



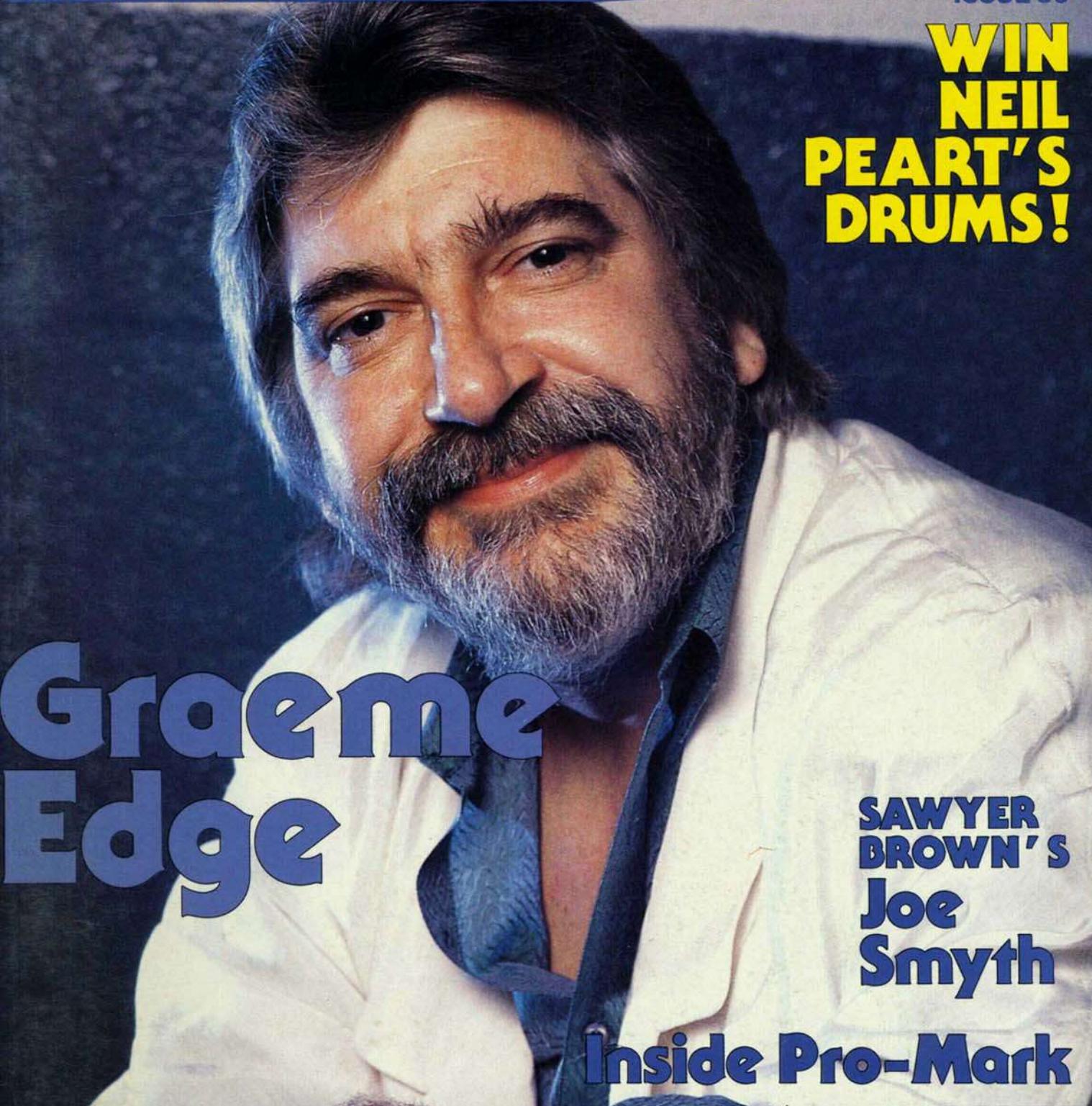
# MODERN DRUMMER®

The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers

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MARCH 1987  
ISSUE 89

WIN  
NEIL  
PEART'S  
DRUMS!



A large, close-up black and white photograph of Neil Peart, the drummer for Rush. He has long, dark hair and a full, well-groomed beard and mustache. He is looking slightly off-camera with a gentle smile.

Graeme  
Edge

SAWYER  
BROWN'S  
Joe  
Smyth

Inside Pro-Mark

Plus: Blues Drummers: Part 2 • Simmons MTM Interface  
Mitch Mitchell Rock Chart  
'87 READERS POLL BALLOT

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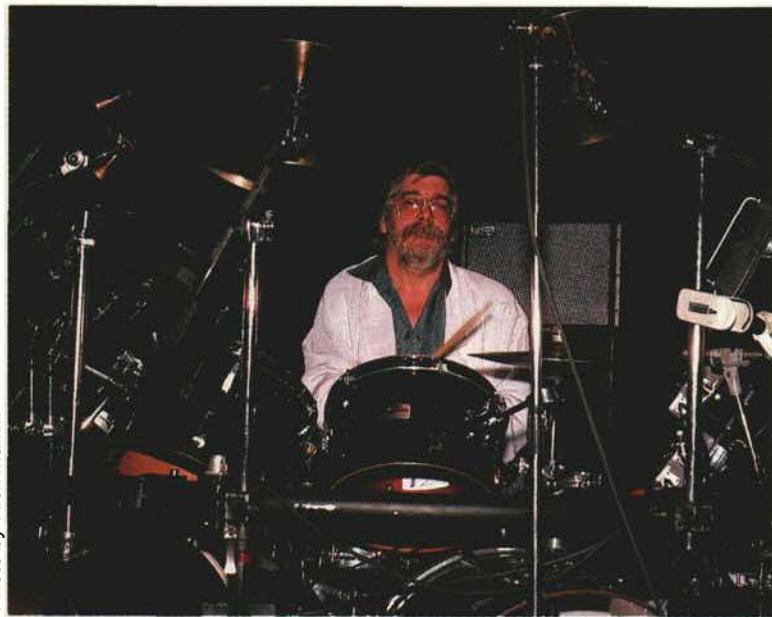
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## Features

Cover Photo by Rick Malkin

Photo by Rick Malkin



### GRAEME EDGE

The drummer for the Moody Blues talks about that group's temporary breakup, his interim solo projects, and the Moody Blues' eventual reunion. Graeme also discusses his songwriting and his mixture of traditional acoustic equipment with state-of-the-art electronics.

by Robyn Flans ..... 16

### BLUES DRUMMERS: PART 2

MD visits blues legends S.P. Leary and Fred Below, as well as "new blues" drummers Chris Layton of Stevie Ray Vaughan's band Double Trouble, Jimmy Johnson's Fred Grady, and Robert Cray's David Olson.

by Robert Santelli ..... 22

### JOE SMYTH

Although he has a strong background in classical percussion, Joe Smyth chose to make his living as a drummer in Nashville. This decision paid off when the country/rock band he had joined, Sawyer Brown, won the *Star Search* competition.

by William F. Miller ..... 26

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# EDITOR'S OVERVIEW



## Typically MD

Recently, *MD* again assigned an outside research firm to mail out questionnaires to a random selection of subscribers and tabulate the results. The purpose of the survey was to gather information for *MD* editors and advertisers. In essence, it enables us to obtain a clear profile of the typical *MD* reader. The results are now in and compiled into an extensive report. Here's a condensed look at the typical *MD* reader.

First, our average reader is a single male somewhere between the age of 20 and 35. He has a regular, full-time position in a professional field, earning an income of \$25,000 to \$40,000 a year. Our fellow has been reading *Modern Drummer* three to four years, and spends more than four hours reading it over a period of six days a month. He may loan his copy to one or two others; however, he prefers to save it for future reference.

Mr. Typical claims that he oftentimes orders or inquires about merchandise that appears in the advertising pages of *MD*. He reports that the magazine has helped him decide *what* equipment to buy and even *where* to purchase it. And though the final decision to purchase equipment was first influenced by "a live demo" and second by "a friend's recommendation," a favorable *MD* product review and advertising in the magazine appeared in third and fourth places, respectively. Our drummer also spends \$100 to \$200 per year on the maintenance of his equipment and plans to move into the area of electronics within the next 12 months.

Our average reader performs on a semiprofessional basis, though an almost equal percentage do so at the professional level. His primary interest is drumset, though he's apt to show an interest in

timpani as well. He's been drumming between six to nine years and has an amateur-level interest in keyboard instruments. However, he spends less than two hours per week with his secondary instrument. And when questioned on performance likes and dislikes, we found our reader heavily into rock, jazz, heavy metal, and R&B—in that exact order.

In regard to our reader's feelings towards *MD*, survey results showed that our drummer enjoys reading product reviews, interviews, industry news, transcriptions, and column departments, again in that order. He prefers to read about rock drummers first, followed by jazz, studio, fusion, big band, and country & western. And as expected, our typical reader is interested in a wide range of subjects: everything from drum tuning, playing tips, and product comparisons, to triggering, drum repair, and the business end of music.

Our reader also approves of our balance of artists interviewed, and rates us in the good to excellent range on quality of writing, color photography, covers, *Sound Supplements*, and overall editorial product. He expresses a positive reaction to our ratio of editorial to advertising content in each issue and finds the musical examples in the magazine quite useful. And when asked to rate his favorite *MD* columns, the top five were *Ask A Pro*, *Product Close-Up*, *Just Drums*, *Rock Charts*, and *Concepts*.

So there you have it. Once again, the information gathered from this report will play an important role in helping the editors to continue publishing the *best* magazine possible. My thanks to everyone who participated. We'll all benefit from it in the future.

RS

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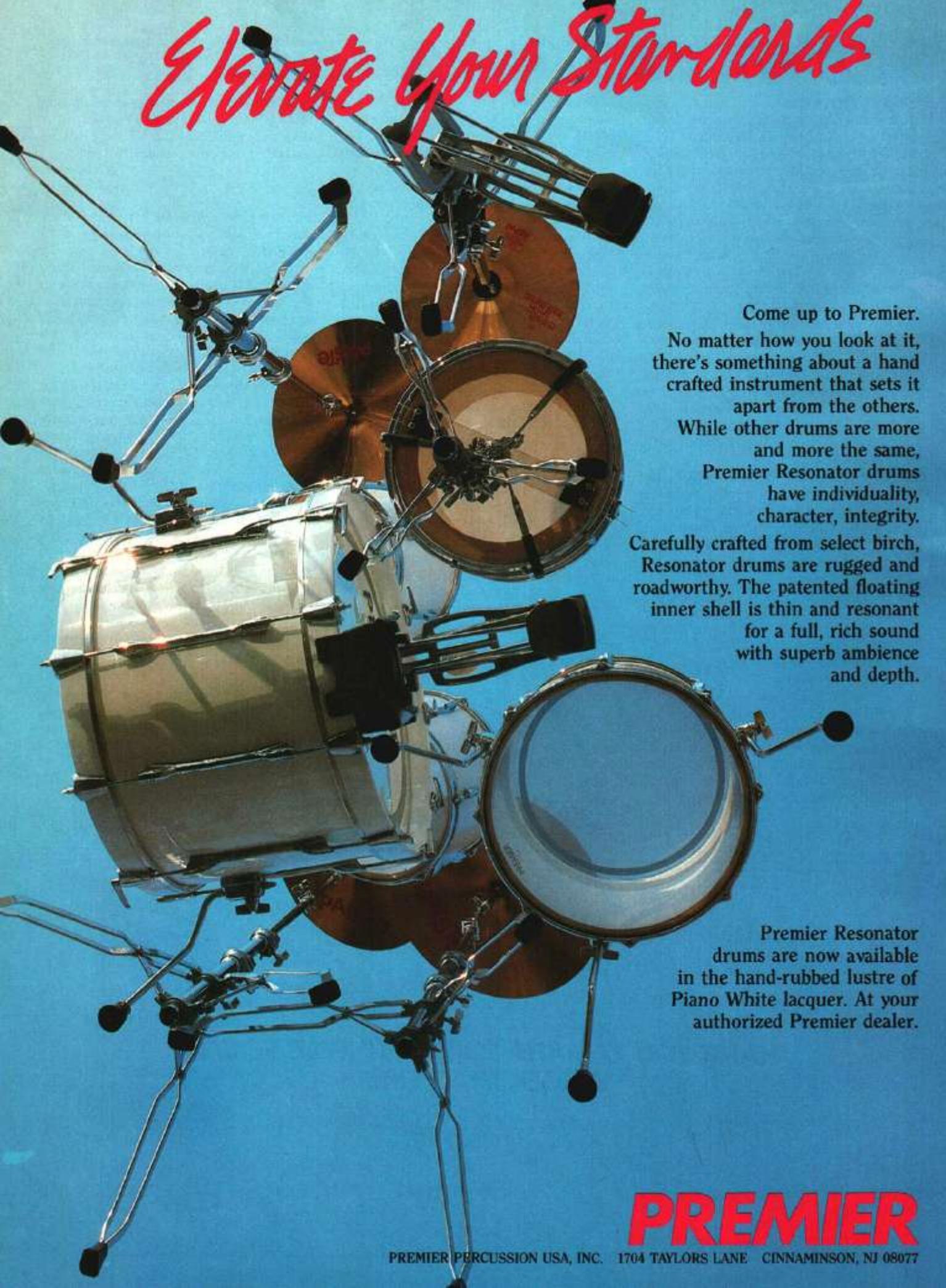
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# READERS' PLATFORM

## SIMON PHILLIPS

I am writing to congratulate you on an outstanding cover story for December, 1986. Simon Phillips was truly a great choice. The article inspired me even more than the previous month's feature interview. Since reading the story, I have not moved from my drumset; I am presently using my snare drum as a desk on which to write this letter.

Ron Connolly  
Langley, BC, Canada

## BARRIEMORE BARLOW

In November's issue of *MD*, Barnemore Barlow made a statement that insulted the credibility of "heavy metal" music. To him and any others who believe in such nonsense: Music is an art, whether it be jazz, reggae, funk, or hard rock. It takes an open-minded musician to admit that, and only then may he or she be called a "true" musician.

I'm a hard rock drummer myself, and on behalf of others like me, I'd like to say that we are proud to be doing what we're doing—without denying the integrity of any other style of music. And we too, like many others, will stand up among the rest and be noted as musicians. Thank God for an undiscriminating *Modern Drummer*.

Pompeo Balbo  
Scottsdale, AZ

## IAN MOSLEY

My unending gratitude to you for your article on Marillion's Ian Mosley. [November '86 MD] I was lucky enough to see Marillion's performance at the Nassau Coliseum in support of Rush. Ian is such a fluent and relaxed player, yet powerful and effective. I hope the U.S. gives Ian and Marillion a chance; they're a great band.

Robert Potthast  
Forest Hills, NY

## MIDI ERROR

Thank you for Jim Fiore's articles on MIDI. As a MIDI-capable drummer, I'm glad to see more information on the subject becoming available. The options created by MIDI are opening up a new area of musical expression for drummer/percussionists.

However, there seems to be some confusion about the use of "MIDI in," "MIDI out," and "MIDI thru." Jim states in his December '86 article that "by connecting the 'MIDI out' of module one to the 'MIDI in' of module two, we can get both modules to respond simultaneously to one pad strike." The vast majority of MIDI devices do not work in this way. (Notable exceptions that do include Roland's *Octapad* and Yamaha's RX-21 drum machine. Their "MIDI outs" function as "MIDI thrus.") Normally, a signal fed into "MIDI in" will affect that instrument directly. "MIDI out" of that unit will not contain the information present at the "MIDI in," although the unit's "MIDI thru" will. "MIDI out" will only contain information generated by that unit directly by playing the keys or buttons on that unit. Jim's diagrams of "daisy-chain" connections should have had "MIDI thru" of module one connected to "MIDI in" of module two, "MIDI thru" of module two to "MIDI in" of module three, etc., in order to get all the units to respond to signals from the drumpad or drum trigger unit simultaneously.

"Daisy-chaining" brings about another issue: that of MIDI delay. Every time the signal runs through another device, a delay is introduced. Since these delays are cumulative from unit to unit, it doesn't take too many "in-to-thru" connections to cause noticeable delays. The solution is to use a "MIDI thru" box to split the signal from

the drumpad or drum trigger unit to the various sound modules. This will introduce only one delay and will help to keep that delay to a minimal level.

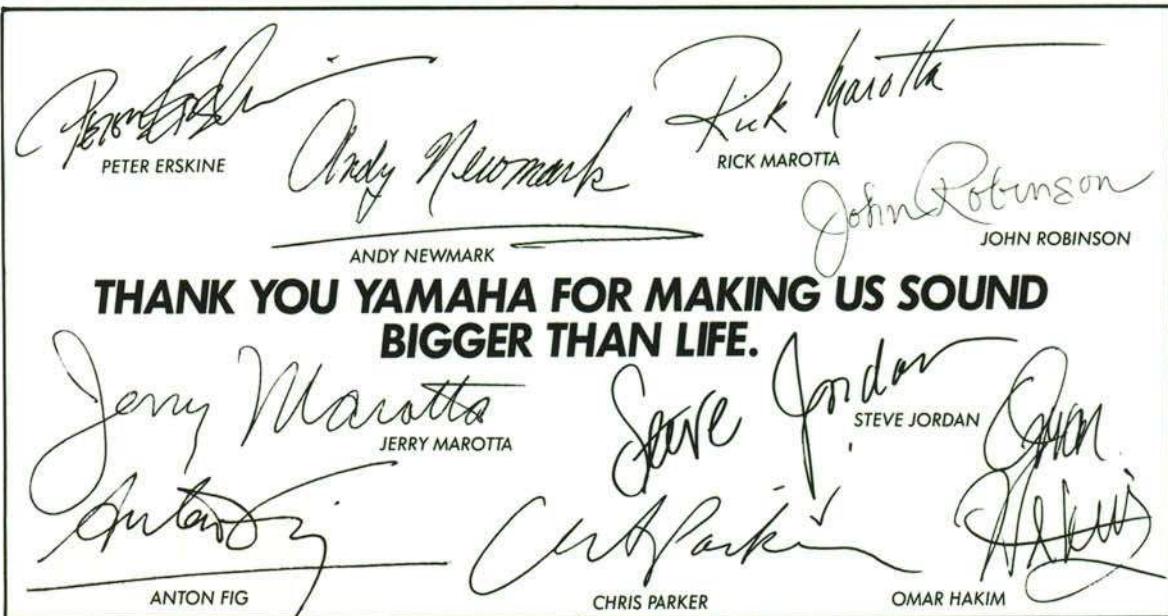
Tom Bordner  
Columbus, OH

*Editor's note: Jim Fiore agrees that there may be some confusion arising from his examples, based on the fact that he assumed in his examples that most "MIDI out" was implemented in the fashion of the Roland Octapad, which turns out to be an exception, rather than the rule. He adds, "To alleviate confusion in the future, I shall use the standard 'MIDI out = local only,' 'MIDI thru = input only.' If your machine doesn't pass 'MIDI in' to the 'MIDI out' and my earlier examples don't work, simply use your 'MIDI thru' in place of the 'MIDI out.' All of the examples will work with the 'MIDI thru' connector. Why then, you ask, did you refer to 'MIDI out' if 'MIDI thru' works? Simple: Many machines simply don't have 'MIDI thru' connectors! So what do you do if you own a machine that doesn't pass 'MIDI in' and doesn't have a 'MIDI thru'? In that case, you can turn to any one of a number of MIDI splitter/patch boxes—perhaps the topic of a future article."*

## MD TEN-YEAR INDEX

I just received the December issue with your *Modern Drummer's Ten-Year Index*. I don't know how many times one of my students has asked me a question on a specific topic, a particular drummer, or a new product, and I've said, "You know, there's a good article in *MD* about that." I've then proceeded to page through my years of old issues to try to retrieve the

*continued on page 40*



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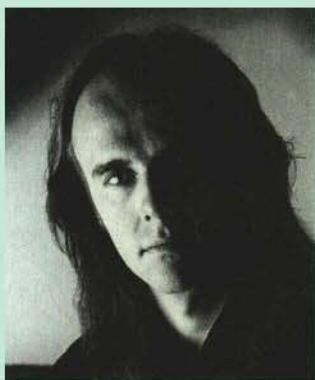
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It's been an exciting year for **Phil Ehart**, who started a new company called the Inside Track, a consultant firm for film companies needing musical material for movies. "Over the years, I'd met so many musicians who wanted to get their songs into films, and I also knew film people who didn't know how to get hold of rock 'n' roll musicians. With the Inside Track, companies

don't have to find ten different managers to get songs. They just contact me or my partner, David Werchen, in New York, and I've done all the leg work."

On the new Kansas album, *Power*, Ehart is listed as Executive Producer. Ask him what that means and he laughs, "That's a good question." He did, however, fulfill the title's responsibilities by finding the producer, Andrew Powell, getting the material together, and most important, putting the present unit together, which includes lead guitarist Steve Morse and marks the return of original lead singer Steve Walsh.

"We gave it a couple of months' trial period down in my basement to see what it sounded like, instead of telling the world that this was the new Kansas and then breaking up three months later. We were

very happy with the results, so we made some demos and gave them to the people at the record company. They were ecstatic. It took a lot of work to get this together. That was two years ago already, which is why I've seemed to be away from everything. I just didn't want to come back with a rehash of the same old thing that people expect like, 'Oh yeah, they've got a few weird time signatures, a few weird songs, and an odd album cover.'

"We used a 60-piece orchestra on four different songs, and it was the first time I had ever worked with an orchestral percussion section. It was real cool. We did one song called 'Musicatto,' which is a long instrumental, and to hear this percussion section play the parts I came up with was a real thrill. Add that to the fact that we were at Abbey Road with

Paul McCartney recording upstairs. I was thinking, This is not for real!"

"It was real different this time, because we were using an English engineer and an English producer. A lot of our influences come from England. And we did a lot of experimenting. I brought all kinds of snares, different cymbals, and tom-toms to the studio, and had two or three sets set up at the same time. During 'Musicatto,' I overdubbed something like 20 snare drums, and I used different miking procedures. But I've always tried to sound different from album to album, which is good in some respects and bad in others. It's hard for me even to sound the same from song to song. We really had a lot of fun, though."

—Robyn Flans

For **John Molo**, member of Bruce Hornsby's The Range, watching something grow has been a thrill. "Bruce's getting the record deal was very exciting. We worked on it last summer, and as it progressed, I saw Bruce take a role in the project that was very impressive to me. He really knew what he wanted, and he made certain tunes really sound great. As we came out of the project, I thought, 'I'm going to be on a record that really sounds good, and I'll actually do some playing.' We never

expected it to have this success. I thought the record would do okay, and that we would be able to play some small venues, have a cult following, and make a couple more records. I was excited about that, but when all of this success started happening, and when the record showed it had some legs on the chart—wow! That was really incredible to all of us."

Huey Lewis produced three cuts on the LP *The Way It Is*. "He's the best producer I've worked with because of his enthusiasm. When I was play-

ing 'Down The Road Tonight,' I looked in the booth and saw Huey in there doing his little dance. How could I not give it the best performance I could? I love working with him."

Hornsby has very specific ideas about what he needs for the music. "He's the type of leader who is not only a good songwriter, but he is such an accomplished musician. I have a little machine with a digital readout of tempos. Say we do 'Western Skyline' at 100. If it's at 99, Bruce can tell the difference. That's what makes the

job a challenge. He's very demanding in that way. It also has to be played every night with a real intensity. That comes from him, because he gets up there and is that into it every night. You have to be spot on with him musically and energy-wise. The guys in the group want the energy to come from me, so I play as hard as I can." The group has been touring quite a bit of late and plans to begin album #2 in the next few months.

—Robyn Flans

**Stix Hooper** plans on being a lot more visible in 1987 after an understandable period of adjustment since leaving the Crusaders. "I needed to take some time off," he explains. "I went fishing in Washington for a few months. I don't want it to sound like I was glad to escape; it almost sounds that way, but as good as it was and as successful as it was, there were some things I wanted to do beyond the scope of what we were doing in the group. After 30 years, it was time to



intrigued by. In the past year or so, he's done several major commercials for various products such as Sanka coffee, Bud Light beer, and McDonald's, as well as some TV episodic acting. Aside from that, he's been doing some producing recently, as well as working on an album.

"It's definitely going to be an extension of some of the things I was doing on my first album in terms of the concept of melodically playing the drums. There will be some

do other things."

Acting has been a welcome diversion for him and something he's always been

interesting high-energy fusion things with lots of electronics. I enjoy the electronics when I'm triggering and enhancing my creativity, as opposed to utilizing them to create a certain feeling like what is happening with these programmed drum machines. I've been working quite a bit with Michael Urbaniak. We're doing fusion, for lack of a better word, and some interesting things that are allowing us to stretch out."

—Robyn Flans

# Santana Rhythm Section

Orestes

Armando

Raul

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"I've never been under any illusions; the drummer is the leader of the band," states Motorhead powerhouse **Pete Gill**. Leading Motorhead's sonic charge, Gill executes a no-holds-barred attack that cuts through the band's shattering guitars. Pete is the kind of drummer who prefers to play a variety of music, and you can hear him warming up with jazz rhythms during a Motorhead soundcheck. But first and foremost, he is attracted to the uninhibited energy of heavy metal playing. "Even though I don't listen to a great portion of metal when I'm not playing it, I really like being involved with it professionally," he comments. "I like to have a physical release when I'm playing, and that's why I've always chosen to be involved with real hard bands. A band like this requires a strong drummer who can really steer the music, because within this format, things could easily get out of control due to the volume and speed the music's played at. Also, there are four of us pumping out real solid



power, so it's no good overplaying because it's just going to get muddled up in the mix."

A veteran player throughout Britain's club circuit, Gill joined The Gary Glitter Band in the early '70s. After four years and several hits, Gill exited the group to search for session work in Germany. Returning to England, Pete then joined Saxon—a well-known metal band during its heyday of the mid to late '70s—as drummer and principal songwriter. Because of a managerial dispute, Pete eventually departed Saxon and

became entangled in a series of legal hassles that plagued him for a long time. "When I disagreed with a change in management, I was fired, although everyone agreed to pay me my royalties. Here I am five years later, and I haven't received a cent, even though I've been to the high court in England three times and won." Is he bitter about it? "Yes," he responds, "because I realize that the band's success was due in part to my song writing."

Because of the extent of litigation involved in Gill's case, he purposely went into exile for a couple of years in the North of England, taking some time off to fish and to relax until things blew over. "At first," he says, "bands were apprehensive about hiring me because they didn't want to take on my legal liabilities. But when word was out that I was free, the phone didn't stop ringing, and among the callers was Lemmy [bass/vocals] from Motorhead."

Since he became a member of Motorhead three years ago (replacing "Philthy" Animal

Taylor), Gill has been quite content with his career. But ironically, the band has been involved with its own series of lawsuits since 1984, and this latest lineup had been unable to record an LP until 1986's *Orgasmatron* release. During the interim period, the group toured extensively throughout the world.

Now that the legal hassles are over, Motorhead is experiencing its biggest Stateside popularity with *Orgasmatron*—also co-written by Gill—and the group's most recent tour. "I think the album has crossed over quite a bit," offers Pete. "With this album, we didn't have time to think too much about it; we just did it. We wanted to get it out, because the fans hadn't heard any product from us for quite a while. Since its release, the album has been doing real well." It looks as though Motorhead's most impressive lineup—relying on the abilities of its drummer—could finally break the U.S. market wide open in the coming year.

—Teri Saccone

On hiatus from the Yellowjackets, **Ricky Lawson** has been enjoying a different kind of musical experience with Lionel Richie. "I had worked with Carlos Rios [musical director and guitar player] and Wilbur [road manager] before, so when it came time to get somebody to do the gig, they asked me. I said, 'You've never heard me play his music,' even though they'd heard me play with Jarreau and some other people. I went down and played for them, but then I found out my schedule with the Yellowjackets was going to conflict with theirs, so I had to cancel on the gig. A couple of days later, the road manager called and said that some of the dates had changed, but some were still conflicting, so for the second time, I said I

couldn't do the gig. In the meantime, they were auditioning people, so I suggested that they get the Yellowjackets to do the gig as the rhythm section. Lionel came down to one of our rehearsals, and afterwards, he asked if we'd be interested in doing the gig. But the guys decided that, if we couldn't play Yellowjacket music—like opening the show—we wouldn't do it. The way Lionel's show is constructed, you can't play the kind of music we're playing, so we passed on it, which was the third time I turned them down.

"I went out and performed about three weeks with the Yellowjackets, and I was kind of sad because I couldn't do Lionel's gig. I came back and was doing a Gospel project with Philip Bailey, and

Lionel's people called again. I went to the studio where they were doing a new album, and Lionel took a break. We talked for about an hour. He brought certain things to my attention that I had not been aware of. This was going to be Lionel's Victory tour. They have a quarter of a million dollar stage, and I thought it would be a really good thing to do, not only for me personally, but for the Yellowjackets. While I'm doing this, I can be doing interviews on behalf of the Yellowjackets also."

Playing with Lionel is quite different from his role with his own band. "Lionel's music requires a lot of discipline. I have the tendency to overplay because it's so simple. I have to keep the discipline and not let square one get away from me.

Girls Next Door, and Pam Tillic. Steve Schaeffer is now involved with writing the music for a weekly TV show called *Sidekicks* with Tom Scott and Joe Conlan. This trio, which calls itself Rareview, also did

I also have to be in real good physical shape because they have the band doing all kinds of fancy steps and dances while we're performing. The lights are amazing, but I almost got sunburned in rehearsal. That extreme amount of heat while you're performing is like working out in the sauna, so you've got to be in good shape. I try to eat right and get my rest. I don't drink or smoke, which definitely helps."

Ricky recently produced a jazz group from San Diego called Fatburger. He will be going back and forth with the Yellowjackets, and is currently recording with them before embarking on a European tour with Richie.

—Robyn Flans

**Larrie Londin** is busy as usual working with such artists as the Forester Sisters, Ronnie Milsap, Randy Travis, Judy Rodman, Louise Mandrell, John Wesley Ryles, Kyle Petty, Chet Atkins, Holly Dunn, The

*Simon, Outlaws, Sledgehammer, Heart Of The City, and Highway To Heaven*. He has recently worked on albums by Tom Scott, Dave Grusin, and

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## DAVE WECKL



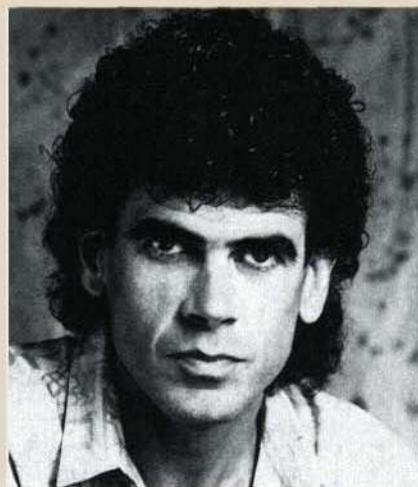
Photo by Jaeger Kotos

Q. I was recently lucky enough to see you in an awesome performance with Chick Corea's band. During a few of your solo fills, you seemed to be either using a double pedal, doing a floor tom/bass drum figure, or playing your bass drum with a very fast right foot (which wouldn't surprise me). Could you explain this particular one of your many talents?

Dan Cavaliere  
Greeley, CO

A. Basically, what happens when that sound is heard is that I'm triggering a sampled bass drum electronically from my left floor tom. The sound is coming from an Akai S900 sampler. That sample is also being triggered from the bass drum itself, so that when I do left-hand-and-bass-drum combination figures with the left hand on the left floor tom, it comes out sounding like double bass drum. My advantage in doing this is that my left foot never has to leave the hi-hat. I can keep quarter notes—or whatever the time feel is—going with my left foot and my right hand, and still get a double-bass effect.

## DAVID GARIBALDI



Q. I have thoroughly enjoyed your work on the various Tower Of Power albums available. On the tune, "What Is Hip?" from the *Live In Living Color* album, you set up a groove between yourself and the bassist, while the

keyboardist solos. My question is: During this part of the tune, it sounds to me as if you're playing a constant 8th-note pattern on your hi-hat while embellishing the phrasing of the tune with your ride cymbal, bass drum, and snare. I think this sounds fantastic, and I'd appreciate it if you could briefly chart out what you're doing on each part of the kit.

Ric Hobscheid  
Wheeling, IL

A. Here are the two basic patterns that I used in the live version of "What Is Hip?" during the keyboard solo. Pattern #1 is what is played when the solo starts; pattern #2 is played later, as the solo develops. There are some other variations during this section, but these are the basic ones.

## NEIL PEART



Q. I have been wondering about a certain technique you have used on recent albums. On tracks such as "Jacob's Ladder," "New World Man,"

subdivisions, and Afterimage, the ride and the China cymbal are played together. I have heard other artists do this, but not as cleanly as you do. How is it done?

Griffin Bell  
Atlanta, GA

A. Thanks for the compliment, Griffin, and wonder no more! I set up my cleanest, quickest-decaying China cymbal near my ride cymbal, and trade 16th notes between them. This allows me to get more motion in the rhythm than if I just used the China type, and more counterpoint than if I just used the ride. As you've probably noticed, I particularly like to play the China type on the 8th-note upbeat or on the accent of a triplet feel.

*Update continued from page 8*

**Diane Schuur, Bongo Bob Smith** has been working with Narada Michael Walden's production company playing percussion and drum programming for such projects as Starship, Whitney Houston, and Walden's own record. He has also recently worked with Eric Martin, the 77's, and even did a few gigs with Steve Lawrence & Edie Gorme. **Prairie Prince** is working on Glen Frey's current LP. **Paul Wertico** is just off the road with Pat

Metheny and beginning a band recording. Also, congratulations to Paul and Barbara for tying the knot. **Stoker** has returned to General Public. **Michael Barsimanto** is currently on the road with Andy Taylor. In recent months, Michael has done some recording with Esquire and Mark Isham, as well as working live with Isham and doing some work with Billy Preston. **Willie Wilcox** has signed with Columbia Pictures as a staff writer.

He wrote and produced the theme to *The New Monkees* TV show, as well as Stacy Q's "We Connect." He wrote a song for the film *Soul Man* called "Suddenly It's Magic," in addition to writing a song for Meat Loaf. **Mike Cullens** is currently on the road with the Mick Taylor Band. **Larry Crockett** has been working with the American '60s Revival Tour, which includes the Mamas & Papas, Martha Reeves, Gary U.S. Bonds, and

Lou Christie. **Craig Krampf** working with Melissa Etheridge. **Joe Buergar** at the Mid-America Jazz Festival, along with **Butch Miles** and **Barrett Deems** this month. **Barbara Merjan** touring as onstage drummer with *Cabaret*, starring Joel Grey. **Eric Singer** recently completed Black Sabbath's new album. **David Garibaldi** recently in the studio with David Meece, *Wishful Thinking*, The Yellowjackets, and Gino Vannelli.

—Robyn Flans

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# IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. What do you do when the playing you do on your toms causes your snares to buzz? I can't stand this noise!

L.W.

Eugene, OR

A. This is probably the second most-frequently asked question that we receive at MD. (It's right after "What drums should I buy?") Snares vibrate due to a phenomenon known as "sympathetic vibration." The pitch at which a tom head vibrates and the pitch at which a snare head vibrates are often very close—especially when one is talking about smaller tom sizes. Striking the tom causes the snare head to vibrate as well, thus making the snares "rattle". There are many ways to deal with this problem—none of them foolproof.

One popular method is to loosen the lugs immediately adjacent to each end of the snares on the bottom head of the snare drum. This tends to reduce the amount of head vibration possible just under the snares themselves, without causing a drastic change in the overall snare tuning. Another method is to retune either the toms or the snare drum, so that the difference between their fundamental pitches is increased—thus making the snare drum less "sympathetic" to vibrations from the toms. Muffling the toms sometimes helps, as well. Many drummers are reluctant to use either of those last two methods, however, because doing so changes the basic sound of their drums to a degree that they don't like. Many drummers simply prefer to live with the snare buzz. It's important to determine how much the buzz really projects to your audience. If you are playing small-group acoustic jazz, the buzz may be annoying, but if you are playing in an amplified rock band, it's doubtful that anyone but yourself can hear it. You may have to make a choice between the tuning you want on your snare and toms, and having no snare buzz.

Q. I live in the suburbs of L.A., and I always miss the boat when it comes to local drum clinics. Is there any way to keep posted on who is coming to do a clinic?

J.W.

Lancaster, CA

A. Many of the larger music stores in major metropolitan areas have a mailing list, to which they send newsletters, fliers, etc. These fliers will be your best source of information about special events sponsored by those stores, so get on as many mailing lists as you can. You'll also benefit by getting information about equipment sales.

Other sources of information are ads published in MD by various manufacturers that sponsor clinic tours. Often those ads contain time and place information. If you are interested in the schedule of a specific artist, you might also consider contacting that artist's sponsoring companies directly, to see if they are sponsoring a clinic by that artist in your area in the near future.

Q. Is there any way a Drum Workshop 5000 Turbo pedal can be converted to an EP-1 electronic pedal? If so, how and where could I get parts for it?

R.N.

Houston, TX

A. Drum Workshop's Don Lombardi replies, "Though the EP-1 is based on the mechanical design of the 5000 Turbo pedal, it would require major modification in order to convert a regular pedal to an EP-1. The bass casting would have to be cut back past the toe clamp, rubber for isolation would have to be mounted on top of the plate, and the electronic parts would have to be added. Drum Workshop now has three types of electronic triggers, including the EPR. This is a plate with the electronics that you can place your existing pedal on, which would be a safer and less expensive way to create a pedal trigger than the modification of a 5000 Turbo."

Q. I'm interested in buying a red Tama drumset. My local drum salesman said that Tama didn't make any of its drums in red, except for a "wine red" that wasn't what I wanted. Is this accurate?

B.L.

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

A. According to Joe Hibbs of Tama, both the Swingstar and Imperialstar lines offer a dark red covered finish, while the Superstar line features a metallic candy-apple red painted lacquer finish. Your dealer should be able to order any of these drums for you directly from Tama.

Q. In a recent Update piece, it was mentioned that both Neil Peart and Steve Smith played on an album by Jeff Berlin. What is the name of that album, and who plays on which tracks?

C.M.

Schenectady, NY

A. The album is entitled Champion, and is on Passport Records. Neil played drums on "Champion Of The World"; Neil and Steve both played on "Marabi". Steve played on the balance of the tracks.

Q. Can you give me an American source for Wuhan Lion cymbals from China?

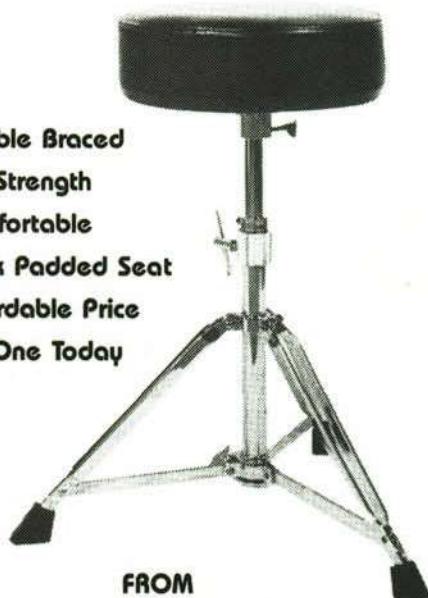
D.R.

Dundee, IL

A. Paul Real Sales, 745 Oak Knoll Circle, Pasadena, CA 91106, is a wholesaler of Wuhan Lion cymbals to music retailers across the country. Contact Paul Real for the name of a dealer near you. You may also contact Steve Weiss Music, P.O. Box 20885, Philadelphia, PA 19141, which lists Wuhan Lion cymbals in its mail-order catalog.



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**S**o much of Graeme Edge is tied up in having been a member of the Moody Blues for the past 22 years. I knew that, if I played a game I call album association with Graeme, I would end up with an outline of him. The game is like word association, but with albums instead of words. I asked him to share what came to mind at the mention of each of the Moody Blues albums.

Days Of Future Passed: "That was dear old [producer] Peter Knight, back in the studio."

In Search Of The Lost Chord: "Very exciting—first time we were allowed into a studio completely on our own. It was exciting and a little bit scary."

