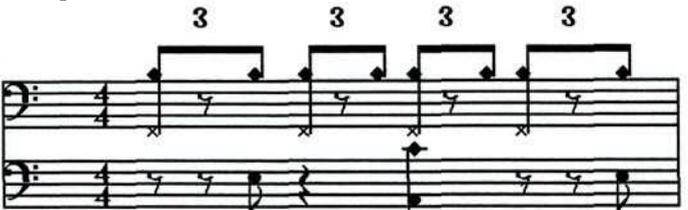


The left hand/snare drum and the right foot/bass drum interpret the written figure, as in the *Jazz Feel* section. Once you can play these figures, be sure to precede them with at least two bars of time.

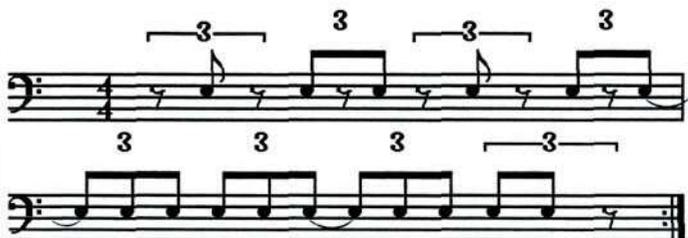
1. Written Figure:



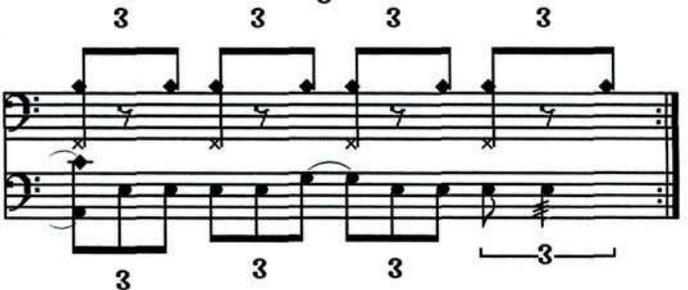
Interpretation:



2. Written Figure:



Interpretation:



After mastering these exercises, try some different patterns, such as three bars of time and one bar of a figure; seven bars of time and one bar of a figure; eight bars of time and four bars of a figure, etc. Practice these at a variety of tempos and dynamic levels, while selecting simple figures for fast tempos and more complex figures for slower tempos. In Part 2, we will continue this basic idea with some jazz-rock and funk patterns.

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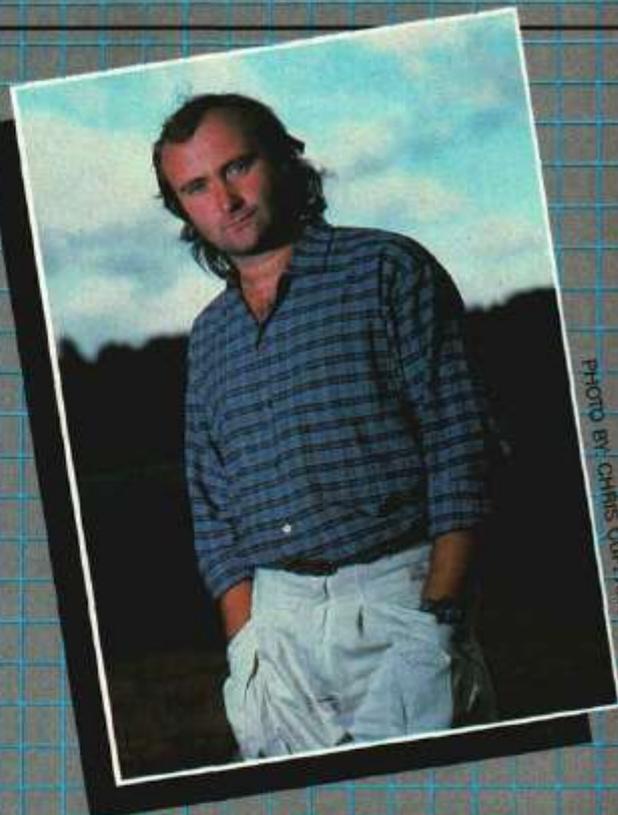


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*Kroon continued from page 29*

political my way in there. I just held my own and waited. I didn't even come here to be a session player. My wife and I came here because I felt I could work in Nashville. I thought that I could get road work with a country artist. I didn't want to be 40 years old and working in a bar in Sioux City, Iowa. I felt that I had to go somewhere where there was enough going on for me to keep working because I wanted to be a musician. This is my life. The studio thing just evolved, and I fell into it.

**RF:** Most studio players will tell you that they didn't set out specifically to be studio players. Now, there are a lot of young players who start out saying that they want

to be in the studio, yet you need that other experience to qualify as a studio player.

**JK:** "Studio player" doesn't necessarily mean that we're the *best* drummers or bass players or whatever, but we can make that song happen in 30 minutes or an hour. We can work under pressure, and after we shoot our best shot, if a guy asks for something different, we can give him something different. Someone out there playing in a club may be really good at one thing. I've seen it happen. A guy will come in, and he's just scorching on the guitar or whatever. It's his natural thing. But then the producer will say, "Can you try something a little different? We want to double this with the steel guitar." The guy will come

unglued because he's limited. He can do his thing, but maybe his thing doesn't fit on that song, so what else do you have?

That's where I think studio players excel. First, they work under pressure, they're very precise in their playing, and they can get along with different people very quickly. I go in, they hand me a chart—whether it be a real chart or a numbers chart—and I get to the bottom line in a hurry. That's what most studio players can do. They have the ability to take something that somebody has been playing for months, and turn it into something really magic in 30 minutes or an hour.

**RF:** What prepares you for that?

**JK:** What prepared me was that I have really worked at being a good player. I spent time playing country music and I listen to records a lot. I still practice a lot.

**RF:** What kinds of things do you practice?

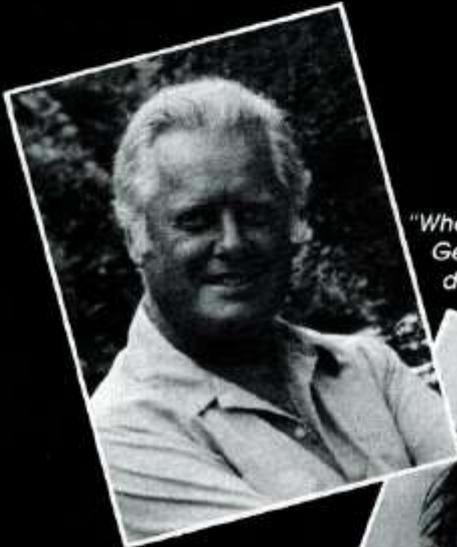
**JK:** I practice different patterns and things I don't play in the studio, so I can try to get further ahead. It's hard to do new things when you don't get to play them all the time. It's very frustrating. I've got a bunch of different books, and some days I'll work on reading. Some days I'll just play a groove I heard off an Al Jarreau record, or maybe I'll try to cop something Jeff Porcaro did. I try to keep pushing myself. I've been very blessed in the studio, but I don't want to get lazy. I'm still like a new kid in town. My attitude is that I have to keep going and do better. I have this little aggressive thing in me that says, "Gee, Jerry, you didn't play that real good. You've got to do better than that. There are drummers out there who can eat you up. You need to keep going."

**RF:** There are people who believe that their playing life is only five years.

**JK:** I believe it all depends on the person. I've known people who had a wonderful thing going and who have blown it in a matter of two or three years.