On The Threshold Of A Dream: "Proud—one of my favorite albums. It's where we really started to come of age, gain confidence, and really take some risks recording"

To Our Children's Children's Children: "Landing on the moon. That was in that period of time, which was very exciting. It was a feeling of being in history. We used to think of it—God, the conceit of it—as the record to put under the foundation stone of some building, because that's what it says on the top: 'to our children's children's children.' "

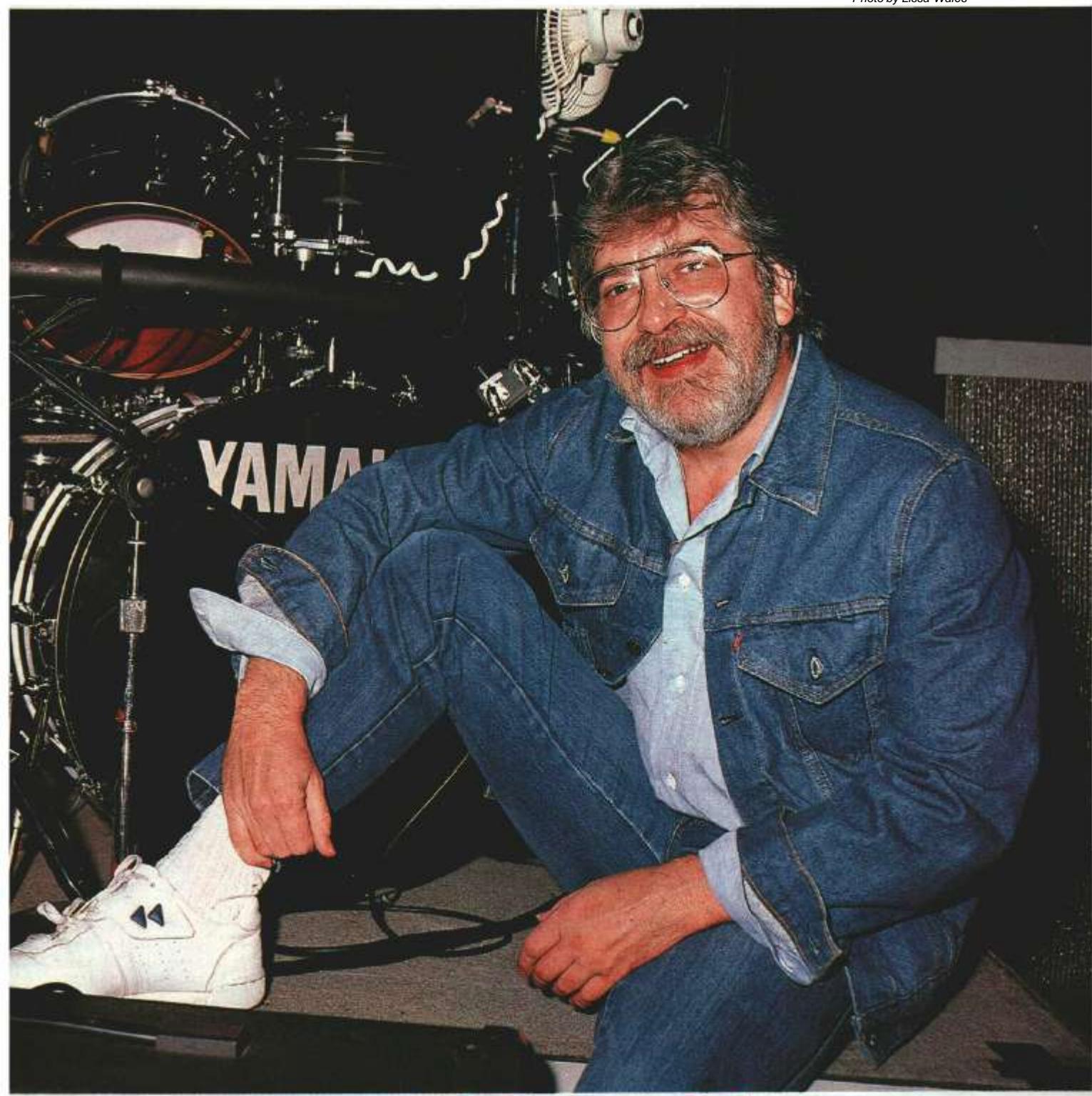
A Question Of Balance: "That was the start of where we were almost treated as semi-deities, and we very much wanted to reflect what the title says: that maintaining yourself is a question of balance. It's very hard to maintain your equilibrium under those pressures."

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour: "I'm proud of it, but it wasn't a milestone."



# GRAEME

by Robyn Flans



# EDGE

MARCH 1987

17



**Seventh Sojourn:** "That was when we had come to realize that we were running out of inspiration. The cover looks like a desert. When you open it up, everything is completely brown except for one tiny green leaf. There was still life and hope; the band was still alive, but that's how we felt."

**Octave:** "That's just full of pain. Poor [producer] Tony Clarke was going through such agonies, and losing Mike Pinder was hard. He was a very talented man before he believed his own press. A great, great guy—a great asset."

**Long Distance Voyager:** "Relief—total, complete relief. It was working. I was happy; the thing I wanted to do more than anything else in my life was back on track. It was happy—joy."

**The Present:** "It was a bad time for me personally, because I was going through a breakup. All of us were in a funny state. If you listen to that record, each song individually is fine, but every one of them is a downer."

**The current album, The Other Side Of Life:** "Pleased as punch. We used a new producer, Tony Visconti, who is great to work with, and we developed a whole new set of morals in the recording studio. We used to own our own studio and have free studio time, and because of that, we got really sloppy. If we said we'd get to the studio at 11:00, people would file in between 11:00 and 12:15, and then we'd sit down and have a cup of coffee. Tony Visconti is a producer, and we start at 11:00—no breaks. We work through until 7:00. We get more done in those eight hours than we used to in 15, because the

adrenaline runs and the excitement is there. Now there are so many ideas sparking. It keeps us up; it keeps us driving."

Driving indeed—for nearly a quarter of a century with some of the most unique and courageous music during the most exciting times of rock 'n' roll history. The Moody Blues were (and still are) technologically advanced for the times—any times—and because of that, in those early days, their music was sometimes construed as pretentious. Mostly it was because they cared so much about it—the unadulterated courage and an uncompromising integrity. And it was that integrity that accounted for the creative output, the refusal to conform, and even the band separation in 1974. Because of their unwillingness to release anything that was not Moody Blues standard, they chose to disband instead. Creatively, they knew they had to re-energize, to gather other musical experiences, and to learn more about themselves as individuals if they were ever to come back and create as a group.

The press calls them "dinosaurs," the dictionary definition of which is "extinct." If the Moody Blues were no longer together, that description would be appropriate. If they were still together but playing only music they had composed ten years ago, I would deem the terminology acceptable. If they were still producing music but hadn't advanced with the times, I could stretch the definition to be accurate. But this band has never stopped its development. Not only does their early material seem to be timeless, and not only have they continued to create, but they have matured and developed. In fact, their current album, *The Other Side Of Life*, contains material that ranks with the best the band has ever conceived. Dinosaurs! Ha!

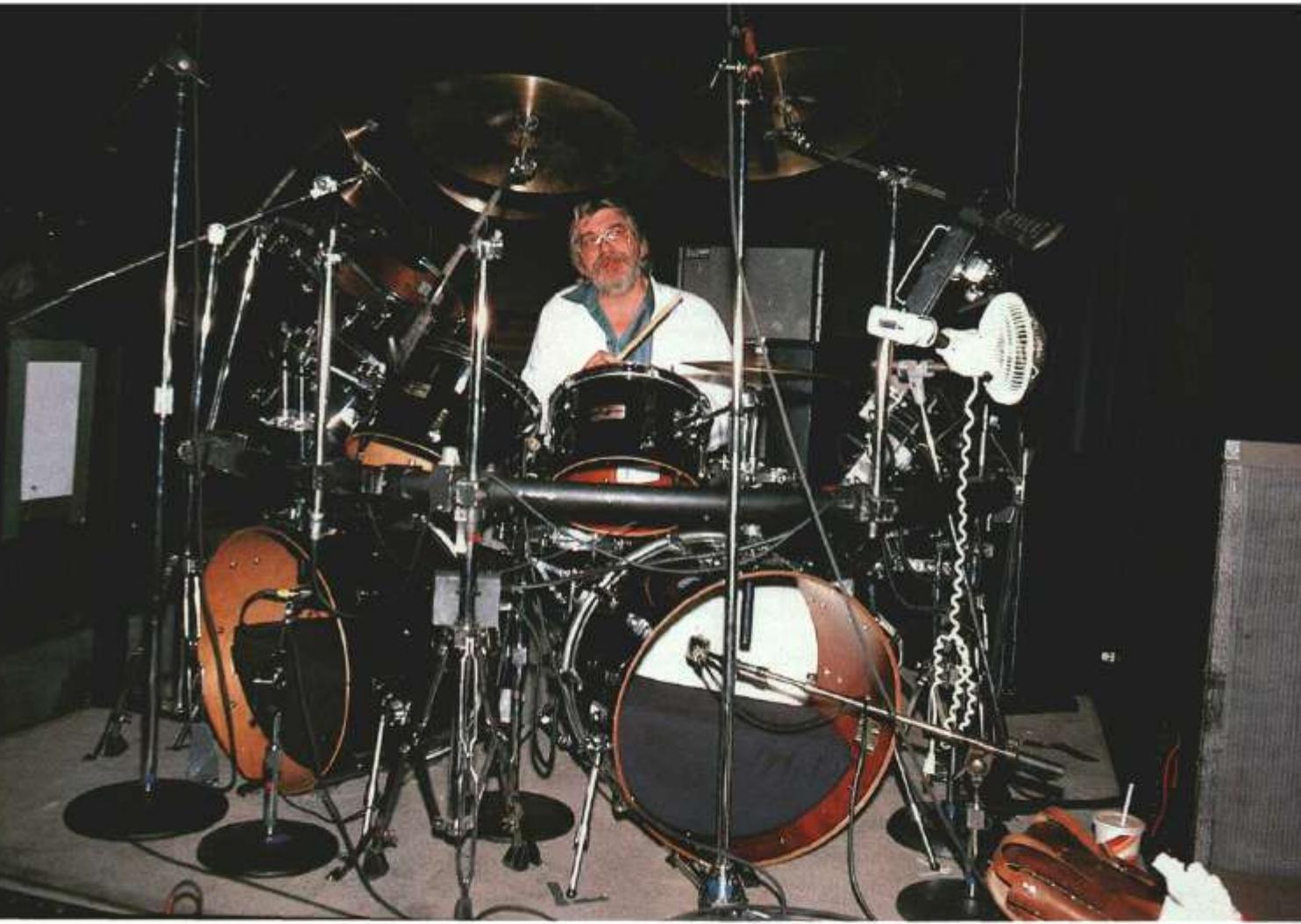
Of course, Graeme Edge does joke that he's always been too old for rock 'n' roll. But that's Graeme poking fun at himself in his delightfully charming humor. If, at 45, his life's motivation is live playing, one doubts that he'll ever be too old for rock 'n' roll. How then could he have possibly been too old for it when he began playing snare drum in the Boys Brigade (similar to the Boy Scouts) at age eight in his hometown of Birmingham, England? He was enticed not only by the snare drum, but also by the fact that he could wear long trousers! "You couldn't wear long trousers in England until you were 12. It's not so much like that now, but it was back when I was a boy—back in 1814," he teases once again.

Graeme's dad, who had been a music-hall singer, and his mom, who was a pianist, had the biggest house in a neighborhood where some boys who were older than Graeme had a group together. They stored their gear at the Edge house, and when they weren't around, Graeme found himself gravitating toward the drumset.

His parents then set him up with a few months of drum lessons, but mostly Graeme taught himself by listening to records and inventing his own style. "There was no one around in England to teach us rock 'n' roll drumming, because we were the first. We had to make it up as we went along," he explains, adding that he enjoyed listening to Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Joe Morello, and John Bonham, but worshiped Ginger Baker.

"Ginger Baker was the first drummer I had ever seen who had a real technique—who had sat at home and worked on his technique properly instead of just listening to records and trying to copy them. He was the first person I saw who played things like paradiddles, flamadiddles, and more complicated things with the right technique. I didn't know what they were called, but I knew the sound of them. When I saw him playing them, I suddenly realized why

## "ANY DRUMMERS WORTH THEIR SALT CAN GET AT LEAST SEVEN OR EIGHT SOUNDS OUT OF A CYMBAL."



*was always getting caught on the wrong hand, and how drummers like him always had plenty of time to get to the cymbal. I was always diving for it, which tended to make me speed up a little. The biggest thing I learned from him was to read music, get some of the books, and practice. Reading was valuable; it taught me that by just copying the sound you can get into trouble. You can play something that sounds similar, but because you're not putting in a double beat on one hand sometimes or starting with the correct hand, you can end up messed up. You can get the fill to sound exactly right, but to get back to a standard pattern, you have to sort of uncross your arms, which makes you speed up. Then you're not in control of the situation,"* Graeme explains, conceding that, although Baker was an important influence, Edge's playing style is much more sparse. "A lot of my style has been formed by the music I'm playing."

*His first professional job was with the Blue Rhythms, the band who had stored their equipment at his parents' house. When that band fell apart, Graeme continued to play, but his parents convinced him to go to college, where he studied and practiced design estimating for bridges and such. He rejoined the Silhouettes while undergoing his required trade training, and simply lived two very exhausting years working and gigging. He obtained his degree at the same time that the band changed its name to Jerry Levine & The Avengers, which played the usual hit-parade pop material. ("Locally, they called us Jerry Latrine & The Four Flushes," he laughs.) When American rhythm & blues turned the young musicians upside down, they changed their name yet again to the R&B Preachers. That lasted about 18 months, when all of a sudden . . . .*

**GE:** Ray Thomas turned up at my house. We had met because he was in a rival band called El Riot & The Rebels. He was with Mike Pinder, and they had John Lodge in their pocket. I was playing in the R&B Preachers with Denny Laine, amongst others. They wanted to get me and Denny to

join up with those three to form a band, because some of the other players were into rhythm & blues and some weren't. They were quite correct in assessing that it was Denny and I in our band who really wanted to play it. So we joined up and formed a band called the M&B Five, named after a brewery in Birmingham called Michells & Butlers. The idea behind the name was that English pubs are quite large buildings and M&B owned a lot in the area. On the top floor, they had a big room where the local people could assemble for various functions. We had this idea that, if we named ourselves after the brewery, they might let us play in the assembly room and even give us a bit of sponsorship. The M&B Five worked for about three or four months, and Michells & Butlers answered the letter. They didn't want to know about sponsorship, so we didn't want to call ourselves M&B Five anymore, but we had gone down so well in such a short time that we didn't want to change our initials. Blues was easy for the "B," but we needed to come up with something for the "M," so we came up with Moody and the band turned into the Moody Blues.

**RF:** What music were you playing?

**GE:** We were doing the usual blues stuff at the time, sort of "Smokestack Lightning," "Twist And Shout," and "P.S. I Love You," which was before The Beatles. Everybody was playing those, but those geezers were the first to get them onto record. But thank God they did, because they had the talent to throw open the doors of America to all of us. We decided we were just going to play for fun and not try to make it anymore.

**RF:** Why did you decide you weren't going to try for success?

**GE:** We were too old for rock 'n' roll. We were just screwing around, and we got to play at nightclubs that trios usually played. We were playing in a place called the Old Moat, when a friend of some guys who worked for Seltaeb—which is Beatles spelled backwards—The Beatles' marketing company, brought the Seltaeb guys around. They asked us what we wanted, and we told them all the equipment we wanted, tongue well in cheek. They came back a week later with a van full of all this stuff. So we signed this piece of paper, and they robbed us blind, of course. But they set things up for us, I suppose, and they got us our first recording contract.

**RF:** What was it like recording for the first time?

**GE:** It was very strange and unnerving, because it was the first time I got stuck in a box to play. We're talking two-track days. I had to use cans [headphones] for the first time, and I found that weird, especially in those days because they weren't very good. I was really quite overwhelmed by it all.

**RF:** Were there any songs we know today in those first sessions?

**GE:** No. The first time we went in was just to demo up some stuff, so we just played some of the stuff we had been playing on stage. The first serious time we went into the studio, they got a whole bunch of American demo records for us to listen to, and we found "Go Now." We recorded it, and it was pure animal luck. After the stroke of luck with "Go Now," we couldn't find a decent follow-up. The next song we recorded was, in fact, "Time Is On My Side," which the Rolling Stones promptly stole and made their own. That sort of flattened us. The next one we recorded was a very good song called "From The Bottom Of My Heart," but at the time, if your immediate follow-up wasn't a hit, you were elbowed. That one did enough to get us work and sell some records, but that was it.

Denny Laine went into a sort of panic, or a career-survival thing, and he decided he wanted to go out on his own. At the time, Eric Burdon was reforming his new Animals, Manfred Mann was looking for a new bass player, and we were looking for a lead guitarist, so we took a huge ad out in

the *New Musical Express*, "Three top 20 bands . . . ." Manfred Mann got Klaus Voorman, Eric Burdon reformed the Animals, and we got Justin Hayward—probably the finest songwriter in all England, from an ad in the newspapers.

**RF:** Justin's influence was entirely different. How did your playing have to change?

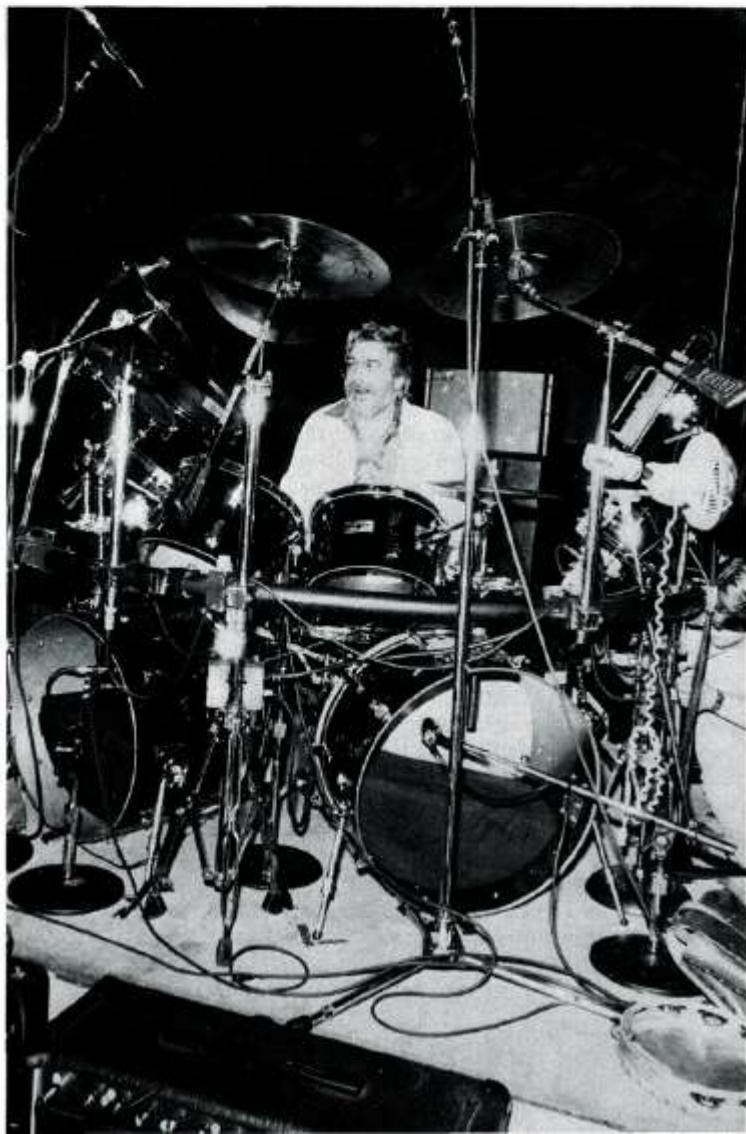
**GE:** Denny Laine leaned towards a more jazzy drumming. He liked me to be much busier with lots of short, busy little phrases. If you listen to a record called *Moody Blues No. 1*, there are three or four tracks that are far from mainstream pop. There are some strange time signatures and constant changes in rhythm patterns, which are the kinds of things Denny Laine liked to write. Drummers who are any good play the correct drums for the material, not the correct drums for their egos. I liked the technical aspect of playing that material, but it did lack feeling. What I enjoy about Jus' work is the depth of emotion, the soul, and the obvious effort that has been put into writing the song. With regard to the drums, his songs really don't want hitting-every-drum-in-sight Keith Moon fills. The word delicate comes to mind. There's great satisfaction in holding a simple beat right to the edge of monotony and then giving the song a release in the right place, kicking it on. Justin likes big tempo changes in a song, but once he gets set into a groove, he likes to stay with it for a lot of bars, and Jus likes his fills in what you would call the standard places. There's nothing unusual about where he calls for a fill. In fact, his songwriting is very correct in musical terms, more so than John's, which is why he's such a good songwriter. John's an excellent songwriter, too, but John does tend to have the odd two-beat bar and some unusual sort of positions musically.

But regarding your question, Justin's influence grew slowly. He just started in, and the poor chap had to get up and sing "Go Now" for a while. I'm sure that was not a happy experience for him. We had to leave the country, too. We went to Belgium, because we owed too much tax to live in England—the standard story. Management pissed off with all the money. They left us in Belgium, and John Lodge had to sell his amplifier to buy us ferry tickets. From there, we moved to Paris, and we were taking Paris a bit by storm, actually. We got an invitation to play at Olympia, with Tom Jones, early in his career when he was considered a rocker as opposed to a lounge act. His agent, a very dear man named Colin Berlin, got us work in England that consisted of doing these bloody nightclubs, which were a rock 'n' roll groups' graveyard. It was cabaret, and what a lot of bands did was learn to imitate other acts and virtually stick on a red nose and a straw hat. The first time we did it, we died. It was awful. We thought, "What can we do with two half-hour spots?" So we thought we'd write something.

**RF:** That's why, on stage, Justin introduces *Days Of Future Passed* as having started as a stage play.

**GE:** Right. The first time Justin played it for us we knew it was something special. We worked it up so we could start playing when we were supposed to and play right through to the end without having to stop or tell any funny stories.

The record company had just developed this new sound system, which was just stereo, really, but it was their own line called *Deram SuperSound, DSS*. To show the versatility of their equipment, they were doing a lot of yin-and-yang records, like a brass band with some juicy violins on the same record. We were the rock 'n' roll band with the orchestra. We had the Mellotron. We were using strings and violins, but we were supposed to record Dvorak's *New World Symphony* with producer Peter Knight, who was brilliant and very well established. They gave us three days in the studio, and we took ten to make *Days Of Future*



*Passed.* When it was played at their Monday meeting where all the new products were played, they had a guy there from America named Walt McGuire. He was there as an observer. They expected Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, and when they heard what we had done, they went bananas. They were ready to crucify us, but Walt McGuire said, "I can sell that." He brought it over to America, the album went to about 30ish, and "Nights In White Satin" got to about 18, which was enough for them to let us carry on. [Three years later, "Nights" was inadvertently rereleased by a D.J. who liked the song. It hit number one, bringing Days Of Future Passed to the number-one position as well.]

**RF:** What was it like to work with an orchestra?

**GE:** We never did. If you listen carefully to that record, the orchestra is never playing when the Moody Blues are playing. They play the links between the songs, but when the Moody Blues start playing, it's just us and the Mellotron. On the album version of "Nights," they come in about halfway through the last verse, and it is the orchestra in back of the poem, but outside of that, it was never at the same time. In fact, we'd record the songs, shoot them over to Peter Knight as fast as we could, and he was writing the links and recording them.

**RF:** It almost surprises me that you didn't work with an orchestra, because so much of your music sounds orchestral. There are songs where it sounds like you're playing timpani and big cymbal crashes. What was all that?

**GE:** Timpani and big cymbals. Oh, did we have some bloody nerve! I've seen John Lodge, Mike Pinder, and Justin Hayward sit in the studio for two days trying to get a bloody cello part.

**RF:** Why?

**GE:** For some reason, we developed this set of morals that we weren't going to have anybody but ourselves on the records. I think one of the reasons was that we were so upset by the fact that everybody thought *Days Of Future Passed* was a rock band with a bloody orchestra over everything. So it sort of became an issue. On the next album, we put: "All instruments played by the Moody Blues." We listed everything everybody did.

**RF:** Of course, a lot of people thought you were quite pretentious because of this sound.

**GE:** Being called pretentious used to hurt us. I didn't quite understand what it meant. I looked it up, and it means pretending. I knew we weren't doing that.

**RF:** How much input did each individual have when it



came to recording this music?

**GE:** We used to sit around a coffee table, and the songwriter would play the song. Everybody dove in, argued about ideas, put things backwards and forwards, and the songwriter just sat there and put his piece in as well. We'd play a bit and try it out, and when all the ideas were put forward, the songwriter picked which ideas he wanted and which he didn't want. The final authority, even above the producer, is the songwriter. Sometimes when you have a great idea and that songwriter can't see it, you have to bite your knuckle. But you need to, because you know that, when it's your song and your turn, you're going to get the same treatment. Then you spend bloody hours getting it right and usually discover that the third take was the right one.

**RF:** What were some of your favorite drum tracks?

**GE:** I was very proud of what I did on "Stop" with Denny Laine. I like "Legend Of A Mind," especially where we change into the Indian stanza. I think the tempo change is done in such a way that you don't suddenly notice that we've moved from 4/4 into what it became. I can't remember the time signature, because Indian music is like a giant riff. Of course, it can be measured out, but you end up

doing something daft like 17/8, and it's best not to think of it in those terms. It's best to picture it as the Indians do—as a riff. I was very pleased with the way I crossed over there. I like playing "I'm Just A Singer In A Rock And Roll Band," because of what it meant at the time, although the drum track itself is not particularly involved.

**RF:** Something like "Isn't Life Strange"—which is so creative with all the different sections, laying out and coming back in—is almost your standard.

**GE:** That one and "Question," which follows a similar pattern.

**RF:** How was stuff like that born?

**GE:** It's down to that coffee table. I can't remember who said, "Let's not have the drums in here." It wouldn't bother me at all to be in for part of the song and then not in for part of it. I wouldn't start to worry that I wasn't all over everything. The only thing that concerns me is if it works for the song.

**RF:** You more or less indicated that the coffee table creating was past tense.

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# Blues Drummers

Part 2

## FRED BELOW

*Fred Below is the dean of Chicago blues drummers. Born in Chicago in 1926, Below claims he's never really lived anywhere else. His track record is long enough to span Chicago's entire post-war blues era. A product of famed DuSable High School, Below worked the clubs and bars of Chicago's Southside in the '50s and '60s with virtually every great bluesman of the day, including Muddy Waters and Little Walter. He helped define the role of the Chicago blues drummer and cut the path on which many other blues drummers would later follow.*

*Later on, Below recorded with such early rock 'n' roll pioneers as Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley, and became a regular session player for Chess Records. That's Below's cool, steady beat heard on Berry's "Maybellene" and Bo Diddley's "Bo Diddley."*

*Last year, Fred Below retired, yet friends will coax him every now and then to come out and play. Such was the case at the Third Annual Chicago Blues Festival. Below teamed up with members of his old group, the Aces. "Playing with these men brings back so many memories," remarked Below backstage after the show. "I can remember a lot of things in my life by music."*

**RS:** You started your long career as a drummer at DuSable High School, an institution that turned out a number of excellent Chicago musicians over the years.

**FB:** That's right. We got some of the best musical education you could get at the time.

**RS:** What drummers did you admire most as a student?

**FB:** Oh, Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich. I studied jazz at school. Blues was something I came into in 1951. When I left the army in 1946, there were no jobs open for me. I was a young drummer back in those days. So I re-enlisted in the army and went to Europe. While I was in Europe, I ran into guitar players who were playing the blues. The blues was something brand new to me. I'd never heard that type of sound before.

**RS:** But you were born in Chicago. How could you not have been familiar with the blues?

**FB:** I don't know. I guess I just concentrated on jazz. The reason I did that was because I could go to the movies each Saturday and there would be a stage show with a different band each week. I had an opportunity to watch and listen to drummers like Art Blakey, Buddy Rich, and Gene Krupa. And it didn't cost me an arm and a leg to see them either. I picked up a lot of good things by watching these great drummers.



Photo by Robert Santelli

**RS:** Did you play drums in the army?

**FB:** The first time around, no. The second time I went in, I did.

**RS:** When were you discharged from the service for good?

**FB:** In 1951. That's when I learned about Muddy Waters and other blues artists like Tampa Red. At the time, I was living on the Southside of Chicago.

**RS:** What were your impressions of the blues when you heard it?

**FB:** It was different. The beats were not substantial like in jazz, for one thing. I finally got with a blues group called the Aces. I had an opportunity to learn from them. But I had to make a lot of changes.

**RS:** What kinds of changes?

**FB:** Well, I was a jazz drummer going into the blues. That was

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**T**wo years ago, I attended the Second Annual Chicago Blues Festival in search of blues drummers whose stories have never been told and whose only real recognition outside blues circles was their names on the backs of albums. To me, they were the forgotten heroes of what is one of America's richest and purest indigenous music forms. For years, I had listened to their work, marveled at their subtle mastery of the blues beat, and wondered what they had to say about the blues and blues drumming.

I spent a week in Chicago that June. When I returned home to New Jersey, I had taped interviews with Odie Payne, Jr., Casey Jones, Jimmy Tillman, and Morris Jennings. What they said was published in the December, 1985 issue of *Modern Drummer*. To be honest, it was one of the most gratifying assignments I had ever completed for the magazine. Yet, I felt the blues drummer story was incomplete. I had fervently hoped to speak with two legendary Chicago blues drummers, Fred Below and S.P. Leary, but didn't. Neither played the festival. Below was ill at the time, and Leary

was out of town.

Five months later, I heard a rumor that not one, but both of them would be performing at the Third Annual Chicago Blues Festival. At once, I made plans to attend and succeeded in interviewing them. What they told me about the blues and their long careers is part of this feature.

Leary and Below, however, are from another era. Their best work (and there's lots of it) is well documented on record, and now they perform only occasionally. To balance out this "Blues Drummers, Part 2" piece, I searched out three young, up-and-coming drummers to contrast old and new—master and student. Chris Layton, Fred Grady, and David Olson together represent the newest generation of blues drummers. Some observers of the blues scene claim there's a blues renaissance in the making. That could be. If there is, you can be sure these three drummers will be keeping the beat for it.

by Robert Santelli

## CHRIS LAYTON

music is all about. Our success has also helped, I think, open the doors for other blues and blues-rock artists. If we can help them gain some notoriety and respect, why, that's fine with us.

**RS:** What kinds of demands has this success put on you as the drummer in the band?

**CL:** I've always tried to do the best that I could when it came to playing drums. And I keep trying to do that. To tell you the truth, I don't feel any unusual pressure or anything like that now that we've gotten some exposure and respect. If there are any demands put on me, they come from within.

**RS:** Did you always play drums in blues-rock bands, or are your roots from elsewhere?

**CL:** When I was growing up, my father had a lot of Ray Charles and B.B. King records in the house. I listened to them, as well as to records by Elvis Presley, Chubby Checker, and guys like them. They were the ones who got me fired up to play the drums. But I also listened to Lionel Hampton and Fats Waller. So my background is pretty varied, I guess. As for bands, I played in a few hippie bands, but that was about it.

**RS:** Did you grow up in Texas?

**CL:** Yeah, that's right. I'm from the coast—from Corpus Christi.

**RS:** Was there a decent blues or blues-rock scene in Corpus Christi when you were a kid?

**CL:** No, there really wasn't. There were a few people who were into the blues and who had a lot of blues records, though. Luckily, I got to meet these people. They were quite a bit older than I was. But still, they didn't constitute a "scene," so to speak. Before I actually began playing with Stevie, I really hadn't played much blues.

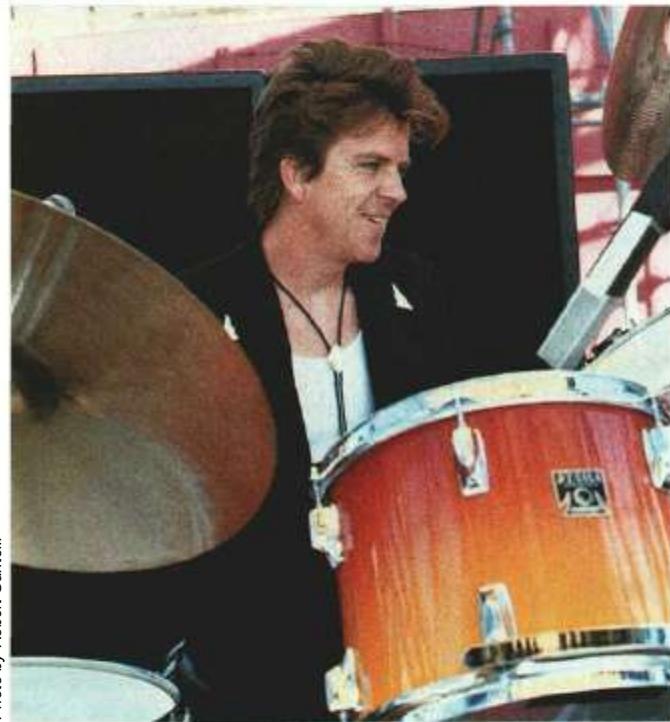
**RS:** How did you wind up becoming Stevie's drummer?

**CL:** One of my best friends, a horn player named Joe Sublett, moved to Austin and got in a band called Paul Ray & The Cobras. Stevie was one of the guitar players in the band. I met Stevie one day in my kitchen. I was playing my drums with headphones on. I looked up, and there was Stevie. He was tapping his foot and snapping his fingers. He'd come over to the house to see Joe. They were going to pick out some new songs for the band to do. He told me he dug the way I played.

A bit later, the Cobras' drummer, who was a sheetrocker during the day, had missed a few gigs, so Stevie invited me on up to play with the group. It was from there that our association started.

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Photo by Robert Santelli



These days, any talk of the "new blues" or blues-rock has to start with Stevie Ray Vaughan and his band, Double Trouble. By introducing the rich heritage of traditional blues to a new generation of music fans nurtured mostly on techno pop and heavy metal, and by reviving the potent hybrid of rock and blues for those who recall the golden years of the late '60s and early '70s, Vaughan and his band are at the vanguard of the back-to-the-roots movement that's currently influencing the course of American rock 'n' roll.

Drummer Chris Layton has played behind Stevie Ray Vaughan for over ten years. Vaughan affectionately calls him, "my main man," and "the guy with the thick sticks." It's Layton's big, bold backbeat and classy shuffles that make up the foundation from which Stevie Ray Vaughan launches his guitar heroics. Often overshadowed by Vaughan's vast presence on stage, Layton is, nonetheless, a highly respected drummer among his peers and one who has certainly put his mark on the growing blues-rock renaissance.

**RS:** No other blues or blues-rock band on the scene today is enjoying the success that Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble currently have. What are your feelings on this?

**CL:** I think the success we've had over the last couple of years has definitely helped draw attention to the blues, and as a result, people who wouldn't have been exposed to the blues now know what the

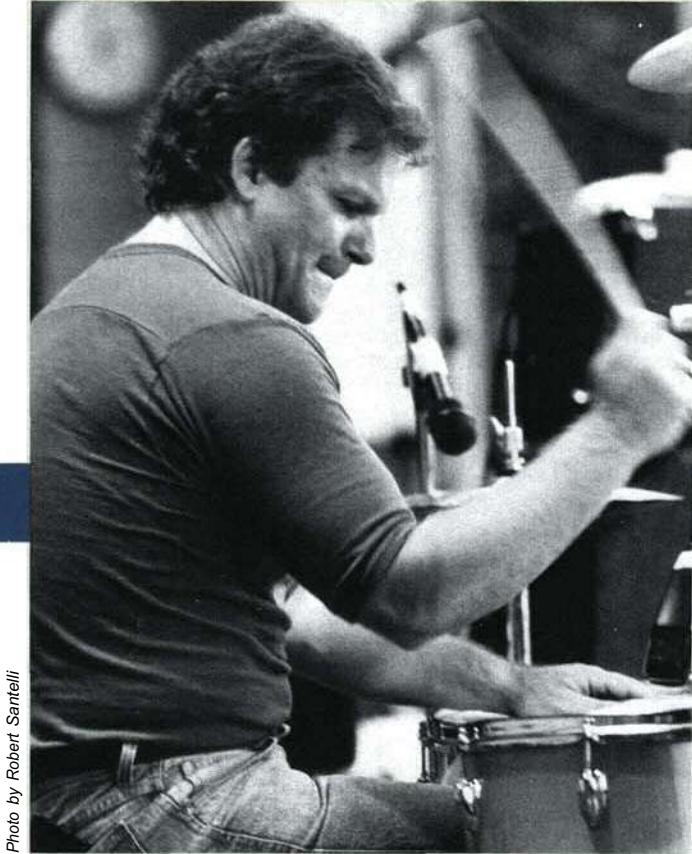


Photo by Robert Santelli

## DAVID OLSON

*Back when David Olson was in high school, he was torn between playing sports and playing the drums. "I was in love with football and was actually passing a few classes because I played on the school team," he says with a smile. "But I also loved playing the drums."*

*When the politics of high school football got "too heavy," Olson not only gave up the sport, but he also transferred to another school. Looking back, he says it was the best move he ever made. "I settled back, rediscovered the drums, and was introduced to the blues."*

*Olson has been a musician first and an athlete second ever since. He logged time in a number of R&B bar bands in the Pacific Northwest until he joined the Robert Cray Band, one of contemporary blues' most exciting outfits. The band's unique feel for the blues and Cray's superb guitar skills have made blues-rock stalwarts like Eric Clapton big fans of the group.*

*Olson is a student of the drums. Watch him as he talks about them, and the enthusiasm he has for his instrument seems to coat each and every word. Cray considers him a cornerstone of the band. Olson says he's got a lot to learn, and that he's willing to do whatever it takes to become the best drummer he can. Talk about having the right attitude.*

**RS:** As a kid torn between sports and drums, you certainly must have had some football players you looked up to. Did you also have drummers you especially admired?

**DO:** Oh, sure. The earliest ones were Mitch Mitchell and Clive Bunker from Jethro Tull. But then I was introduced to drummers like Benny Benjamin, Al Jackson, Sonny Freeman, and Bernard Purdie.

**RS:** You went from British rock drummers to American R&B and

soul drummers.

**DO:** Yeah. After high school, I attended a community college in Oregon and actually learned how to read music. I even got pretty decent at reading big band charts. But I was playing in an R&B band and having a lot of fun in it. Then Robert Cray called me up and asked if I wanted a job in his band. The group had just moved from Tacoma, Washington, to Portland. I was getting very bored with school, so I quit. I took Cray's offer and have been with him ever since.

**RS:** Is there a strong blues scene in the Pacific Northwest, in places such as Tacoma and Portland?

**DO:** I think it was better in the past than it is now. It's weird, but today if you call yourself a "blues" band, there aren't too many clubs that will hire you in that part of the country. A few years ago, however, it was a little bit better.

**RS:** Is there enough for the Robert Cray Band to play steady gigs

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Photo by Robert Santelli

## S. P. LEARY

*Don't ask S.P. Leary what his initials stand for, because he doesn't know. "It's just S.P., unless you want to add something to them," he says amusingly. "I was called S.P. from the moment I entered this here world as far as I know."*

*No matter. What you do need to know about S. P. Leary is that, when it comes to naming the truly great post-war Chicago blues drummers, you've got to include him. As a blues stylist, Leary proved that less was more and that to be felt was better than to be heard. Born in Carthage, Texas, in 1930, Leary and his family moved to Dallas early on. It was in Dallas that Leary kept the beat for the legendary blues guitarist T-Bone Walker. But it was after a stint in the army and after he had migrated to Chicago that Leary made his reputation as one of the steadiest and sweetest blues drummers in the Windy City.*

*The list of musicians S. P. Leary has played behind reads like a Who's Who of Chicago blues. That's why, at the Third Annual Chicago Blues Festival held last year, Leary, like his old friend and counterpart Fred Below, drew a standing ovation before he even hit a note.*

"It's nice to know some people remember and respect what I did," remarked Leary backstage after his set with Barrelhouse Chuck. "It's nice to know indeed."

**RS:** What's your earliest recollection of yourself as a drummer?

**SPL:** Well, let's see. I guess I'd have to go back to 1943 or so. My sister bought me a snare drum that year. She knew I was always beatin' on something, so when she saw one for the right price, she bought it. I've been drumming ever since. It took a long time, though, before I got my first real set of drums. I just worked out on that snare for a long time.

**RS:** Early on in your career, you had the opportunity to play with T-Bone Walker. How did you wind up playing with him?

**SPL:** I'd been playing the blues, and T-Bone discovered me. He gave me a job. But because I was young—like 14—he had to come up to my house to pick me up and drop me off each night. That's the way my folks wanted it. I had to ride with him all the time. During that time, there weren't any kids my age able to go into

only been since joining Jimmy Johnson's blues band that he's begun to get some outside recognition. At age 34, he's old enough to recall and to have been influenced by such legendary blues drummers as Fred Below and S.P. Leary. Yet, he's young enough to be considered part of the new generation of blues players. He brings to the blues a keen sense of tradition and a remarkably strong respect for standard blues. However, he's never been afraid to insert fresh ideas into his drumming.

For this reason, Grady is a good choice to represent Chicago's new breed of blues drummers. As he points out in the following interview, young blues drummers often borrow from rock and rhythm & blues, and in the process, are slowly but surely redefining the role of a blues drummer. Grady's drum style can be summed up this way: cool, crisp, a touch of funk here, a dash of rock there but always mindful, as he says, "to keep my job of laying down the beat in front of everything else I do."

**RS:** You weren't always a blues drummer. You crossed over from

nightclubs. You had to have an elder be responsible for you. T-Bone, Lowell Fulson, and Big Joe Turner helped me through the mill.

**RS:** Looking back, I'm sure that playing at such an early age with such great musicians must have given you a wealth of experience.

**SPL:** Well, it did. I never did run with kids my own age. I'd go to school with kids my age, but after school, I'd be with the big boys trying to learn something.

**RS:** What was T-Bone like?

**SPL:** T-Bone was a gift to music. Along with Lowell Fulson, he was one of the creators of electric blues guitar. All of today's electric blues guitarists can thank T-Bone and Lowell for what they did.

**RS:** What do you remember about playing with T-Bone?

**SPL:** He made me learn how to play with the brushes because he didn't like sticks. He didn't like loud beats. He just wanted that drive—that steady drive, you know. He didn't want you to get

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funk and Top 40, correct?

**FG:** That's true. In the '70s, I played in mostly funk groups around Chicago. But in 1979, I switched over to the blues. I started out free-lancing around the city, and I played with a bunch of different blues artists. I'd work four or five nights a week with pretty much everyone around town. I did that until I met Jimmy Johnson. He was working steady enough to keep everything happening, so I hung around.

**RS:** But why the change to the blues?

**FG:** Two reasons: first, because I always loved the blues and, second, because I had friends who actually found a way to make a decent living as blues musicians. It used to be that you couldn't make any money playing the blues, and that kept a good many players away from playing it regularly. Blues musicians have to eat just like anyone else, you see. So when I saw that I could make a decent living, plus get to travel to places like Europe and still have a couple of dollars in my pocket, well, I made the switch.

**RS:** Did you grow up listening to the blues?

**FG:** Yeah, I did. I came up listening to the blues and hung out at blues clubs. I knew the music. I was born and raised in Chicago, so there was no getting away from the blues even if I wanted to.

**RS:** What neighborhood of Chicago did you grow up in?

**FG:** I grew up pretty close to the Checkerboard Lounge. Junior Wells, Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters—they all played there. I'd hang out there and listen to these players, and I'd be torn between playing the blues and playing funk. I loved the earthiness of the blues, but I also dug the rhythms heard in funk music.

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

**FG:** Oh, when I was about 16. So I've been playing for about 18 years now, although it doesn't seem that long. I always loved the drums—always loved the way they sounded in a band. As a kid, I'd beat pots and pans, and then I went out and got some real drums. I went down in the basement and learned how to play them, and a year later, I was in my first band.

**RS:** Did you take drum lessons?

**FG:** No, but I had friends who took lessons, and I would learn what they learned.

**RS:** From a drummer's point of view, was it difficult for you to make the transition from funk to the blues?

**FG:** No, not really. When I was playing in funk bands, I'd still make it to the blues clubs and sit in whenever I could. I'd play with local bands. But in order to sit in, you had to know how to play the blues. You couldn't play like you were stuck in a funk groove. They'd throw you off the stage.

**RS:** It seems that a number of young blues musicians did, and still do, the very same thing. They play in contemporary soul or funk bands around the city, and jam with blues musicians until they make the change. Would you say that's a fairly accurate state-

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Photo by Robert Santelli



## FRED GRADY

Although Fred Grady is well known in Chicago blues circles, it's

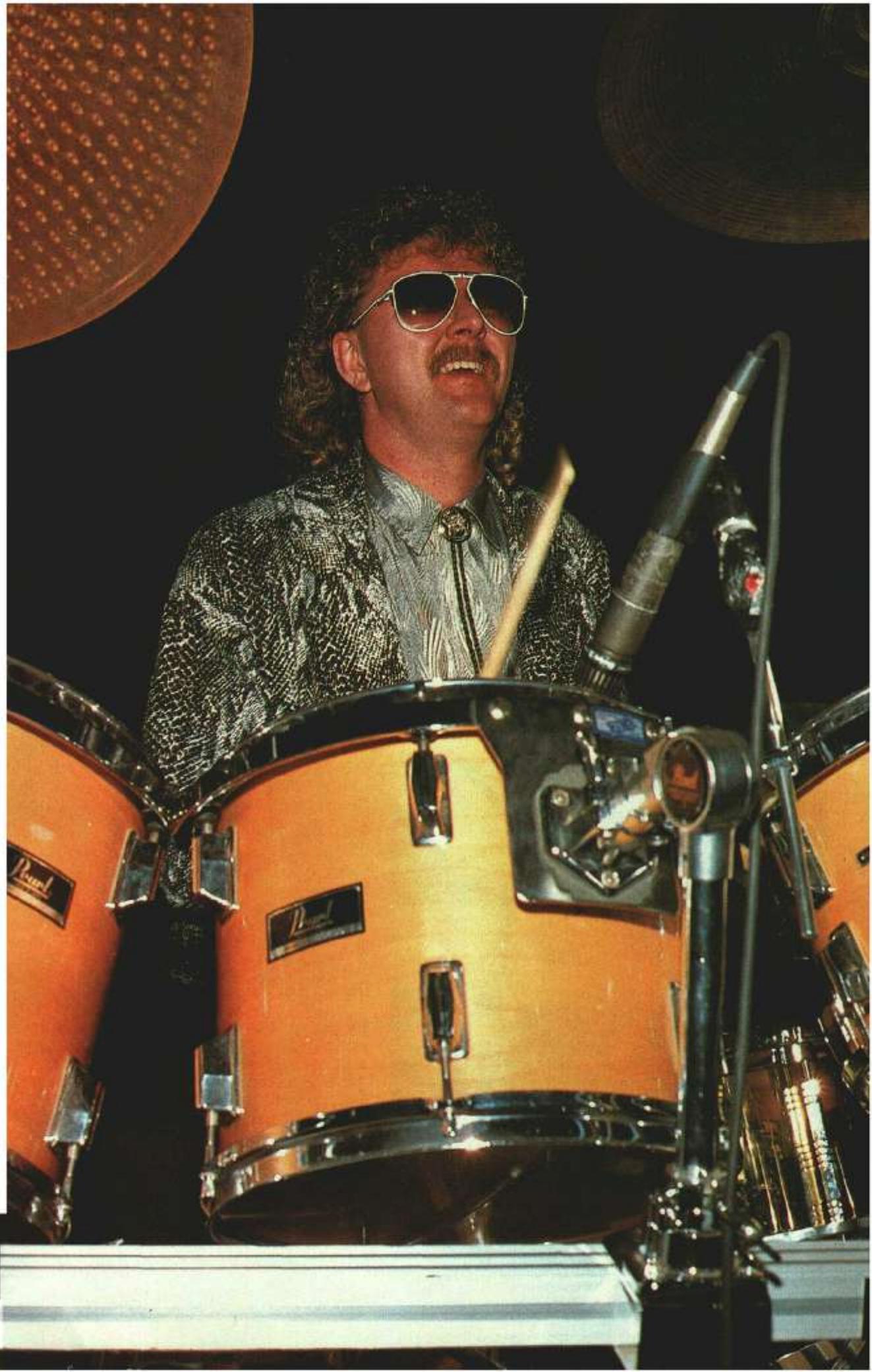


Photo by Rick Makin

by William F. Miller

# JOE Smyth

**W**HEN a person decides to make music a "career," it can be interesting to see how many different directions that career can go in. Take Joe Smyth: He started out with a desire to be a great jazz drummer. Then, he found himself in a situation where he discovered a love for legit percussion. He pursued that avenue and became an accomplished percussionist. After being a composition major at the Berklee College Of Music and then receiving his master's in applied percussion from the University Of Miami, he decided to pursue a career as a university instructor, and was getting offers to do so. But another change happened in this talented musician's career. Through talent, fate, or whatever, he's now playing drums with one of the most popular country/rock bands performing today, Sawyer Brown.

After a year and a half of constant touring (with over 300 dates in one year) playing the club circuit throughout the South and Midwest, Sawyer Brown got a break that many performers only dream of. They were chosen to compete on a new television show in 1984: Star Search. Thanks to all of that dues paying the band did, they were ready. The band won the vocal group category for a total of 12 weeks, with the group eventually taking the finals. That national exposure gave them the break they needed. From there, Sawyer Brown signed a record deal with Capitol Records, which has led to three successful albums: Sawyer Brown, Shakin', and their current release, Out Goin' Cattin'. Sawyer Brown's combination of country, pop, and rock continues to bring in new fans, and Joe Smyth is enjoying the challenge of combining these styles in his approach to the drums. Joe's career has certainly been varied!

**WFM:** You're originally from Portland, Maine?

**JS:** Yeah, Westbrook, right next door to

Portland, which is about two hours north of Boston. Our music program in the town I grew up in was really head and shoulders above most music programs. It began in the fifth and sixth grades, and the person who ran the music program in the elementary grades was a trombonist. Don Doane is his name. In the 60s, he had been out on the road with Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, and Maynard Ferguson. He lived in New York awhile and said, "I want to move back to Maine and get out of it." So he's created a whole music community in Portland of players in big bands and small groups, and just evolved all that around himself.

So in fifth and sixth grade, I played on a parade drum and a drumpad. Don had a jazz club at the time. The first time I ever played behind a kit of drums was when he took me to the jazz club one afternoon and had me play on his drummer's kit. They had a Sunday afternoon jam session. He was slowly schooling me to be able to sit in at the club. So it was a great, great thing.

**WFM:** He must have seen something in you to take such an interest.

**JS:** Well, he lived for the kids anyway, but I think he had kind of a special interest in me. He was able to see things in different kids. In high school, we always had the top jazz band and the top marching band. We were also one of the first high schools to go to corps style marching, and we won a national field band competition in high school. I was lucky to have such a good early education in music. I also had excellent training in music theory. The high school band director had been in the first year of graduating comp majors at Berklee, so he had the Berklee system down. In a year, while I was still in high

school, he gave me about the first two years of Berklee on paper. When I ended up going to Berklee the next year, I had a jump on what was happening.

**WFM:** When you entered Berklee, did you have any background in percussion, or were you primarily a drumset player?

**JS:** Drumset was all I really played. In high school, the band director was knowledgeable enough to try to get me to study with the timpanist in the Portland Symphony. So I had a few mallet lessons and figured out the rest on my own. I was working on the other instruments then, but certainly not heavily. I could play a little tambourine or play a little timpani. It was all wrong, but I didn't know that at the time, [laughs] It was good, because even in the last couple of years of high school, I was able to do a little subbing with the local orchestra. So it was kind of neat to get to play alongside some legit players.

When I went to Berklee, it seemed like every year priorities changed. During my first year, all I wanted to be was the best jazz drummer in the world, so I'd bring my drumkit into the practice room every night and practice until the practice rooms closed. That was the first year. Then the second year, I got involved in studying with Dean Anderson, who's now the head of the department up there. He's probably the top free-lance, legit percussionist in Boston. When Vic Firth is sick for a recording session with the BSO, Dean does the timpani stuff and plays with the Pops. So I started studying legit mallets and timpani with him, and that's when I just wanted to be the best free-lancer in the world.

**WFM:** Was legit percussion required, or was it just something you found interesting?

**JS:** At Berklee I was a comp major, so I literally could have just done my weekly

## THE BIG BREAK

lesson and forgotten about it, but at the time, they only had three majors. They had applied, where you basically did nothing else but work on your instrument. There was music ed., and that was definitely out, because they weren't teaching you anything about music. But in the comp program, you learned the most just about the nuts and bolts of music. I was a comp major, but I really kept my playing up.

**WFM:** What turned you away from drumset?

**JS:** Well, actually the percussion and mallet end was just a new thing for me. I think it was a new challenge, and I'd been playing drumset for what seemed like forever. All the time I was at Berklee, I was working every weekend and teaching drumset three days a week back home. I guess that, if I had gotten into a real jazz situation or some kind of progressive drumset situation where I could have continued to really be challenged, I might have still stayed interested in it. During my first years at Berklee, in addition to my lessons at school, I was studying with Alan Dawson at his home, and certainly that was challenging. I learned a lot with him.

In my second year, I had lessons with Dean on legit mallets and timpani, and a lesson with Dawson on drumset. So trying

to prepare was really nuts. I'd practice until midnight or 1:00 in the morning, and then go home and start doing my homework. It was a pretty crazy year, but I think the percussion stuff was just more challenging. It was like a new instrument to learn. I continued to play drumset on the weekends. I played in bands and worked casually.

**WFM:** It wasn't like you were cutting it out. You were just adding something new.

**JS:** Right. It was something to continue to concentrate on. The drumset became a means of paying the bills, which it did very well, and not so much an instrument that I practiced. When I got out of Berklee, I decided to continue my studies at the University Of Miami. I was told that there was a lot of work in Miami. I could study and get practical experience. When I moved to Miami, I actually did fill in and sub for Fred Wickstrom [head of the U. Of M. percussion department], and I played timps with the Pops. I got to play some good bell excerpts, and I played "Nutcracker" on the tambourine and all the things you practice but never get a chance to do. So it was great to actually do that. I looked at Miami more as a degree and a chance to play.

At one point, I tried to be the best jazz

drummer in the world, then I tried to be the best free-lancer in the world, and then I learned enough about marimba to say, "Yeah, I want to be a marimba recitalist. That's what I want—just to play marimba. That's it." Then towards the end of the second year of Miami, I thought, "I want to be a college instructor. I want to play, but I want to be a college percussion instructor."

**WFM:** How did you go from wanting to be a college percussion instructor to playing drums in Nashville?

**JS:** I had a cousin up there, who was living just south of Nashville and working as Marty Robbins' bandleader. He played piano and trumpet with him, and was a very good musician and songwriter. He had a recording studio in his home. So I went up to visit him, and it was beautiful there. I thought, "It would be great if I could work up here—get some gigs happening." So I went back to Miami. This was like Thanksgiving weekend—the last year I was in Miami—1980. In '81 during spring break, I took my wife up to Nashville for a week. She liked it, so we decided to move. So I kind of dusted off my drumset, [laughs] It was kind of a revelation, because I hadn't been playing it for two years. I was doing gigs on xylophone, tri-





angle, and crash cymbals. I took a few casuals and did some bar mitzvahs in Miami Beach to get back playing, and moved to Nashville. I was staying at my cousin's place, and I had gone to the union to transfer membership. I put my name on a list of new people in town. I came home the second day, and my cousin said, "You're not going to believe this, but you got a call." It was from a guy named Don King, who was a young singer—kind of country rock—who was on CBS Epic records. So I ended up working the end of that first summer that we were in Nashville with Don. It turned out that the guys that I'm working with now in Sawyer Brown were all the rest of his band. So that was the connection.

It was a weird thing, because when I got out of Miami, I still was thinking about teaching percussion on the college level. I had sent out a few resumes, but nothing had come back yet. After moving to Nashville, I found out that four colleges were considering me for a teaching position. It was a real hard decision, because I knew how few openings there were to teach percussion at a college level. Finally, one of them called and said, "You're one of the three people we want to interview. We want you to come down next weekend, and meet the president of the university and the president of the music school." I moved to Nashville and really wanted to pursue the playing scene there. I can still remember the conversation I had with the university people. After all this stuff of submitting and resubmitting tapes and talking to these people, it was like, "I've reconsidered. I

don't think I want the job. Thanks. Bye." [laughs] I hung up and I thought, "Gosh, what am I doing? This last year of my life I've been preparing myself to be a university professor, and I've just turned down a job. There are hundreds of people getting out of colleges who would give their eye teeth for an opportunity to teach at any university, and I just turned it down."

**WFM:** So what happened to your gig with Don King?

**JS:** Well, it's funny, because after the summer was over, I left the group. We basically all split up. His career wasn't going real well with CBS or playing live. As his jobs got fewer and thinner, everybody kind of left his employ. I spent four months doing absolutely nothing in Nashville. My wife was a nurse, so she was making enough money for us to live on.

Then in April of the next year, the five of us who had worked as Don's backup group said, "Hey, we work well together. Let's put this thing back together on our own without Don." There was nowhere to play in Nashville, so we immediately had to take it out on the road, and that's how Sawyer Brown got started.

**WFM:** What kind of material were you

doing?

**JS:** Basically Top 40 country—what was on the charts country-wise, and even from the very beginning a few originals. Mark, our lead singer, moved to Nashville to be a songwriter, and so we were doing some of his songs from the beginning. I'd never played country music. Where I'm from in New England, country musicians were into another circuit where you never met them. So I felt like I wasn't on familiar turf musically. I didn't listen to country radio. So if the song felt like this was the way it was supposed to go, that's the way I played it. Nobody in the group really has a strong country background. Bobby, our guitarist, is probably from the most traditional background of playing country, and the bass player was a jazz and rock 'n' roll bass player. The way our sound is today is because none of us came from a Merle Haggard/George Jones school of traditional country.

As it progressed, our style kind of emerged more. So if whatever was number one on the country charts that week didn't fit the style of what we were doing, we just didn't do the song. We kind of picked and chose those songs that fit in with what we were doing. At the time, I don't think there was any super-conscious thought behind a certain style of music. It just was kind of happening. We played in the clubs for a year and a half before getting on *Star Search*, so we really were in front of a lot of people. We played 300 nights that first year. We'd go out of Nashville, play for seven weeks, and not see our families. It was Holiday Inns and Ramada Inns five sets a night, six nights a week, two weeks in a town, and we'd go nuts.

**WFM:** And you're still married?

**JS:** Yes, it's amazing. Our wives would come out for a week on the road here or there. But we got in front of audiences to see what would work and what didn't work. So we had all that growing time. We were able to grow as a group, and find out what worked and didn't work for us.

**WFM:** Isn't it hard to stay motivated playing five hours a night and 300 dates a year? I would imagine the money isn't good.

**JS:** No, at that level when you're doing that kind of hotel nightclub, the money is very bad. At the end of the year doing that,

*continued on page 90*



# PRO-MARK

## INSIDE:

Herb Brochstein—  
founder and president.



**H**erb Brochstein may not be the nicest man in the percussion industry, but he certainly is a top contender for that distinction. As might be expected from a "Southern Gentleman" born and raised in Houston, Texas, Herb is warm, gracious, and hospitable. He is also astute, insightful, and keenly aware of shifting trends in the music business. A lifelong drummer, as well as founder and president of Pro-Mark, Herb is dedicated

to the proposition that all drummers have a right to a quality product, superb service, and a source on which they can depend for the drumstick that meets their needs. Along with his son Maury, who serves as the company's vice-president, and National Sales and Artist Relations Manager Pat Brown, Herb directs the operations of the Pro-Mark company around the world with a personal attention to present day details and a forward-looking approach to product development. MD recently had the opportunity to visit with Herb, Maury, and Pat at the Pro-Mark factory in Houston, in order to learn the history and share the views of this remarkable man and his company.

**RVH:** I am curious about your evolution from drummer to retailer, drumstick distributor, and ultimately drumstick manufacturer. Let's start with how you got into the retail drum shop business.

**HB:** After I got out of the navy at the end of World War II, I went to Chicago, where I studied with Bobby Christian. When I got back to Houston in 1948, I started working with the best local jobbing bands. I'd say that I got the first call for the majority of any recording work that was done e mostly commercial jingles and things like that. I also played with probably the most

prominent local big band at the time. Big bands have always been my thing. I just wanted to play and teach, because I enjoyed playing and got such a reward out of teaching.

As I recall, the thing that put me in the retail business was the first adjustable hi-hat stand. No one had ever seen anything like it before; all previous hi-hat stands were one standard height. When I got back from Chicago, I went to the most established local music store and said, "I'd like my students to get these new hi-hats. You can contact Frank's Drum Shop in Chicago. They'll sell them to you at a discount." Lo and behold, my students would come back and show me what they'd bought, and it wasn't the right hi-hat stand. Apparently, the store had decided to sell what they had in stock. So I contacted a wholesaler I had met in Chicago and asked, "Can you send me a hi-hat stand for Johnny Smith?" He said, "Yeah." So I got one for Johnny Smith. Then a pro player saw it, and I got him one. I sold them for whatever they cost me. That may sound terribly corny, but that's what happened. After I had ordered probably ten or 15 hi-hats, one or two at a time, the wholesaler said, "Look, why don't you let me send you down some on consignment?"



Maury Brochstein displays the hickory dowels that are the starting point for the drumsticks manufactured at the Houston facility.

# MARK

by Rick Van Horn

ment? I'll also send a set of drums and some cymbals. When you sell them, you pay me. You're going to have to pay transportation, so you'll have to add something in order to come out ahead. You can still give a discount to your students and friends." I didn't know debits and credits or anything like that, but I understood that. So that's what I did. He sent down several thousand dollars' worth of equipment, and I started selling it.

I was operating a place called the Houston School of Music. I had a lot of drum students. We had a saxophone teacher, a clarinet teacher, and a trumpet teacher all the best players in town. Well, after a year and a half of that, I realized that the other teachers weren't carrying the load. I took an inventory one day, and we were three or four thousand dollars short some way or other. So I contacted the wholesaler in Chicago and told him we were going to be closing the school down. Another dealer in town Paul Stewart had offered to give me space in his accordion studio and just have me teach drums for him. He was going to include a drum shop that would provide my students with the latest equipment. About the shortage, I said, "I'll pay you. It's going to take me a year, but I'll pay you so much a month." I didn't understand what had happened. I was so inexperienced at it. Fortunately, in the last three or four months of operation before we closed down, we sold enough so that I didn't have to pay this man off on time; we had enough to pay him off in full. Then I opened a drum shop as a section of Paul's big accordion studio. We ordered \$1,900 worth of cymbals and drums. Before they came in, Paul said, "You know, I've been thinking about this drum shop. Why don't you go ahead and own all the merchandise that we've ordered, and I'll let you stay up here rent-free?" I had been there about a month by then, and I had just gotten married. I thought, "Well, okay," but I didn't have any money.

My mother loaned me a thousand bucks. My brother took me to a bank and cosigned a note for \$900 to make the \$1,900. The stuff came in, and I set it up. I must have stayed up there for six or seven



*The dowels are shaped into sticks on two specially designed German lathes.*

months. Then Paul needed some of the space, and then he needed a little more. By this time, I had a chance to move to a house that my mother owned, two doors down from where she lived. My wife and I lived in a bedroom and kitchen. The rest of the house was the studio and the waiting room for the parents and the kids. The breakfast room had one small showcase and room for one set of drums. That's what started me in business. I guess you couldn't start with \$1,900 anymore, could you? [laughs] But even at that time, I was still only doing it as a hobby.. I had no intention of becoming a businessman, because I wanted to be a drummer.

I remember having a cigar box, and when I got paid from the gig - 75 bucks - it went in the cigar box. When I got money from lessons, it went in the cigar box. When I needed to buy groceries, it came out of the cigar box. After about a year of that, my brother, who's a CPA, came to me and said, "You've got a problem. You're in business, whether you want to be or not, and you have to keep records. All you've got to do is get a ten-cent sales book and just write down what you sell. Give me the tickets every week, and someone in the office will keep track, because you've got to pay taxes." I didn't think that was such a good idea, [laughs] But I listened to him, and I really didn't pay much attention to

business for a number of years. I just left it up to him. Quite by accident, I learned a debit from a credit after five or six years.

I remember meeting Louie Bellson that



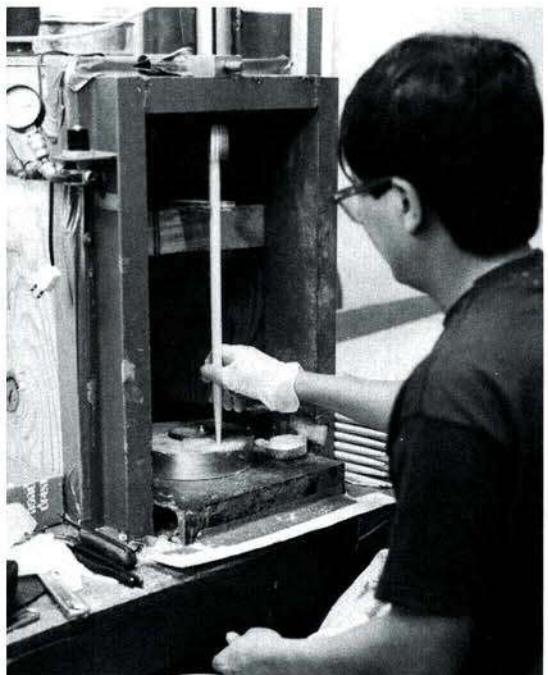
*After shaping, each stick is hand-fed through a sanding machine.*



Small batches of sticks are dipped in sealers and lacquer under careful supervision.

year. He was with Duke Ellington. I was selling Gretsch drums. I met Louie, and we became very, very close friends and hung out a lot together. Shelly Manne passed through town with Stan Kenton a few years after that. They both advised me not to give up the drum shop. I remember Shelly told me, "There are only about ten bands that anybody really wants to play with. I'm playing with one of them." That was probably true then.

Anyway, seeing a couple of guys with Woody's band who wanted to get off the road, settle in Houston, and make 75 or 80 bucks a week made me stop and think that maybe I didn't want to travel and get famous. Shortly after that, our first child



Nylon tips are individually applied by a glue-and-pressure method.

arrived. When you've got those other mouths to feed and those responsibilities . . . well, I don't have to relate anything else there to you. But I still was playing quite steadily, and although the financial reward was just adequate to keep a roof over our heads, the personal reward as far as I was concerned was worth thousands of dollars a week. I just couldn't measure the feeling of satisfaction that I had in dollars and cents.

About that time, I remember getting an order from the school district for three little single-tension parade drums. I must have made five dollars apiece on them. I shined the chrome, took the drums to the schools, and told them, "Here's how you tune them. This is a snare throw-off, and this is the snare strainer." The next year, the school district asked for one bass drum. My competitors, in an effort to keep me out of it, bid the order at cost. I had figured out what transportation was going to be and added a ten-dollar profit. Naturally, I didn't get the order. Well, I was crushed. A traveling salesman was kind enough to tell me what had happened. I was perplexed. I had offered to do service work for these other stores, at cost, and to give them anything I had at cost repair parts and so forth. They didn't know how to repair drums anyway. But I was considered an outlaw by the three major stores in town at that time.

The following year, some new schools were opening. I was invited to bid on Souffaphones, baritone horns, oboes, drums, timpani - probably \$10,000 or \$15,000 worth of stuff. There was a wholesaler in San Antonio from whom I had been buying a few little things. I contacted him, and he said, "Send me the bid list and I'll help you figure it out." I was going to make \$1,000 if I got this order, and that was a lot of money. So I made the bid, but I didn't go to the opening of the bids as the other stores did. I found out later that the three stores had gotten together and rigged the bid so that they each got a third of it. This was highly illegal, but they had been doing it for years. It was another reason why they didn't want an outsider, so to speak, coming in. Even though I was born and raised in Houston a local boy they didn't want the local boy to make good. I became very discouraged, and I knew then that I didn't want to be a businessman. "I don't know what to do," I thought. "I've never worked in a music store. I don't know how to do it, can't seem to learn how to do it, and I want to be a drummer anyway."

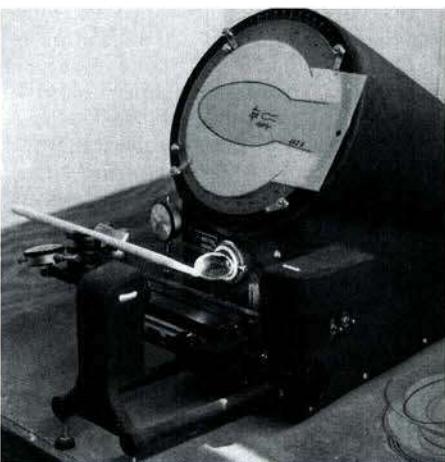
But after some weeks of waiting, I got a phone call one day. I must have been 24 or 25 years old. "Hello, Mr. Brochstein? This is the Houston Independent School District calling. You've been awarded the entire bid." That night, I got a call from the wholesaler in San Antonio. He had heard from the three other music stores. If he filled the order, they were going to boy-

cott him. I said, "Well, I know a man in Chicago who can fill the order. I don't want to jeopardize your business." The wholesaler, Maxwell Myers I had never met the man said, "No, I'm going to fill the order. I can't have dealers telling me who I can sell to and who I can't." Of course, they did boycott him for several years, but that actually put me in the music business. You see, if those guys had just let me sell a few drums, they wouldn't have put a fire under me. I had to become successful just to show them I could do it. Ultimately, I developed into a full-range music store, but we always maintained our drum shop within that store. That was a long way around your question, but I had to reconstruct it all for you.

**RVH:** How did music retailing lead you into drumstick sales?

**HB:** It all started when I bought six pairs of sticks from a traveling salesman. I didn't know what kind of wood they were; nobody said "oak" to me. As a matter of fact, they were Japanese oak, which is different from many species of American oak

I was playing with a big band here in town one night. Jake Hanna was passing

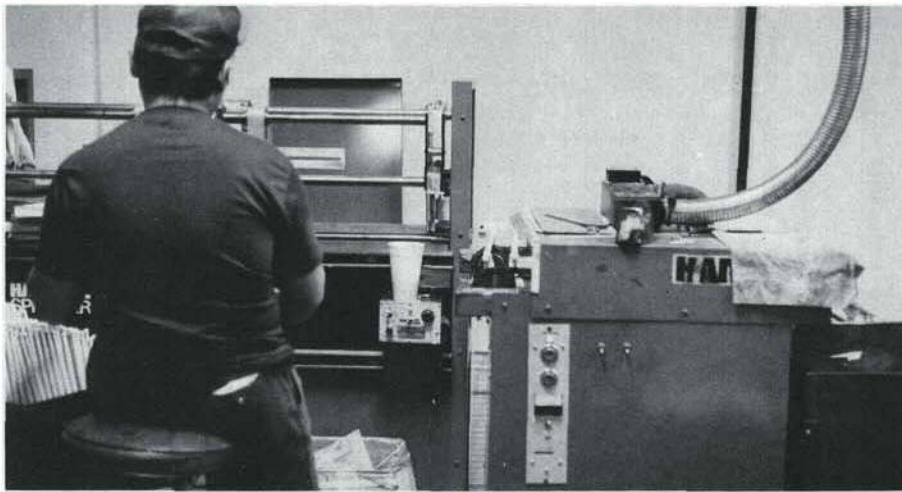


Sticks are periodically checked against an electronic Comparator. This gives an indication of any variation in the shaping and can determine whether a lathe knife needs replacing.

through, and he sat in for a set. While he was playing, I thought my cymbals sounded very mushy; they didn't have that bright "ping" sound that everybody was looking for at that time. When I went back up to play, I looked at the sticks Jake had played with, and saw that they were a pair of Gretsch sticks he had selected from my trap case. Then I picked up that pair of Japanese sticks and hit the cymbal: "Ping!" And I'd been playing this pair for three or four nights a week for close to a year! I was just amazed. It was then that I realized that whatever that wood was it was better than the domestic stuff. That's when I tried to find the source of supply.

**RVH:** Which was no mean research feat, as I understand.

**HB:** That's right. I wrote to the Japanese



*The Pro-Mark logo, model numbers, and various personalizations are applied to the sticks via a silk-screen process. An ultra-violet machine dries the ink in seconds.*

Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Japanese embassy. I had no results for about six months, so I just gave up. Then, out of the blue, I got an inquiry in the mail from a trade company in Japan that wanted to sell me guitars and ukuleles. I wrote them and said, "I'm not interested in guitars or ukes, but I am interested in a Japanese drumstik. Can you locate a source of supply?" They said, "Send us a sample." So I did, and in a very short time, they located not only a source, but the source that had made those drumsticks. But they required something like 1,200 pairs as a minimum order.

Now, in my drum shop, I'd only been buying a couple of hundred pairs of sticks at a time perhaps 300 assorted pairs, tops and that was more than all the other stores in Houston put together would buy at a time. So I went to the three other stores that had tried to sink my ship. I said,

"Look at these sticks - fantastic quality. They're going to last longer and sound better. We're going to give the people more for their money. If you want to go in and share the order with me, we'll share all of the expenses evenly, and you can take whatever portion you want." All three of them turned me down for which I'm eternally grateful. So I made the commitment for all 1,200 pairs.

The sticks came in, and their quality was superb. At that time, most of the domestic companies were just sawing the sticks off on the butt end, and some of the tips were larger or smaller than others. It would be like buying a pair of shoes consisting of one size five and one size eight. They didn't pay that much attention to the shape of the taper, or the neck, or the tip, or the finish. I may have been excessively particular, but I'm glad that I was because it all worked out very well.

**RVH:** How was the name "Pro-Mark" created?

**HB:** My oldest daughter was nicknamed "The Pro," and my second daughter's name was Marka. The name "Pro-Mark" could signify the *mark* of a professional. I must have considered 20 names, but "Pro-Mark" sounded good and looked good, so that was it.

**RVH:** How did you get from retailing the Pro-Mark drumsticks only through your store to becoming a major distributor?

**HB:** I got a call one day from a wholesaler who wanted to know if he could buy Pro-Mark sticks. Another traveling salesman friend of mine had mentioned the sticks to some of his customers in Florida, and those dealers started ordering the sticks. I was on an ego trip. I was so happy that I had created a name and a product that people liked and were asking for. That was the beginning of Pro-Mark as far as domestic distribution was concerned. It was some years later that we went into worldwide distribution.

**RVH:** At what point did you give up the

retail operation and get into drumstick distribution exclusively?

**HB:** In 1966, I was involved in a custody suit with my ex-wife involving three children. At that time, a musician was automatically considered a drunkard, a drug addict, and a no-good. In filing that suit, I knew that I had to stop playing and be a very straight businessman. So I hung the drums up in 1966. About the same time, I became disenchanted with the retail business. I had an opportunity to sell my business ironically, to one of the three music stores that had tried to bury me. So I sold the retail store in 1968 and started just selling drumsticks, with a part-time secretary and a part-time shipping clerk.

**RVH:** And at this time you were selling strictly the Japanese imported sticks?

**HB:** Right. But about 1972, I felt the need for expansion into hickory sticks. We had been approached by a small company in New Jersey, and had sent samples back and forth. I felt that they could make a quality stick that would be better than those any of the major drum companies were putting out. We planned to have a limited line six or seven models. So they started making sticks for me. We got into the factory operation here in Houston a bit later.

**RVH:** I'm interested in how that jump from distributor to manufacturer came about.

**HB:** In 1973, Remo, Inc. acquired Pro-Mark. There were periodic shortages of oak wood from Japan, and we would be short on our deliveries of oak sticks. We became concerned about what would happen if there was some world crisis affecting the wood supply, and we thought that perhaps we should learn how to make our own sticks. So somewhere around 1978, we seriously began looking at various kinds of equipment, including sophisticated lathes. The Houston manufacturing facility we're in now opened in May of 1981.

**RVH:** How did you actually learn to make the hickory sticks?

*continued on page 98*



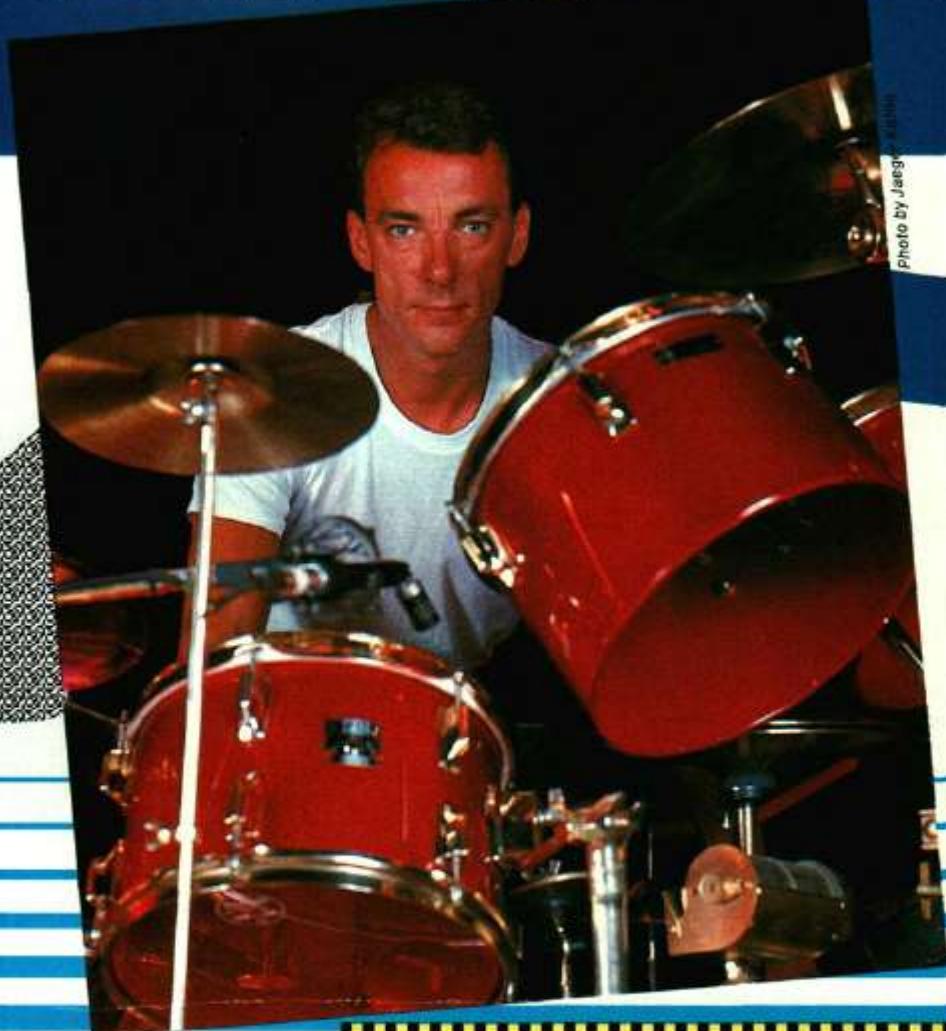
*Pat Brown displays a few of the special silk screens used to prepare custom sticks for artists and distributors.*



*As a final step before packaging, every Pro-Mark stick is rolled on a mirror to ensure its straightness.*

# Just Another Dru

## Win Neil's Drums



### OFFICIAL RULES

1. Cassette tapes only; no microcassettes or reel-to-reels.
2. Solo must be two minutes or less in length.
3. Solo should consist of a drummer's performance only; no accompanying musicians, sequencers, drum machines, etc. Also, no overdubbing.
4. Solo must be original in nature; reproductions of previously recorded or printed solos are not acceptable.
5. Only one tape per drummer will be accepted.
6. No spoken material allowed on tape.
7. Cassette must be clearly marked with drummer's name, address, and phone number. (Please mark the cassette itself—not the box.)
8. A signed official entry form must accompany cassette (original or photocopy). No other written material, photos, etc., will be accepted. (If contestant is under 18 years of age, the contestant's legal guardian must sign the entry form.)
9. Entry must be postmarked no later than April 30, 1987.
10. Tapes become the property of Modern Drummer Publications and cannot be returned.
11. Winners will be announced in the October 1987 issue of Modern Drummer.
12. Void where prohibited.

Mail entry forms to:

Modern Drummer, Attn: Neil Peart Drumset Giveaway  
870 Pompton Ave., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009

### THE OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM FOR THE NEIL PEART DRUMSET GIVEAWAY

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

I have read the rules governing the Neil Peart Drumset Giveaway, and I agree to abide by them.

PHONE NUMBER

YOUR SIGNATURE OR THE SIGNATURE OF YOUR LEGAL GUARDIAN

# mset Giveaway!

Fellow Drummers:

I have recently put together a new drumset for myself (about which more will appear in the next issue of MD), and I'm starting to feel like I have too many good drums just sitting around. (You should have such problems, right?) Now, I'm not greedy, and all these drums are more than I really need. If I have one drumkit for touring and recording, and one at home for practice and recreation, what use can I possibly have for all these others? The answer, I've decided, is none; thus, I have decided to give the extra ones away.