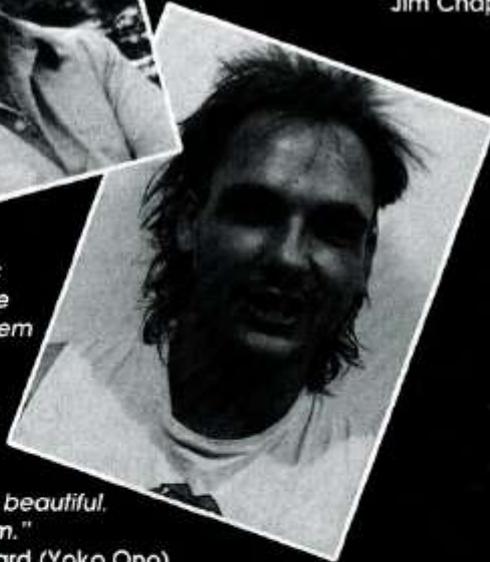
**RF:** How does one blow it, and how does

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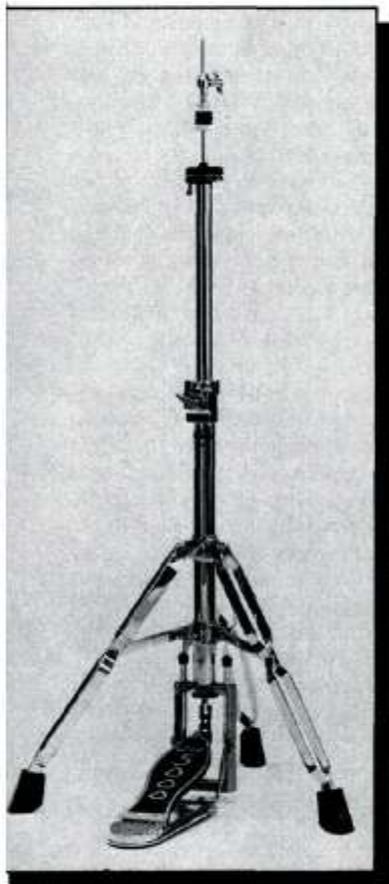
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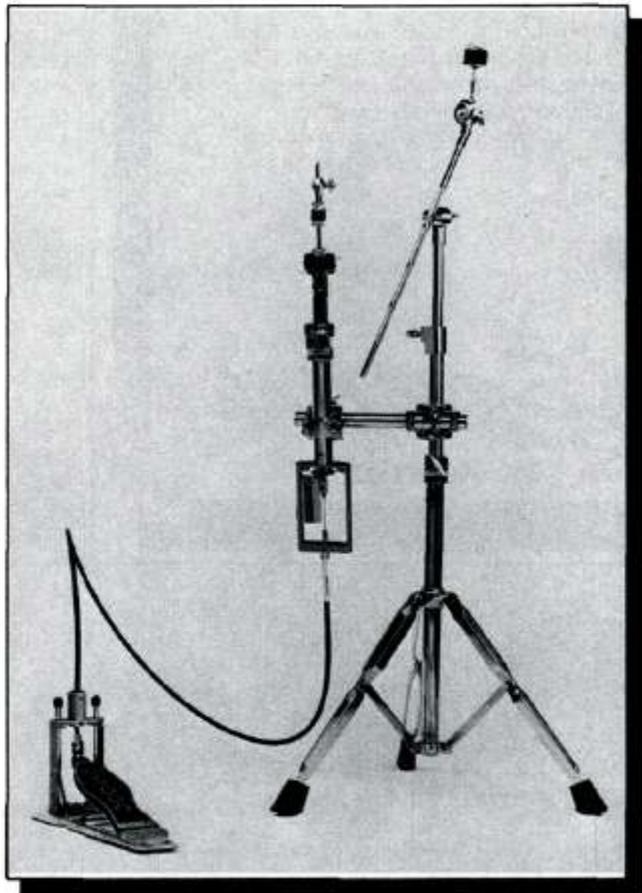
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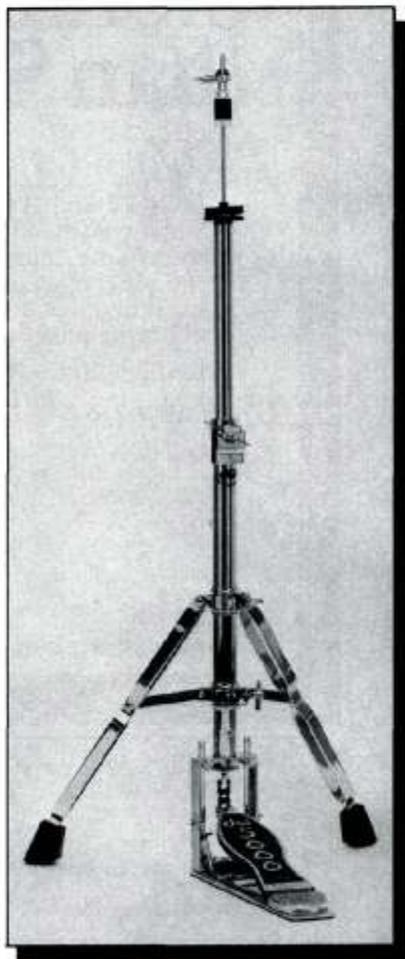
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MUSIC STORES

one keep it together?

**JK:** Obviously, the way you blow it is drugs and not doing your job. You become successful, you're climbing up this studio scale, you get busy, and you don't take care of business. I think that, if people keep themselves in shape mentally, more so than physically even, it will be fine. I've got to learn new things, listen, and stay aware. I've got to think about equipment. I've got to stay on top of the current trends. With a good, healthy attitude—which is sometimes hard to maintain because we all get fried around the edges—you can be a survivor. Maybe you're not the one with the best chops, but you always get to the bottom line, which is that the producer can count on you, you sound good, you have a good attitude, you work well, and you give 110%. With that kind of attitude and a blessing of decent health, you can do it for a long time.

I'm counting on doing it for a long time. Age has nothing to do with it. The reason some of these people get too old to do it is that they've gotten very successful and they quit trying. They get too secure: "I don't need to practice. I don't want to get any of that electronic stuff . . ." I may not want to do a lot of that either, but that's what is required for my job.

**RF:** Do you find that, in Nashville, artists and producers are loyal?

**JK:** Some of them are loyal, and some of them are hard to figure out. I guess that's

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the way with any session player, but I've played on many number-one records for people and then found out they've used someone else the next time. One thing that has helped me deal with that is the fact that, hey, I'm hired for x amount of hours, I go in there, and they only owe me for that amount of time. I think, "Gee, I've gotten number ones for them. What more do they want? Records are selling. I'm doing a good job. That account should be mine." That's a myth we get into. I fall into that myself. With all the years I've been doing it, sometimes I still get hurt when I'm not called back. I've learned to deal with that a little more in the last few years. I had to because it was starting to drive me nuts. I do have some very loyal clients where I'm first call, and sometimes they don't even want to cut without me, which feels great.

**RF:** When you're new on the scene, is the producer the person you need to get to know or is it the artist?

**JK:** It may be different for other people, but for me, I always wanted to get the respect of the other players. I figured that, if I worked on a demo date and did a good job, there would be four or five people who would spread my name around. Word of mouth by the players is what helped me because, face it, certain leaders can be influential with the producers. Sometimes a producer will say to the leader of the session, "I want you to use this drummer and this guitar player," but other times, the session leader will say, "You can't get Larrie or Eddie? There's this new guy, Jerry Kroon . . ." "Ultimately, I'm there to satisfy the producer. That is my main consideration, but while I'm doing that, I want to satisfy those other players because that's four or five potential voices talking you up when they leave.

**RF:** And if you satisfy them, you're satisfying the producer and hopefully vice versa.

**JK:** Exactly. It's like a sports team. We play together.

**RF:** Did you have any training at all, or did you completely teach yourself?

**JK:** I'm self-taught. I didn't really start playing drums seriously until I was 17 because I was always into sports. Just like most people, I listened to records and tried to learn the feel. When I got to Nashville, it was the same thing. I put on the records, and tried to play to them and learn the feel. I practiced at home, listened to other drummers, and listened to their ideas.