Some of you may recall that a few years ago I gave away a nice Tama kit by means of an essay contest here in MD. This worked out quite well, as I was able to choose a deserving winner by way of his words, and he in turn was generous enough to pass his drums along to the person I chose as runner-up. The only trouble was that I had to read 4,625 essays, which took up rather a large portion of my holidays! It was more than I bargained for, I'd have to say, though I'm glad I did it - once!

So this time, I put my ideas together with the people here at MD, and we decided to do it a little differently. We would like to hear a taped drum performance from you. You have determined a limit of two minutes, to be recorded on a cassette tape, in which you can express what you feel is your best work. If you wish to make it shorter, that's fine (we judges won't mind!), but please don't bother to make it longer, as we judges won't be listening!

Recording quality will not be taken into account, so don't worry too much about that. We will be looking for things like originality, technique, structure, imagination, musicality - the intangible qualities that together make a good musician. Play any style, any approach you like; there are no limitations save your own (and the two-minute one!).

So give it your best thought, give it your best shot, and put it in the mail slot. (This guy writes lyrics?) We await your entries with open ears.

**First Prize** - One Candy Apple Red Tama kit (the prototype Artstar shells), with two 24" bass drums, 6", 8", 10", and 12" concert toms, and 12", 13", 15", and 18" toms. All the drums have brass-plated hardware. There is also the "satellite" kit consisting of an 18" bass drum, four matching red Simmons pads, and a Simmons SDS 5 module. Oh all right, I'll throw in a 13" wood-shell timbale and a 22" gong bass drum, too. (This setup was used in the recording of *Power Windows*, *Grace Under Pressure*, and *Signals*, as well as the subsequent tours.)

**Second Prize** - One Black Chrome Slingerland kit, with two 24" bass drums, 6", 8", 10", and 12" concert toms, 12", 13", 15", and 18" toms, and a pair of 13" and 14" brass timbales. (This kit was used in the recording of *A Farewell To Kings* and *Hemispheres*, and the endless tours which followed them!)

**Third Prize** - One Chrome Slingerland kit, with two 22" bass drums, 6", 8", 10", and 12" concert toms (copper finish), two 13" toms, one 14" tom, a 16" floor tom, and a chrome timbale. (Used in the recording of *Fly By Night*, *Caress Of Steel*, *2112*, *All The World's A Stage*, and on those equally endless tours.)

All the kits are complete with basic mounting hardware and heads, and even a few stands as well. I'm sorry there are no snare drums for any of the kits, but I'm keeping the one snare that all those kits had in common! (Some things you just can't replace!) To quote once again from one of the entrants in the last contest: "Good luck is when preparation meets opportunity." So, Good Luck!

Yours truly,





**TAMA**



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*9mm, seven-ply birch shells, with Tama's exclusive plastic covering material that holds up to the abuses of the road - year after year. Available in eight finishes. All die-cast fittings on Granstar drums have been redesigned to have a bold, modern look. Tama's road-proven Omnilock tom holder has a radical new shape, with the emphasis on greater flexibility and better sound projection.*

*If you want drums that help you be seen as well as heard - visit your nearest authorized Tama dealer and check out Granstar - the sound of success.*



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Tama dealers.*

# Pan Fra



Photo by Joost Leijen

In a career that has spanned half a century, Panama Francis has made his mark as both a big band and a rock 'n' roll drummer. During the swing era, he powered the bands of Roy Eldridge, Willie Bryant, Lucky Millinder, and Cab Galloway. In the '50s, he had a second career, becoming known as the rock 'n' roll drummer. He recorded with such artists as Buddy Holly, The Coasters, Delia Reese, Neil Sedaka, The Platters, Frankie Avalon, Big Joe Turner, Paul Anka, The Tokens, Bobby Freeman, Connie Francis, Jackie Wilson, Brook Benton, The Flamingoes, Sam "The Man" Taylor, Fabian, Bobby Darin, James Brown, and The Four Seasons. He also recorded with vocalists ranging from Wayne Newton and Johnny Mathis, to Ray Charles, Tony Bennett, and Sarah Vaughan.

Eventually, Francis came back to the sounds of his youth and to the music he loved most. Since the late '70s, Francis has led his Savoy Sultans: nine musicians and a vocalist dedicated to straight-ahead swing music. They play standards, big band specialties, and occasional new jazz instrumental, written by Francis, Wild Bill Davis, and others. Half of the year, you'll find Francis' band at New York's elegant Rainbow Room. But if you want to hear the band at its best, try to catch one of its appearances away from its base. The band often seems to tone things down at the Rainbow Room. It takes the wraps off, however, for jazz festival appearances and the like. The band also tours Europe periodically. One of Francis' albums reached the number-one position in France and the number-three position in England in 1979. The band records on the Stash label. Francis is glad to be back playing the swing repertoire. Rock 'n' roll drumming paid the bills, he says, but it wasn't always very

demanding, and the music wasn't particularly interesting to him.

Drummers aspiring to play in big bands are well-advised to check out Francis' technique. His band rides on the solid foundation you rarely hear anymore. Francis formed his style well before the advent of bebop. His model was Chick Webb, and his numerous rock 'n' roll records notwithstanding he remains one of the great exponents of classic swing drumming.

"These bands you hear today are all top and no bottom," Francis complains. "That's because there's no bass drum just a bass fiddle. And no bass fiddle has been able to give a jazz band bottom, like a bass drum can do. I still use my bass drum to keep time. I'm one of the few left. I never changed. The bass violin and the bass drum team up as one. You have to know how to control that bass drum, so you don't overplay it. You should be able to feel it more than hear it. This takes control. And you still have to have a certain sense of rhythm to do that," Francis says.

"It's not easy to play a bass drum. When Max Roach and Kenny Clarke came along, dropping bombs and things, that was an escape. They couldn't play time on the bass drum," Francis believes. "Max had great hands, because he was one of the young black drummers who was schooled. What he couldn't do with his foot, he did with his hands on snares and cymbals. He found a way out. Styles are often developed from shortcomings."

"It's hard to play time on the bass drum, because you have to have control and you need stamina. That's why anybody can play drums now. When I was coming up, not everyone could play drums. If you couldn't play time on the bass drum, you weren't considered a drummer."

"Take the average drummers today.

Offer them a thousand dollars to sit there and play time, and see if they can do it. Playing time is an art within itself. It takes years and years of learning how to control that bass drum how to play four beats to a bar or two beats to a bar. That's the reason why so many drummers will sit up and say, 'Well, you don't have to play time on the bass drum; you use the bass drum to accent.' That's a cop-out! It's because they can't play time."

In big band drumming, Francis believes playing less can often get you more results. "Knowing what to catch and what not to catch is something you don't learn in school. They write arrangements now, and the arranger will write in where you're supposed to fill, but you can't! If you're going to be filling in every place, then the band ain't gonna swing! You have to settle down, and know where to fill and where not to fill. You don't learn that in school. The young arrangers today have 'fill' written all through. If there's an open spot in the arrangement, they've got the drums filling it up. A lot of times, instead of playing a fill, you should just be playing straight rhythm through there to keep it swinging."

"That's why the bands don't swing today. The drummers are so busy showing off their rudimental training that they don't have time to play 'chi-chi-boom, chi-chi-boom, chi-chi-boom.' They want you to know that they can do a paradiddle. So the bands don't swing."

"I could go on any band right now, and you would tell the difference. If I were to play in that band, it'd sound like a different band," Francis says. "In the first place, the drummers are supposed to take charge; they're the quarterbacks. They can carry the band. They can pick up the tempo; they can drop the tempo. They can overshadow the band. They can play louder than anybody in the band. That's another thing that doesn't happen today. The drummers don't take charge. The drummers are supposed to take charge; they're the bosses. They used to say, during the big band days, that a band was no better than its drummer. The drummer makes the band swing, and the drummer is a very important person in a big band."

"Drummers like Sid Catlett and Jo Jones took pride in how they made the

# amancis

band swing and how they made the soloist sound good. When I was coming up, we didn't take pride in the drum solo. The solo was secondary. Drummers' solos are just like tap dancers'. Once drummers get out there and do their seven or eight minutes, they've done everything they're going to do. Back in the old days, drummers took pride in the way they made the band swing. Solos were secondary."

When Francis was a youth, the drummer he most admired and emulated was Chick Webb. He occasionally plays arrangements from Chick Webb's old book today, as a way of honoring that jazz pioneer. He also holds Big Sid Catlett in high esteem. Francis still treasures a memory of Catlett talking with him, when Panama was a teenager and Catlett was touring with Don Redman's band.

Francis' drumming was a bit different in his early years, if only because the equipment was different. On his first dance gig, in 1931, he used a 28" bass drum. "When I first started, I was playing mostly two beats, and the snare drum with press rolls. The only time I used a cymbal was behind the solos and on the going-out choruses. The first hi-hat I played was a floor model. Hi-hats weren't up high like today. They were made with two pieces of two-by-four, with a spring in the middle and two cymbals on the ends. Those cymbals were so thick that you could hear them two blocks away.

"Kaiser Marshall, the drummer with Fletcher Henderson, was the father of the hi-hat cymbal—the one we use today. He had the idea for it, but I started before we had hi-hats."

Francis notes that he's used Ludwig drums for more than 50 years. He mentions, as an aside, that he's probably made more hit records with Ludwig drums than any other drummer, going back to the early hits of Lucky Millinder. Yet, he's never been asked to so much as endorse a drumstick.

"I use a Ludwig snare, 24" bass, and the regular snare drum with the metal shell. I use a 16 x 16 tom-tom and a 9x 13 tom-tom. I use two 18" cymbals and one 14". Then I've got two 12" hi-hat cymbals. My cymbals are all Zildjians.

"My drums are over 25 years old. I look at drums like I look at any other wood

instrument. I feel that the older the wood, the better the sound. I have a bass drum that's got the most beautiful sound in the world. And I've got the same drumheads on it that I've had for the last 27 years! I haven't put a hole in a bass drum in quite a long time, so I have the same heads. They're calf heads. I mean, if you have a synthetic thing, you'll get a synthetic sound, right? The plastic heads—these are synthetic. You can't get a sound out of a synthetic head that you can get out of a cow's skin. When I tour, I take my trap case. I'm used to the sound of my cymbals and the sound of my snare drum. The bass and tom-tom are secondary," Francis says.

Cab Galloway had given up his band, and Francis was working at Birdland in New York when he began doing free-lance R&B sessions. He got into rock 'n' roll on the ground floor. The drumming wasn't particularly demanding. Later, he notes, other drummers would study the way he played backbeats during recording sessions, and would write down what he was doing, so they could master the new technique of rock 'n' roll. Francis says that a small cadre of musicians played on almost all of the early rock 'n' roll sides. He adds that, on many sides, he simply played rhythms he knew from Gospel music. He worked up ways of creating different sounds. He made some records with his wallet on the snare drum to produce a deader sound. There were records he made using drumsticks on a phone book rather than drums to get a certain effect. To give an example, he puts on the original demo of "Don't Be Cruel," with him backing songwriter Otis Blackwell, which Elvis Presley later copied to make his smash RCA recording. "I'm playing a phone book on that one," Francis notes. And on the hit recording of "Colonel Bogey's March" (the theme from the film, *Bridge On The River Kwai*), Francis recalls, "I put my snare drum on top of a 25" timpani. That's how I got that field drum sound heard on the record."

To Francis, much of the studio work was unchallenging. "I'd come home and my wife would say, 'Well, what did you record today?' And I'd say, 'I don't know.' And I didn't, because it was—you know a job. Some days I'd do as many as

by Chip Deffaa



Photo by Chip Deffaa

four or five recording sessions.

Francis enjoyed the financial success from the rock and pop studio sessions. It was a situation many musicians dreamed of. But he considered it something of a mixed blessing. He found himself getting slotted and was unhappy with that.

"You see, all of a sudden, I became the rock 'n' roll drummer." I was very embarrassed by it, because it was like a put-down. Some musicians would say, 'Oh here comes that rock 'n' roll drummer,' The label they put on me kept me out of a lot of other work. I was hurt and frustrated from it. I felt it was an injustice, because I could also play big band. What was I doing in Lucky Millinder's Band? What was I doing in Cab Galloway's Band that, all of a sudden, I couldn't play big band jazz anymore? All I got called for was rock 'n' roll. I knew as soon as the phone rang that it wasn't going to be for a big band date. I knew what it was going to be. The only time I got called for a big band date was when they wanted a backbeat on the record."

Francis was glad to take Dixieland gigs in New York. "At least I was close to playing like a big band." He was glad, too, for occasional dates with Ray Conniff (his big band and singers). He has the highest regard for Conniff, as a person and a professional. Eventually, things changed. In the '60s, Bernard Purdie and Gary Chester replaced him as New York's busiest session drummers. For five years, Francis played for Dinah Shore. "Working with her was one of the greatest jobs I've ever had. She's a beautiful human being," he adds.

He's come full circle now. Playing alongside him nightly, in his Savoy Sultans, is guitarist John Smith who sat next to him in Cab Galloway's big band 40 years

*continued on next page*

ago. Francis is glad to be kicking along his own band on old tunes like "Air Mail Special" and "Stompin' At The Savoy," and new things such as Wild Bill Davis' "Stolen Sweets" and his own "Funky Willie." Since there's a limited market for this kind of music today, he can't expect recordings with this band to enjoy great commercial success, though one of his albums received a Grammy nomination. And there's a certain satisfaction in playing the music you want to play, just the way you want to play it.

Francis notes one big difference in the music scene since he started out in the early '30s. "Young musicians are all schooled now," he notes. "None of the early great jazz drummers were schooled. They learned by trial and error, on the job and in jam sessions."

Francis is also skeptical about how much jazz musicians can learn in school. "Trying to teach somebody how to play jazz is like trying to teach somebody to perform sex. You can't teach people. You can give them an *idea*, but you can't teach jazz. You have to have the potential and learn by experience, because after you get the fundamentals down, you still have to know what to do with what you've got. That's why we've got so many mediocre musicians today in jazz. Nine out of ten of them never had any experience. They think they *know*, because they went to school and got a degree in music. But there's more to it than that."



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#### Readers' Platform continued from page 4

information for my student. All I can say is *thank you* from myself and all of the other instructors who use *MD* to provide expert opinions, working knowledge, and practical applications for topics we are trying to cover. Now we can easily use all of the good material compiled by *MD*.

Kevin D. Gazzara  
Director Of Marketing  
M&K Productions  
Harleysville, PA

I really enjoyed your December issue with the *Ten-Year Index* and the new hard binding. It prompted me to straighten out my collection of MDs and put them in chronological order. Looking back at the early copies makes one appreciate just how far you people have come, and how every aspect of *MD* has changed and improved. I know I speak for many others when I sincerely say *thank you* for your vision, and the perseverance to make that vision a reality. All of us drummers have benefited in the process.

M. Rupert Walden  
Slaughter, LA

#### READERS DEFEND TOMMY

*Editor's note:* In the Readers' Platform section of the December '86 *Modern Drummer*, readers David Saketkoo and Bill Sons presented letters critical of *MD*'s September '86 cover story on Tommy Lee. Response to those letters was quick and substantial. Here are three representative

examples.

In response to a letter submitted by a reader from Dallas, Texas, regarding the cover feature on Tommy Lee of Motley Crue, I see no reason why Tommy is not entitled to such recognition. I am not a fan of heavy metal, nor do I listen to Motley Crue. As a drummer and an avid reader of *Modern Drummer*, I am glad to see that there is a variety of different styles of drummers and drumming to take the spotlight now and then. Whether someone thinks that Tommy Lee's drumming is "primitive" or not is a matter of taste, and each listener is entitled to his or her own opinion. But to deny a fellow drummer—no matter what level of talent he possesses—a chance to tell his story, reveal his techniques, or explain his reasons is not fair. By granting Tommy Lee an interview, *Modern Drummer* expressed its flexibility in as tasteful and fair a manner as possible.

No one ever made a stink when Keith Moon demolished his drumkit at the end of a performance. Tommy Lee's talent lies in the ability to fulfill the expectations of his fans. He gives the people what they want!

Marc Egert  
Atlanta, GA

I'm writing in response to Bill Sons' and David Saketkoo's comments regarding Tommy Lee's cover story. I found myself upset with the attitude of these two gentle-

men. Showmanship is a big part of drumming more so today than ever. As far as Tommy's talent goes, I had the chance to catch the Crue in El Paso, and was very impressed with Tommy. I was also very glad he said that he was sticking up for drummers everywhere in reference to showmanship. Why do Mssrs. Sons and Saketkoo consider stick twirling and stick bouncing such a sin? I do it myself, and I consider myself a serious, professional drummer. It seems to me that Tommy is totally into drumming. Watching him play, I couldn't help but feel that he was having the time of his life and isn't that what music is all about?

Fernie Gutierrez  
Deming, NM

In response to Bill Sons' letter in the December issue, I must agree that there are better players than Tommy Lee. But his playing is certainly more than "talentless." People like Bill Sons should realize that Tommy is more of a drumming personality, preferring to "keep the beat" and use visuals (i.e., stick-twirling, tilting riser, etc.), rather than doing more complex things. Motley Crue's music was not made for bars in 9/8 time or a "light touch" on the cymbals. Tommy Lee is a very talented player who puts fun into drumming.

Andrew Wiseman  
Framingham, MA

# Roland Electronic Percussion Workshop Session 1

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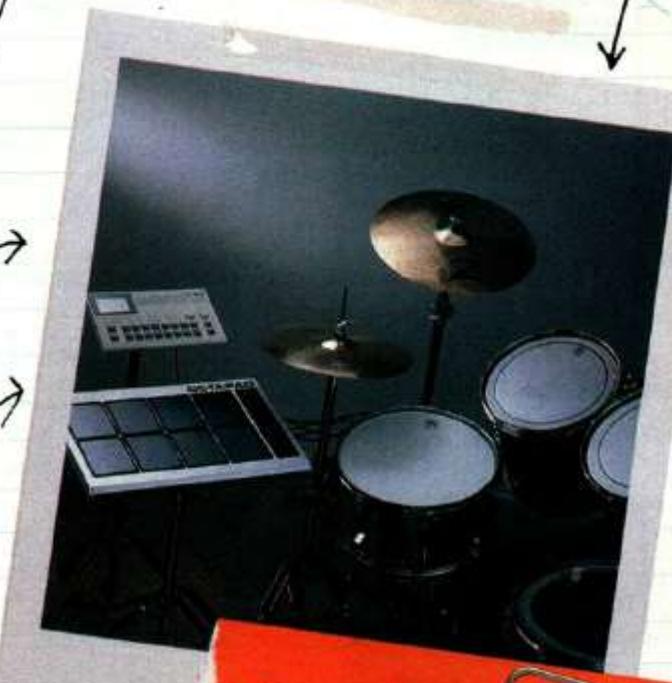
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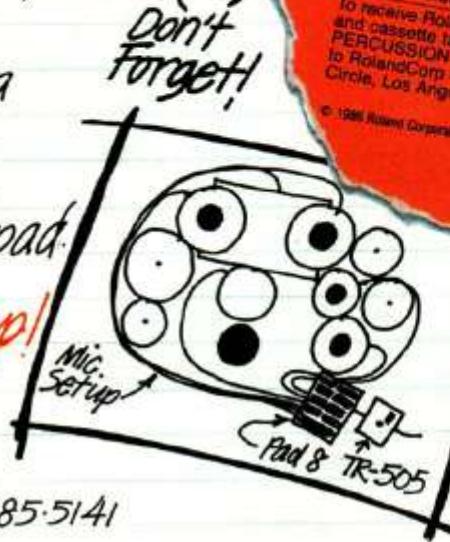
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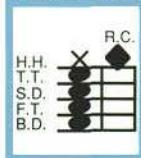
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by M. Rupert Walden

Photo by Ebet Roberts



## MUSIC KEY



This column will focus on a time feel that Steve Gadd has become known for. This beat is called the "mozambique," and I recently attended a clinic by Steve where he demonstrated it. The basic pattern is:

He creatively applied it a number of ways, such as with the right hand on the bell of the ride cymbal and the left hand on the snare drum:

Another way to apply it is with the right hand moving around the drumset (focus on the right hand):

The following patterns are simple variations on the mozambique. Use two basic approaches when playing these beats: the right hand on the snare drum with the left hand on the hi-hat, and the right hand on the bell of the ride cymbal with the left hand on the snare drum. Practice each pattern slowly until it becomes automatic. Then, shift your concentration to the right hand. This will aid you in coming up with your own combinations.

## Roland Electronic Percussion Workshop Session 2

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**GE:** We don't do it so much now, because with modern electronics, there's so much more pre-work done in the home. The equivalent of that now might be that Jus will ask me to help him with a program on his drum machine for a song he's working on. With these drum machines, we can get a bit of a program down, although obviously, we don't put the finished one down because things have a way of developing in the studio. We get a bit of a drum program down, we use that to run a couple of keyboards, and then Jus will put a couple of guitars down. We ram all that onto tape with some very good home equipment. It often can be used almost as the first take of the song.

**RF:** The electronics have had quite an effect.

**GE:** It's totally changed recording. Groups don't really play together anymore in the studio.

**RF:** How do you feel now being in the booth all by yourself, whereas before you got to play with other musicians?

**GE:** I love it. Before, I used to play with the other members, but it was a very, very basic track. They were in there just to give me some music to play with, because they knew that they were going to replace themselves at a later date. And if not that, they were going to have so many things on top of it that it was going to become virtually meaningless. That meant that I was playing with some very, very bland music and

trying to play orchestral Moodyes drums over the top of it. That required quite a lot of imagination. Now, I don't put the drums on until there's a whole bunch of music down. I'm playing with more than I've ever played with, so I love it this way. I used to have to play sort of safe fills that wouldn't get in the way of anything anyone else played. If I played anything more elaborate, it would screw up perhaps an interesting triplet run someone might have come up with.

**RF:** There must be some more current drum tracks you've done that you like.

**GE:** I like "The Other Side Of Life," but I love the song. The drumming is good on it, too, though. "Running Out Of Love" [from the LP *The Other Side Of Life*] is great. I love the backing track for that. When the vocal went on it, it changed the style. The track was very much swamp music, like Creedence Clearwater, before the sweet English vocal went on the top. I still have just the backing track. I also like what I played on "Veteran Cosmic Rocker" [from *Long Distance Voyager*]. It's so outrageous, and it has a touch of Ginger Baker about it.

**RF:** One of the interesting things was that little marching drum thing in "The Hole In The World" on *The Present*.

**GE:** The drum intro to "Under My Feet." Another name for that is "Hole In My Shoe," and actually, in my opinion, where it should have been recorded was the hole

in the record. I hated it.

**RF:** Yet, you were out front for a change.

**GE:** I just don't think it worked. I should have done at least 20 snare overdubs and had it as mass snares with that lonely, powerful guitar over the top. But because people were thinking about performing it live, it came out to be one snare, and I thought it sounded too small and too real.

**RF:** Wasn't it impossible to reproduce on stage half of what you did in the early days?

**GE:** There's never been a song that we've wanted to perform on stage that we haven't managed to do.

**RF:** Even back then when technology was so limited?

**GE:** Even back then. That's not to say that there weren't a couple that would have been impossible if we had wanted to do them. One of John's that I've always wanted to do, and one that we could have developed in the same way we developed "Isn't Life Strange," is "The House Of Four Doors." I always thought that was a smashing piece. That would probably be very difficult, because as he goes through the various doors, we play the different styles of music, but that's why I fancy it.

**RF:** There is a little instrumental piece on *On The Threshold Of A Dream* called "The Voyage." Was that fun to do?

**GE:** That was great. There was this idea and that idea and the other idea. Sometimes we've got so much going that it

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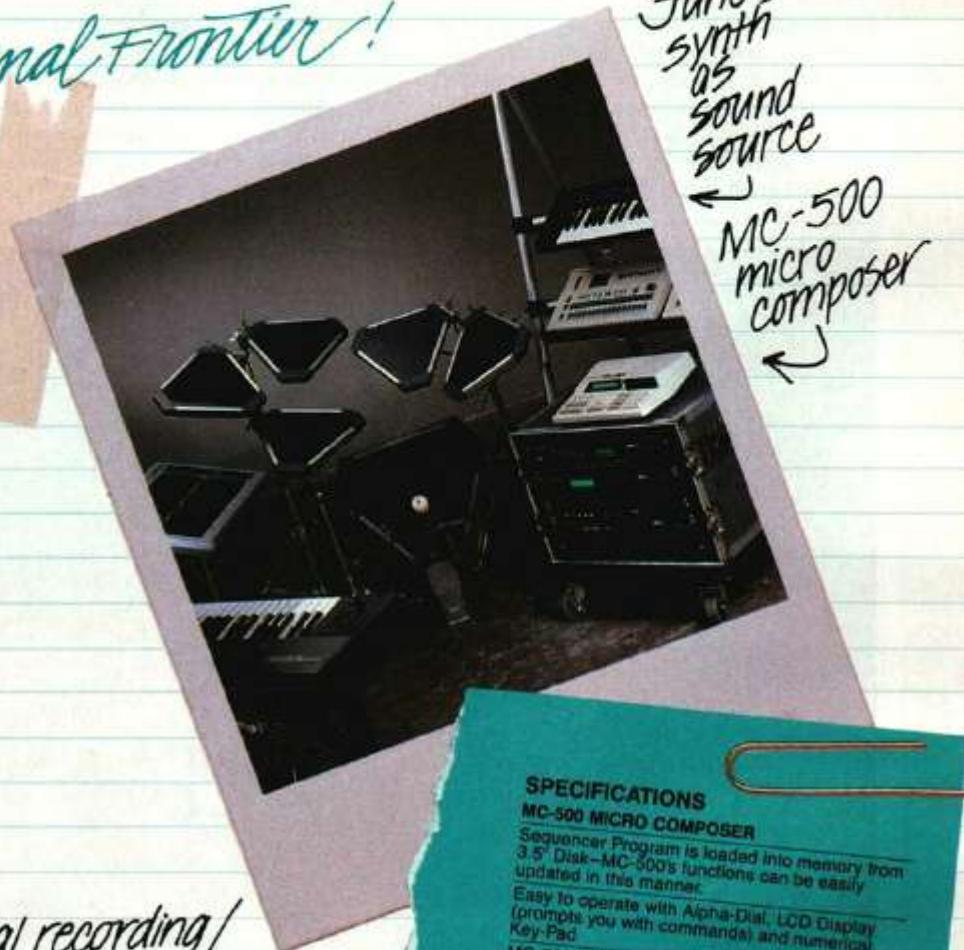
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amazes me. They just said, "Alright, put a bass drum in there for 32 bars, and we'll figure out what we're going to play there afterwards." I'm sure you've heard this before, but a lot of performers work better with a deadline—calling your own bluff, and pushing yourself into a corner. There's nothing like a bit of fear to get the creative juices flowing.

**RF:** What kinds of effects were you guys fooling with in the studio in the early days?

**GE:** We always have been, and still are, open to any new technology. We used the first dbx. In those days, they were not these simple little things we use now. We switched it all through to high treble and

then brought it back down. It cut down on the bloody hiss you get with generation. I'm glad we did worry about sound quality in those days, because now the whole back catalog is on compact disc, and it really matters. We had one of the first Moogs in England. We used to do crazy things. At Decca, they had an echo room that was actually inside the roof, and there was a speaker at one end and a mic' at the other end. For the echo, they actually put the guys at the speaker, and the length of echo was adjusted by how near and far you moved the mic'. There were two huge steel plates to keep it bright. I sat up there with a cricket bat for an effect. I'd have every-

thing all set up, the music coming through in my headphones, and I'd hit it, bang, on the steel plates. I had the job because I was the drummer.

**RF:** Did it actually make it onto vinyl?

**GE:** No, it was a terrible failure. But we didn't know it wouldn't work until we tried it.

**RF:** Are there any off-the-wall things that you can actually remember making it onto the record?

**GE:** In the *Lost Chord* poem, everybody loves the way I break and scream and laugh at the end. If you listen carefully, I do a spoonerism—where you mess words up, like instead of saying sweet potatoes, you say peet sowatoes just about two words before I break out into laughter. I stepped to one side and delivered it again. I maybe did it a couple of more times right, and then I listened to it. They all were looking at me, because they didn't know how to say, "Don't you want to hear the one where you crack up?" I was thinking about this as a piece of art. They played it for me, and I had to own up. It worked.

Most of the effects that we got we actually set out for, though. There is one of the poems with a big intro like a spaceship kind of noise. That was Mike and I on two great big Moog synthesizers. If you listen to "Thinking Is The Best Way To Travel," with 'phones, God, it took us ages to get that to move around your head.

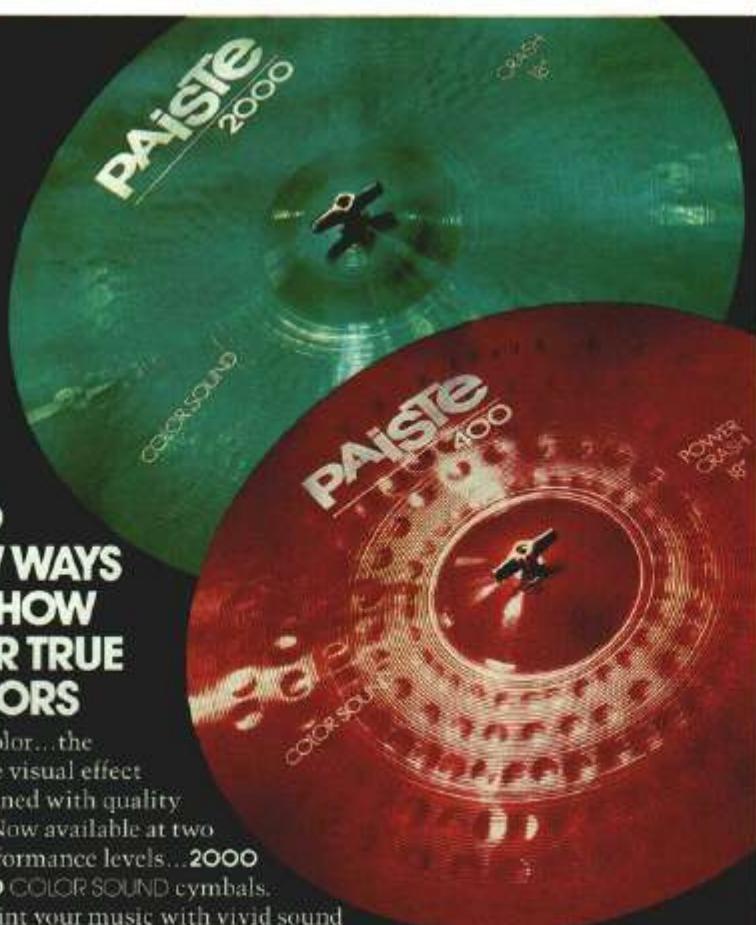
**RF:** Today, we have such advanced technology, which should be making things easier, but it seems it takes longer to make albums.

**GE:** Because there are more things to experiment with now. You've got to be very, very careful. Do you remember the Syndrums when they first came out? It was, "Wow, great!" And I was just like every other idiot. It was all over one song on *Long Distance Voyager*. I listened to it for about three days, and I thought, "I've got to get back into the studio and take that thing off, because I'm going to be ashamed of that in two years' time."

**RF:** You had a great deal of foresight, because people didn't realize it was a fad.

**GE:** It just seemed obvious to me after a couple of days that it was very faddish. It has no musical quality, actually. It was just an interesting new piece of technology. On this last album, we used a lot of sequenced material, but there were stacks more of it recorded, digested, and elbowed. We're damn proud of our music, and we want it to be listenable in ten years. So although we want to be there at the front of technology, we are very careful of being faddish. We listen to it and ask, "Is this musical?" **RF:** When you guys decided to call it quits for a bit, was it with the intention of being for just a while, or was it an actual breakup?

**GE:** None of us ever had any doubts that we would perform and record together again. I think it grew from that attitude of



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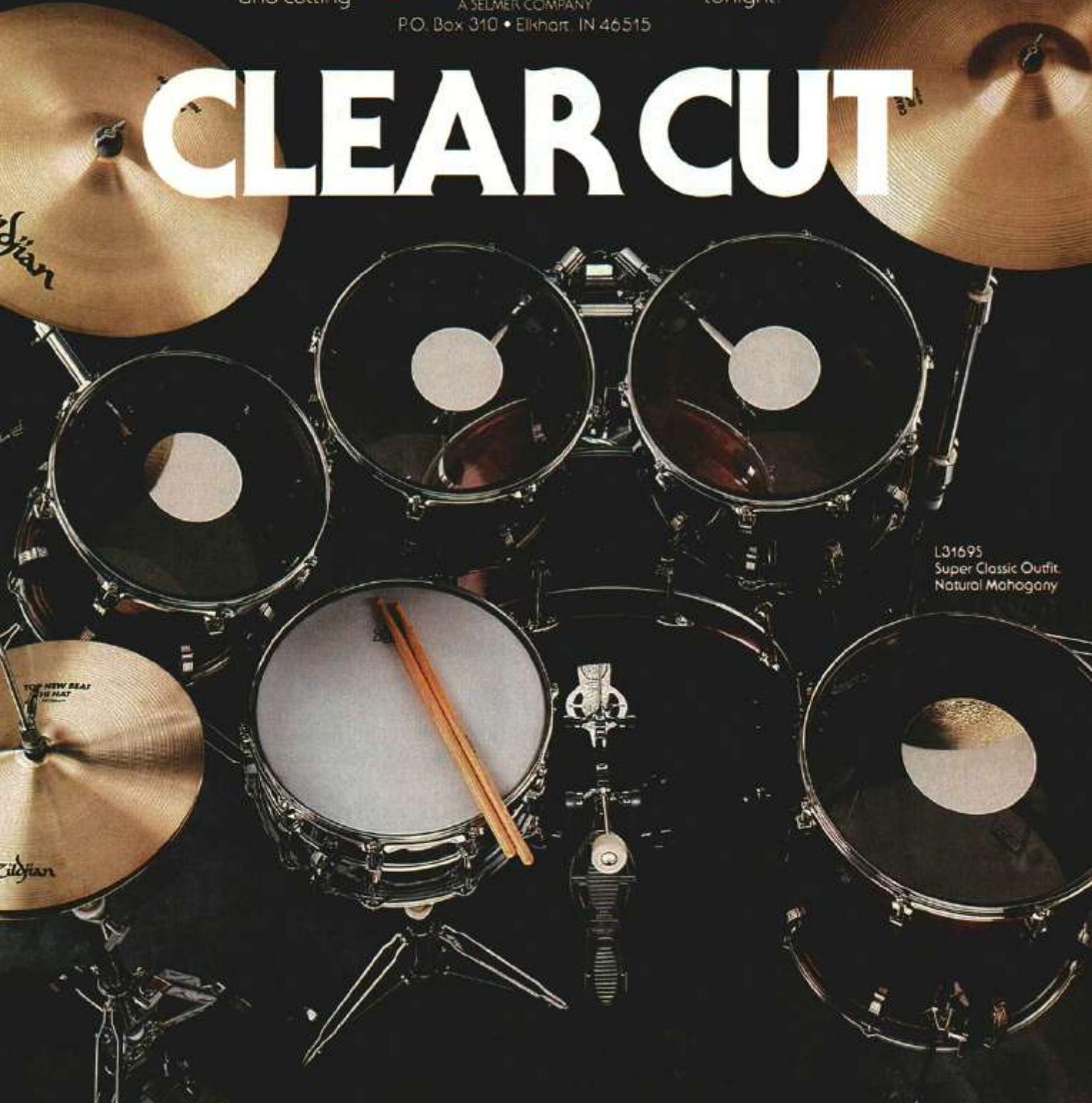
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playing all the instruments ourselves. Also, we had become very, very popular, and we had become totally isolated from the world and totally incestuously lumped all together. We went in to make an album, we had about four tracks, and it was junk. You could hear that one song we previously recorded was the father of those four songs. So we wiped that lot, and we realized we couldn't work together and make stuff that came up to the standard that we wanted. So we went out to get other experiences working with other people and also to let that major stardom thing die down.

Those were strange times. Now the rock stars are people. Admittedly, they're sex

objects and all that, but they're people. But in '72, people thought of us almost as semi-deities. People used to ask us to bless them. They thought we were in touch with some cosmic thing, and that's horrifying. Mike Finder never recovered from that.

**RF:** If you don't have your feet on the ground, something like that could blow you away. Is that what "I'm Just A Singer In A Rock And Roll Band" was all about?

**GE:** Yes. We were just asking the same questions as everybody else. There's a great line in that song: "If you want this world of yours to turn about you, and you can see exactly what to do, please tell me, I'm just a singer in a rock and roll band."

**RF:** So you decided to back off for a while.  
**GE:** I made two solo albums, and I lived on a yacht for 15 months.

**RF:** Tell me about your solo albums.

**GE:** I like the second one more than the first one. I did them with a guy named Adrian Gurvitz, because I don't have the musical expertise to work on my own, and I sound like a bullfrog with somebody stepping on its toe when I sing, so you can't really call it a solo album. It was really a collaboration with Adrian. We co-wrote the material, but for marketing purposes, it was called the Graeme Edge Band. It was great working with Adrian, because even though I love Moody Blues music, like any drummer, sometimes I want to really give it some stick. It was also very much removed from Moody Blues music. I wanted to get completely away, which is why the name of the first album is *Kick Off Your Muddy Boots* - muddy boots being Moody Blues.

**RF:** After working with the same people for so many years, working without them must have been a shock to your system.

**GE:** I was very nervous about it at first. It was a whole new bunch of people who didn't owe me anything. I had no history with them, they didn't need to be considerate of my feelings, and it was, "Come on asshole, get it together."

**RF:** That must have been an awful time, in a way, but exciting.

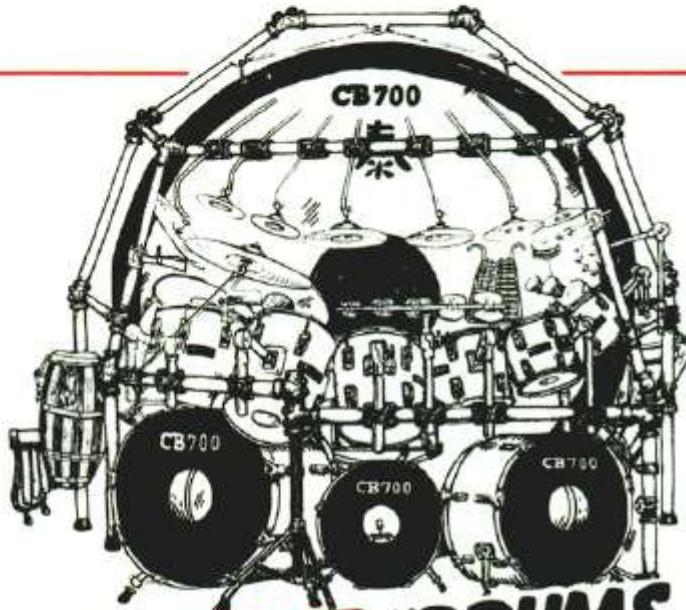
**GE:** It was exciting. I had some weird dreams at night, which is part of the reason I went off in the boat. After that experience, I had to go for my sanity and get myself back together.

**RF:** What about your second solo album, *Paradise Ballroom*?

**GE:** I felt I had to prove myself. The band was sort of hovering on coming back together, and I felt I needed something to say, "This is what I've been doing, this is where I've been, and this is where I am now." A year on the boat really built my confidence in myself, and I went back and really took charge of the second album, so much so that Adrian and I never worked together afterwards because he's a very powerful ego of a man, and I asserted myself a couple of times and said, "That's my way. Stuff it." It was a little bit unfair to him, because he put a lot of work into the album, but I never had the slightest intention of going on the road with it because I always knew the Moodies would be back. I suppose in a way I used him, but I suppose in a way he used me, too.

**RF:** You both got something out of it.

**GE:** If you look at the release dates, all the solo albums - mine, Ray's second one, *Hopes, Wishes & Dreams*, *Jus' Night Life*, and John's *Natural Avenue* - came out in the space of three months. It was all of us turning to each other and saying, "There you are. Can you respect me now? Can we work together?" From there, we got back together and came over to America,



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because Mike Finder was living in America at the time. All of us moved to him, rather than his coming to us, because we really wanted to have completely the same setup. I don't want to say too much about Mike because I don't want to put anybody down, but he got religion bad. One week he was a Hopi and the next week he was worshipping the sun. He hardly worked at all on the album. Most of the keyboard parts were done by John or Justin, who, given enough takes, are very competent keyboardists. Poor Tony Clarke was just going through a divorce, and it took Justin half an hour to talk him off the edge of a cliff. That was the last album he made with

us. That's just what you need when you're making your comeback album. It was a bit of a mess, but the four of us came out of it solid. We tried to get Mike Finder to come out on the road with us, but he wouldn't. He had totally lost his music - totally lost his nerve. We don't even know his address. We have to send his royalties to a lawyer. From there, we got Patrick Moraz in, originally as a pickup musician, hoping that Mike would come in on the next album.