Reading-wise, I'm basically self-taught. You have to ask a lot of questions. You also have to sit home, and go over and over it. I think I've turned into an adequate reader. If I had the chance to read at least two or three times a week, I could be a great reader. I enjoy reading. It's a challenge for me. The frustrating part is that I'll go for months and not read a note. Then all of a sudden, somebody will come in with a chart. It's like that movie. All of a

sudden, it was a click track in my ear, a 30-piece orchestra, and those guys all read. I've been blessed with good ears, and when it gets weird, I rely on my ears. I always wanted to go to Berklee or something like that, but it was like moving to L.A. I thought, "I don't know if I really fit in there." So the basic thing was self-motivation. That's what kept me going.

**RF:** Do you work with a lot of click tracks?

**JK:** In the last year, I had a rack put together where I have my Linn drum machine, my Simmons, and my own cue system. I play to a click all the time. I'll program a shaker, cabasa, or cowbell, and I'll play to it. I don't feed it to the other players. In the contemporary Christian scene here, some of the people, like Mark Hammond, were using clicks a lot. It was really working well, so I started trying to do it. When I realized that some of the guys might not mind working with it, it took a load off me. Then I thought, "I can have the ultimate steady track without it being a human drum machine." Certain rhythm sections I work with—no problem. Then I started getting some negative feedback from some who said, "Do you have to have that thing going?" I was just enjoying it because it was freeing me up from being a timekeeper to doing more things.

**RF:** What didn't they like about it?

**JK:** They didn't like something steady wacking away in their earphones. That's when I decided to get my own cue system, which only I hear. Larrie has done that for a long time. I really like that. Ninety percent of the time now, I can go home at night knowing the drum track and the basic track are in the pocket. This is a wonderful thing. I'm still human. I'm not going to be exactly precise, but I can give it a real human feel, and it stays real steady. So I use that all the time now.

Sometimes, if I know who the other players are, I'll put what I program into their cue, and they love it. I have to walk on eggs with some people because they think it makes the feel stiff. I don't want to make anybody mad, but it helps me do my job. My job is to play steady, and keep it from rushing or dragging. My favorite records are in the pocket. That's the kind of player I want to be: solid and in the pocket.



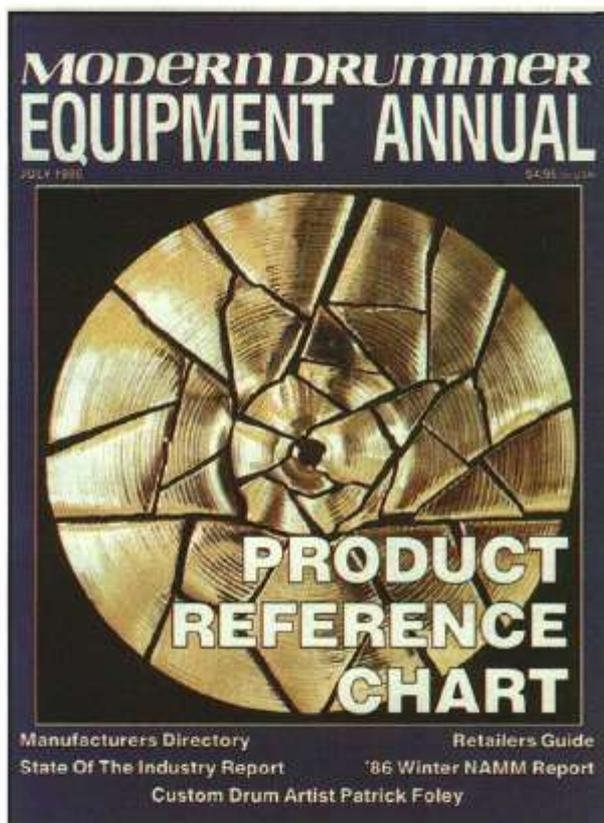
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**RF:** You mentioned that you really had to get into electronics. When was this, what happened, and how did you feel about it?

**JK:** At first, I didn't know. When the Simmons came out, I thought, "That's fine, but we're not cutting Chaka Khan here. We're cutting George Jones and Reba McEntire." I was probably one of the last people to get the Simmons, and I'm supposed to be a busy studio player. Everybody got them, and then everybody burned out on them. By the time I got my stuff, producers were saying, "Boy, whatever you do, don't bring the Simmons." It was overkill. Luckily, I waited, and as opposed to getting the *SDS5* or *SDS7*, I got a real simple setup. I got the *SDS8*, I bought the *Detonators*, and I'm triggering. Everybody else bought all the expensive gear, but I waited and narrowed it down. I looked at the people in Nashville I respect the most and saw what they were using. If I were in L.A., it would be a totally different thing. What I heard from the engineers and other drummers was that they wanted to hear acoustic drums triggering the Simmons with a little bit of white noise to give it that AMS expanded sound. So I bought a simple Simmons setup, an *MX-1*, and I have my Linn. I just do some triggering. Now I have the flexibility where, if they want a real pop/rock sound, I give them the Simmons effect, and if they want just a "fattener"—an embellishment of a drum sound that I already have—I can trigger off that and give them the Simmons toms or whatever. It was difficult figuring it all out. I'd buy something and think it was the ultimate piece of gear, and two months later, somebody would say it wasn't happening anymore.

On the Sawyer Brown stuff that I did a few months back, they wanted a more pop-sounding record, so we hooked up AMS, I changed the chips in my Linn, I hit the acoustic drums, and it triggered the Simmons chips in the Linn. I like simple things. I don't want to get into that game of new toys every week.

**RF:** As you said, with Reba McEntire, you wouldn't bring all that stuff anyway.

**JK:** I did Reba when Harold Shedd produced her, and I used basically acoustic drums. I do know that Jimmy Bowen, who Reba is with now, uses a lot of electronic sampling, like triggering Simmons. I think they have an *SDS7* brain, and when they do what we call the cross stick, which is the country rimshot, they've got that sampled as well as various different rimshots. They're into that, but I don't hear that big of a difference. Basically, I go for a real good acoustic sound. If they want effects, I have my little rack of stuff I can give them. But I think it's turning back to more acoustic sounds. The Simmons and Linn's are going to be around, but I'm hearing more and more that they're going back to human rhythm sections, even in L.A. At one time, we all had to have the Hal Blaine

setup with all the toms. Now, I think drummers are back to three toms—maybe four. For me, it was "Let's get something simple that enhances what I do and keeps me competitive with Eddie, Larrie, Stroud, and some of the other drummers I respect."

**RF:** When I think of Nashville recording, I think of the entire rhythm section in a room cutting live.

**JK:** That's us. Some of the sessions that I felt were tightest right away were when I went in with three or four pieces. I prefer to go in with piano, bass, drums, and maybe electric guitar, turn on the click track, and go. The simpler the rhythm section, the easier it is to make it tight, but budgets don't necessarily let that happen.

**RF:** What have been some of your favorite sessions and why?

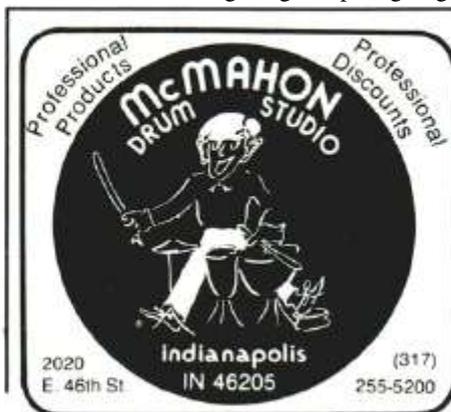
**JK:** Obviously, the first favorite session was the first time I played on a hit record. That was for Jimmy Bowen, and it was Mel Tillis' 'I Believe In You.' There's an interesting story behind that. There was a 6:00 session and another one at 10:00. Larrie was booked for the 6:00, but he said he absolutely couldn't do the 10:00 because he had something booked, so he suggested they call me. It was Joe Osbourne, Reggie Young, and all those heavies. I'd had a little experience, but that was the major leagues. I got in there, we did the song, and it went number one. The neatest thing about that, just to show you about friendships, was that Larrie got me on the session and then discovered later that he was open for the 10:00 because his 10:00 was canceled. They wanted him to play the date, but Larrie said, "Hey, give this guy the shot. You hired him, and he'll do a good job."