**RF:** With regard to the solo experiences, certainly there are advantages and disadvantages to working with the same core group of people for so long. I would assume that, in one sense, it could be musi-

cally unhealthy, though.

**GE:** It depends on what your attitude is as a performer. I'm quite happy to be recognized as part of the Moody Blues. I'm not really that bothered about being recognized as a brilliant percussionist. The band being recognized as brilliant is great for me because I'm part of that. But it has stylized me. I did become a little bit conscious of this about three years ago, and I started playing in a little jazz band called Loud, Confident & Rung. I don't think the same lineup has been on stage twice, and it's great.

**RF:** As you said, you're not a soloist, but an ensemble player. You all went off to do your solo projects, and they weren't massive successes. But you all came back together, and the total was greater than the sum of its parts.

**GE:** Absolutely. It was a great relief, which was felt much more on *Long Distance Voyager* than on *Octave*. On *Long Distance Voyager*, it was great because it was very comfortable. We knew what someone was going to do and where he was coming from. At the same time, after that period apart, there were new, interesting, and exciting facets of each person's performing abilities that weren't there before. So it was the best of the old and some great new stuff as well.

**RF:** You have written songs. What other instruments do you play?

**GE:** I use the piano, but there's no way you could say I play it. When I walk up to the boys with the chords, they sort of give me a sweet, condescending smile and make it work. I get close enough to let them know what I'm trying to do.

For us, publishing is quite simple. The geezer who gets the publishing is the bloke who, if he hadn't done what he did, the song wouldn't exist. I know drummers who think they ought to get part of the publishing for coming up with their parts.

**RF:** When did you start writing poetry?

**GE:** I always have. When I was eight, I had a composition to do in school, which I wrote in rhyme.

**RF:** How did the poetry enter into the musical concept?

**GE:** We were recording *Days Of Future Passed*, and we were gigging as well at the time. I was driving with the roadie on the way to a gig, and I wrote "Cold Hearted Orb" and all of that, on a pack of cigarettes. Next time we were in the studio, I just said, "What about this?" They all said, "Great." That's what made the overtures happen.

**RF:** This current album has some interesting material. Watching you flailing away on one of the new songs, "Rock 'n' Roll Over You," made me think that it wasn't much different from heavy metal.

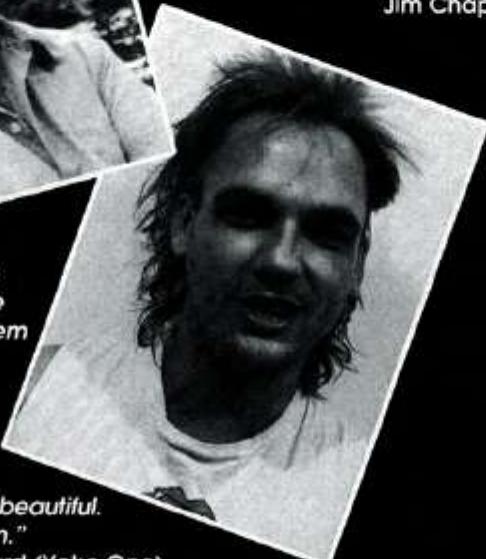
**GE:** That song scared the pants off of me. It was such a style departure in the backing-track phase. John had a very fixed idea of what he wanted, and I went on quite

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early, so I didn't hear the rest of the stuff that was going to go down. He wouldn't let me move around the drums, which I thought, at the time, would be much more interesting. It's all on one drum, which seemed a bit monotonous. But it turned out to be right. He could hear the rest of it in his head. And I've got a feeling that it will be one of those songs that's really going to develop and change, and we're really going to mess with it. It's like "Legend Of A Mind," which bears no resemblance to the recorded version. I have a feeling that

"Rock 'n' Roll Over You" is going to go that way. And conversely, a song I really like on the album, "It May Be A Fire," doesn't work on stage. It's not a disaster, but I know that it's going to be one of the songs that, when we do the next album, will be dropped. And yet, if you had asked me before we started playing live, I would have said the opposite. But you don't know these things until you start playing them. I'd love to go in and record "The Other Side Of Life," having played it so many times live, now.

**RF:** What a creative drum chair! Why do you think that is?

**GE:** First off, it's the abilities of the people I'm backing. A good drummer can't make a bad group good, but a bad drummer can sure make a good group bad. When we're on stage, we do play together. Some groups thrive on a certain clash between two instrumentalists trying to outdo each other, which gives it a certain abrasive quality but creates excitement, which is good. Our band isn't like that. When it's somebody's turn on lead, everyone lines up behind him. If anybody makes a mistake, this band regroups and gets behind the geezer who has made the mistake. Nobody makes a mistake on purpose. He's the person who is lost, so the rest are really hanging onto what they know is right.

I did something recently, and there was no way they could cover for me. On the song "Gemini Dream," there's a guitar

solo in the middle. The first lick of that solo is played at the end again, which comes up to a sort of staccato-style end. I went steaming straight into playing the end in the middle of what should have been the guitar solo. But it worked out okay. Justin carried on with the guitar solo, and the rest of the boys played the end with me and what would have been the finish. Then we dropped back to finish the guitar solo. People must have thought it was a weird arrangement, but we got away with it.

**RF:** What are some of your favorites to play live?

**GE:** I still love "Nights." As soon as we start that song, a wave of electricity belts from the audience across the stage. We get the feeling that the song means so much to so many that we give it everything we can. Although I think the development is finished, I love playing "Isn't Life Strange" because of the arrangement, with the way we built it up and developed it. We've taken that to its full extent, but John Lodge is proud of it and I love playing it as well. There are some parts where I don't play at all, which gives Ray a great opportunity to let the flute really speak into the hall without my cymbals. Also, I have three solo fills in it, which I really enjoy. I play the first one very simple, I build it up and put some triplets in the second time, and the third time, it's just triplets all the way around the kit to kick in the chorus. I get to go across the song like a herd of ele-

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phants, which I enjoy doing. Justin has written some lovely songs that I like, like "Sitting Comfortably." "Melancholy Man" by Mike, I thought, was a great song.

**RF:** You really use the audience to charge you. At Radio City Music Hall, you made the comment that you felt too far away from the audience.

**GE:** I look around the audience to find as many who are into it as possible. I can only see about five or six rows back, so I'll look for the demonstrative people who are chair dancing or playing air guitar or air drums. I use them to leech energy from.

**RF:** You said before that you love to play live. You've been doing it for so many years. Do you still love it?

**GE:** Oh yes!

**RF:** The road and hotels?

**GE:** Oh no. I said I love playing live. But you've got to put up with one to get the other.

**RF:** Are you ever too old for this?

**GE:** No.

**RF:** But you were too old when you started.

**GE:** You're damn right. I've always been too old for rock 'n' roll. Nobody ever says that jazzers are too old.

**RF:** But let's get serious. Everyone says your body changes when you get older, and it's harder to do certain things. How do you counter that? Have you felt any of that at all?

**GE:** Oh yes. I've got a knee problem. I suffer with tendinitis, but I've got an ultrasonic machine. I've altered some techniques and I'll probably have to alter a few more, but I'm reasonably fit, and I'm only 45 for God's sake.

**RF:** But when you're talking about your body, 45 years old is very different from 2C years old.

**GE:** You're damn right. You don't see any 20-year-old marathon runners do you? They're all 45, because you get a different kind of strength as you get older more tenacity and more mental strength. I have to treat my body very differently now, of course. I used to drink scotch on stage, but now I have to point myself toward the gig all day, keep my act clean, get sleep, and all that. I love to take a nap at 4:00 in the afternoon, which keeps me calm because I still suffer from bad nerves.

**RF:** Why?

**GE:** I think it's anticipation, excitement, and the adrenaline. It's not fear.

**RF:** I can't believe you've put yourself through this all these years.

**GE:** But when I hit that first note, I just want to explode with joy inside. Sometimes I just burst out laughing while I'm playing, because I'm having such a good time. I almost feel guilty about feeling so happy.

**RF:** You have all sorts of gear. How much do you care for yourself, and what does your roadie do?

**GE:** He has to change the programs for me. It's only a question of pressing a button, and then I'm back. I could handle it, but that would mean I would have to have all that gear up there with me. What I have on stage is a start switch, a program change switch, a tempo control knob, and all the controls to the acoustic drums that I use as triggers.

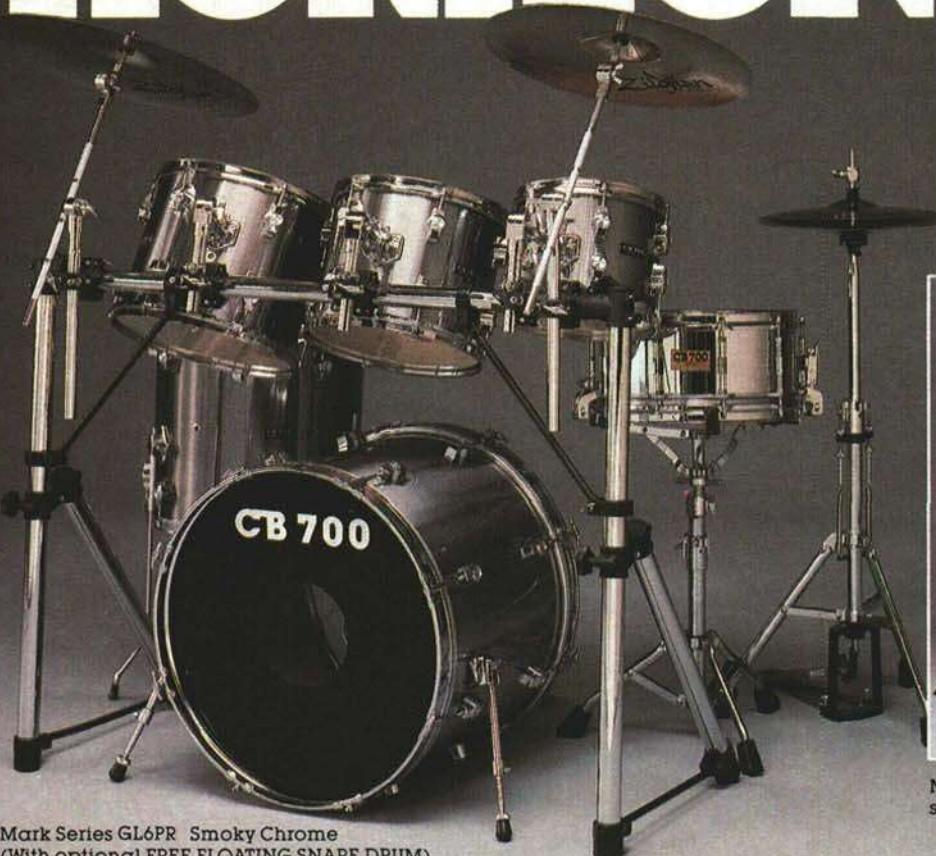
**RF:** Can you detail your very state-of-the-art equipment?

**GE:** Just the old-fashioned acoustic way, I have two overhead mic's, which are there to pick up the cymbals. I don't think anyone has yet successfully synthesized cymbals. You can get one great cymbal sound, but it's just the one sound. Any drummers worth their salt can get at least seven or eight sounds out of a cymbal, depending on whether they hit with the flat of the stick, or on the edge, or on the bell, etc.

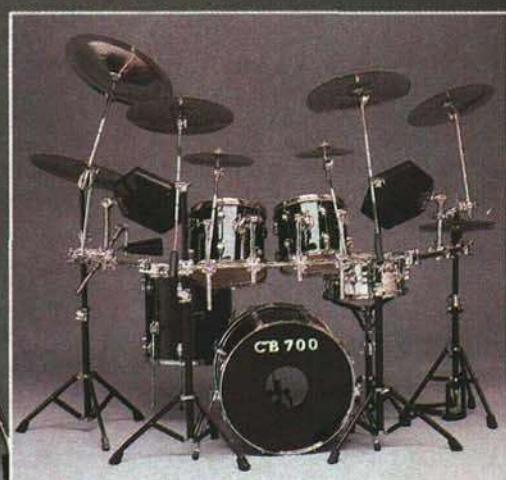
I have an emergency backup should everything die, so I have an acoustic mic' on the bass drum and two acoustic mic's on the snare. The acoustic snare mic's are actually used as well. The bass drum mic' never is. The guy out front mixes that in and out at will. Then I have C-ducer mic's,



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which are contact mic's, all going through a C-TAudio electronic trigger unit that has been beefed up by my electrician. It's really made for fiddles, cellos, and things like that, and it was a bit delicate for the explosive impact of the drum. We had to brutalize the inside a bit more so it could handle the immense power.

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

**GE:** Because I don't like the look of standard electronic pads. I don't like the feel of them either, and the rest of the boys really want the acoustic sound of drums on stage. It sounded like there was a great big hole in the music when I did try to use the electronics just coming out of the side speakers.

They said they couldn't seem to rock or drive without the actual air being pushed behind them. Everyone agreed that the acoustic kit should be there, but at the same time, I wanted to have the availability of electronics. The acoustic trigger unit then goes into a *Percutor* drum machine. It's a German machine that plays electronic chips. It's not a sequencer; it's just what makes the noise from the acoustic trigger. That has several sounds that you can interchange. I have three triggers in the snare and four tom-tom sounds... I just get a real good sounding tom-tom, and I don't have to worry about changing the tom-tom sound. If I want it to sound slightly differ-

ent, I just bang the kit up and down a little. I'll get the drums mildly in tune with the track. You don't want to get them perfectly in tune with the track, because part of the feel of the drum is that it is standing just a little bit away from being perfectly in tune.

All that goes through a Yamaha mixer. Also going through the mixer are two Linns that have been severely modified. I can run them both at the same time. I have the tempo control next to me on stage so I don't have to fiddle with the button on the actual Linn, and the choice of the song pattern is up there for me. It gives me the availability to put in claves or timp, or to use the snare on that machine for extra emphasis on certain parts of a song. I have control of the tempo and switching it on, and we use that to run through an SDX-80 MIDI box. I use that to send MIDI signals to Patrick's Kurzweil and [auxiliary keyboardist] Tobias Bishell's DX-7. I can then trigger sequences in their equipment. I can be sitting up there and trigger cello lines from Patrick's stuff or those spacy effects that might come along once or twice in a song, like some of the noises in "Rock 'n' Roll Over You" and noises in the beginning of "Wildest Dreams." It would be a waste of time tying up a keyboard just to make that one sound, or you'd have to go back to the bad old days when keyboard players had 15 keyboards just so they could have one sound halfway through the song, once. Now I can run it from my equipment, leaving the keyboard player to concentrate on playing the song with as much of the human touch and feel as he has the talent to do. I also have a Simmons SDS5 system with four pads stuck up on the kit. They're mostly used for effects, like in "Rock 'n' Roll Over You." I love all the electronic stuff today and the challenge of making it work. It really has kept me interested.

**RF:** What kind of acoustic set do you use?

**GE:** Yamaha drums and Zildjian cymbals.

**RF:** When did you get into the double bass?

**GE:** I got into it, and I'm back out of it now. I must admit that it's really there just to balance off the kit, because I have so much electronics on the side.

**RF:** What was your equipment like back in the early days?

**GE:** I always played Zildjian cymbals. I used to have one hi-hat and one enormous 22" crash ride that you could never dream of using nowadays. You hit that once, and it was over in about ten minutes. In those days, they didn't use to close-mike you either. I had an Olympic 2 1/2" wafer snare it took me years to believe in deep snares and the rest was a Premier kit. I had 9", 12", and 14" tom-toms and a bloody great-big 24" bass drum. We had to stuff it with toilet paper.

**RF:** What was required of a drummer in the '60s as opposed to what is required of a

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drummer in the '80s?

**GE:** In the '60s, speeding up was perfectly acceptable - controlled acceleration. The disco boom really got people metronomic in the way they listen to music. You really have to keep strict tempo now. It's gone full circle, because between the two periods, there was a period where you had to be very jazzy in your playing, but it's come past that again. It's back to a good, strong backbeat. You have to make the fills effective by their sparseness and their statement when they do come in.

**RF:** Justin made a comment in an interview that, in your more current albums, there is a lot more space in the music than there was in the '60s when there was so much going on.

**GE:** We used to pile it on.

**RF:** He also said that on the current albums there is a lot more emphasis on the drums and bass.

**GE:** Which means that you have to be much more strict and more disciplined, because you're carrying so much more of the sound and the responsibility.

**RF:** On the old recordings, you can barely hear the drums.

**GE:** That's the price you pay when you're doing multilayering on a four-track machine. By the fifth or sixth generation, it's bye-bye drums. Nobody on earth could have had the drums high enough on the original mix to compensate for that, or if you did have it high enough in the original mix, nobody could play with it because it would be so offensive musically.

**RF:** Is there anything else you can think of

that the drummers of the '60s and '80s would find different?

**GE:** Well, the obvious electronic applications that are available now. In the old days, your drums were your drums and your sound, and that was it. Maybe you could use a couple of cigarette packs to dampen it down so it didn't ring so much in the studio, but that was about it. Now, you can get these great tom-tom sounds with the Roland and the Simmons stuff. Even though it's touch-sensitive, you get different noises from whacking it in the middle and wacking it two inches from the middle. You get more attack and a shorter decay if you move off the middle. Also, you've got to be much more prepared to operate with sequencers to operate with the tempo being supplied by a machine or something else. At the same time as you're doing that, you've got to be able to drop the offbeat down so it still feels human. It's much more technical now, and you've got to think a lot more about what you're doing. And of course, in the '60s, there were no rock traditions, so you were very much on your own in what parts you played. Now, of course, there's a lot to listen to and learn from, so the rock drummers now can get all their rock grounding together in four or five years, whereas we had to make it up as we went along. All John Bonham really did was reverse the bass drum pattern, so instead of going boom, cha, boom, boom, he went boom boom, cha, boom. But what a revelation that was! All of a sudden, virtually with the same part we had all been playing for bloody years, he just reversed the bass drum pattern, and suddenly, there was this powerhouse. It had been right there for all of us, and none of us had figured it out.

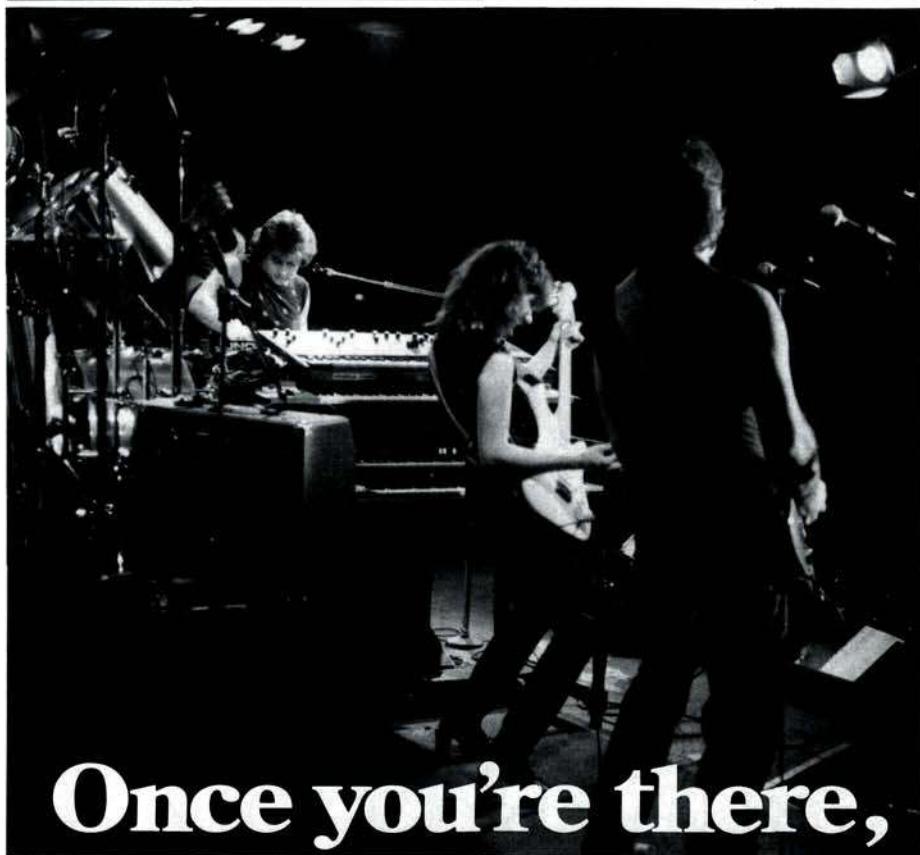
**RF:** So now that we're nearly out of the '80s, what is the goal?

**GE:** Musically, I want to make another excellent album. Hopefully, a lot of people will like it and buy it. I'm not hoping this just so the album will go up the charts. If it goes up the charts, it will mean that a lot of people enjoyed it. That will enable me to carry on playing live, which is the thing I like doing most of all in all the world.

I personally would like to write a song good enough for the band to choose as a single one day. And I'd like to get another poem out soon. I've written several recently, but I'm not really satisfied with what I've written lately.

**RF:** After 22 years, does it still hold the magic for you?

**GE:** Even more so. It's more frightening now, but it's more satisfying when you make it yet again. When you're starting out, you know you'll do it; you have to have that kind of confidence and belief in yourself. But when you've done it and done it and done it, then you start to think, "How much longer can I maintain?" That is a different feeling. So when you do actually continue to make it, it's even more satisfying.



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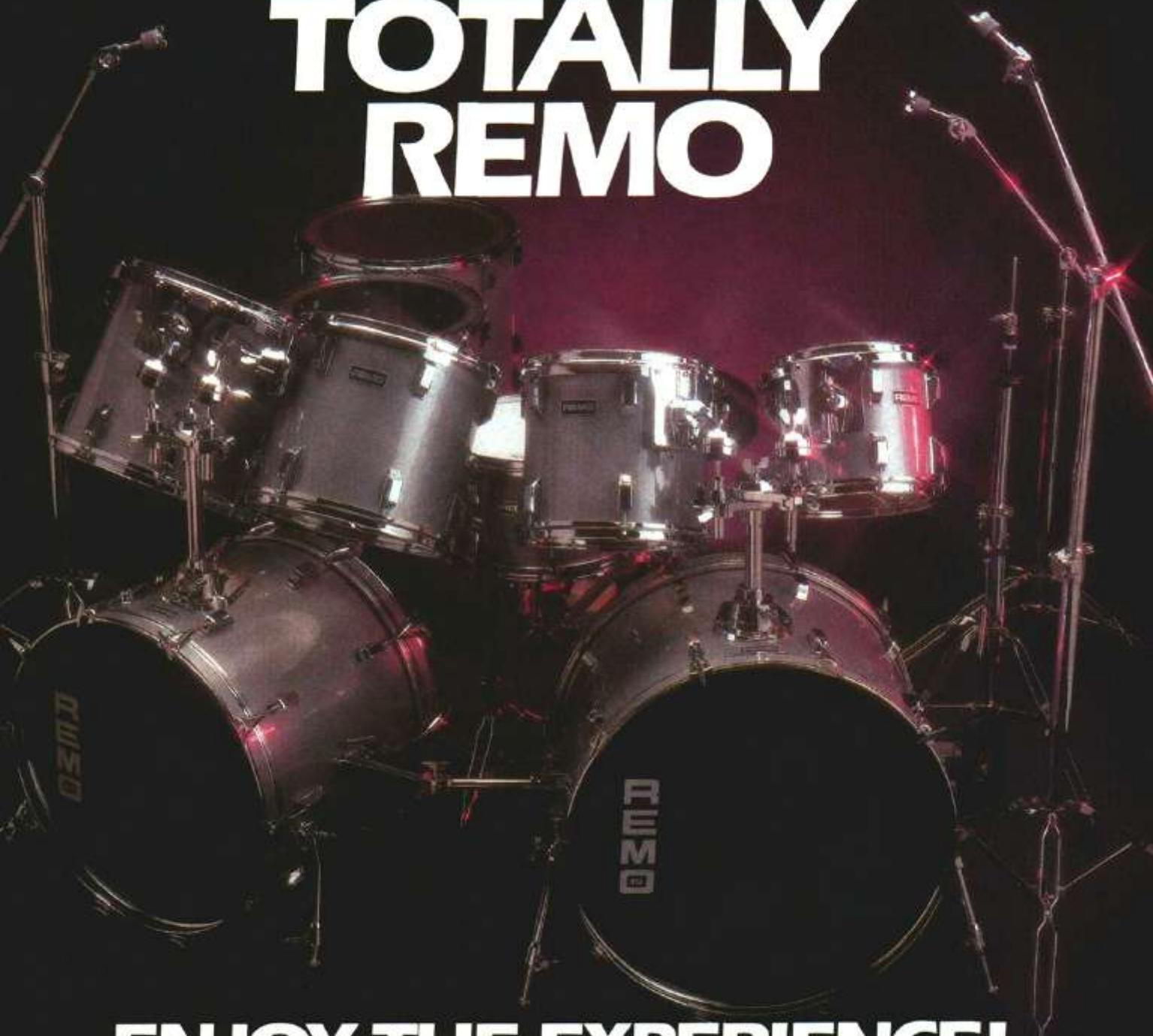


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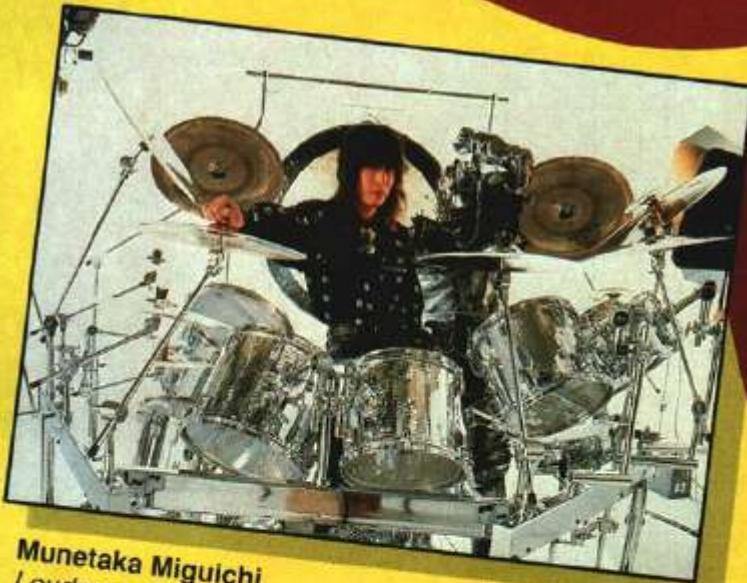
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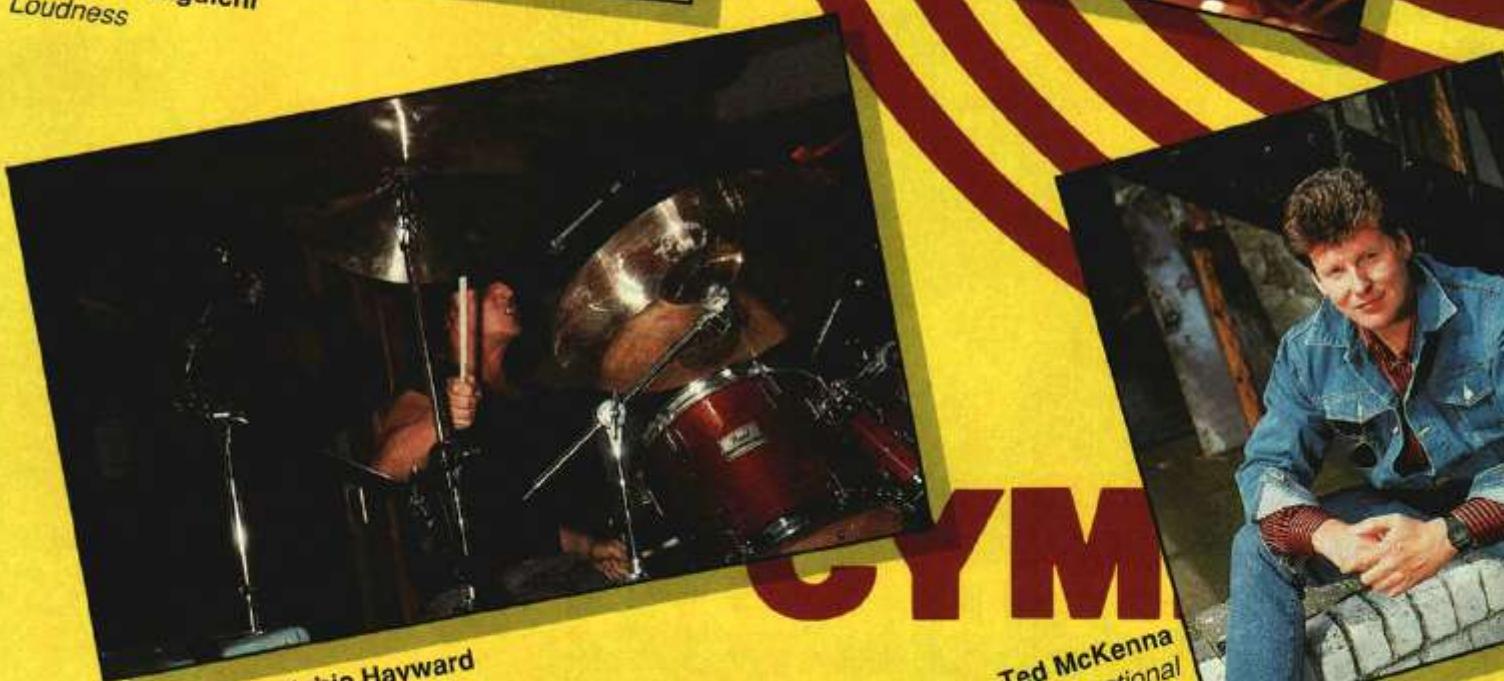
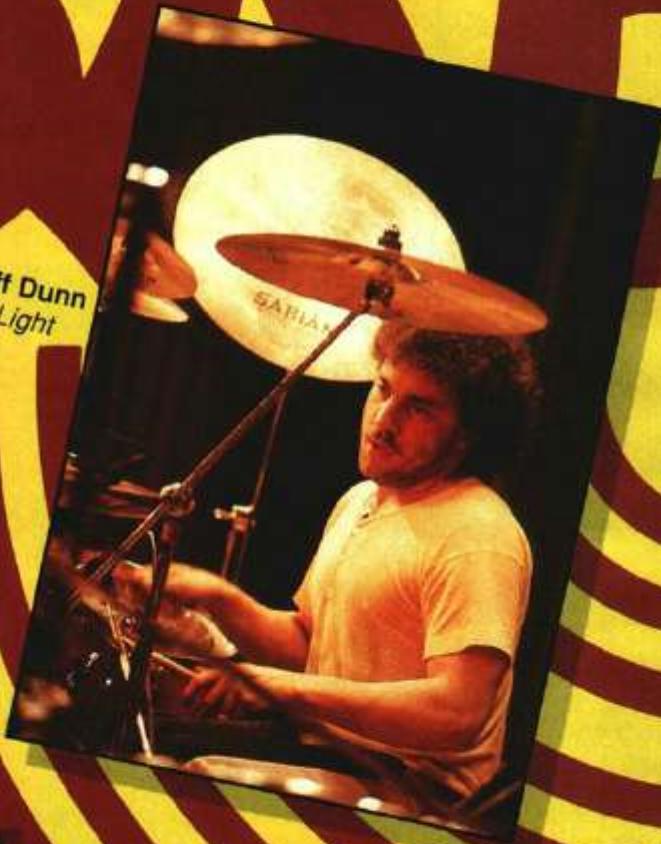


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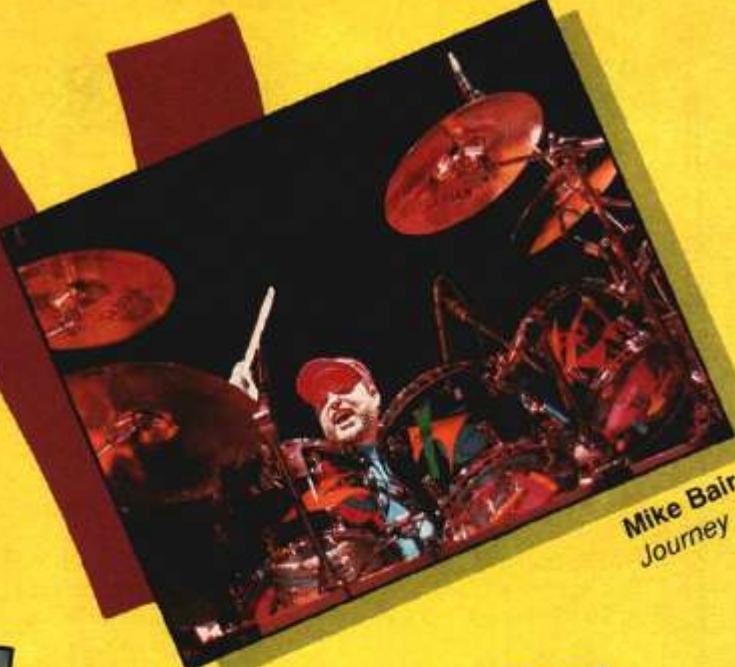


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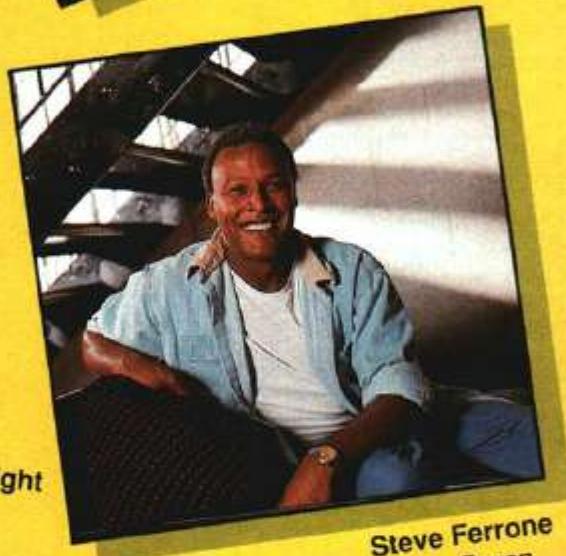
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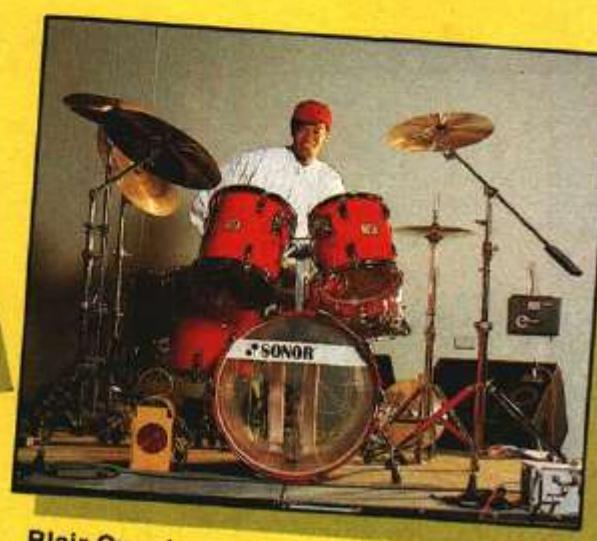
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*by James Morton*

# Drum Trivia

1. Gene Krupa was born:
    - A. In New York City, in 1906.
    - B. In Chicago Illinois, in 1909.
    - C. In Detroit, Michigan, in 1910.
  2. In 1935, Krupa joined the band whose leader became known as the "King of Swing." Name the band.
    - A. The Glenn Miller Band
    - B. The Benny Goodman Band
    - C. The Tommy Dorsey Band
  3. What song was Krupa regularly featured as soloist on in the above-mentioned band?
    - A. "Skin Deep"
    - B. "Let There Be Drums"
    - C. "Sing, Sing, Sing"
  4. Name the drum company Krupa was associated with.
    - A. Ludwig
    - B. Rogers
    - C. Slingerland

5. Name the actor who portrayed Krupa in the 1959 movie, *The Gene Krupa Story*.

  - A. Sal Mineo
  - B. Frank Sinatra
  - C. James Whitmore

6. Match these '60s drum-oriented hits with the correct artists:

  - "Wipe Out"
  - "Let There Be Drums"
  - "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida"
  - "Toad"

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by Norman Weinberg

# Electronics In Teaching: Part 1

Several months ago, a student came into my office with a digital drum machine. She had been singing in many of the local clubs, and had decided that a drummer with a volume knob was just what she had been looking for. This instrument had a much more realistic sound than I had heard before. (If the last drum machine that you heard was attached to an organ with color-glow keys, then you owe it to yourself to give some of the new models a closer listening.)

Not long after my student's visit, I read an ad in a computer magazine about a sequencing program that would enable any synthesizer (including drum machines) to "talk" to a computer. This communication with the computer would allow several possible options: (1) a performer could record onto a computer disk instead of tape, delivering almost infinite overdubs with "punch-in" and "punch-out" editing, (2) the recorded performance would play back through the instrument itself (which means zero loss of signal or addition of background noise), and (3) the program would allow the computer to print out the notation of what was recorded. (What was that? Print out in legible standard musical notation what was just performed this was too much to believe!)

An interview in another magazine discussed how several of the pop and rock recordings made today are using drum machines. (Boo, hiss! "They are going to put a lot of drummers out of work.") But the focus of the article was a plea to drummers to embrace the new technology so that: (1) drummers would get to keep their jobs, and (2) the drum parts being programmed on drum machines wouldn't sound as if they were recorded by a keyboard player.

The night after I read that interview, I had a very strange and realistic dream: I was in my teaching studio, surrounded by electronic gadgets, and a student of mine was playing a snare drum étude. As I pulled the paper from the printer, I said something like: "No, that wasn't quite right. Your diminuendo was too fast, and your last flam didn't match the ones in the previous bar. Listen to it again, and this time, watch what you did." I woke up at just after 4:00 A.M., and spent the next five hours drawing up a diagram of connections and thinking about all the incredibly useful stuff that a system like this could do. By 10:00 A.M., I was in my dean's office asking how many thousands of dollars he

would let me have to create this electronic studio in my office. He was quite a bit more supportive than I expected and suggested that I apply for a grant to cover the funds that the music program could not provide.

The next several weeks were filled with phone calls to various companies that manufacture electronic drums, software companies, software programmers, music stores, and keyboard players who had already embraced this technological revolution. A lot of people's brains were picked, a lot of magazine articles and reviews were read, and a lot of rough drafts of grant applications were made. In January, 1986, I was awarded a faculty grant from Del Mar College, which provided the funds for an E-mu SP-12 drum machine, Roland DDR-30 digital drums, an Apple Macintosh computer, three software programs, and a sound system to run it all through.

The concept is this: Today's musical market is changing. In order to provide their students with the job skills and knowledge necessary to earn a living in music, today's teachers are going to have to keep up with the expanding body of knowledge that is percussion - and this includes electronic percussion instruments. If new teaching techniques that might help students become better performers are available, then let's give them a try and see if they work. Computers have already been shown to be an aid in many aspects of academic training. It might be possible to adapt some of these training techniques to percussion performance.

## Getting Started

Let's first examine some of the problems that might be encountered when trying to put together an electronic teaching studio. The first - and most difficult - problem is money. The system that I'm using ran about \$8,500. In today's computer and synthesizer market, with prices always falling, it might be possible to build a system for several hundred dollars less. Funds can be obtained from grants, music department budgets, private sponsors, or other sources. When you think about it, \$8,500 is about the cost of a decent set of timpani. Just as you can't teach timpani without the drums, you can't teach electronics without the necessary equipment.

Another problem that might be encountered is that of colleagues who believe that you are going to put your own students out of work. This is a difficult subject. There

are some members of any faculty who believe that music made with electronic sounds (or anything that plugs into the wall) does not belong in a legitimate educational setting. But music is changing, and it is important to give students an education in music - not just certain types, but *all* music. We, as educators, should be doing our job for the benefit of the student. Please don't get me wrong. I am not advocating a "change from" any situation, only an "addition to" any program that needs it.

## Benefits

Now, let's look at some of the benefits that an electronic percussion system can hold for you *and* your students. First, for you: You are going to spark an interest in your students to learn more about percussion, and your own personal knowledge is going to grow. Second, for your students: They will gain the knowledge of how to work with the different aspects and parts that make up the entire system, and they will improve their playing ability by confronting themselves with an examination of their own style. How does one program a drum machine, "sculpt" sounds on an electronic drumset, or use a sequencing program to drive electronic sounds? By answering these questions, the student gains a new perspective on his or her playing.