**RF:** You must have been nervous walking into that one.

**JK:** Yeah, I was a little nervous.

**RF:** How do you get yourself comfortable real fast when you walk into a situation like that?

**JK:** I try to do what I do best, be real attentive to what's going on, and not let being nervous psych me out. I try to say, "I'm here, nervous or whatever. How does the song go? Is there any tricky part that I might have trouble with that I need to outline?" You need to get a game plan going.



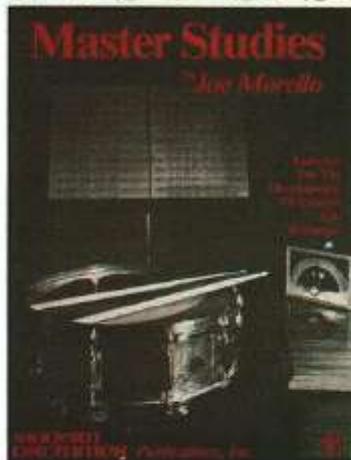
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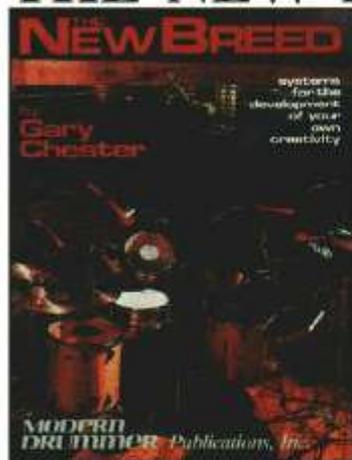
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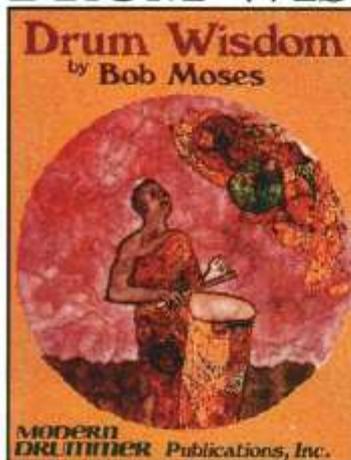
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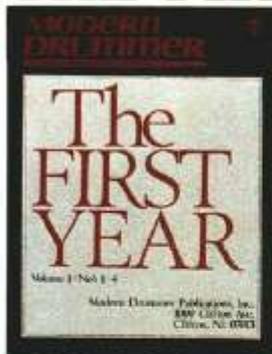
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Okay, Larrie Londin is your favorite drummer, and I don't play like him. *I'm* here. What can I do? I just want to do a good job. I'm nervous, so there's no sense in trying anything fancy like I might do if I were feeling real good and were on a roll. Let's get to the bottom line. What do they want in the verse and in the chorus? I figure it out and go from there. I always revert back to the bottom line. A good groove and steady time will work. There will be days when I can do that, plus I feel a little hot where I can let it out and play some real nice things. When I don't feel that I can think of anything or I'm a little unsure of my creativity, I stick to the bottom line. I guess that's what I like about the Porcaros and people like that: They'll give you the steady track, but they'll also give you a burst of exciting stuff. Some days I feel like I can give that burst, and other days I don't. But I know from experience that, if I play real solid, steady, and tasty, that will work.

**RF:** Doesn't the stuff over and above that come with time and knowing a producer?

**JK:** Exactly—and confidence in yourself and knowing you can take a chance with this guy—knowing you can stretch out here and he won't slap your wrists. When you walk in that studio, whether it's five players, six players, or whatever, you've got to wear a lot of different hats, and being a psychologist is one of them. First of all, you're there to work for that producer and satisfy the artist. Then you've got other people you're dealing with. Maybe there's someone on the session you're not really good friends with. Okay, you're professionals, and the bottom line is to get the air cleared. I find that, if I'm working with somebody who doesn't really like me or doesn't really want me there, I block that out and say, "Look, this guy is paying me good money to be here, and I have to give him a product." I'm a product. I'm like a can of 409. As long as I do a good job, people use me until something else comes along. That's what the longevity is: being consistent. You don't have to be flashy or great, but there's a greatness in even being consistent. That's what has helped me maintain as long as I have maintained. I've seen drummers who have so many licks, and who play more in a drum check than I play all year. I do what I do, and I get some of those ideas sometimes. But the important thing is what will make this record sell and what will make this record feel good.

**RF:** Can you think of other favorite sessions?

**JK:** Terri Gibbs. We did "Somebody's Knockin'." That was my first real big single. I guess that was special, even though I had played number ones in between the time I played that first Mel Tillis number one and Terri Gibbs. It was all of us coming in there—strangers—and the magic of that: the feel, the atmosphere, the attitude,

the new artist. She was a bar singer in Georgia, and here she was recording. That was really great.

**RF:** Other people might come in with the attitude of, "She's only a new artist. She's not Mel Tillis, or George Strait, so I don't have to put my best foot forward. Maybe no one will ever even hear it."

**JK:** I've never had that attitude. I've had days when my attitude hasn't been great, but basically, I want to please these people. I know you are hired to play the sessions and you get x amount of dollars, but I think lots of times we're playing for ourselves, too. It's, "I want to do a good job. I want to be part of this tune." That was exciting for me, because that was one of the first artists I worked with where we took a newcomer up the ladder with phenomenal success for that first year or two.

Other sessions that are memorable for me are the sessions that are firsts, like doing my first national jingle. I did some "Me And My RC" commercials, which I heard on TV. Other firsts, like that film music or that big band album with Buddy Emmons, are great. I guess it's those kinds of things. It's exciting the first time I work with an artist who all my friends have played with, like Jerry Reed. Those kinds of things are special. And getting those moments where you did something you've never done before, and somebody comes up to you and says, "Man, you really played that great. I didn't know you could play that way. You sound like you've been doing that for 20 years," is really great.

**RF:** Do you find that this is a fairly thankless job, though—that you don't really get that much feedback from people?

**JK:** Sometimes. We're studio players, and we're supposed to be the best—perfect.

**RF:** So they expect it and might not acknowledge how good you are.

**JK:** Sometimes I want to back off. I'd like to just go away for a while. I've dealt with a lot of good artists who I have thought were really nice people and who have treated the musicians wonderfully. It's not usually the top artists who treat you bad. It's usually the ones who aren't of the superstar status who might feel they have to prove something. They're the ones who give you a lot of trouble sometimes. Then sometimes it's real sad, because you'll go

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in and cut a record with somebody, it'll be a number-one record, that person will become successful, and then next time you do that artist's album, he or she will have changed because that person has become a "star." That's sad. You're a part of that individual's career, and it's sad to watch. But that's part of the reality of the studio situation that people need to know. It's not a glamorous thing, and you'd better treat it like a business and be prepared for a lot of heartbreaks. You can make a decent living, and if you're inclined to work under pressure with ups and downs, you can have a wonderful career. For me, that's what I want to do. I enjoy the fact that all I have to do is go in there for three hours. I like to create a song, play on it, hopefully watch it go up the charts, and I don't have to play it six nights a week on the road.

**RF:** Do you miss live playing at all?

**JK:** I've got a family, so the studio thing for me is really great. I'm a Monday-through-Friday guy. I give it all I can Monday through Friday. Saturday I work in the yard. Sunday we're pretty involved in the church and it's a family thing, so I don't care to be gone on the weekends. If I were part of a James Taylor thing or something, maybe then. I might do some road work eventually, not for the money, but on a limited basis. I do love to play live. I went out and played with Ricky Skaggs a couple of years ago when his drummer at the time, George Grantham, broke his hand. I really enjoyed that. Ricky asked me to go out because I played on some of the albums, so I was the logical choice. I'd heard all these stories about, "If you're in the studio, you can't play live." I wanted to see if I could go out and do it, and I did. I trashed two snare heads in two shows, but I heard the tape back and it sounded as good as the album, so I felt real good. I had one rehearsal and I had to make all my charts, so while the rest of the band was out by the swimming pool, I was in my room because I was responsible for counting off the tempo. That was a lot of pressure because Ricky is a very particular person, but I did a good job.