When a student starts to program a drum machine, the first decision is whether or not the end result is going to sound like electronics or a "live" drummer. If the style is rap or techno-pop, then just about anything is legal. If it is decided that the style of music being programmed calls for a real drum sound, then another approach must be considered. You might ask, why use a drum machine to try to imitate a "real drummer"? Because your students may very well be asked to do this at some point in their careers. Many keyboard players are now performing on the hotel club circuit as a single act. A club owner can make more money by paying one musician than by paying six. For this reason, some of these players are using drum machines as their rhythm section. Drummers who really know what can be done with a drum machine could program their songs for them, and the keyboard performers would have a better sound. In other words, someone could hire a drummer once, and use that drummer's great ideas and musical influence for every per-

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formance. (Needless to say, this one-time session should have a larger fee than a normal gig maybe even a small royalty. But this is a separate idea worthy of a great deal of discussion.)

#### Working With The System

How do students begin to create that "live" sound? If the "real drummer" sound is desired, then programming a pattern on the drum machine requires your students to pull their playing apart and analyze what is going on when they perform. Let's look at some of the factors that come into play when using this approach.

First might be the sound of the drumset. It is possible to program each pitch along with its amount of decay (length) for all the drum sounds on the machine. Once you have the sounds that you want, then comes the actual recording of patterns.

Another item to think about is the groove or feel of the patterns. "Swing factor" can be added to the patterns to distort the divisions of the beat. It can be set for 50% (straight 8ths), 54%, 58%, 63%, 67% (swing-style divisions of the beat), or 71% (shuffle). Some of these differences are subtle, but they really affect the groove and style of the performance.

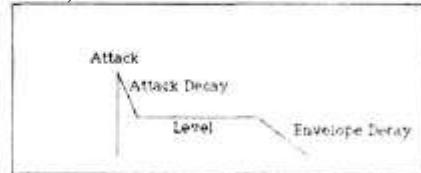
A lack of natural dynamics is the first thing that comes to mind when listening to a drum machine that has been programmed in the "set-it-and-forget-it" mode. You can't create a "live" impres-

sion with only the two choices of loud and louder. Where are the stress points, pulse points, accents - the life and spirit of the patterns? How strong are the accents in relation to non-accented notes? Are all accents at the same level, or do they also have a shape? With a drum machine like the SP-12, all dynamics are memorized into the individual patterns. Where these dynamic differences occur in the patterns and at what level they are recorded determines quite a bit of the overall feel.

Another facet of creating a "live" impression is the tempo. Let's face it, it's possible with auto-correct and a good, steady supply of current to build a song with absolutely *perfect* time. While this may be a goal of many drummers, I believe that they are not looking for perfect time, but perfect *control* over time. I've never met anyone who can hear something and say, "It's between 110 and 111 beats per minute - closer to 110.4." With the drum machine, it is possible to program tempo with the accuracy of Vio of a beat per minute. It is also possible to program a ritardando or accelerando to occur between any two points. With this in mind, the tempo can push a little bit going into a chorus or drag back a little when the mood relaxes. These should be subtle changes, and thinking about them and working with them will make the student's ear more sensitive to tempo differences and fluctuations.

Few drummers get the chance to work with a mixing board in order to listen for and experiment with their overall balance. When you play live, your ears tell you the balance of the entire set and your body makes a series of constant adjustments to achieve what you want to hear. Just think of the balance differences (drums versus cymbals) between a big band sound and a rock sound. Each sound on the drum machine can be mixed at different levels without losing the subtle dynamics that were originally programmed. By experimenting with different settings, the student will gain the knowledge of how balance affects style. Students who really think about all of these factors and do some experimentation will improve their control on the drumset when they play live by giving themselves more options. They'll also gain an impetus for working toward more control.

While you can mold the color and sound of the drums with the drum machine, many more variations of color are available with the electronic drumset. Where the drum machine allows pitch changes of a little more than an octave in half-step divisions, the drumset's pitch range spans two octaves in quarter-tone divisions. Instead of determining overall length of the sound with the drum machine, the DDR-30 permits fairly sophisticated control of the wave's envelope (as shown below).



The student can also control the amount of bend a sound has (pitches falling due to stronger attacks), how long that bend takes to fall, how far it falls, and the dynamic sensitivity at which the bend is activated. Other aspects that can be used to

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mold the sound into the desired color are two separate sound gates that are fully controllable, as well as a modest equalizer.

When all of these parameters are present, the student programmer is required to really think about what types and levels of these controls make up a given sound. When the student is looking for some far-out space sound, anything is possible. But there is a certain value in trying to make up (I like the term "sculpt") a pure, acoustic sound. I have found myself thinking about the lengths of attack on different snare drums, the difference in the volume between the time the stick hits the snare and the short amount of decay that follows, and even the distance that the pitch falls in relation to its attack volume. What really are the differences in the attack and sustain of a single- and double-headed tom-tom? These are questions that few people have ever thought about. But when you try to sculpt drum sounds from their basic ingredients, it requires a new kind of analyzation. It forces you to think just about the sound itself and hear it in a new manner. I believe that this can be transferred directly to acoustic drums as well. Pitch, stroke, level of sustain, and decay can all be controlled, to a large degree, by the player's hands. By working with the sounds on the electronic set, students just might get a better idea of what they want their hands to achieve.

Once these ideas are sculpted into the student's sounds, they can be combined to

form different drumsets that can be stored in the electronic drum's memory and recalled at the push of a button. Using the memory cartridge, the DDR-30 holds 24 different sounds for each pad. Why do drummers use certain types of drums for different playing situations? Most likely the answer involves the combination of different sounds to best blend with the music. With so many drums available at the touch of a button, students can really hear the difference between a good "heavy metal set" or a "jazz quartet set." The student working on orchestral excerpts can even try out 24 different snare drum sounds in order to hear which type of drum would be the best choice for that particular passage or work.

Sequencing programs are so named because they record the data that tells the instruments what to play. This sequence of data can be changed and molded in many different ways. When the computer is used to trigger the sounds on the electronic instruments, the additional memory of the computer permits much finer resolution and control of ideas. A sequencing program is to music what a word processor is to text.

The programs used in my project are *Total Music* by Southworth Music Systems, and *Midi Performer* and *Professional Composer* by Mark of the Unicorn. While all three programs can only be described as amazing, they are not perfect in all respects. One program will do a par-

ticular job easier or better than the other, depending on what that task happens to be. What follows is just a short list of some of the tasks that can be performed by the combination of programs: (1) overdub or multi-track an almost limitless number of times (how about a 400+ track tape deck), (2) include a metronome that performs the recorded material at any setting from 20 to 400 bpm without changing the pitch, (3) have a rhythmic accuracy of 480 attacks per quarter note (for all you number crunchers, this amounts to a mind-boggling "theoretical" 3,200 notes per second), (4) play and print out just about any polyrhythm that you can dream up (i.e., five against seven against nine against 13 against 17 all at the same time), and (5) control 128 levels of dynamics over any time span.

By working with the computer, students learn about recording studio techniques, such as overdub and punch-in/punch-out, notational problems with percussion, and working with MIDI. These, too, are valuable skills in today's musical job market.

So far, we have been looking at how students could use an electronic system like this in order to gain technical knowledge that may help them in the marketplace (as well as helping them to examine their own playing from a new perspective). In my next article, I will focus on several techniques that I have used with this system to help students solve specific performance problems.

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Transcribed by Jeremy Owen



Photo by Tom Copi

# Mitch Mitchell: "Freedom"

## MUSIC KEY

	C.C.	R.C.
Open	o	◆◆
H.H.	x	x
T.T.	◆◆	x
F.D.	x	x
F.T.	x	x
B.D.	x	x
B.H.	x	x
w/ Foot	x	x
addl. T.T.	x	x

This month's *Rock Charts* goes back a few years to the Jimi Hendrix Experience, with Mitch Mitchell on drums. The track is called "Freedom," and it's from the album *Jimi Hendrix Vol. 2*, on Polydor Records (Polydor 2343 086 Special). Note that, wherever a hi-hat ride is indicated, the hi-hats are played partially open.

The drum sheet music consists of six staves of notation, each representing a different section (A through F) of the track "Freedom". The notation is written on a bass staff (F clef) and includes various drumming techniques indicated by symbols like 'x', 'z', 'y', 'o', and '>'. The first staff begins with a '6' above the staff, indicating a sixteenth-note pattern. The sections are labeled as follows:

- A:** This section starts with a '6' above the staff, followed by a series of eighth-note patterns. It includes a '4' and a '6' marking.
- B:** This section features a 'B' above the staff, followed by a series of eighth-note patterns. It includes a '2' and a '2' marking.
- C:** This section features a 'C' above the staff, followed by a series of eighth-note patterns. It includes a '4' and a '6' marking.
- D:** This section features a 'D' above the staff, followed by a series of eighth-note patterns. It includes a '2' and a '2' marking.
- E:** This section features a '2' above the staff, followed by a series of eighth-note patterns. It includes an 'o' symbol above the staff.
- F:** This section features an 'o' symbol above the staff, followed by a series of eighth-note patterns.

 F























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 6 > 3

 3 > >

 >

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 >

 6

 G >

 4

 6

 3

 >

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 3

 3

 3

 3

 3



*Below continued from page 22*

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change enough.

**RS:** In addition to your work with the Aces, you played with a number of other blues people.

**FB:** That I did people like Muddy, Jimmy Reed, Little Walter, Elmore James.

**RS:** What was the scene like back then? With so many great players in one city playing local clubs on a regular basis, it must have been very exciting.

**FB:** It was. There was plenty of work around if you were good enough to get it.

**RS:** So you played, what, five or six nights a week?

**FB:** Seven. I'd go to work at 9:00 each night, and play three or four sets a night, every night. I'd work three or four clubs steady. There was a lot of jammin' going down, too. You had an opportunity to hear and play with some of the great ones. You always had musicians coming around and sitting in.

**RS:** You did quite a bit of studio work back then, too.

**FB:** Yes. The beat that I was playing was a beat that the blues people accepted and liked. So I got plenty of work.

**RS:** How would you describe your drum style back then?

**FB:** Well, it was a blues beat with a jazz feel. I still play like that, too. It made me different from the other drummers. And one other thing I played with the band; the band didn't play with me. There's a difference, you know. See, the role of the blues drummer is to bring the beats out, but not to overshadow the music. That means you do not play so loud that no one is heard but yourself. Play in a way that your music is felt, not heard.

**RS:** I've heard that before.

**FB:** It's true. The rock drummers and blues drummers today don't go along with that concept, you know. What they play is so loud, and they sustain one beat. Rock drummers do that a lot. They have one little lick. The young blues drummers try to double up on the bass drum and do things that are not necessary in blues.

**RS:** The blues was always given a bad rap by some, because on the surface, it appears to be a rather simple music form.

**FB:** The blues, if played correctly, is not easy to master. People who say that about the blues never played the blues. If they did, they probably didn't play it right. It's very hard to play somebody's feelings, and that's what the blues is.

**RS:** You did a lot of work for Chess Records in the old days.

**FB:** Yes I did. I played with Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, and Little Walter.

**RS:** Berry and Diddley were rock 'n' roll.

**FB:** They were the beginning of rock 'n' roll. I had to come up with a new beat to go along with what they were singing. They must have liked what they heard, because I did a lot of that kind of work. I also worked with the Moonglows and other groups.

**RS:** What Chuck Berry songs did you play on?

**FB:** "Maybellene" was one; that much I can tell you. But I don't remember the names of the others.

**RS:** And what about Bo Diddley? What songs of his did you record?

**FB:** "Bo Diddley." Now that had a different beat. But I played it like a blues drummer. I didn't let myself overshadow the rest of the players and music. I made sure that the beat was there, but it wasn't so loud, if you know what I mean. Bo Diddley wanted more fills than Chuck Berry wanted. We'd go into the studio, get two or three good takes, and that was it. My job was finished.

**RS:** Of all the blues and early rock greats that you played with, which one did you enjoy working with the most?

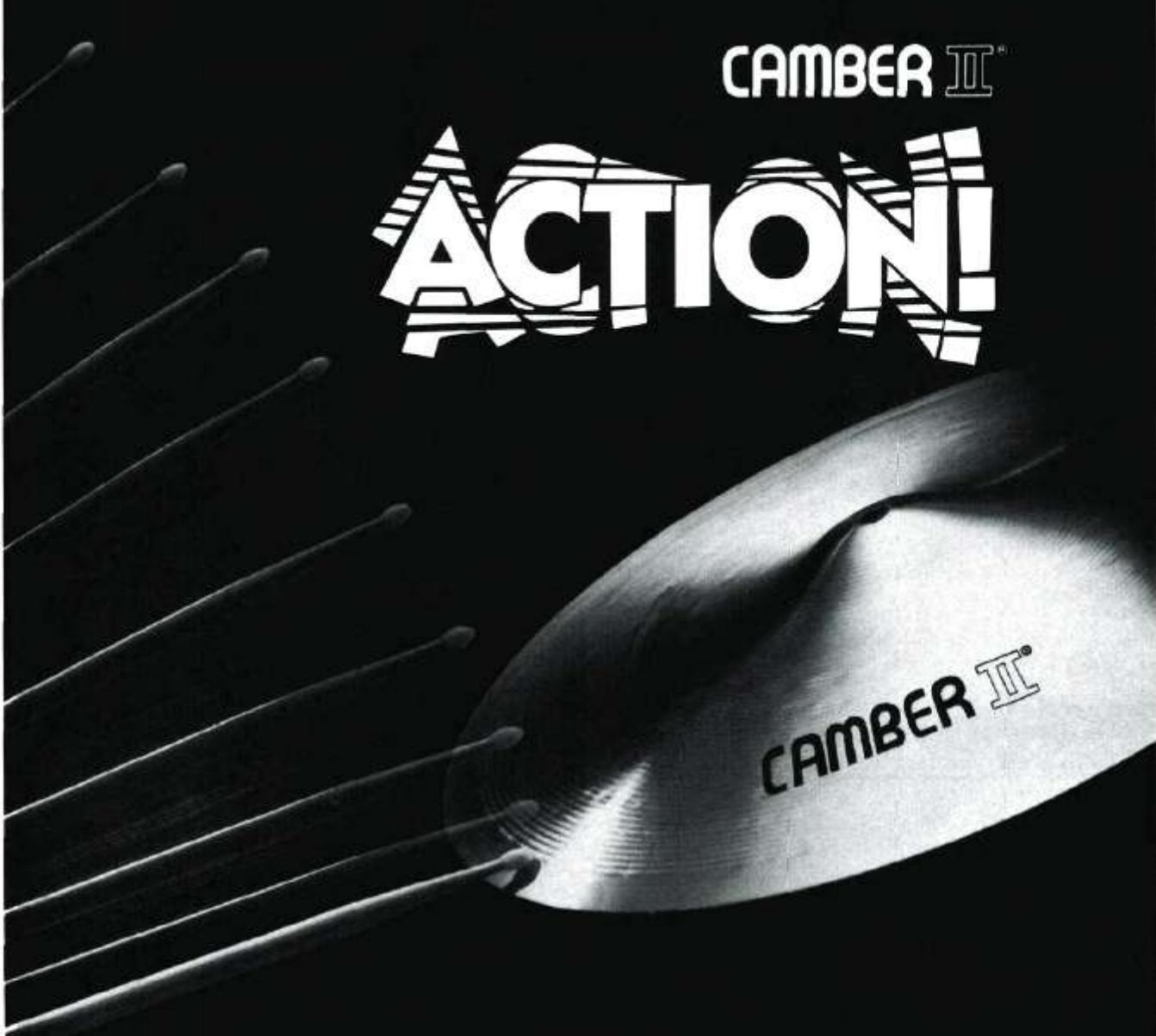
**FB:** Little Walter. He gave me more freedom than anyone else. So I was able to do a lot of experimenting. He just turned me loose.

**RS:** Did you do much soloing?

**FB:** No, I did not. The first solo of mine that was ever recorded was heard on "Off The Wall" by Little Walter back in the early '60s. That's what I mean about Little Walter. He'd let me do something like that. The other artists I played with wouldn't go for that. When Little Walter told me to take a solo, boy, I was surprised.

**RS:** What kind of drums did you play back then?

**FB:** My first set was a Gretsch set. I used Zildjian cymbals. That



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was a good little set.

**RS:** You're retired now. Do you miss playing the drums?

**FB:** Yeah, but when I'm feelin' lonely for them, I just get them out and play.

**Layton** continued from page 23

Then, when Stevie left the Cobras to start a band called Triple Threat Revue, which didn't last long and which eventually turned into Double Trouble, he was having some problems with his drummer. I really wasn't too happy with what I was doing. I wanted to do something more serious. So I told Stevie I wanted to play with him, and he said, "Okay, let's go." We've been together ever since.

**RS:** And this was the first time you played in a blues band?

**CL:** Yeah. I wasn't the world's greatest shuffle player, because like I said before, I never really seriously played the blues in other bands I was in. Fortunately, the bass player in Triple Threat, W.C. Clark, gave me a lot of pointers. He's an incredible player. Anyway, I guess I had a natural ability of sorts to play the blues, because I picked it up pretty quick.

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

**CL:** When I was 14. That's when I got my first set an old Ludwig set. I traded it offin a bad deal a long time ago. That was a great set.

**RS:** Why the drums?

**CL:** That's a good question. I guess because I always used to beat on things. My father was a drummer, even though he had stopped playing by the time he was 23. Maybe it was something genetic that made me want to play. I don't know.

**RS:** Did he have any drums around the house when you were growing up?

**CL:** No, he didn't. The only thing he kept around was a pair of brushes. And I played with brushes before I ever picked up sticks. One thing he did do for me was encourage me to play. My father always said that a man becomes what he thinks of most of the time. Well, I was always thinking about drums and rhythms.

**RS:** Your father aside, what other drummers influenced you?

**CL:** Three people come to mind immediately: Mitch Mitchell, Michael Shrieve, and believe it or not, Stevie Wonder. I just love the way the man plays drums. He has a whole different approach to the instrument. The stuff he did on *Talking Book* still knocks me out.

**RS:** Let's get back to Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble. Are you pretty much free to play what you believe is best for a particular song?

**CL:** Yeah. We don't actually sit down and work things out. We just do a lot of playing. We don't even have long periods of intense rehearsals. Stevie will throw out an idea, and everybody will just jump on it. We'll try to play it like we're breaking out of jail.

**RS:** What does Stevie like in a drummer?

**CL:** If it's at all possible, don't play the same thing twice. And always play with as much heart and soul as you can. You also have to be able to play loud, because Stevie sure does play loud.

**RS:** Is that difficult for you?

**CL:** In a way it is, because I have to play loud and hard, and still keep my finesse. Those are difficult things to put together.

**RS:** And how do you manage?

**CL:** The best I can.

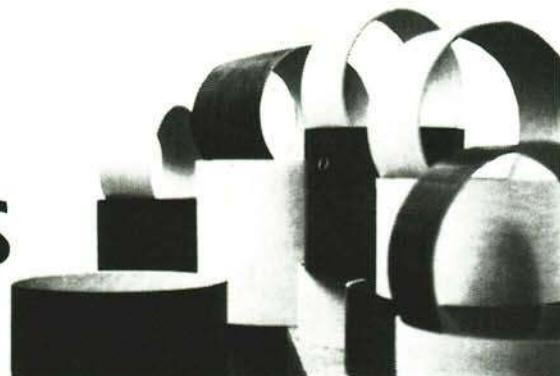
**RS:** Every now and then, Stevie will venture off and include some interesting jazz themes in his music.

**CL:** I love when he does that. I'm not the best jazz player around, but I love playing it. By nature, I'm really a lighter player than I sound, so I kind of fall into the jazz grooves pretty easily.

**RS:** What kind of equipment are you presently using?

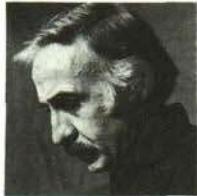
**CL:** I'm using a custom Tama set. I have a carbon fiber snare that has a lot of crack to it. I also have 12", 13", and 14" toms. The 12 and 13 are an inch longer than the standard size. My kick drum is 16 inches deep, similar to the power kick series. As for cymbals, I have an 18" Sabian crash-ride and a 20" Paiste ride. My other crash is a K Zildjian. I also have Zildjian New Beat hi-hats that I've had

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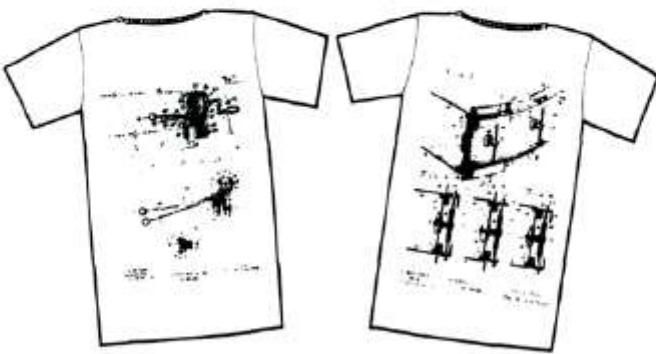
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for years. I got them when they first came out, and I've played them ever since.

**RS:** What is your general outlook when it comes to playing the drums? Sum up, if you will, your personal view towards your instrument.

**CL:** I want to do the best I can and play the most I can. Playing behind Stevie is a job I love. It also helps to have a strong woman behind you, and my wife, Betty, is just that. I owe her a lot.

*Olson continued from page 24*

and earn a decent living?

**DO:** Well, let's put it this way: We persevered. We starved, but we kept knocking on doors, and eventually we beat them down. The turning point with the band occurred when we signed with the Rosebud Booking Agency out of San Francisco. They took a lot of interest in us.

**RS:** You mentioned before that Sonny Freeman was one of your main influences.

**DO:** The man could shuffle like nobody. I finally got that feel with the left hand incorporated into my own drum style, you know, with the accents on the 2 and the 4. I went to play with these guys who were blues fanatics I mean real blues fanatics before I joined with Robert Cray. The reason why they invited me to play with them was because I didn't play loud. All they wanted was someone to play some relatively quiet shuffles. From that point on, I started to get very involved in blues drumming. I always feel really good when a band locks into a blues or soul groove. That's the greatest feeling in the world for me.

**RS:** So many of the great blues drummers stress the fact that you have to play softly if you want to play the blues correctly.

**DO:** In this style of music, the right dynamics is essential dynamics and the right grooves. Sometimes I don't think of myself as a blues drummer, but as a drummer who plays the blues. I don't know if many people can see the distinction like I can, but for me it's very real.

**RS:** There's an increased awareness of the blues these days, if not an out-and-out revival or renaissance. Where do you think this comes from?

**DO:** I think it stems back to the Blues Brothers records. That group was so good, with Duck Dunn and Steve Jordan holding down that rhythm section. Jordan is a drummer who took the shuffle, switched it around, and gave it a whole new flavor. He's incredible. He has so much class to go along with a very intellectual imagination. Some of the things he did on the Letterman show amazed me.

**RS:** What comprises a good blues drummer in your estimation?

**DO:** Most important to me is the groove the beat. Whether it's a funk beat with a million notes or a basic Al Jackson 2 and 4, you must be able to get that groove right. That's what's most important, at least to me.

**RS:** Do you practice much at home?

**DO:** Yeah, I'd say so. When I'm home, I like to work on the shuffle, and move the double stroke between the snare drum and the bass drum just to give it a little flavor. I don't do that on stage, because Robert doesn't like that too much. But for my own dexterity, it's fun to practice that. I've gone from practicing exercises to practicing grooves. I like to play to tapes. Bobby Womack is perfect for that. Yogi Horton is great. I'd love to apply some of the things I've been working on in a live situation. My goal is simply to be able to get people to tap their feet. The drummers who do that are the ones I admire the most.

**RS:** You've recorded with Robert Cray, right?

**DO:** Yes, I have. I'm on *Bad Influences*, *False Accusations*, and the new record. I haven't done much else in the way of recording. I'm basically a band drummer, and when the band records, I'm a part of it. We tour a lot, too, so there's little time for outside projects. Studio work is real weird for me. I much prefer playing on stage and touring. The studio is too demanding.

**RS:** You say you enjoy playing live and touring. It's a good thing, because the Robert Cray Band always seems to be on the road.

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Quincy Jones and Steve Winwood are a few of his credits) learned the importance of using the right mic for each part of his set

long ago. There's no substitute for J.R.'s years of practice and professional experience, but we can offer you a head start. We've put his tips on how to choose and use mics, along with advice from other top producers, engineers and players, in "The Beyer Percussion Mic Group" a new educational poster. To get your free copy, send \$2.00 for postage and handling to Beyer Dynamic Inc., 5-05 Burns Avenue, Hicksville, NY 11801. The poster, and your Beyer Percussion Mic Group dealer, will show you how to pick the right mics for your budget and playing style. And how to start getting a more accurate drum sound.

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**DO:** Well, it's true. We do tour a lot. We go to Europe as much as we can. There's definitely a demand for good American blues bands over there. Actually, I think a large reason why we got a major record deal with Mercury was due to our success abroad.

**RS:** What kinds of drums are you presently playing?

**DO:** I have a Pearl drumset. The bass drum is 22." The extended toms are 12", 13", and 16". I use Zildjian cymbals: a 20" ride, a 16" crash, and New Beat hi-hats.

**RS:** Do you ever use electronic drums?

**DO:** No, although I've played around with them, and on the new record, I was subjected to a *LinnDrum* for the very first time. I used it a bit on the tracks. With the *LinnDrum*, it was strange pushing buttons and all, but I think I need to know about such things. Let's face it, that's now very much a part of the overall equipment currently being used by drummers in the 1980s.

**RS:** You already alluded to the Robert Cray Band's success overseas. Why is it more difficult to crack the U.S. market for blues bands?

**DO:** I think the American people have so many other things coming at them, musically. They have jazz, rock, pop, Top 40, videos, MTV -- you name it. And how many radio stations are playing B.B. King records? It's hard for me sometimes to look back and see how far we've come. We've always refused to compromise our music, and still we've made progress. That makes me really proud to be a part of this band.

*Leary continued from page 25*

fancy and jump all over the place. He'd take care of the fancy stuff. He was the show. You see, that's where many of the young blues drummers of today make a mistake. They think they're supposed to be seen just like the fellows up front. But their job is to drive those guys. Just drive 'em that's all. I learned early on that I wasn't supposed to be heard; I was supposed to be felt. You ain't got to hear me. You got to feel me.

**RS:** How long did you play with T-Bone Walker?

**SPL:** About six years. Then, I went in the army and played drums there. After that, I came out and went to school. I wanted to become an accountant, but my mind was always on music. Finally, I moved to Chicago.

**RS:** What drummers were you listening to for inspiration?

**SPL:** One drummer: Art Blakey. That's the man who gave me my first pair of drumsticks. I was up at the Rose Room where Mr. Blakey was playing with Billy Eckstine. This is when Mr. Eckstine had his big blues band. Anyway, after the show, I asked Mr. Blakey if he'd give me a pair of sticks, and he did. I didn't have any business being in the club, because I was just a kid. But I wanted to meet that man. And you know what? To this day, Mr. Blakey remembers me as the boy he gave a pair of sticks to in Dallas a long time ago.

**RS:** Were you influenced by Art Blakey's drum style?

**SPL:** I was then, and I still am. I think he's the greatest drummer in the world.

**RS:** Talking with other blues drummers, I'm amazed at how the names of the same jazz drummers pop up when discussing influences.

**SPL:** Do you know why? Because the only blues drummers around when we were starting out were Dixieland blues drummers. And remember, the blues didn't need a drummer back then. You just needed a guitar, and that was it.

**RS:** When you moved to Chicago, was it with the idea that you'd join a blues band there?

**SPL:** Chicago was, and still is, the blues capital of the world. When I first came to Chicago, I was living with my sister out in Maywood. I was trying to find a regular job, but I couldn't find one. So I was ready to pack and leave, but one day I was down in the basement practicing my drums, and Sonny Boy Williamson [Rice Miller] came over. He lived across the street. I didn't know that at the time. He asked my sister, "Who's that beatin' on those drums down in the cellar there?" Well, my sister told him it was me. This

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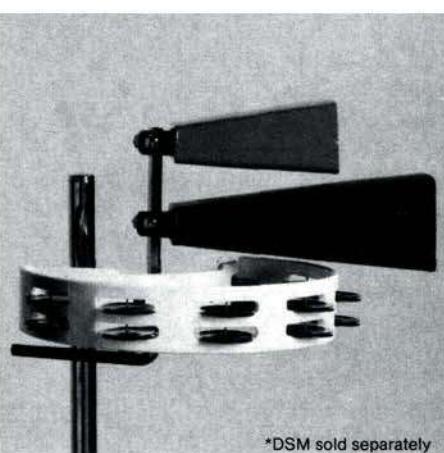
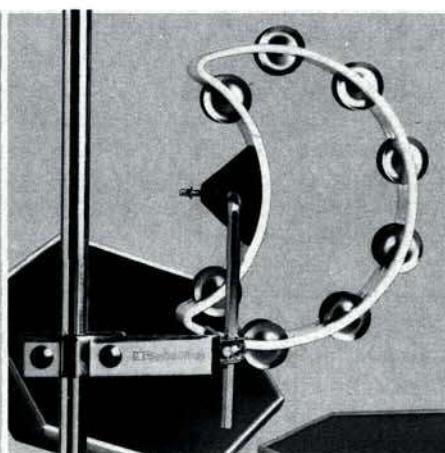
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was the same sister who bought me my first drum. Well, ol' Sonny Boy gave me a job. I played with him and Johnny Shines. I worked with Sonny Boy until he broke me into what was going on in Chicago. From there, I just went.

**RS:** Those were truly classic days in blues history.

**SPL:** They sure were. You could go from door to door from one club to the next. There were so many clubs back then and a lot of great players.

**RS:** Who else did you play with back then?

**SPL:** Oh, boy, you're going to make me bust my skull trying to remember. I'll give you a couple of names: Elmore James, Homesick James, Robert Jr. Lockwood, Magic Sam. Is that enough?

**RS:** That's fine.

**SPL:** You know, when I played with Magic Sam, that was important for me, because after working with him, I knew that I was able to play the blues. He taught me quite a bit about the moves I should make behind a blues musician: go for that steady backbeat and set up the drive. Now T-Bone, like I said, taught me the same thing. But I was too young to get it down the way I needed to. But with Magic Sam, I did. See, I never was a solo drummer. A technician is what you might call me.

**RS:** You did quite a bit of recording once you settled into the Chicago scene.

**SPL:** Yeah, but not right away. It took me a while to get into it.

**RS:** And who did you first begin your recording career with?

**SPL:** With Howlin' Wolf on Chess Records. From Wolf I went to Muddy [Waters], from Muddy to Jimmie Rodgers, and from Jimmie Rodgers to a lot of others.

**RS:** What are your recollections of Howlin' Wolf?

**SPL:** He was one of the greatest men I ever worked for. He and Muddy were great blues people.

**RS:** Do you remember what kind of drumset you used back then?

**SPL:** I sure do. It's the same one I'm using now. It's a Slingerland set. I got that kit in 1952, and I've been using it ever since. Some players today change drums like they change clothes. What for? You find a good set of drums, and you stick with them. They treat you good, and you treat them good. There ain't no other way. You talk cymbals with me, and I'll tell you Zildjian all the way. That's the way it is with me.

**RS:** There were blues drummers who played the blues in the Delta region and blues drummers from Chicago. From what I've been told, they approached the blues differently. Yet no one has been able to tell me what it was that was different. Can you?

**SPL:** Well, I'll try. The Delta blues drummers played by hearsay. By that I mean instinct. They played the way they thought blues drummers ought to play. They didn't know the way Chicago blues drummers were playing, until they actually got here and saw how it was done. Now don't get me wrong. Some of the greatest blues players I know came from Mississippi and the Delta. Once they got to Chicago, they changed the way they played. Chicago was like a blues college. You brought your talent with you, and you refined it here. There were no chumps keeping the beat here. There are still no chumps here.

**RS:** Do you still play out regularly?

**SPL:** Well, I'll play with Jimmy Walker and Barrelhouse Chuck, and that's about it. I'm not playing full-time anymore. The blues has been good to me. I ain't complaining. I've been around the world nine or ten times. I played on Muddy's "I Got My Mojo Working." I was around for the days when blues was king. I've got no right to complain. I've got a good wife, too.

**RS:** Do you have any children?

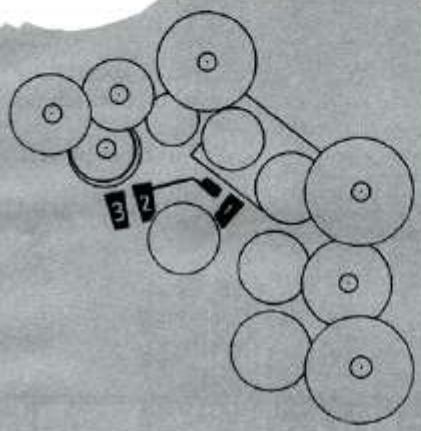
**SPL:** No, no children. But I'll tell you what. I've got three ol' dogs out there in the back if you want to interview them. [laughs]

**RS:** Maybe another time.

*Grady continued from page 25*  
ment?

**FG:** I think so, yeah. A lot of young black musicians don't like to play the blues full-time, because that's the music of their parents and grandparents that sort of thing. But once they get the need to

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discover their roots, they take the blues more seriously. Then, sometimes you have to get the blues before you start to understand the blues and want to play it.

**RS:** What blues drummers did you especially admire when you were learning to play?

**FG:** Fred Below. When it comes to the blues and blues drumming, he's the master. There ain't no better than Fred Below. I'd listen to him all the time. He was an inspiration.

**RS:** Describe, if you can, the changes you had to make as a drummer when you went from playing funk to blues.

**FG:** When I was playing funk, I'd play more upbeat stuff and maybe a little more all the way around. But funk is derived from the blues, so I don't think it's all that difficult for anyone with a good knowledge of both music forms to make the change. A blues drummer is also less showy. He's there, but he's not, if you know what I mean. Blues musicians don't like drummers who go around proving they can play this or that and being fancy. You might get away with that in other forms of music, especially in rock, but not in the blues. You'd be out of a job.

**RS:** Yet, when you play with Jimmy Johnson, you seem to blend together a blues-funk feel so that your playing is sharper and more robust than the average blues drummer.

**FG:** Well, that's because I'm not from the old school of blues drummers. I listened to the greats—people like Fred Below, Odie Payne, and S.P. Leary—but then I developed my own style. In the old days, before electric instruments, you had to play soft, so everyone else in the band could be heard. But these days, I think it's okay to play a little harder—a little heavier—providing you're not too flashy or playing with one of the greats. When you play with them, you play drums the way they're used to hearing them, mostly because that's the way they know the blues to be and also out of respect.

**RS:** Would you say that blues drumming is evolving into some-

thing more dynamic than the styles heard 30 years ago?

**FG:** Yeah, I think so. Blues drummers are influenced today by drummers in rock and R&B, and they're sneaking a little more into their fills along with a little more volume. There's a little mixing up going on with the younger blues drummers.

**RS:** What kind of drumset do you currently play?

**FG:** I use Ludwig drums. I have two kits. My fiberglass kit is the one I'm using now. It has four toms: 13", 14", 16", and 18", a 24" bass, and a 14" snare. I also use a 16" crash cymbal, a 20" ride, and a 14" hi-hat. My other kit is a wooden one.

**RS:** Do you ever use electronic drums?

**FG:** No. Now you're really putting me off the blues stage. That's going too far. That would definitely change the sound of the blues.

**RS:** I know Jimmy Johnson is quite popular in Europe. Do you enjoy playing there?

**FG:** Oh yeah. They love the blues over there. Blues acts from America don't get over there as regularly as they'd like, so when they do come, thousands of people turn out. Some blues artists have even moved over there. I saw Memphis Slim in Paris, and the cat was driving a Rolls Royce. He's going good. I've been to Europe on seven different tours. The money is four times what you make here in the States.

**RS:** What's the current Chicago blues scene like?

**FG:** It's pretty good, you know. There are a bunch of good clubs around to play. People who dig rock 'n' roll seem to be searching out the music's roots, so they go looking for the blues.

**RS:** Is there enough happening in town to keep most blues players working?

**FG:** If you're good, there's always a gig for you. I made a good living free-lancing. Others are doing the same.



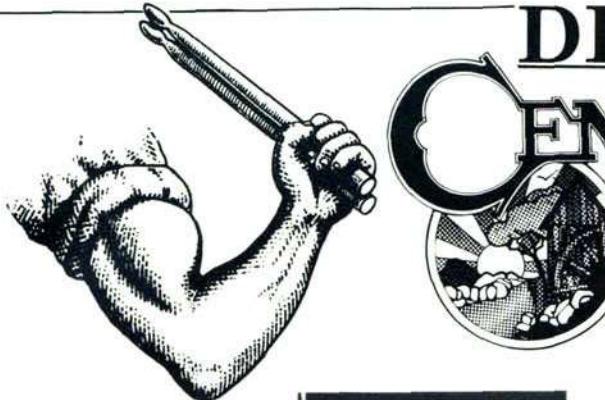
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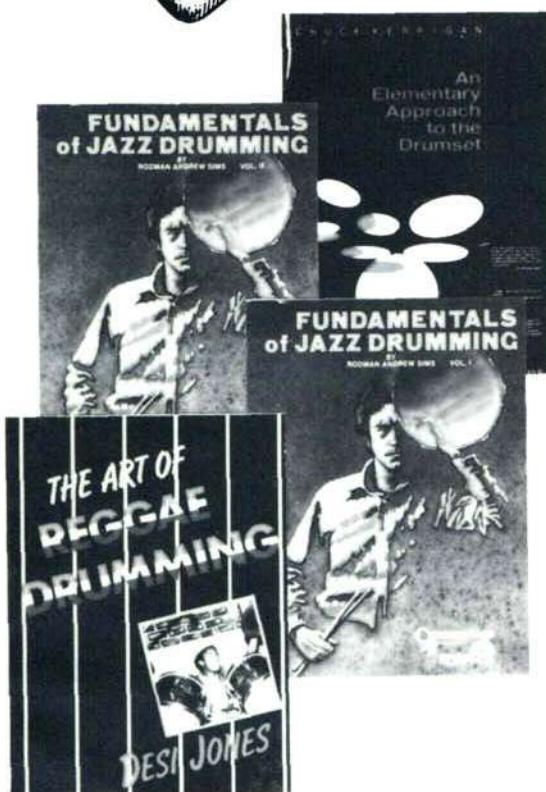
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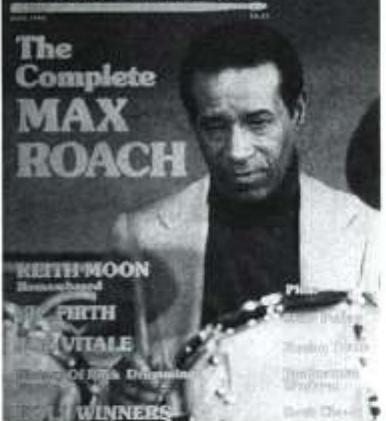
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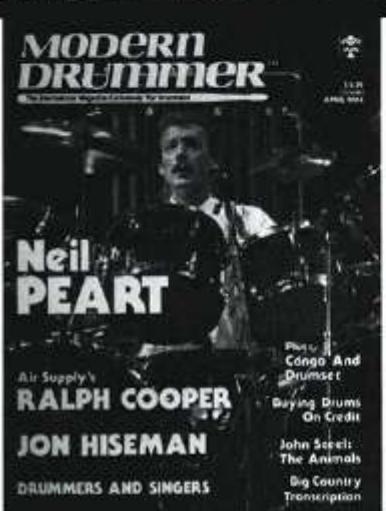
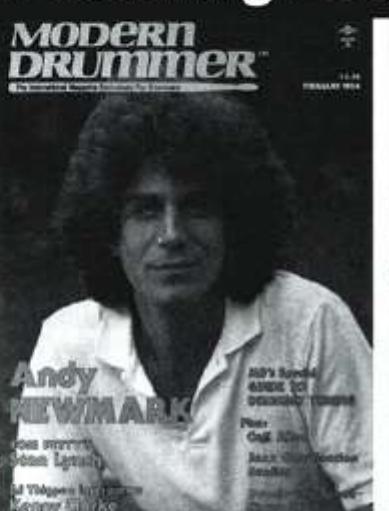
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by Robin Tolleson

# Michael Shrieve And David Beal: Tracking The Future Of Electronic Percussion



Michael Shrieve is old enough to remember what the term "equipment problem" used to mean to a drummer. "You used to go to Tama or someone and you'd be asked, 'What would you like, a 15" hi-hat?' Now you're sitting around discussing problems with software, saying, 'If I could just do this . . .' I used to look through Ludwig catalogs in bed at night, making plans about drums," he says. "Now I find myself reading keyboard magazines."