**RF:** As you mentioned, people have lots of preconceptions about studio players, like they can't play live, they're too rigid, or they're boring. There's a lot of negativity

surrounding a very important job. Toto has certainly gotten its undue share.

**JK:** Oh yeah, and they're wonderful players. We just have to be people who are gifted at working under certain conditions.

**RF:** But as Porcaro once said, look at the pressure a Paul McCartney puts on someone. That's nothing to sneeze at.

**JK:** People need to know that it *is* pressure. I didn't know how much pressure it was. In fact, at one time, I can remember thinking while I was working in Printer's Alley, "Gee, if I could just get my foot in the door and get a couple of sessions a week, that would be great." So I got my foot in the door and I got my two sessions a week, but once I got in there, the demands were incredible. I'm not talking about just the demands by the people you work for, but also the pressure of knowing that you have other people wanting your job. And the music business—thank you for giving me a good living, but you're very fickle. I'm here today and gone tomorrow. I hate the *business*, but I love making records and being part of working with some of the people I work with. I think, "Man, I'm from South Dakota, and I'm playing with these people. This is wonderful! I never expected this." I'm deserving of it now, because I've paid my dues.

When I really enjoy that the most is when I get away from Nashville on a vacation or something, and happen to turn on the country station just to listen. I'll know that's my friend playing steel guitar and I'll think, "Boy, he really does play good." When we're here doing it all that time, we take each other for granted or we're always in a hurry. I think studio players are a special breed. It's something more than just the playing because I think I'm an example of it. There are a lot of fantastic players who do more than I do, but there's something about me and the other people who do it that's different. I certainly don't want anyone to think that's cocky, but that's almost something I can't put into words.

**RF:** When we began this conversation, you mentioned the frustrations of not being able to accomplish some goals. What are those goals?

**JK:** I want to grow as a player. I'm a pretty frustrated player. Maybe it's the Barbra

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Streisand syndrome. She says she never wants to listen to any of the records she's done. I listen to her records thinking, "Wow, how does she do that?" I hear something I've played on, and I'm glad I played on it, and it sounds really good, but I keep thinking, "I want to do this. I want to be like this." It's my own little hang-up, but it's a hang-up that drives me nuts. I want to do better, and I feel that I need to do better. Maybe it's for my own satisfaction more than anything else.

**RF:** You seem to be the kind of person who will never be satisfied, though.

**JK:** You're right. It's sad.

**RF:** Not really, because it's what keeps you going and motivates you.

**JK:** And sometimes it drives me crazy. But yes, that's the positive side I want to lean on.

**RF:** Sometimes there are people who need that to really give them that motivation.

**JK:** I need that because I've been in the business long enough now that it would be easy for me to be burned out. The thing that stops that is something inside me. I won't call it an obsession, because it used to be and that was bad. I used to think that my happiness depended entirely upon how many sessions I did, how much money I made this week, etc. The Lord turned that around. I was literally going nuts. I was so depressed and frustrated all the time that I couldn't enjoy anything. God really helped me do that. I want to give Him the credit for that, because He's a very important part of my life. Sometimes I don't exemplify it in my frustrations, but He really helped me deal with the studio thing.

The studio thing is really a strange breed of cat. I've gotten over it being an obsession. I now say, "Okay, I'm doing the best I can, and I'm not sitting there waiting for the phone to ring." I'll get up at 8:00 in the morning, and I'll do a 30-minute workout before I do a 10:00, a 2:00, and a 6:00. I keep saying, "Jerry, you can do better.

You owe it to yourself. He's given you this talent." But now it's just my career. Monday through Friday, I'll go as hard as I can, but on the weekend, I'm going to be with my family, so it's rounding me out a little bit. It was a terrible obsession. When I'm down, I like to think, "You really are blessed to be able to do something that a lot of people would like to do." Regardless of whether I make the best money, it's a unique thing. When I play on a track and it

really feels good and I've done a good job, that is a wonderful feeling. That's what it is all about. Especially if I've been fortunate enough to work with a producer who is really good, the song is good, the artist is glad I'm there, and I feel that kind of family thing, then it's a wonderful feeling. That's what it's all about. I need the money, it's my career, and it's a job, but that's the special part of it. Those moments are what I strive for.

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# Teaching By Intimidation

Imagine how you would feel if, on your first drum lesson with a new teacher, the teacher said, "Can't you do anything right?" or "You don't even know how to hold a pair of drumsticks!" or how about, "You mean your last teacher told you that you were good? You are terrible!" Each of these comments has been made to several of my students by former teachers. What is surprising is that the students in question are extremely talented. For example, I have one student who is 15 years old and is an exceptional drumset player. His friends in school had heard him play in a local rock group. They all told the percussion coach at the high school that this young guy was hot. They told the coach, "This guy will blow you away!"

Apparently, this so-called percussion coach felt threatened by these comments. I think he decided to teach this young person a lesson—to "put him in his place." (Naturally, this was supposed to be for the good of the student.) At any rate, the per-

cussion coach made life so miserable that the young man's parents had him transferred from the band to another class. This is sad, because it deprived the student of the experience of playing in a school band. (It is good, however, that the parents recognized that the percussion coach was out of line.)

I have another student who is only 13 years old and has great natural ability. When I gave him his first lesson, I was startled at how accomplished he was on the drumset. During the lesson, he told me about some earlier experiences with drum teachers. For example, one teacher had told him, "You have so many bad habits that I'll have to start you all over from the very beginning."

I will agree that this talented 13-year-old needed to improve in some areas. He must have realized this as well, because he *was* taking lessons. However, to "start over" would have been ridiculous. We just needed to work on the areas that needed improvement.

When I was much younger, I had the following experience: A drum teacher (who shall remain nameless) said to me, "Do it this way!" I said, "Why? I don't understand." He replied, "Look, I am the teacher. I know what is right. I don't have time to explain everything; just do it!" At this point I said, "If I don't understand, how can I practice effectively?" The teacher finally relented and explained what he wanted me to do. I understood the lesson, and we got along very well after that.

Ed Shaughnessy and I are old friends. I agree with Ed's approach, which is to be *positive*. Ed teaches by example, not by ridicule or intimidation. He will simply play for the student, show him or her how to approach the lesson, and then encourage the student to play it—very positive and very logical.

One of my students told me that he was taking a lesson when the teacher began yelling at him. I asked, "Why was he yelling?" He replied, "Well, I guess because I couldn't play this one part of the lesson. I was having trouble with it." "How did you feel after the teacher yelled at you? Did it help?" I asked. "Are you kidding?" he said. "I was so nervous afterwards that I couldn't even think. I don't even remember the rest of the lesson." I guess this is a case of the teacher taking out his frustration on the student. Instead of yelling, he should have been thinking of a different approach that might have been more effec-

tive at communicating the lesson to the student.

Dave Garibaldi once told me that he had a student who had been studying at a well-known college. The student was so nervous that he could barely stop shaking, much less play anything. Dave said it took him about 35 minutes just to get the student to relax. Dave also said that the student played very well after he calmed down. He later explained to Dave that his previous teacher was so critical and so harsh in his comments that he could no longer play in front of the teacher. Dave told him, "Relax! We all make mistakes. That's one of the reasons for taking lessons. Let's just play some music."

One very accomplished young drummer that I know told me of the following experience: He took a lesson from a teacher who asked him to play something on the drumset. He played some groovy funk patterns, after which the teacher said, "Your approach is all wrong. You're not generating the right kind of energy." Respectfully, the young man said, "Perhaps you could give me an example." The teacher replied, "I don't play drums. I just teach drums." Somewhat in disbelief, the student asked, "How do you *teach* if you don't *play*?" The teacher said, "I watch you, and I tell you what you are doing wrong." My young friend asked, "Do you ever tell people what they are doing *right*, or do you even *know* what's right?" At this point, he packed his stick bag. As he was leaving, he said, "I'm not paying for this. This is a joke."

I agree with my friend Joe Morello, who recently said in *MD*, "If you can't do it, how can you *teach* it?" Joe and I have discussed that idea at length. He didn't mean that the teacher had to play *everything*; he meant that the teacher should have *some* sort of professional playing experience.

Mousey Alexander tells a story about a time when he was doing quite well. He was touring with a name big band, recording with Johnny Smith and Stan Getz (to name a few), and playing some TV shows. He thought, "Well, here I am on the West Coast for several weeks. Maybe I should take a few lessons while I can." The teacher Mousey approached is quite well-known, although he hasn't played in public in a great many years. He told Mousey, "You're holding the sticks all wrong. We'll have to start at the beginning and have you *relearn everything*." Mousey said, "Look, with all due respect, I just

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by Roy Burns

can't *do* that. I'm working, and I have too many responsibilities to start all over."

So that you don't misunderstand me, let me say that there are many dedicated and qualified teachers. Most of the teachers I studied with I now consider to be valued friends. I believe in teaching, and I believe good teachers deserve all the respect in the world. However, students also deserve respect. There is rarely, if ever, a time when ridicule, intimidation, or humiliation will benefit the student. Overly harsh, sarcastic, or demeaning criticism is never helpful.

There are many great musicians who readily admit that they cannot teach. Teaching takes a certain type of personality—one that is positive and encouraging. It requires patience, understanding, and an enjoyment in seeing others develop. A teacher must have the ability to create a friendly atmosphere in which learning becomes effortless and fun. He or she must convey an enthusiasm for drumming and music. In short, if the teacher doesn't enjoy teaching, the student most likely will not enjoy the lessons.

If you take several lessons from a teacher and you feel as if you are not learning, try another teacher. If the teacher is always looking at his or her watch, look for someone else. Remember, too, in all fairness, that some personalities just don't hit it off. You and a particular teacher just may not be on the same wavelength. Look for someone with whom you can feel comfortable. You can't learn if you and your teacher dislike each other. When I studied with Jim Chapin, we were friends. I used to look forward not only to the lessons, but also to the chance to "hang out." He took me along on a few jobs so that I could learn about the business. Jim and I are close friends to this day.

Teachers who tend to teach through fear are usually very insecure about themselves. People who have a sense of who they are and what they know are usually more at ease with themselves. This naturally tends to make those around them feel more at ease.

The reason we all play the drums is because it is fun. Studying should be fun, too. Remember, there are a lot of good teachers who are both qualified players *and* positive personalities. If you want your studying to be both rewarding and fun, seek those teachers out. They will be happy to see you.



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# Dealing With House Equipment

by Rick Van Horn

As you progress in your club drumming career and encounter a wider and wider variety of working situations, it's not unlikely that you'll come up against an opportunity—or a requirement—to use a house drumkit. How you approach the use of that kit—and how you prepare yourself—can make the difference between a successful and enjoyable gig and a totally miserable experience.

I want to start by differentiating between using another drummer's kit—perhaps on an off-night gig where a steady band plays the regular nights—and using a "house kit." When playing on another drummer's kit, you generally make any and all arrangements as to how much of the kit you'll use, what can be removed or readjusted, etc., directly with the regular drummer. (Simon Goodwin offered some excellent advice on this subject in his *Jobbing Drummer* column, "The Other Guy's Set," in the September, '83 issue of *MD*.) Management usually doesn't get involved in these arrangements.

On the other hand, I define a "house drumkit" as one that the club itself has provided for any and all drummers to use on a regular basis. In some cases, the use of the house kit is optional; the club makes it available should the drummer wish to use it. In other cases, the use of the house kit is mandatory. If you are given the option, there are pros and cons to be considered before you make a decision. If you *aren't* given the option, there are ways to make the use of house equipment more comfort-

able and acceptable. Let's examine some various ways to approach each situation.

## Optional Use

Some clubs offer a house kit as a convenience to incoming drummers. (These clubs generally have a house P.A. system, and not infrequently have amplifiers for the other instruments as well.) Obviously, a house drumkit is convenient—especially if you're traveling—since you don't have to lug your kit in and set it up. In fact, if your entire tour or out-and-back series of gigs can be booked in clubs with house kits, you don't even have to take a kit on the road with you. This can make your traveling arrangements much simpler. The negative side to all this convenience is that, if you don't bring a kit with you, you are *totally at the mercy* of whatever equipment is provided in each club.

Many drummers feel that the worst part of using house equipment is the unfamiliarity; nobody likes unpleasant surprises. One is comfortable with one's own set, and no other set—no matter what the quality—can quite provide that level of comfort. I can't argue with that; all I can say is that you have to balance the value of that familiarity against the convenience offered by the house kit and make your decision accordingly.

If you do decide to use the house kit, the key to doing so successfully is finding out as much as you can about it in advance. If the club is in town, get over there a few days before your engagement starts, and see what the kit is like. If you can listen to someone else playing on it, that would be better; if you can get the chance to play on it yourself, that's better yet. You need to know how well the kit suits you physically, how the hardware adjusts, how the drums are tuned (heads, muffling, etc.), and generally all the details that will tell you whether or not you can perform to your own satisfaction on the kit.

Even though it may not seem very "artistic" to say so, the actual *sound* of the kit can be fairly low on your list of priorities. After all, tuning can generally be adjusted or adapted. More important is whether or not the drum throne or snare stand will raise or lower to a comfortable position for you, or whether the tom-tom holders are solid—rather than weak or stripped so that the toms will only hang at one angle. You need to know whether the cymbal stands can be positioned in such a way as to put the cymbals where you want

them (and whether the stands will support your cymbals if you're bringing in your own). Make sure that the legs on all the drums are secure; there's nothing much worse than playing on a bass drum that slides—or collapses to one side—due to a faulty leg holder.

Many drummers feel secure about working on a house kit, as long as they are able to make a few changes and/or bring in some of their own equipment. You'll need to discuss this with management to determine their policy regarding such changes. For example, if you can't live with the heads on the kit, can you replace them? If so, who pays for the heads? (If the club does, the heads stay on the kit; if you do, you take them with you when you leave.) What about replacing some items on the kit with your own? Many traveling drummers carry their own snare, cymbals, and pedal, so most clubs are used to that and don't object. But if you want to start dismantling the kit piecemeal and replacing parts of it with pieces from your own, the management may simply prefer that you go ahead and bring in your whole kit.

If you can't physically examine the kit before you arrive at the club to play, you *must* make it a point to call ahead and talk to someone who can give you as much information about it as possible. Management personnel may or may not be qualified to tell you about it; it will be up to you to ask your questions as simply as possible so as to get the kind of information you need. An alternative method is to call ahead while the band currently on the gig is still performing and talk to that band's drummer. This might take a bit of scheduling, but it's certainly likely to get you more accurate and useful information.

The potential for getting a good drum sound easily should be something that you consider before you decide whether or not to use a house kit. Assuming that the house has a sound system and mikes up the kit, it's logical to assume that the house sound tech will have worked with the kit and will be able to offer the best possible mix from it. This is a very positive consideration. The other side of this coin, however, is the possibility that the drum sound that the technician likes and the drum sound that you like may be very *different* sounds. The house kit may be tuned with a lot of muffling for miking purposes, while you prefer an open, unmuffled sound (or vice versa). If you and the sound tech can reach a compromise in order to achieve a sound you

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can both work with, then you'll be in good shape. If the sound tech (or house manager) is adamant about not changing the sound of the house kit, you may wish to bring in your own kit as an alternative.