While working on the soundtrack to a new Dino DeLaurentis film, *Bedroom Window*, Shrieve and fellow percussionist David Beal utilized some of the latest software for MIDI drums, virtually playing Thomas Edison using the tools on hand (Digidesign and Blank Software) to invent previously unheard percussion sounds. "We spent a lot of time on the drums," says Shrieve, who set up shop at Fantasy Studios in Berkeley, California. "We were here 12 hours a day, working on getting it as right as we could. I've never had that luxury in my life."

Thanks to the new software, Shrieve and Beal were able to call up, shape, and bend sounds from a table full of floppy disks. "Drum File from Blank Software allows you to change the sampling rate of your sound to be compatible with the *Emulator II*, the *Synclavier*, and other devices. We made our E-mu *SP-12* samples compatible. Now we can work with them visually with the Digidesign program," explains David Beal, who brought his Macintosh computer setup out from New York for the project.

The film's opening sequence is punctuated by a sharp, unfamiliar, metallic-sounding click. "We had a sound of a tambourine sampled, and the sound of an anvil that we really liked, so we digitally combined them on the Digidesign soft-

ware. Then we sent it over, modified it, layered it, put it in *The Blender*, mixed it together, and sent it back. Now it's one sound in the *SP-12*, Beal says. "It made one sound that had a kind of varying attack. I cut off the beginning to give it one attack, and we made a sound. We call it the 'Antam.' We're really creating new sounds. We took long, orchestral cymbal crashes, threw them in there and reversed them, and then we layered them with something else. We'd get these weird, off-color kind of effects. For movies, that opens up a whole new world, because if you can deal with sounds that people haven't heard before, it's much more emotionally stimulating."

Michael Shrieve's accomplishments in the percussion world are well-known, beginning with the Santana drum chair when he was barely in his teens. Shrieve was a co-founder of the group Automatic Man in the mid-'70s, and did some of the first recorded work with electronic percussion on that band's 1976 Island Records debut. Shrieve has also done boundary-stretching and ground-breaking work with electronics in Stomu Yamashita's Go groups and with synthesist Klaus Shultze.

David Beal is a newcomer on the scene by comparison, but has already logged studio and road time with Little Steven, Madonna, and Peter Gabriel, among others. Beal's reputation as a programmer is spreading fast. He got started in programming the way a lot of drummers did out of frustration from seeing programming gigs go to non-drummers. He began sampling when the *SP-12* came out on the market. "It really fascinated me," he says. "Having the availability of all these different sounds, you can totally change the attitude. You can play one kind of groove over a completely different set of sounds and get a whole new thing."

"Three years ago, having 2,000 drum sounds that you could load from a floppy disk would have been a dream," he continues. "But you sit in a studio now and some people say, 'I can't believe how slow a floppy disk is.' So we've had to go to the Mac just to get a much faster load time. The Blank software is great," Beal adds. "Michael would come up with a series of

sounds, we'd put them in the *SP-12* and get them all tuned, and then we could dump them into 'document' as one *SP-12* load. It shows right on the screen, and you can write about it on the info section of the Mac, like 'These are the sounds we used for cue M-1.' It would save it exactly as it was. Later on, when we had to redo a few cues, we could go right back to where we were."

Another advantage of the advanced and visually enhanced tuning and shaping capabilities is that there is no need to take up a lot of tracks recording or to worry about EQ on the mixing board. "We are composing drum parts, mixing them, effecting them, and sending a stereo mix out. The engineer doesn't have to do anything," says Shrieve.

Shrieve and synthesist Patrick Gleeson were asked to compose 50 minutes of music for the film. Fantasy Studio B was blocked out for several weeks, and the musicians worked 12-hour shifts. Gleeson would begin an idea, and then leave it for the percussionists to add to. Shrieve and Beal would do the same during their time in the studio, leaving rhythmic beds for Gleeson to elaborate on with his *Synclavier*. They brought in guest musicians like Yellowjackets saxman Marc Russo and guitarist Peter Maunu.

In one climactic scene near the end of *Bedroom Window*, the musical authors provide a different and appropriate rhythmic current for each emotional twist. "The minute they fall down the stairs and go running across the garage toward a car, it's like an all-out jungle — like a tribe of natives in pursuit. It's like 100 African drums playing, and it's really kind of cool," Beal says. "We laid down a foundation of African drums. Then we put two *Octapads* across from each other, got the picture up on the screen, and played live. We each had eight sounds, and we went live onto the track. Michael does a great kick and snare thing. To have 16 sounds to be able to play off a log drum onto a cowbell for instance isn't something that you could do without an *Octapad*."

The drummers used a Garfield Electronics *Master Beat* to get themselves out of a few real clinches when it came to synchro-

nizing sound to film. "Our biggest, most time-consuming, and money-wasting problem has been synchronization," Shrieve says. "They can pretty much synchronize two things together now," adds Beal, "but if one machine is going through a variable, it's also moving the other machine. If your tape recorder is speeding up or slowing down while you're putting music on it, you're going to have the pitch wavering up and down, and timing problems. Luckily, the *Master Beat* can memorize very speedy clicks. We had a click that fluctuated up to four metronome numbers; it would go from 125 to below 121. But the *Master Beat* would memorize where that would happen and keep everything in sequence. The other problem in synchronization is that you've got to have pre-roll, so that you can have time for the machines to lock up before the cue starts. If the studio doesn't give you enough pre-roll or code before your first downbeat is supposed to happen, the machines can't get going right."

Despite some technical hang-ups and the fact that they were often working with short bursts of music, there was ample room for creativity in the project. During one scene in the film, a deep and resounding kick drum that moves an action sequence along is a combination of a sampled floor tom and sampled timpani, detuned almost two octaves, with a little bit of Simmons over it. "It has all that bottom, because it's a timpani," Beal says matter-of-factly. Being able to load a sampled sound onto the Mac and then work with it until you're satisfied has made a difference in sounds from orchestral crashes to shakers and percussion of all shapes and sizes. "I rolled off all the raids and lows on a sampled shaker, and only left the highs in," says Beal, speaking of his work on the Macintosh screen. "And the temple blocks and agogos are all sampled. Sometimes I'll take a low block and tune it way up, to get a completely different timbre from it."

"You can quickly set up an orchestral percussion section," says Shrieve, "and then alter the sounds so that they don't have to be like a straight orchestra. They can have that semblance of an orchestral sound but sound like something else. Then we can put it on the pads and play it. It depends on what the piece of music is. Several times, we both played *Octapads*. We'd say, 'Let's take off the machine and play it,' and we'd get a different feel. But otherwise, the machine offers you precision, and you can work with the sounds. And with the pads, you can choose any sounds with the MIDI notes, so you can just call up any sounds you want to play and you have six at once. With the Ensoniq *Mirage*, you can assign a whole drumkit however you want it over the keyboard, which is pretty slick." By the way, there was no acoustic drumkit set up in the studio only a deep Tama snare. On one chase scene, they sam-

pled the sound of a brush on the snare and toyed with it on computer. "MIDI has changed the world of musical instruments," laughs Beal, stating what is rapidly becoming obvious.

"Now, everybody has a 4-track or 8-track at home, and a MIDI drum machine. It's given people a sense of perfect time," Beal says. "You'll hear drummers fluctuate a little, and everybody looks at them like, 'Hey, come on, my Roland doesn't do that!'"

While teaching recently at Drummers' Collective in New York, Shrieve discovered that young players had many questions about how to spend their money best. "Should I get a new cymbal, or should I get some Simmons? When you're coming up, these are important questions. What should I get? Should I get a drum machine, or should I get a drumkit? What if I've got a drumkit but people won't hire me if I don't have electronic drums as well? This is a real situation, and not only for top-of-the-line professionals," Shrieve says. One reason Michael got the gig to work on *Bedroom Window* was because a main hand in the picture heard Shrieve's solo percussion album *In Suspect Terrain*, an eclectic collection of Linn machine programs, waterphone, African marimba, and other exotic sounds. "The record was done before chip changing, so by the time it was released in this country, it sounded old," Shrieve says. "You know, the sounds are changing so quickly."

Working on *Bedroom Window* with Beal has gotten another idea rattling around inside Shrieve. "For a long time, I've wanted to have some kind of percussion group, and David and I are talking about doing something like that. It would be a combination of traditional and new stuff. And we could make it so that we'd play everything; nothing would be programmed. We could have a bunch of triggers and play every sound, but now we wouldn't be limited to drum sounds. Combinations are what I've always been interested in."

"Working with Michael has been the coolest thing," Beal says, "because I have a system of things that I do detune this, put this here and it's great, but Michael has no preconceived notions, so he pushes me to different places. Rhythmically, Michael has concepts, but he doesn't necessarily know the boundaries of this technology. Trying to meet his ideas and concepts has caused me to go astray from my normal programming. It's just like reaching levels in playing. Once you've got the rudiments, you want to put them around the kit. And the approach to programming, as you can hear on Michael's album, is a whole different kind of drumming. There's drumming that's physical the learning, the ability, and the rudiments but the mental chops you use in programming are also really heavy-duty."

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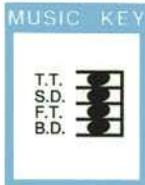
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# Creative Triplets For The Part 2



Last month, we looked at how syncopated figures could be used within an underlying framework of 8th-note triplets with accents to create some interesting rhythmic ideas. This month, we'll look at a few more ways to apply this concept. Note: *It's extremely important that all of the material in Part 1 of this article be mastered before progressing to Part 2.*

### Bass Drum Unison

One of the more interesting ways to elaborate on the concept presented last month is to utilize the bass drum to further enforce the rhythmic figure that's played with the hands. In essence, the bass drum is played in *unison* with the syncopated rhythm.

Here are a few more examples of this approach. Once again, start slowly and gradually increase the tempo after you're totally familiar with the exercise. Use alternate sticking throughout (RLRU).

Using the same procedure as last month, it's recommended that you once again work with your copy of Ted Reed's *Progressive Steps To Syncopation For The Modern Drummer*. Begin with pages 33 through 36, and then move on to solo exercises 1 through 8 (pages 37 to 44) using the bass drum unison technique.

### Drum-To-Drum Patterns

Here's another method where the accented rhythm moves around the drums (snare, small tom-tom, large tom-tom):

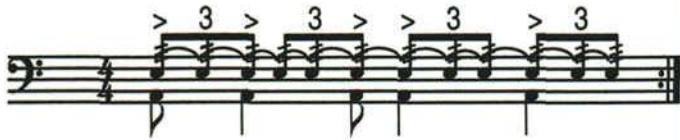
Below are six examples using the drum-to-drum system. After mastering each one, move on to the Reed book and work through the same pages previously mentioned. You'll note that some of the figures in the book will lend themselves better to the drum-to-drum system than others. Simply eliminate those that don't work well and experiment more closely with those that do. Use your imagination and create your own drum-to-drum patterns.

# Advanced Player:

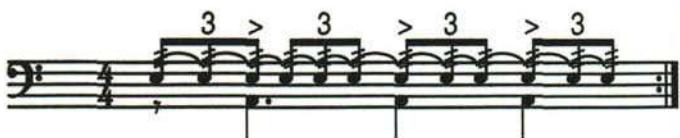
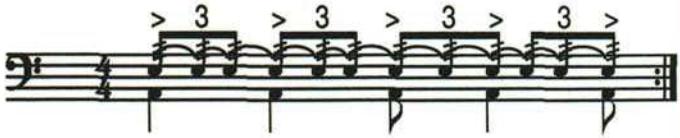
by Mark Hurley

## Press Rolls

Finally, here's another application of the concept using press rolls. Keep the unaccented notes softer than the accented ones. Use alternate sticking throughout (RLRL).



Here are six more examples to be practiced before progressing again to pages 33 to 44 of Ted Reed's *Syncopation* book. Along with being a great solo technique, this method will also help build strength and endurance.



I'm hopeful that both of these articles have stimulated you to develop even more ways of using this approach. *Good luck!*

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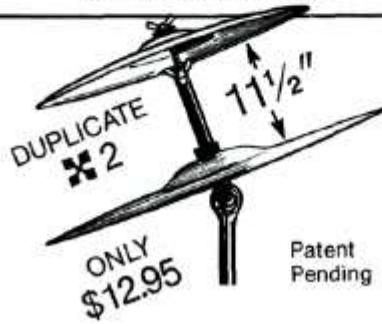
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*Smyth continued from page 29*

you say to yourself, "If something doesn't happen, I will not live out of a suitcase playing Holiday Inns for the rest of my life." All of us pretty much agreed that either we would move up the next step of the pyramid or eventually we would disband. There's no sense beating your head against the wall. You'd make more money working in a 7-11 and living at home, but we really felt there was something special, and after a year, we started doing showcases in Nashville for the record labels RCA, CBS, Capitol, and people like that.

We started to build up a reputation as a good club act. We moved up the club scale to where we were playing some clubs that were like 1,200-seat clubs, and the money got up to as far as it was going to get in a club. So that next jump in the pyramid had to be something to do with recording. That's luckily where *Star Search* happened.

**WFM:** How did that whole thing come about?

**JS:** It was a very casual thing. We were in Nashville for a day, and we thought we were going to shoot a promotional video. Our booking agent said, "You've got to be at this studio at a certain time. They're going to film you." We thought this was going to be just a cassette that they would be able to send to club owners, because video was starting to happen and it would get us more jobs. Actually, it was an agency call where *Star Search* came to town, called up agencies, and said, "Do you have talent? Send it down." We thought, 'Oh no,' because we had been in Jackson, Mississippi, at a Ramada Inn, and we had seen the pilot for *Star Search*. We thought, "We're absolutely not at all what they want." But *Star Search* had already taped five or six shows, and the group category had been substandard. They thought it was bad, so they were out looking for new talent, especially to beef up that group category. We said, "Oh man, this is the worst - another disappointment - being jerked around on a chain." So they had a hand-held black-and-white video camera. We lip synched to a tape of one of our songs and literally just goofed off - jumped up on the amplifiers and fooled around behind the drums. They said, "This is September 30. You may very well hear from us by Christmas." They called three days later and said, "Can you be in L.A. Monday?" We got a free trip to L.A.. They were giving us a per diem. We just went out and thought, "Hey, this is a chance to get a free trip to L.A., and make a little money." We never considered winning. We just thought, "This is great." So we canceled the next week's work and flew out to L.A.

**WFM:** Did you take your equipment?

**JS:** No, they had equipment there and everything. All we had to do was have a song edited to that two minutes or whatever the time limit was. We had been doing

some recording - basically good demos to pitch to the labels at Nashville - so we had some stuff. So we had the audio package and went out there. In the first show, we went against a group that had won one or two shows. We found out later that the lead singer had been one of the Village People. They did a soft song, and we did an uptempo song and won. We were flabbergasted. They used to tape two shows a week: If you won Wednesday, they'd tape Thursday night. So you had to have two songs ready every time you went on. Then there was a week off, and then they taped another week with rehearsals. And we won again. We thought, "This is incredible." We didn't expect to do that. So we saw what worked with the show - energy, smiling, uptempo stuff - for the vocal group category. The singers were all doing Barry Manilow ballads the bigger the better. So we were on there with Sam Harris, and ended up winning like eight or nine weeks on the show.

**WFM:** What was the band doing between the show tapings?

**JS:** *Star Search* would fly us back to Nashville. The first year, they were very generous. We were getting scale, a per diem, and a bonus for every show we won. They'd also fly us back and forth. We'd go into the studio and either cut something else that we were doing normally in the clubs anyway - it was all our own stuff basically - or we'd edit something that we already recorded down to the correct length.

**WFM:** Did the band work on your stage act for the show?

**JS:** No we didn't. That was interesting. Basically what you saw on *Star Search* was what we did in the clubs, just without people. A lot of people took it as being so polished or so up that they were saying, "Who put you together? Come on, tell us. Who masterminded this whole thing?" And we said, "Hey, a week ago we were in a Ramada Inn" And people still think to an extent that that was all put together. We said, "Hey, we're doing what we do, and it seems to be working. When it doesn't work, we'll know."

We got out to L.A., and the people on the show were saying, "Why don't you have a record deal?" We said, "Hey, it's not that easy getting signed." Nashville, bless its heart, is a very negative place. The labels turn down everything, and at the end of the month, if there's something they haven't turned down, well, maybe they'll sign. If Boy George had been in Nashville, he'd still be a waiter, because nobody goes out on the line. Nobody sticks his neck out for anything new. It's a very, very conservative town.

The L.A. divisions of the labels were calling the Nashville divisions saying, "Why didn't you tell us about these guys?" All of a sudden, it became an embarrassment to a few of the labels in

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Nashville who had turned us down. The week of the finals was hysterical. Motown called. RCA and CBS were calling saying, "Don't sign anything. Come back and talk with us." A couple of years before, Capitol had flown their vice president in Nashville to Cincinnati to see us in a club. They had always said, "We're going to keep a relationship. We're always going to talk." And Curb records in L.A., who have a variety of people in country and rock 'n' roll, were very interested in us. We ended up signing a dual deal with Capitol and Curb. It took almost a year to sign that after *Star Search*, but it was good because *Star Search* put us up that next step in the pyramid.

**WFM:** Did you ever think of the fact that you were performing in front of millions of people? Did that affect you?

**JS:** Oh yeah. It was an artificial situation, because it was a competition. We realized that we were being judged by four people in the industry and that we were going against another group. It was a head-on competition, and it all gave us ulcers; I mean everybody. It was a drag because there's enough competition in the music business without making it a "competition." So that was a little bit of a put-off.

**WFM:** When *Star Search* ended, you weren't signed immediately.

**JS:** No, things moved more slowly than we would have liked. We signed management, but I don't think people knew how to capitalize on it at the time. We'd say, "Forty million people saw us on the finals of *Star Search*, and we can't get us a job for Saturday night. Come on. What's the deal?"

**WFM:** Back to the Holiday Inns.

**JS:** Yes, but after *Star Search*, we went to playing a single night in a club and being kind of like the featured act. We'd come in and it was still a honky-tonk or club, but a local group would open the show and we'd play two shows. That was better, and all the time, we were working on signing management and signing the record deal up. So it took a while, but we did a few appearances. The first appearance we did after *Star Search* was a fair in West Palm Beach, and there were something like three thousand people there. All of a sudden, we realized how powerful the show had been. Eventually, we acquired management, and the record label worked out.

**WFM:** On *Star Search*, you won for nine weeks.

**JS:** We were on nine weeks. Then we did a recap show, then the semifinals, and then the finals. So we were on 12 weeks, which with reruns was 24 weeks of basically national TV. It was syndicated, but it was the number-two syndicated show after *Solid Gold*.

**WFM:** After being signed, you started work on Sawyer Brown's first album. Was that a new experience for you?

**JS:** Yeah, I think it was. We had done a certain amount of recording on our own

and with a couple of producers in Nashville, just when we were in the demo stages of putting together some things to shop around to labels. The first album was tough. Recording is not easy. I don't think I would like to be a studio player. I prefer playing live. We all pull tight in the studio together, but it's not something that I think any one of us in the band would like to do. For a while, I thought, when I moved to Nashville, "Yeah, it would be neat to do just studio work." You only see the glamorous side of it, but then I got to see the other side of it. For a variety of reasons, I'm not sure that I like being behind the eight ball in that way all the time.

**WFM:** Is there a lot of pressure on you?

**JS:** Yeah, I think there's pressure to produce in the studio, and there's pressure if you're just a studio player to do just what this producer wants or this jingle arranger wants. Some people are real good at that, and that's why they're there. I admire what they do. I think what our band is all about is performing live. Sometimes the stage show gets to the point where musically things do suffer, but you're not playing for musicians. There's going to be five per cent musicians in the audience. They'll say, "Man, that guy missed that note singing," or "That guy played a clam," but when you jump around the stage playing bass guitar or whatever, you're going to do that. Our strongest point, I think, is the live show, and record sales are our second strongest point. We've won a few awards, but I think the proof is in how many people leave their living rooms and take it upon themselves to pay \$12 or \$17 for a ticket to see you, or pay \$8.98 to buy your album. I think those are the two telling points as far as success goes in commercial music. So far, we've been very strong in both those areas.

**WFM:** How many dates are you playing a year now?

**JS:** I checked last year for my taxes, and I was on the road 238 days. People say, "When is your tour over?" We say, "Probably when we die." We've been on the road steady since we put the band together. We get time off at Christmas two or three weeks. The summer is our busiest time because of the fair circuit. We're busy anywhere from 14 plus days in January through the winter, and then in the summer it hits up around 25. We're out for a solid month.

**WFM:** Do you have a lot of say in the course of the band at this point, other than the drumming and that musical aspect?

**JS:** It's a double-edged sword. Now we have a great management team, and we've got people working in the offices. The publicity office is in New York. People are working for us there. The booking agency is William Morris in L.A. and Nashville, and those people are working specifically on our careers. There's the record label in L.A. and Nashville. We're lucky because a

lot of our stuff is done through L.A. They're really on our side. So we've got all these offices that are directly or indirectly working for us, and then out on the road, we've got 18 people. That's a long way from the five of us traveling in a van. It's not like there's a guy taking care of towels and a guy taking care of drinks. Still, everybody's doing multiple jobs, but since we have a good road manager and everything, there are less things that I have to take care of. I don't have to call and have my laundry done. I do enjoy having a roadie. There are less things for me to bother with.

**WFM:** You can concentrate more on playing.

**JS:** Yeah, and just keeping my head together. The hour and 15 minutes that I'm on stage at night is vacation time. People say, "Is it hard playing every night?" That's the easy part. It's the other 22 1/2 hours of daily living on the road when you have to work to keep from going insane. We trust our management completely. They call and say, "You can do this. You can do that. Here are your options. What do you want to do?" They take care of a lot of the stuff. There are so many day-to-day decisions that have to be made: hotels, flights, and moving two buses, a truck, and 18 people around the country on a day-to-day basis. It's good not to have to be bothered with these details.

**WFM:** Tell me about your current drumkit.

**JS:** The kit I have has evolved as far as it's going to go for a while. It's almost a multiple percussion setup with five levels. There are the pedals on the floor whether it's a double kick pedal or a hi-hat or a remote hi-hat. That's the pedal level. The next level is the snare drum and floor toms. The next level is the toms, hi-hat, cowbell, and electronic pads. Level four is the cymbals: rides, crashes, other splashes. The fifth level, which I've just started since getting the Zildjian endorsement, is two China cymbals. To me, having that organized in those five levels makes sense, and when I sit down, I can feel good about the fact that this thing doesn't look like a jumble of stuff.

As for the kit itself, I'm using a Pearl all maple set. I've got 8", 10", 12", and 13" rack toms, and 14" and 16" floor toms all hanging from a Pearl Rack system. All of the drums are mounted on RIMS, and the mounted floor toms sound incredible. I tune all of the toms very low, and the RIMS help center the pitch of the drums. The bass drum is a 22". I'm using all Zildjian cymbals, and I'm thrilled to endorse Zildjian's products. I've also been using Pearl electronic drums and a Linn MIDied to a Simmons MTM. I'm becoming involved in the electronics thing. So much is happening, and it's very exciting. On

stage, I'm using a total of eight acoustic drums, five electronic pads, eight cymbals, and a cowbell, all attached to the rack. It's a big, yet organized, setup.

**WFM:** Here's a musical question for you. You were so involved in so many different areas of music, and now you're doing a totally different thing. Do you see a lot of ways you can tie in your composition background, your percussion background, and your legit music background to what you're doing now?

**JS:** I was waiting for this question. What I'm doing now is probably the result of everything that's happened to me. First off, I really feel like there are two facets to the music. There's the emotional release of getting behind a set of drums and just grooving, whether it's in front of 20 people or 20,000 people. That's a more emotional and physical release to me than playing a great bell solo in *The Pines Of Rome* with an orchestra. European music or a difficult contemporary piece appeals to me more on an intellectual level than on a physical 4/4 "just knocking it out" level. I enjoy both aspects. Right now, I'm only doing one. Someday, I'd like to get to play extra percussion in a local symphony, but I'm not sure if I could sit back and play snare drum in an orchestra now looking on it as a full-time deal. I'd like to have that emotional release behind a drumkit. That's part of what I am.



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by Denise Skea



Photo by Denise Skea

*Harry Lewis was playing with his band, Smash Palace, at J.C. Dobbs, a popular South Street nightclub in Philadelphia. The house was packed as I squeezed past the waiting line. "Nice crowd," I commented, as I found Harry in his dressing room, fiddling with his drumsticks. I wanted to get acquainted with Harry prior to the first set to have a comfortable atmosphere for the interview at the end of the night.*

*I found Harry to be a very laid-back person, with a gentle personality and a calm air about him, but when I watched him play, he was a most powerful player. He was the kick in the band. His movements were overemphasized, and his sound cut through like a cannon. Also, although his concentration was intense, he offered direct eye contact with the audience.*

*As an entertainer, Harry's energy seemed endless, but despite this, he did not overpower the music. Instead, he added a quality of sound that complemented each song. After the final set, Harry mingled a while with the crowd. Then, he moved toward the dressing room, where we began our interview.*

**HL:** I can think back to the age of seven. One of my cousins had a drumset, and he showed me how to hold the sticks. I carried them around all day, so I wouldn't forget how to hold them. As soon as I got home, I actually carved a pair of drumsticks from a tree branch. I used some old cookie tins for drums and just had a good time.

# Smash Palace's Harry Lewis

In fourth grade, we were introduced to different instruments and allowed to take an instrument home. If we liked it, we had an opportunity to buy it. I already knew I was going to be a drummer. The school offered lessons, and we were taught to read a little bit. Other than that, I'm self-taught. When I got to high school, I played in the marching band, orchestra, and dance band.

I've only been in two bands before Smash Palace. We played pop, rock, and a couple of cover songs, but it was mostly originals. While I was in my second band, I heard about the opening with Smash Palace. I was friends with Phil Barnett, the bass player, and I called Phil to set up an audition. That was it!

We rehearsed at least six months before we ever played a gig. We didn't want to start with a bad reputation. We got a good response right away, even though we started in a small club in South Jersey. Later, we started playing in Philadelphia clubs and hooked up with our manager, Chris Evans, who found us gigs in New York City. The next step was a record contract.

**DS:** Was that a long-term goal?

**HL:** I never really had any long-term goals. I've always taken my drumming one step at a time. When I reach one goal, I shoot for another. Ten years ago, my goal was to play in a band that worked in clubs. After that, I wanted to play to larger crowds. That has happened. Next, I wanted a record contract, and we got it. We signed with Epic/CBS Records and recorded our album in Toronto. Our producer was Tom Treumuth. The album was mixed in New York by Bill and Dave Wittman. The album was released in October, and it's doing really well. We had our first tour with Mr. Mister and other scheduled concert stops.

**DS:** Tell me a little more about the recording.

**HL:** I spent the first morning checking the drums. The rhythm tracks were recorded while the entire band played together. My sound took about five to six days. We recorded the album in three weeks, and it

took another two months to mix.

**DS:** Would you do anything different in recording a second album?

**HL:** I think there will be a few changes for the next album. I don't have to play as hard to be effective. During our first album, I played with as much energy as I could. I think that, if I play with a little less power, it may even come out better.

**DS:** Tell me about the video.

**HL:** We went out to Los Angeles to do the video. We were there for five days. We spent the first day traveling. During the second day, we planned the video. On the third and fourth days, we worked *hard*. We spent 15-hour days shooting. It was hard work but a lot of fun.

**DS:** What distinguishes you from other drummers?

**HL:** My power, mostly. When I get in front of people, I put everything into it. I try to make direct eye contact with the people in the audience and do certain things that set me apart. I tend to overemphasize my strokes to add to the show. Sometimes I pick up habits of other drummers and try them out in my act. Every drummer is a little different from the next.

**DS:** How would you describe your style of playing?

**HL:** I try to put on a terrific show. I try to please the audience, instead of other drummers. My style is very serious and direct. When I play, I mean it. I don't have any hidden tricks. I'm a basic 2 and 4 drummer who doesn't like to play intricate fills — just straight-ahead power drumming. It's the kind of sound this band calls for. When I'm on stage, the number-one thing is the music. I want the music to sound *great*. I don't want the drumming to stand out and detract from the songs.

**DS:** You're well known on the Philadelphia music scene as a good, hard drummer, and the word is spreading.

**HL:** I never went out to play drums just so I could become the world's finest. I just go out, have a good time, and play how I play the best I can.

**DS:** What style grip do you use?

**HL:** I use matched grip. I think it looks better, and I can hit harder. If I were to

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play in a jazz band, I would use the traditional grip. I can get better control of my left hand, since I learned to play that way originally.

**DS:** Describe your setup.

**HL:** I have a Tama *Imperialstar X-tra* drumset. The extra-deep drums fit my style of playing. I use a 16 x 22 bass drum. My two toms, mounted on the bass drum, are 13x14 and 14 x 15. My floor tom is 16 x 18. My snare drum is by Sonor. It's 6 1/2" deep and has a seamless ferro-manganese steel shell. Occasionally, I use an 8" Ludwig snare in addition to the Sonor. I set the Ludwig snare to my left and use a digital reverb on it. It sounds like a cannon. All my cymbals are Zildjian. I have 18" and 19" Rock crash cymbals, 14" Rock hi-hats, an 18" *China-Boy*, and a 22" *Earth* ride cymbal. All my cymbals have a *Brilliant* finish.

**DS:** If someone asked you what a drummer is to a band, how would you respond?

**HL:** The drummer and the bass player are the driving forces in the band. The drummer is the central part of the energy and provides a reference point for the people on the dance floor.

**DS:** Do you believe audience response helps your playing?

**HL:** Most definitely. When I first started, my band wasn't very good. Sometimes the reaction we received from the audience wasn't very good either. I could always hide behind my drums in that case. Luckily, the band I'm in now has a great following. I could play forever under those circumstances.

When I see people moving to the music, I'm really flattered. It's a good feeling! When I see people watching me, I try to put out extra effort I like to show off a bit, too, and twirl my sticks. I just have a great time.

**DS:** Do you believe it doesn't matter what you're playing, but how you play it?

**HL:** No, I don't believe that. If you play something you don't like, then you can't put your heart into it.

**DS:** So you're saying that, if there is a song you don't like, you don't put your heart into it?

**HL:** That's not necessarily true. When you're playing a set of ten songs, of course there are going to be songs you don't enjoy playing. But I always put my heart into the whole set.

**DS:** There are probably thousands of good drummers who haven't gotten a break yet. Do you feel particularly lucky?

**HL:** I was in the right place at the right time. That had a lot to do with it. I used to follow Smash Palace before I was in it. I actually waited for the drummer to leave. Then I auditioned.

My advice would be to hook up with a band an original preferably and get gigs. If the band doesn't work well, just play your best and try to make a name for yourself.

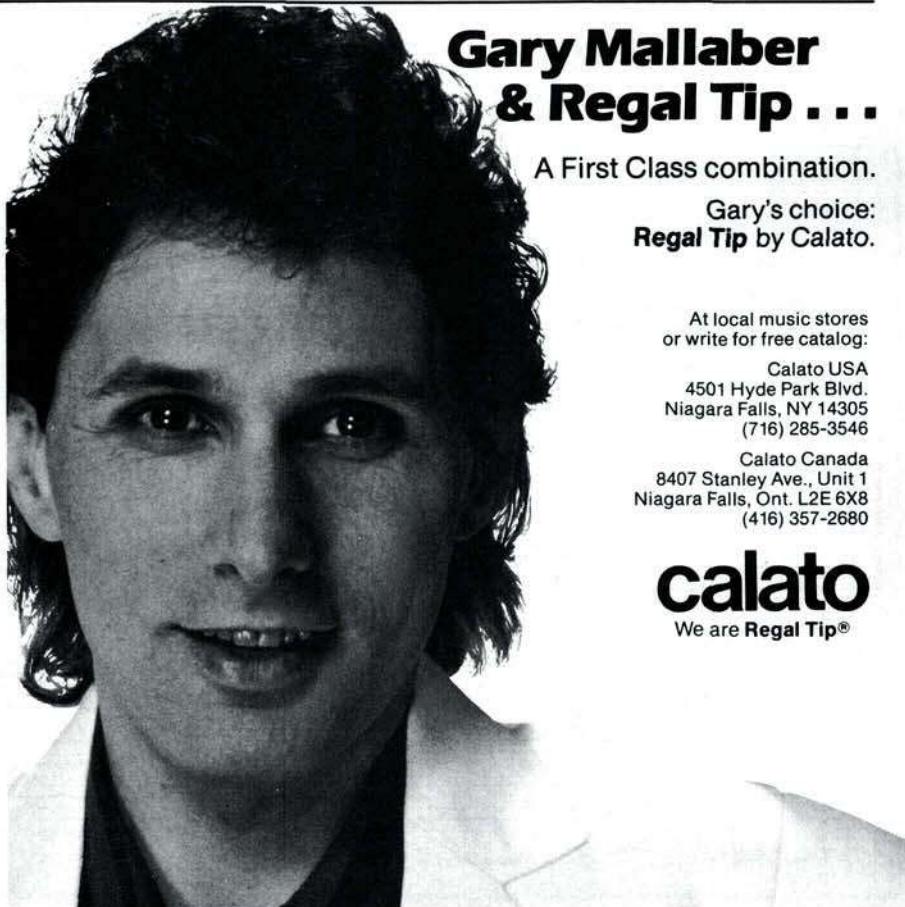
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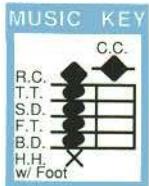
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# Maintaining The Flow:



As I mentioned in Part 1 of this article, this month we will deal with 8th-note and 16th-note figures. The ride cymbal and hi-hat will keep the time flow going, while the left hand and the bass drum interpret the written figures.

## Jazz-Rock

In this section, the right-hand/ride cymbal and the left-foot/hi-hat parts play the following 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 16th notes in the figure will be played on the snare drum with the left hand. (2) All long notes (notes with a duration longer than a 16th note, including 16th notes tied to other notes immediately following one or more 16th notes) will be played as a single stroke on a tom or as a "buzz" on the snare drum with the left hand. (3) All isolated long notes (not immediately preceded by one or more 16th 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:

Interpretation:

## Funk

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

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

### 1. Written Figure:

# Part 2

by Chuck Kerrigan

Interpretation:

Drum notation example showing a time figure interpretation. The notation consists of two measures on a bass drum staff. The first measure has four strokes (x) on the first, third, fifth, and seventh beats. The second measure has four strokes (x) on the first, third, fifth, and seventh beats. The time signature is 4/4.

Drum notation example showing another time figure interpretation. The notation consists of two measures on a bass drum staff. The first measure has four strokes (x) on the first, third, fifth, and seventh beats. The second measure has four strokes (x) on the first, third, fifth, and seventh beats. The time signature is 4/4.

2. Written Figure:

Drum notation example showing a written figure interpretation. The notation consists of two measures on a bass drum staff. The first measure has four strokes (x) on the first, third, fifth, and seventh beats. The second measure has four strokes (x) on the first, third, fifth, and seventh beats. The time signature is 4/4.

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Interpretation:

Drum notation example showing a time figure interpretation. The notation consists of two measures on a bass drum staff. The first measure has four strokes (x) on the first, third, fifth, and seventh beats. The second measure has four strokes (x) on the first, third, fifth, and seventh beats. The time signature is 4/4.

Drum notation example showing another time figure interpretation. The notation consists of two measures on a bass drum staff. The first measure has four strokes (x) on the first, third, fifth, and seventh beats. The second measure has four strokes (x) on the first, third, fifth, and seventh beats. The time signature is 4/4.

After these examples have been mastered, try interpreting different written figures, using different ratios of bars of time and bars of written figure interpretation. For example, play six bars of time and two bars of a figure; play nine bars of time and three bars of a figure; play eight bars of time and eight bars of a written figure, etc. Practice at a variety of tempos and dynamic levels is also recommended. Select simple figures for fast tempos and more complex figures for slower tempos.

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**Pro-Mark** continued from page 33

**HB:** I observed quite a bit when I went to Japan. The first time I went to see the "drumstick factory" in 1967 I expected smokestacks and a big building. Instead, I was taken to a residential house with electric belts running through the ceiling. These turned a little machine that was not really a lathe, but more of a chuck that just held a piece of wood while it was being shaped by an operator holding a hand tool. I was really impressed!

We had our hits and misses when we first started out here in Houston, in spite of all the things that I had learned in Japan. Theirs was a hand process at that time, while we were using very sophisticated lathes to shape the sticks. After shaping

the sticks, though, everything else we do here is still a hand process. In a sense, it's very primitive, but we feel it's very accurate and contributes to a certain quality that some of the other companies don't possess.

I reacquired the Pro-Mark company from Remo, Inc. a little over two years ago. My intention is to make it a family business. My son Maury came on board the day after he graduated from the University of Texas in May of 1980. Maury started in the shipping department, learning the product line from the bottom up. He's been with the company now going on seven years. My 16-year-old son, Max, is working here part-time while he finishes high school.

**RVH:** Could you explain how your operations in Japan and in the U.S. are related?

**HB:** The Japanese sales agent that I met through the mail in 1957 was Tat Kosaka. Some years later, the company he was working with was dissolved, and Tat started his own company. The manufacturer of Pro-Mark Japanese oak drumsticks is another individual. He owns the factory, and is a mechanical genius who lives and breathes drumsticks. In any event, Tat Kosaka started his company, named Toyo Tsusho, Ltd. We decided, a couple of years ago, that if his company was named "Pro-Mark Japan" it would be easier to deal with our foreign customers. It's a separate company that takes care of all of the Pro-Mark business outside of the U.S. and Canada. Tat is our right arm our partner, so to speak. And we've been together for 30 years on a handshake.

We also have a Taiwanese supplier that is probably the most reliable in all of Taiwan as far as the manufacture of drumsticks is concerned. We don't own any interest in that company; we strictly buy from this company as a customer.

**Pat Brown:** We should stress, though, that we do control the quality. All products made for us in Taiwan are made to our specifications and are subject to our approval.

**RVH:** You recently introduced the *New Generation* series of sticks. It seems to represent a major restructuring of your entire oak stick line. How was this new series developed?

**HB:** The concept of the *New Generation* is my own concept of what the majority of today's drummers are looking for in a drumstick. The ZX concept, which is only one part of the *New Generation* line, should be duly credited to the designers in Japan. But as far as modifying the shapes of the sticks, the tips, and the beads go on this we worked on together for close to two years. I would say that the *New Generation* was probably hatched in late '83 or early '84.

**RVH:** How does this new series differ from other drumsticks?

**Maury Brochstein:** For one thing, there's a special air-drying process that we use that virtually eliminates all warpage. It's very different from the usual kiln-drying process normally employed for drumsticks.

**HB:** The *New Generation* series also offers a wide variety of tip shapes and sizes, and we stress the point that our nylon tips are virtually identical to the corresponding model's wood tips.

What most of the other companies were doing for many years was offering one large and one small nylon tip period. They forced that particular tip to fit, let's say, a 5B, which would normally have a fairly thick neck. But they would thin down the neck so that this tip could be put on. Consequently, the stick would be a nylon-tipped 5B that wasn't really a true

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match for a wood-tipped 5B.

Not every company produces a classic SB as the history books say a 5B should be. If you were able to trace what a 5B was 20 or 30 years ago and then see who's making that today, you'd find that Pro-Mark probably comes closest. That isn't true from A to Z through the line, but on the traditional models, we're probably most consistent in that regard including the slight modification to the *New Generation* sticks. I think it may take a year or two, but when our production gets up sufficiently to meet the world demand, and enough drummers see the *New Generation* sticks—and are able to go from a SB wood to a 5B nylon and have the sticks feel almost the same and look the same they're going to have a preference for Pro-Mark.

**RVH:** Your previous stick series was successful. What prompted you to think that an almost total renovation of your product line was necessary?

**HB:** Well, it's not a total renovation. Some of the models we've left as they are classic models like a 7A. But our move toward the newer design is based on kind of instinctively knowing what drummers want not only today, but in the future. We think we're ahead of the game with what we've done. I can tell you that, since our business year began in June of last year, we've broken all records in sales in spite of the fact that we still can't deliver all of the orders we have in-house. And these orders are especially for our Japanese oak sticks, which are the *New Generation*. Last fall, we owed out over 400,000 pairs of sticks. This was mainly due to the fact that the Japanese factory moved in the early part of 1986 and production was shut down for almost six months. By the end of the year, we still owed out something less than 100,000 pairs. I'm not complaining. Business has been superlative since June of

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'86. We've only had one month that didn't significantly surpass the prior year.