### Mandatory Use

Clubs that make the use of house equipment mandatory are usually those that employ more than one band per night. For example, many cities feature "showcase" clubs that present several bands each evening. (It's rare, however, that you'd get a steady booking in such a club; you'd more likely be in for one night or perhaps one weekend.) In "showcase" clubs, the use of a house kit speeds up the changeover from

band to band tremendously. (Unfortunately, if you are the second or third drummer in line on a kit on a given night, you're faced with the problem of not having enough time to readjust the kit to make it comfortable for yourself. You're also likely to have little time to re-tune the drums to achieve "your sound.")

I have played steady gigs in extended-hours clubs where the first band played a regular 9:00 P.M.-to-2:00 A.M. schedule, and the after-hours band played from 2:00 A.M. to 7:00 A.M. There was no time for a changeover of equipment, so a house drumkit was used. (In one particular case, the club rotated the schedule: One band played early on Friday and late on Satur-

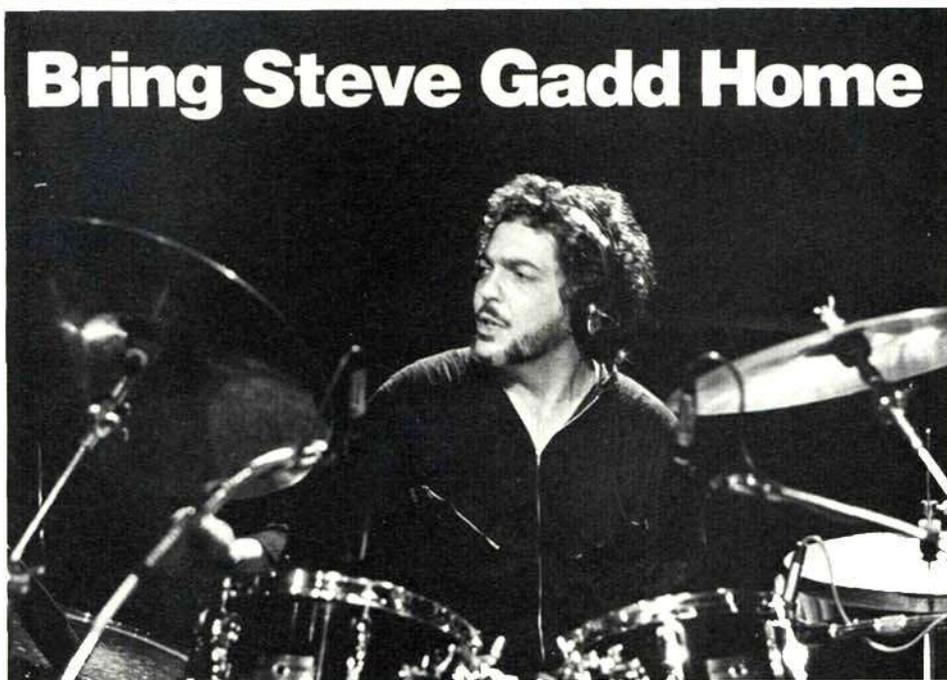
day. Equipment setups and breakdowns would have created a scheduling nightmare for all concerned, so the club simply had a complete set of band equipment on stage and left it in place all the time.)

It's also possible that you might get a steady booking in a lounge in Las Vegas, Atlantic City, Reno, etc. You're likely to be one of several bands using the same stage—and the same equipment—over the course of an entire day and night. In this type of situation, the management is interested in keeping the entertainment going constantly. This means that the equipment must be miked up the same way at all times, so that one or two sound technicians can have a fair chance at running the sound for a variety of acts.

Your main concern in a mandatory-use situation is practical, rather than musical. The decision of whether or not to use the house kit has been made for you, so now you *must* be concerned with making yourself as comfortable as possible, so that you can do the best possible job with what you've got. Again, discuss with management what items can be replaced on the set. You may be able to use your own cymbals, but only if you don't have to move the existing cymbal stands. You may be able to use your own snare, provided it doesn't create a problem for the sound technician by being too different from the snare the board is set for. I've never heard of anyone objecting to a drummer using his or her own pedal, but be prepared for the fact that the sound tech might not like the sound your beater produces.

(Don't get the idea that I think all sound technicians are uncooperative and demanding. Most are quite the opposite, and the *really* good ones are as concerned with getting a good sound as you are. But there are those who are stubborn about the sound *they* want to hear from the drums—regardless of who the drummer is or what the group's style might be. They are more concerned with controlling the volume and tone of the kit for the benefit of the room's acoustics than they are about the creative quality of the music. There's not much you can do about this, since they are the ones "pushing the buttons." Your best bet is to be as diplomatic as you can, obtain whatever concessions they might grudgingly allow you, and look forward to the next gig.)

All of the suggestions I made earlier about finding out about the kit ahead of time go double in a mandatory-use situation. Your basic philosophy here should be "forewarned is forearmed." Keeping an open mind, a sense of humor, and a cooperative attitude will also help to make the best of a given situation. And who knows—you may get to a club and discover that the house kit is the one you've always dreamed of playing! Stranger things have happened.



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# CB- Ra Sys

CB-700 has joined the growing number of companies offering rack-type mounting configurations for drumkits. This com-

pany is currently marketing two completely different systems: the *Gibraltar Spanner System* and the *Power Rack*.

### Power Rack

The *Power Rack* is made of lightweight steel tubing, and is designed along the lines of the Simmons or Ultimate Support Systems *Rack*. The basic *PR400 Power Rack* is in three sections: a crossbar, plus two side base pieces. Each side piece has a right angle formed at its base for rear floor bracing, as well as one diagonal brace rod that connects up to the crossbar. The side base pieces have large, non-skid rubber feet, and the crossbar affords 40" of length.

The crossbar attaches to the side pieces to form the complete unit. This tube is height-adjustable when connected. (Note, however, that closed-ended "T" connectors are used to connect the crossbar to the upright side pieces. This means that the full width of the crossbar must be used; the side pieces cannot be brought closer together on the bar.) All adjustments are accomplished by large black polycarbonate joint clamps fitted with large hand-sized knobs. (I've been told that CB-700 will be changing these clamps to aluminum.) The crossbar holds your assorted tom arms, cymbal holders, mic' holders, synth pads, etc., by means of prism-type multi-clamps (with memory locks). One end of the clamp fits onto the *Power Rack* tubing; the other end clamps around your holder arm. CB-700 has all the miscellaneous holders available: cymbal boom arms, straight cymbal arms, L-shaped and 7/8" tubular tom arms, and mic' booms. These are all

angle-adjustable, generally via concealed ratchets. The multi-clamps also fit most other brands of drum equipment.

If you need to mount things on your left or right, a *Power Rack* side extension is available, which is a single base piece plus a 42" crossbar. The other end of the extension crossbar clamps onto your basic *Power Rack* side piece and can be height-adjusted. The side extension comes with one multi-clamp; if you need more, they're available separately at \$14.50 each.

I set up the *Power Rack* with side extensions to accommodate my own drumkit and found that it held everything quite securely. I would have liked an adjustable-angle connection for the side extensions to close the setup in a bit more. As it is, the *Power Rack* will only enclose single bass drum setups; I wonder if longer cross tubes are available to extend it. With the *Power Rack*, only my bass drum, snare drum, and floor tom sat on the floor; everything else (toms, pads, cymbals, and remote hi-hat) was upon the *Rack*.

CB-700 has always been known for its budget-mindedness, and the *Power Rack* is no exception. The basic *PR400* with four multi-clamps retails at \$139.50; the *PR500*, which includes two tom arms and two cymbal booms, retails at \$219.50. The *PR100* side extensions retail for \$69.50 each. And they tell me that there is now an upper *Power Rack* section, for "flying" your cymbals (and anything else you may want). Given its price, looks, and quality, the CB-700 *Power Rack* is strong competition for the other rack systems on the market.

Photo by: Mark T. Parsons

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## Spanner System

If you're looking for a really wild and modern-looking setup, CB-700's *Spanner System* just might do the job. Somewhat similar in concept to the *Collarlock* system (MD: June '85), the *Spanner* is basically constructed of lengths of chrome steel tubing connected with multi-clamps, using your existing cymbal stands as base pieces. You're limited only by your imagination as far as what your own custom-built *Spanner System* can be.

Tubing lengths of 24", 36", and 40" are available, as are angled multi-clamps and extension clamps. By utilizing your own stands, you can span tubing between them, and then mount drums, cymbals, pads, hand percussion, mic's, remote hi-hats—anything! I must advise that you use sturdy (preferably double-braced, wide-stance) stands as your anchors. If you don't, the whole thing is liable to fall right over from the weight and angles you've set. As with the *Power Rack*, there is a large range of hardware to use with the *Spanner*.

The company allowed me to go totally crazy with a large box of *Spanner* tubes, clamps, etc., and I managed to build up a really workable configuration. I was also able to produce my own "Dream Product"—a baseless snare stand—by using a short tube mounted off a cymbal stand tier, extending towards my seat. I fitted a multi-clamp onto the open end of the tube, which held the top basket section of a snare stand. The drum was stable, and I now had room for a comfortable combination of pedals on the floor. Experimentation is the key with the *Spanner*.



All pieces necessary to create your own *Spanner* are sold separately, but CB-700 does have three complete package systems—available with one single bar each—ranging from \$75.50 to \$99.50. The *Ultra Spanner*, at \$259.50, incorporates all three

tubings with ten multi-clamps for a three-sided system (as shown in the photo). The CB-700 *Spanner* affords complete versatility for your drum setup at a reasonable price.



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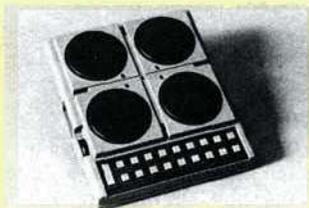
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## SIMMONS SPM8:2 PROGRAMMABLE MIXER

New from Simmons is the *SPM8:2*, a full-function, eight-channel stereo mixer. By incorporating a powerful microprocessor to control the functions of the mixer, the unit is capable of storing up to 64 different mixes—combinations of level, EQ, panning, and effects send settings from all eight channels. These mixes—or patches—can be recalled via MIDI from the musician's keyboard or electronic percussion setup. Hence,

it becomes possible to have a totally separate mix for each new synth patch. Being a computer-controlled device, it is not necessary to duplicate the controls for each of the eight input channels. As a result, the *SPM8:2* is extremely compact and fits neatly into an effects rack. For additional details, contact your Simmons dealer, or write Simmons Group Centre, Inc., 23917 Craftsman Road, Calabasas, CA 91302.

## SYNSONICS PRO MODEL AND FOOT PEDAL



The recently introduced Synsonics *Pro-Model 5350* has all the features of the regular Synsonics drums, plus the addition of enhanced memory capability that also maintains and protects the drummer's created patterns stored in the memory—even though the unit is turned off. Also present in the new model are improved stick response and increased tempo range (now up to 240 bpm). The unit is offered in a new steel-



gray color, with red trim.

Also new from Synsonics is a double foot pedal, *Model 5289*, which allows the bass drum and hi-hat effects to be controlled with the foot. The new device is compatible with any model Synsonics drum, including the new *Pro-Model 5350*. For further information on any Synsonics products, write Synsonics, P.O. Box 358, Ridge-land, SC 29936.

## BARCUS-BERRY SENSING KITS

Barcus-Berry, Inc. recently introduced a line of sampling kits that make available a vast new array of sounds useful to the creative musician. The kits feature contact-type transducers that can be quickly and easily applied to, and removed from, almost any surface. These transducers make it possible to "hear" and sample a wide variety of sounds not obtainable with conventional microphones. Virtually any surface which can be "struck"

or "thumped" can now become a potential source for new and musically useful sounds. Numerous mechanical devices—from kitchen food processors to clothes dryers and automobile engines—can now provide a wealth of untapped possibilities. Several kits are available, for dry or ambient effects. For more information, contact Tony Brewer at Barcus-Berry, Inc., 5381 Production Drive, Huntington Beach, CA 92649, (714)898-9211.

## KLONE TRIGGER SYSTEM



To meet the demands of today's drummers who want to achieve electronic drum sounds without sacrificing the great sound and feel of their acoustic drums, Paul Real Sales recently introduced the new Klone Trigger System. The system utilizes lightweight, self-adhesive Drum Sensors that are applied directly to the acoustic drum-head. These Sensors are specially designed for accurate, dynamic electronic drum tracking without the need for additional trigger/interface units. In addition, the pickups are also high-impedance transducer microphones that can be effectively used for acoustic drum sound reinforcement.

Klone's sound generator is an ideal analog drum synthe-

sizer—for creating contemporary, studio drum sounds in conjunction with acoustic drums and digital drum machines. The full-function brain features five independent, assignable channels with individual adjustments for pitch, bend, sweep, decay, attack, tone, noise, and output levels. There are separate channel inputs and outputs, a head- phone/mix output with master volume control, trigger buttons, LEDs, and a unique variable-slapback echo effect on-board. For more information on the Klone Trigger System, contact Paul Real Sales at 745 Oak Knoll Circle, Pasadena, CA 91106, or call (818) 792-6847.

## NEW REMO CATALOG

Remo, Inc. has recently released a new full-color catalog outlining its entire line of drumheads. The most extensive array of drumheads in the company's 30-year history, the catalog features complete listings for the sizes and types of heads available in each of Remo's many head models. Marching heads, timpani heads, bongo,

and even banjo heads are included, as are Remo's complete *PTS* line and the *Muffl's* muffling products. Also featured are dozens of photos of noted Remo endorsing artists. For further information, contact Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer Street, North Hollywood, CA 91605, or call (818) 983-2600.



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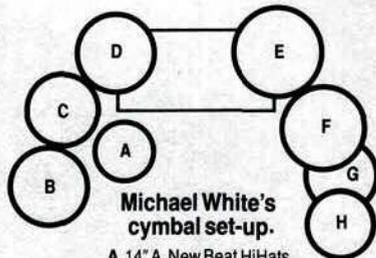


Michael White is one of the most sought-after drummers in contemporary R&B. His unmistakable groove is currently the backbone for one of the world's most successful bands, Maze, featuring Frankie Beverly.

His career has included recordings and tours with artists such as Patrice Rushen, Curtis Mayfield, David Sanborn, The Pointer Sisters, Rickie Lee Jones, and Luther Vandross.

When he's not on the road with Maze, he can be found in the studios of Los Angeles where his consummate professionalism and impeccable feel are actively sought for jingles and commercials.

While a student at the American Conservatory of Music, Michael developed his skill as an educator. He performs master classes for the Los Angeles Percussion Institute of Technology, whenever his packed schedule allows.



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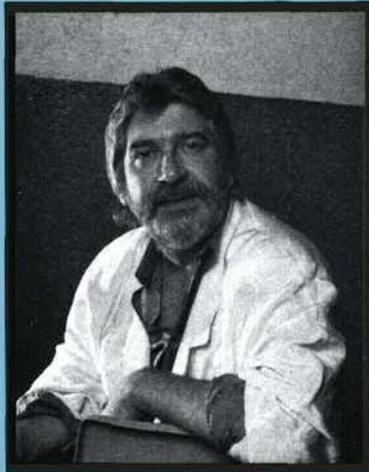


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Gregg Bissonette has played Zildjian cymbals for as long as he remembers. So when we introduced the Z Series, he didn't hesitate to try them. "For me, it's always been Zildjians and nothing else. I've checked out the others, but nothing comes close. You won't break a Z. It's very heavy duty, but it's also very musical, with a lot of warmth and texture. I think you'll love Z's."

Castillo agrees, "They're the best. It's a simple fact of life. Z's open up the door to new sounds."

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