**RVH:** Is it accurate to say that Pro-Mark is the largest producer of drumsticks in the world?

**HB:** Let me answer the question this way: I've been thinking in the last few weeks about creating an ad that challenges every other drumstick maker in the world. We would say that any manufacturers who can prove that they sell more than we do ... well, I was thinking about a \$10,000 "bet," if you will. I don't think we'd have any takers, quite honestly. And in terms of quality control, I think that, if an independent testing laboratory were to come in and take 100 pairs of our sticks, and 100 pairs of Brands X, Y, and Z—at random I don't doubt for a minute that ours would score higher.

**RVH:** A distinguishing feature of your Japanese oak sticks is the "serial number" on each. Could you explain what those numbers signify?

**HB:** That's a production code number that identifies when the stick was made, the particular treatment that the wood went through, and the batch of wood it came

from. I like to say that today we're 96% perfect in eliminating warpage. That code number also identifies the source of supply for the wood. Those code numbers are on anything that we have made at the facility in Japan. Their equipment is set up to put that number on the sticks. On our American hickory sticks that we make here, we're not set up to do that. But we have a little more on-site control of what's happening here.

Just for your information: The wood that we'll be using in 1987 and part of 1988 was cut and purchased in Japan last winter. You just don't go out tomorrow because you have a big order for sticks and get the wood! We have to make a commitment. We have to have a certain degree of confidence in what we're doing and what the world is going to purchase. We don't always hit it; occasionally, we call a shot wrong and have an excess. But most of the time, we seem to underestimate what the market is actually going to take. I'm going to make it my resolution for 1987 to try to improve that.

**RVH:** I'd like to ask you about your recently released *Quattro* square sticks.

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How did the idea for that particular model come about?

**HB:** I saw a stick in Japan that was six-sided. The flat surface area seemed too small to me. It looked cute, but when you put it in your hand, it really didn't make sense musically. But I thought, "If there was more room there . . ." I decided that I'd like to try a square drumstick. Luckily, our source of supply in Taiwan is also in the furniture business and had tooling that would make something square. I asked them, "Would you mind experimenting? I want a 5A : Make it square but I want it rounded on the edges." We must have gone through five or six stick designs before we settled on what we are now calling our *Quattro* series. It will start off with 5A and 5B models, in hickory. I know the country & western drummers are going to love the sticks for their rim-click afterbeats. We're going to include a set of photographs with each pair to give some pointers on what I think people should know to help them utilize the stick. That should be very beneficial for enlightening drummers about something so new.

We took some prototypes to the 1985 PAS convention in Los Angeles. Some of the hot players who were there, like Stix Hooper, Danny Seraphine, Gerry Brown, Terry Bozzio, and others, would first look at the sticks and say, "What's the gag?" Then they'd pick them up and start playing with them, and the smirk would become a very serious face within a minute or two.

That's what convinced me that we might have something.

Something else we're introducing soon is a new, illuminated model called *Laser Lights*. They're made by a company in New York, and we have the exclusive rights to them. They're strictly for showmanship; I wouldn't want to play more than one or two tunes with them. We've eliminated any wires that would encumber a drummer. Our other sticks that glow in the dark our *Lightning Bolts* work well. Sticks like that are just something we want to make available to people who want a very specific look. In the meantime, we have some other developments in the works, including a non-slip surface coating for sticks that's functional as well as cosmetic. The key thing about this coating is that it causes no appreciable change in the dimension of the sticks, such as happens with rubber grips or tape-wraps. I don't like those. They're fine if you play nothing but matched grip, but as soon as you switch to traditional, your left hand is halfway in between the grip and the rest of the stick, and it's not a good feel. But with these, you could go either way. The coating also will not affect the sound of the backstick or the butt end. It might mar or abrade your drumhead a tiny bit, but if that becomes a major concern, we could make the sticks with the ZX nylon cap on the butt end. Along with the black nylon tip and the red coating, cosmetically, this stick will look very good.

**RVH:** In an article on drumsticks in our July '83 issue, you stated that Pro-Mark was doing some research into synthetic sticks. Are you still considering entering that market?

**HB:** Frankly, we could duplicate what I think is the most popular seller in synthetic sticks. But why *duplicate* anything? Our first challenge is to get production up to the point to where, when you call in an order today, we literally can *ship* it today. That's the thing that helped put us on the map in the beginning: We could make shipments very quickly. But last year, because of the cessation of production in Japan during the factory move, we had people waiting for some models of sticks for six or eight months. I'm talking about the Japanese oak.

**Maury Brochstein:** Our American hickory production is up, because for close to five months we worked two shifts five days a week plus Saturdays. Now we're able to deliver our hickory models immediately.

**HB:** As far as a synthetic stick is concerned, it's surely something that we're not going to forget about. Our people in Japan are very well aware that we would like to offer a synthetic stick if it was of superior quality and was different enough to serve drummers' needs. I'd also like to be able to price the stick much lower than other sticks are. I don't mean as a competitive, price-cutting thing just strictly through technology. But for the time being, we've placed a low priority on synthetic drumsticks. I'm sure it makes the people in the synthetic drumstick business very happy not to have someone else try to get in on the act, but that's our decision right now.

**RVH:** Several of the other wood drumstick companies are offering laminated sticks. Most of those are incredibly heavy and hard primarily to increase their durability factor. How do you feel about that approach to stick manufacture?

**HB:** It would be no problem for us to produce a laminated stick at all. But I've heard about some problems frankly, directly from one of the major names in the drumstick business today. They've had problems with the laminations not holding up, and they've been getting some returns and complaints. We can buy laminated wood probably from the same sources that some of the other makers use. But once again, we're talking about duplicating: having a 5B laminated and a SB not laminated each with or without nylon tip. With the way the economy of the music industry has developed in the last couple of years, it's important that we try to zero in on the real, significant needs of the wholesalers and the stores, which is to have those sticks *most* in demand available for drummers when they walk in the door. Just getting enough wood to do that is an ongoing challenge.

**RVH:** One of your pieces of promotional literature says that "Pro-Mark offers the

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largest and most extensive variety of models of drumsticks." From a marketing standpoint, there's a fine line between offering a variety so that your line isn't limited and overextending to the point where dealers have an inventory problem and consumers are confused. How many models can you offer before you create a problem?

**HB:** Well, you've got a valid point. But to me, whether drummers realize it or not, their drumsticks are as important to them, individually, as a mouthpiece would be to a brass or woodwind player, or a violin bow to the concertmaster. We happen to believe that, when we make drumsticks, we're talking about making music. We look at it over the long term. I get letters every week from drummers who have been using our sticks for ten, 15, or 20 years. It's very comforting to get those letters and to feel the loyalty that's there. We owe our customers some degree of loyalty, too. From a dollars-and-cents standpoint, it's a poor business decision to keep investing in something that's a slow mover, but we're committed to doing that for a hell of a long time before we'll remove a model.

As for having too many models for dealers to stock, something that we might consider doing somewhere down the road is offering a service by which drummers could call or write to us for hard-to-get models that just aren't available in their local store. Even today, we still get calls for our model G *Tiny Mite* that was discontinued 12 or 13 years ago.

I saw an ad from a camera company recently. I was so impressed by it that I cut it out and stuck it in my "future ad ideas" file. The question in the ad was, "Why do we make lenses that only 50 people are going to buy this year?" The answer was that the company was dedicated to photography and felt responsible for satisfying the needs and requirements of serious photographers. Our business is to satisfy serious drummers.

**RVH:** You've mentioned that major artists have been involved with the design of your sticks, acting as consultants and offering suggestions. Yet it's obvious that you have a very strong concern for the ultimate end-users of your sticks. Your "Not-Yet-Famous Drummers" ad campaign was a vivid example of that. How responsive is it possible for you to be design-wise to the needs or suggestions of the average drummer?

**HB:** We are very sensitive to the input we receive from the consumers out there. First of all, let's talk about complaints: We do get some, but luckily very few. But when we get those complaints, we try to respond that very day, either by letter or by phone. In some instances, we have a question: "Was it hickory or oak?" Our Japanese oak sticks have that production code number on them, and we're very anxious to find out what that code number is. If we're

going to strive for perfection, we need to have this information. It costs us a few bucks to get the answer, but I've gotten many complimentary letters from drummers who say they've never gotten response like that from any other company. It doesn't mean that other companies don't care; I think there are some companies out there that care as much as we do. But we're still going to try to be better than they are. [laughs]

**RVH:** I know you can't make a custom design for every drummer who contacts you. Do you assimilate input from enough people to indicate a need and respond on that basis?

**HB:** Yes. I think that very thing influenced our decision on the New Generation sticks. I can't say that the influence happened on a certain date at a certain hour. But over a period of time, the comments and opinions we get from the field give us the direction we need for development. We do get some off-the-wall ideas that are worthless to us, but we also get many good ideas and suggestions. Louie Bellson, many years ago, wanted a smaller tip on a 5A. We did that for Louie. Would we do it for Joe Unknown? Maybe not instantly, but we would surely think about it, and ask other people what they thought. We really value customer input. And although it's true that we can't respond to every little change that is suggested, I think it's safe to say that, when drummers talk, we listen.

**Pat Brown:** It's important to note, too, that Pro-Mark is not run by a bunch of MBAs who look at nothing but the bottom line. Herb, Maury, and I are all musicians, and we like to think that we understand what musicians need.

**RVH:** You said earlier that you don't think you're the only company that cares. And obviously, you're in business to make a profit. But it seems as if you conduct your business with an exceptionally high regard for the consumer and enjoy a profit as a result.

**Maury Brochstein:** We think about the consumer first, and then sort of sit back and let the profits happen.

**HB:** I think our philosophy is that if you can do something that you really enjoy, and you feel the reward of succeeding at that that's part of your paycheck. It is for me, anyway, even though I can't buy groceries with that part. I think, though, that people who have that particular philosophy don't have to walk too much further before a financial reward catches up with them. I'm not going to sit here and say that I'm in business only to help drummers, and that I don't care about profits. I have to care, or I won't be around next year to help anybody! We had an ad one time that said, "Who gives a damn? We do." And I think that particular philosophy has made an impression on a lot of people. Yet, there's a new generation out there that we must reach all over again.

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# MD's 9th Annual Readers Poll

The purpose of MD's annual poll is to recognize drummers and percussionists in all fields of music who have been especially active during the past year, either through recordings, live performances, or educational activities. It is in no way to suggest that one musician is "better" than another but, rather, to call attention to those performers who, through their musicianship, have been inspirational to us all.

Please note that, in recognition of the diversification of contemporary rock music, the "Rock Drummer" category has been replaced by three new categories. While it is impossible for MD to offer a category for every conceivable variation of musical style, it is our hope that these three new categories will provide an opportunity for readers to express their admiration and support for those artists who specialize in today's most popular rock genres.

## MD's Honor Roll

Artists who have been selected by the MD readership as winners in any one category of the Readers Poll for a total of five years are placed on MD's Honor Roll. This is our way of recognizing the unique talent and lasting popularity of those special artists. Artists placed on the Honor Roll in any given category are subsequently ineligible in that category, although they remain eligible in other categories. (The exception to this is the "Recorded Performance" category, which will remain open to all artists.) Artists who have achieved Honor Roll status (and are now ineligible in the category shown) are listed below.

**Airto:** Latin American/Latin Brazilian Percussionist

**Gary Burton:** Mallet Percussionist

**Vic Firth:** Classical Percussionist

**Steve Gadd:** All-Around Drummer and Studio Drummer

## HALL OF FAME

Vote for the artist, living or dead, who you feel has made an historic contribution to the art of drumming. Previous winners (Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, John Bonham, Keith Moon, Neil Peart, Steve Gadd, Louie Bellson, and Tony Williams) are not eligible for this category.

## ALL-AROUND DRUMMER

This category is not intended to indicate the "overall best" drummer. Rather, it is to recognize drummers noted for performing in a variety of musical styles and applications, instead of one specific band, act, or style. Please limit your voting to drummers who fit that definition.

## BIG BAND DRUMMER

## MULTI-PERCUSIONIST

## LATIN/BRAZILIAN PERCUSSIONIST

## FUNK DRUMMER

## STUDIO DRUMMER

This category is restricted to drummers primarily known as multi-session players who record with a variety of artists, or who are involved in such projects as jingles, TV and film scores, etc. (Not included in this category are recording artists who may spend much time in the studio, but only as a member of one group or act.)

## MALLET PERCUSSIONIST

Please limit this to performers who specialize in vibes, marimba, and/or xylophone.

## CLASSICAL PERCUSSIONIST

This category is limited to artists performing with symphony orchestras, operas, percussion ensembles, etc.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. You must use the official MD ballot and photocopies.
2. Please print or type.
3. Make only one selection in each category. (It is not necessary to vote in every category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.)
4. Mail the *entire* ballot to:

Modern Drummer Readers Poll  
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Ballots must be postmarked no later than April 3, 1987. Results will be announced in the August '87 issue of MD.

## POP/MAINSTREAM ROCK DRUMMER

## HARD ROCK/METAL DRUMMER

## PROGRESSIVE ROCK DRUMMER

## UP-AND-COMING DRUMMER

This category is reserved for the most promising artist brought to the public's attention within the past 12 months.

## MAINSTREAM JAZZ DRUMMER

Please restrict this category to drummers known primarily for their work in small-group, acoustic jazz.

## ELECTRIC JAZZ DRUMMER

This category is reserved for drummers who generally perform in fusion or jazz-rock situations.

## COUNTRY DRUMMER

## RECORDED PERFORMANCE

Vote for your favorite recording by a drummer as a leader or as a member of a group. Limit your selection to recordings made within the last 12 months. Please include the artist's name, the complete title of the song, and the name of the album from which it came.

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by Roy Burns

# Drumming And The Practice Pad

Some drummers hate practice pads; others are never without them. Some teachers recommend practice pads; others say that you should practice on the drums. Some drummers feel that the practice pad helps to develop technique; others feel that the pad is unrealistic, because it bounces too much. Some drummers consider them a necessary evil, and some would rather warm up on their knees.

My own experience indicates that a practice pad can be a real help at times. For example, when you are traveling, it is difficult to find time to practice or to warm up. Twenty minutes or so on a practice pad in the hotel room can be a real lifesaver when you are short on time.

Practice pads are also quiet. After all, you can't set your drums up in a motel room without being asked to leave the motel. Even at home, if it is late at night or early in the morning, the use of the practice pad will prevent angry phone calls from

the neighbors. The pad makes it possible to practice at any hour in most situations.

I have always used a *Gladstone-style* pad one that looks sort of like a rubber pizza. It takes up very little room in the suitcase, is lightweight, and can be placed on a table or a pillow with equally good results.

When I teach, I use both the practice pad and the drumset. It helps to save the ears of both teacher and student. If a teacher is giving several lessons in a row, the use of a pad can greatly reduce the fatigue associated with teaching.

I use the pad for warming up, for technical exercises, and in some instances, for snare drum reading. Rhythms, coordination, fills, solos, and grooves are all done on the drumset. Since the practice pad has very little sound, it is good for developing control and even strokes. The sound of the pad is also shorter than the sound of a drum. This enables the student to hear the spacing between the beats more accurately. There are no distracting sounds from the pad, no snares to rattle or adjust, no head to tighten or loosen just the sound of the individual strokes.

The pad *does* bounce more than a snare drum. I find that this extra rebound can help a student become more sensitive to the way the drumstick moves and responds. The pad can also be a real help if you are practicing with fingers, or working on rebounds, open rolls, or accented patterns. The extra bounce can be a real aid if used properly. I have never liked the idea of practicing on something that has *no* bounce, such as a pillow. This tends to tighten up muscles and does nothing for the development of a "touch." I know that some drummers say that practicing on a pillow is helpful. I much prefer a good practice pad.

It is true that the drums feel different, and this is as it should be. The tension of the heads tight or loose will determine to a great degree how the drums respond. It will take more strength to play the drums as opposed to the pad. This is especially true if the drums are tuned loosely. Developing good movement on the drumset can only be done *on* a drumset.

Practice pad drumsets have always left me a little cold. The sizes, distances between the pads, and the feel of the pads are no substitute for a drumset. On the other hand, they are better than nothing. If

you live in an apartment complex, a practice pad drumset may be your only alternative. Some music stores use the practice sets in their teaching studios because they are quiet.

There are practice products on the market that are placed on the drums to quiet them. Rubber discs can be mounted on the drumheads to reduce volume. A product called *Drum Mutes* was designed to be placed on the individual drums. The *Gladstone-style* pad I mentioned earlier can also be placed directly on the snare drum for practice. Although these products may not feel exactly like your natural drumset, they can be of great help if your practice situation is a difficult one due to volume.

If you are considering purchasing a practice pad, buy a good one. Avoid those tiny wooden pads that have a piece of cheap rubber about the consistency of a hockey puck nailed to the surface. Nothing can be learned on a pad with virtually no rebound or response. The rubber should be thick enough and soft enough to approximate the feel of a snare drum. If the pad is hard or flimsy, look for another one. Buy a good one, and it will give years of service.

I have seen drummers who have gotten "hooked" on practice pads. They sit for hour after hour working on their "chops." If you overdo the practice pad-type of practicing, you tend to play fast all the time. Since the pad has no sound to speak of, you can't really play loudly on one. Consequently, you end up playing very fast at a moderate volume level. The problem with this approach is that you can wind up as a fast snare drummer with no feet who cannot play a fill around the tom-toms. Obviously, you can overdo anything.

If you have been playing for a while, the thought of working out on a practice pad may be less than thrilling. Practice with music! Put on some of your favorite records and have fun on the pad. If it is late at night, put on the headphones and go to it. You can't get much quieter than that.

A practice pad is a tool. It can be good or bad, depending upon how it is used. As part of an overall practice approach, it can be valuable. It is a good travel companion. It is always quiet and very portable. It is great for warming up when no drums are around. Used wisely, the practice pad can be a real friend.

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# The Instrument

Simon Goodwin's column last month ["Setups For The Jobbing Drummer"] started me thinking about drumset size and my attitude towards it. I've probably played on every conceivable size and shape of stage during my career and often in places with no stage at all. I've had to contend with clubs, halls, bars, private homes, frat houses, and many other venues that were almost diabolical in the difficulty they presented when it came to load-ins and load-outs. I've also enjoyed the luxury of taking my kit into a club and leaving it set up for many weeks. I've worked in situations where I had more help than I could use, and I've also had to schlepp my gear in and out all by myself. The result of all this is that I honestly believe I've experienced just about every possible situation regarding the use and handling of a drumkit. Consequently, I feel that my attitudes are pretty well substantiated by practical research into the matter.

I find it interesting to note that we often don't come to understand our own philosophy until it is brought to our attention by some outside circumstance. In other words, we don't enter into a situation saying: "This is how I feel about things; therefore, this is how I will act . . ." More likely, we follow a course of action, and then look back and say, "Oh yeah! I guess I did that because I feel this way about things . . ." That's what happened to me over the course of the past year and a half, in regards to the size and arrangement of my drumkit. It's a convoluted story, but it brought me to the realization that I don't play an assortment of drums and cymbals; I play a single instrument called a drumset. And that instrument needs to meet a certain standard of size and arrangement in order to be complete.

Like many drummers my age, I didn't start out with a large drumkit. When I started playing drums, manufacturers didn't offer large drumkits. I started on a typical, four-piece, jazz-style kit, with one ride cymbal, one crash, and a hi-hat. But even in my teens, I felt a need for more sound flexibility from my kit, so I added a couple of timbales as additional toms, along with a few more crash cymbals. A second bass drum came next, as double-bass kits became prominent in the late '60s. I'll admit that the second bass drum didn't last long, because the type of music I pursued didn't call for it. I got into jazz-

rock in the early '70s, and the funky music I played allowed me to develop a fairly fast right foot. So I stuck with the single bass drum. But I also began to experiment with more top-end sounds on the kit, adding more toms and cymbals. When I got into full-time club playing as a career, I was able to enlarge my kit even more, enjoying the convenience of only having to pack it up and move it once every two months or so.

In my early *Club Scene* columns, I described my drumkit as it evolved while I played with Summerwine in San Diego. When I left that group in 1982, my drumkit my instrument included seven toms, six crash cymbals, a ride, hi-hat, a wind chime, a cowbell, two drum synthesizers, snare, and bass drum. Mind you, this was for a top-40 gig, not a hard rock situation. The point was that I felt comfortable on that size of kit; it offered me the variety of sounds and approaches to my music that I felt I required.

When I went to Hawaii in 1983 to take the house band gig in a commercial rock club, I used a new kit that featured larger, more powerful and responsive drums. I added a China cymbal in place of the wind chimes, but otherwise the design of the kit stayed basically the same. Again, the size of the kit caused me no inconvenience in terms of set-up or break-down, because I only had to set it up once (!) during my ten-month stay in Hawaii.

One can easily see how I could become attached to this setup and could come to consider it "my instrument." But I pride myself on maintaining a certain practical attitude and realistic outlook about things. So after I came to *Modern Drummer* full-time and thus was able to play only on weekends immediately figured I should reduce the size of my gigging kit. After all, playing only on Fridays and Saturdays meant setting up one night and breaking down the next probably by myself. The band was playing simplistic rock 'n' roll, and I would probably have little need for an extremely wide variety of drum sounds. It seemed reasonable to go with as few drums as possible, in order to maximize convenience.

With all this in mind, I went into the first few gigs playing a four-piece kit again, using a ride, two crashes, and a hi-hat. The kit was indeed convenient to deal with, but I felt limited almost immediately. I discov-

ered that the band's music offered more opportunity for percussion variety than I had originally thought. And from a purely "geographic" sense, I found myself reaching for drums and cymbals that weren't there! (Let me point out that this wasn't just from "force of habit." I had been off my old kit completely for over a year before hooking up with my new band. You could almost say I was starting fresh when it came to kit configuration.) So it wasn't long before I added a second rack tom and a third crash cymbal to the kit. I played with this setup for several months.

And then an interesting phenomenon occurred. I developed serious problems in both of my shoulders. Certain movements became painful, and I was unable to put any weight against the shoulders. Upon seeking medical treatment, I was diagnosed as having a "weekend athlete" syndrome. Simply put, I was asking too much of my shoulders on an infrequent basis. Active drumming requires more from one's arms and shoulders than they are designed to do. When you play constantly, your muscles "get used to" this abuse and can even become strengthened against it. But if you overuse the muscles on a weekend, and then do little or no physical activity during the ensuing week, you tend to develop the problem I was experiencing. My muscles were being abused without the chance to develop a resistance.

When I described to my doctor what I used to do on a nightly basis in clubs versus what I was doing now he came up with a somewhat surprising "prescription" for me. He reasoned that not only had I been playing more often in my steady club gig days, but that I had also been playing on a much larger kit than the one I was playing now. That club playing had called for greater lateral movement around the kit in short, greater exercise than the playing I was doing on the smaller kit. He suggested that I go back to the larger kit in order to get back into the movement patterns that my body had been comfortable with. He also recommended that I do an amount of daily playing at home, so that my body could strengthen itself for the exertions of the weekend.

The outcome of all of this is that I am now playing once again on my full-size drumkit: seven toms, snare, bass, six crash cymbals, ride, two hi-hats (one cable remote), cowbell, and wind chimes. After

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about four months of using this larger kit along with an increased practice schedule as per the doctor's suggestion—my shoulder pains have been eliminated.

Now, I'm not recommending that you expand your kit as a cure-all for drumming-related aches and pains. I'm pointing out that playing on a set that seems comfortable that "fits" offers advantages that you might not conceive of under normal circumstances. Of course, there are also disadvantages to my large setup: I have a lot of equipment to haul around. I have to carry my truckload of equipment into and out of my basement, besides going into and out of whatever club we're playing in. (I tend to feel, however, that the exercise involved in all this lifting and carrying may be a contributing factor to my shoulder improvement.) Setting up takes me a while, even though I've developed shortcuts and am using a rack system that further cuts down set-up time. The kit does take up a lot of space, compared to the smaller kit. On the other hand, I'm using the same riser I've always used, so the amount of stage space required for my setup hasn't really changed. Thus, my band members are no more inconvenienced by the large kit than they were by my small one.

The musical advantages of playing my larger kit became apparent immediately. I found myself coming up with uses for specific drums or cymbals to achieve a much greater variety of sounds than had been possible before. I didn't just have more targets to hit; I had a greater potential for *musicality*. Once again, my instrument was complete. I cheerfully accepted the inconveniences involved with handling the larger set in exchange for the relief I felt at being "back where I belonged."

My philosophy about setups was clarified for me by all of this even though I've probably held it all along. Whether small or large, the drumset that works for you is your instrument, and that's what you should play, no matter what the other circumstances. I once had a bass player ask me why I didn't bring a smaller set to a casual job. "After all," he said, "you could play the gig on just three drums!"

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ARTSTAR

by Jim Fiore

# Simmons MTM Interface

The Simmons *MTM* can best be described as a universal trigger interface. The unit is designed to accept input signals in a variety of forms, such as MIDI note-on signals, pad or analog sequencer/synth trigger signals, or acoustic drum signals. This information is then processed and put out as either MIDI note-on commands or analog trigger pulses. Because of this versatility, the *MTM* lends itself to a variety of applications: triggering MIDI or non-MIDI synthesizers and voice units from drum-pads or acoustic drums live; replacing drum parts on multi-track tape; and note processing, including the addition of echo and delay effects, dynamic compression, and the like. The *MTM* has a list price of \$1,195.

The *MTM* is housed in a metal case of double-rack height (3.5 inches) and may be mounted in a standard 19" EIA rack with the appropriate rack ears. The front-panel layout is rather interesting in that it mimics

the signal flow through the electronics. All program information is displayed by a multiline LCD. Generally, all information is entered either through increment/decrement keys or the numeric keypad.

Basically, the device consists of eight processing channels. These inputs can be accessed through either 1/4" or XLR-type jacks, or via MIDI. The former is for direct connection from Simmons drum-pads, Simmons trigger outputs (as on the *SDS7*), or acoustic drum signals. MIDI, of course, is reserved for MIDI sequencers, keyboards, or compatible drumkits (such as the *SDS9*). The trigger-type inputs have a few extra controls, including the ubiquitous sensitivity control. No matter what the source, all input signals go through some common processing.

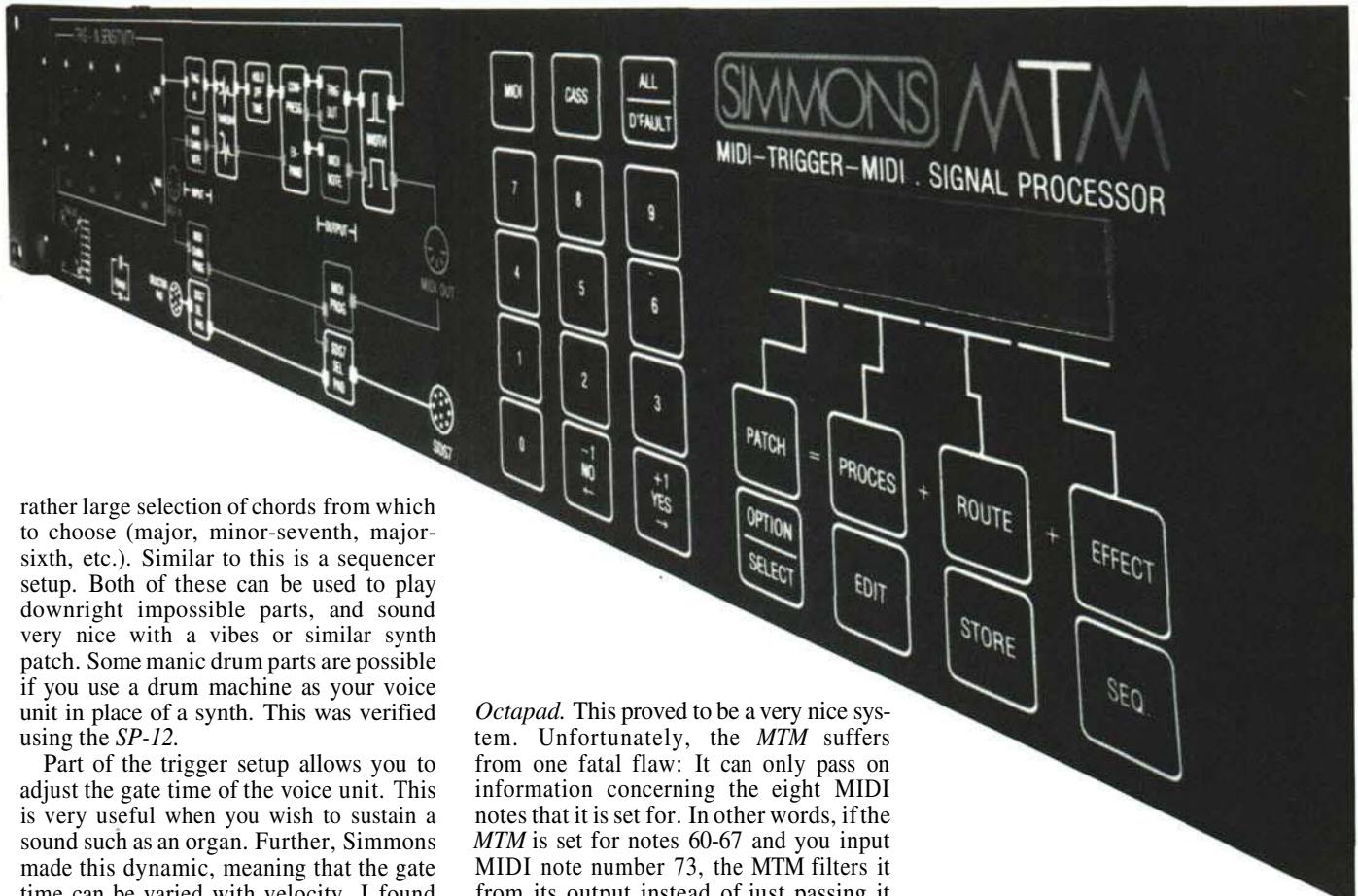
The *MTM* is modeled with three major functions in mind: Process, Route, and Effect. Process details how a signal is handled in the time domain. In other words,

under Process input triggering, details such as Threshold Level, Holdoff Time, and Dynamic Curves are specified. Variations in these items enable the *MTM* to respond to vastly different signals. Route indicates how the input signals are related to the output-signal jacks. In other words, you can have a Trigger-On/Input One produce a Trigger-Out at Output Three, or vice versa. Effect is perhaps the most obvious: It allows you to add a variety of echo, delay, and chordal effects to the sound. There is memory space available for a number of different user-defined Routes, Processes, and Effects, as well as preset factory settings.

The *MTM* provides 99 locations for user-defined patches. Each patch consists of a Process, Route, and Effect, as well as MIDI program-change data and *SDS7* selector-pad info. Patches can then be strung together to form sequences. Up to 10 sequences of 100 patches each can be programmed. For convenience, a footswitch can be used to step through the sequences.

The *MTM* was tested with a range of equipment including a Prophet 2000 sampler, E-mu *SP-12* drum machine, a Roland *Octapad*, Simmons and homemade drum-pads, and a typical acoustic drum setup. The first test was to check the pad response by trying to trigger the Prophet via MIDI. The factory patches include setups for both pad and acoustic drum trigger, so a simple factory pad patch was used for starters. The *MTM* triggered the Prophet reliably, although I found it necessary to set the sensitivity to maximum. Editing the patch allowed me to trigger different notes and use various dynamic curves. I found that some curves produced a natural loudness response, some produced compression, and some were, well . . . weird. For example, one curve produces only two different volume levels, while another gets softer as you play harder. By themselves, these curves may not seem too useful, but when combined with either another *MTM* or a MIDI voice unit with velocity-controlled layering, some nice effects may be produced.

The effects area is extensive, and I was able to produce some nice results. Simple echoes may be produced by specifying the delay time and number of repeats. Chords may be produced from a single drum strike and can be keyed to velocity (higher velocity = more notes). Simmons includes a



rather large selection of chords from which to choose (major, minor-seventh, major-sixth, etc.). Similar to this is a sequencer setup. Both of these can be used to play downright impossible parts, and sound very nice with a vibes or similar synth patch. Some manic drum parts are possible if you use a drum machine as your voice unit in place of a synth. This was verified using the *SP-12*.

Part of the trigger setup allows you to adjust the gate time of the voice unit. This is very useful when you wish to sustain a sound such as an organ. Further, Simmons made this dynamic, meaning that the gate time can be varied with velocity. I found the overall gate time setting useful for most purposes, although it will not sustain for much more than four seconds. Personally, I would prefer that the dynamic adjustment have a wider range.

Programming the *MTM* is not too difficult once you get the hang of it. The LCD gives you enough information so that you usually have a good idea of where you are at any given step. The programming sequence of button pushing can be obtuse at times; sometimes the functional layout helps, and sometimes it hinders. Also, some confusion is generated by the fact that numbers cannot always be directly entered via the keypad and require the use of the increment/decrement buttons. Programming is the normal Simmons sequence type, rather than immediate random access type. The manual, unfortunately, is not written in a clear, concise style at least not for U.S. consumption. (This lends credence to that argument that the U.S. and England are two countries separated by a common language!)

In order to check the MIDI input response, the *MTM* was driven from the *Octapad*. Again, the *MTM* performed well. In this application, the unit is being used as a combination MIDI effect box and router. All of the curves and effects previously noted could now be applied to the

*Octapad*. This proved to be a very nice system. Unfortunately, the *MTM* suffers from one fatal flaw: It can only pass on information concerning the eight MIDI notes that it is set for. In other words, if the *MTM* is set for notes 60-67 and you input MIDI note number 73, the *MTM* filters it from its output instead of just passing it along. This is most unfortunate, because it means that *MTMs* cannot be cascaded to handle more signals. The only way around this is to use some form of MIDI mixer. In all fairness, though, there may be times when you want to filter MIDI data and the *MTM* can be used as is.

The real test of the *MTM* came in the conversation from acoustic drum signals to MIDI commands. This proved to be a bear at best. In an effort to produce reliable and repeatable results, a straightforward rock pattern was programmed into the *SP-12*, and one of the *SP-12*'s outputs was then fed to the *MTM*. The results varied considerably depending on the source drum, its dynamics, and speed of playback.

It was relatively easy to produce good triggers from a consistent-volume, moderately paced drum. A good example was an attempt at replacing the *SP-12*'s kick drum sound with a piano note from the Prophet. The kick drum is a good source, as it has high attack and quite a bit of damping, thus producing a good, spiky signal. I wasn't so lucky at replacing the *SP-12*'s snare with an electronic snare from the Prophet. In order to get a good, reliable trigger, a fairly long hold time was required. Unfortunately, that long setting made the *MTM* skip a few strikes during a

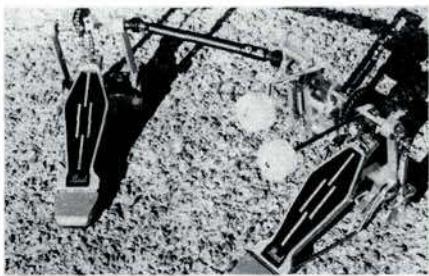
roll. EQing the source signal may help in many cases. In any event, I found this setup to be a less-than-desirable way of triggering electronics.

A pad signal is by far easier for the electronics to deal with and, as a result, a more natural playing style emerges. Triggering from acoustic drums (via mic's) tended to produce a much stiffer style, since the player must always pay close attention to dynamics and speed. Acoustic drum triggering is best left to track replacement as used in studios. (One gets the impression that the Simmons people would rather have drummers use their pads live anyway. I know I would.) This is not to say that the *MTM* is a slouch at acoustic source triggering. On the contrary, I think the *MTM* does a reasonable job, considering the complexity of the waveforms it is processing. Do not expect, however, to hook an *MTM* off of your drumkit's mic' lines and produce a wonderfully natural, quick response. For sheer simplicity, reliability, and ease of use, pads are superior.

Overall, I think that you'll find the Simmons *MTM* to be a very interesting and useful product, particularly if effects and routings are your cup of tea. Aside from the somewhat quirky manual and the MIDI-filtering item mentioned, it is a good performer.

# Double Bass

This *Product Close-Up* takes a look at five recently released twin bass drum pedals. These devices enable drummers to play double bass drum patterns on a single bass drum, reducing the amount of space taken up by a second bass drum. Pedals from two other manufacturers have been spotlighted previously in this column: the original double pedal, the Zalmer *Twin* (*MD*: Aug./Sept. '82), and the Drum Workshop *5002* (*MD*: Oct. '83). The new pedals are shown in ascending order of price, with the exception of the Cosmic Percussion pedal. I'll explain that when we get to it.



Pearl P882TW

Pearl's twin pedal is available complete with both the primary and auxiliary pedals, or with the auxiliary slave pedal alone (so you can utilize your own existing pedal). The *P882TW* features completely redesigned pedals. The basic *P880* has a hinged-heel footboard plus a removable toe-stop, and a chain/sprocket drive. A single expansion spring, stretched downward, is tensioned near the bottom of the pedal via a large knurled knob, and it's locked by double nuts. A large slot off the side of the pedal enables the spring to be positioned, which, in turn, varies the beater stroke length. The pedal has sprung spurs on its base, and fastens to the drum hoop using a block clamp and direct T-screw.

A large, rectangular cast aluminum clarrip connects to the primary pedal's left side via key screws. This clamp also contains the tension mechanism for the secondary pedal (also a single tensionable expansion spring), plus the beater housing for the left pedal. Both beaters supplied with the *P882TW* use hard felt; the auxiliary beater has a bent shaft for closer positioning to the center of the bass drum head. The clamp also contains a beater angle adjustment cam for the left beater.

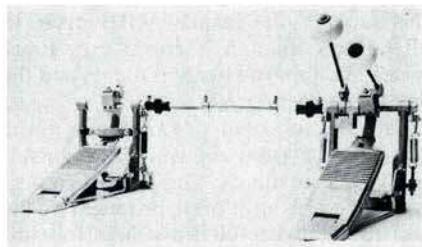
The connector rod, which links both pedals together, is telescopic and attaches

directly to the left pedal and to the clamp on the main pedal via small allen screws. Both ends of the rod have universal swivel joints to allow for various left pedal angles on the floor.

The secondary pedal is a stripped-down version of the main pedal, and is clamped onto a polycarbonate base plate. Rubber squares are placed underneath the front and back of the base plate to keep the pedal from skating away.

Pearl has designed the *P882TW* so that the main pedal can be easily removed for single-play use (simply by unclamping it). In its "slave-only" version (*P880TW*), it can be used with an existing Pearl *880*, *850*, *800*, or *750* pedal, or almost any other pedal with a double-posted framework.

While playing the *P882TW*, I found its action to be very smooth and noiseless. There was no lag-time or binding in the secondary pedal's response. I would have preferred the connector rod to be a bit longer; its fully telescoped length is approximately 16". All in all, the pedal is intelligently engineered and does its job just fine. The complete two-pedal unit retails at \$294.



Yamaha DFP-750

As I write this, Yamaha's twin pedal, the *DFP-750*, isn't even on the market, but it will be soon. I was lucky enough to get my hands on a prototype model to test out.

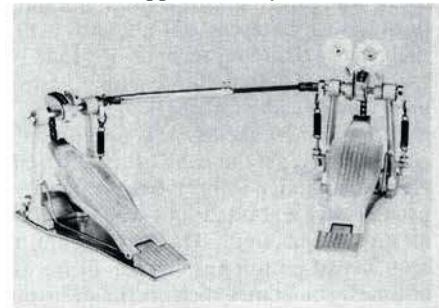
The *DFP-750* has hinged-heel footboards, synthetic strap linkages, felt beaters, and three tensionable expansion springs. One spring drives the main pedal, while the other two operate both sides of the pedal's connector rod. All are tensionable at the bottom of the pedals. The auxiliary footboard has a lighter-weight spring. Both pedal bases have sprung spurs. An angled T-screw on the side of the main pedal moves a steel piece that raises or lowers a serrated clamp plate for attaching the pedal to your bass drum. (The plate's teeth are quite sharp; beware of marring

your wooden bass drum hoops.) The secondary pedal also has this clamp plate, should you decide to use it as a separate pedal.

The left pedal clamps onto an 1/8" thick chromed support plate, with yet another set of sprung spurs. This plate also has rubber pieces at its front and back for extra non-skid protection. Given all these attachments, the left pedal is securely anchored to the floor, with little or no chance of sliding away.

Like all the other pedals, the connector rod is telescopic and has universal joints at both ends. The rod can easily be detached should you wish to use either pedal alone. From joint to joint, the rod can telescope to a maximum of 16". Angling the auxiliary pedal cuts this length down just a bit, of course.

Yamaha's *DFP-750* is very smooth and efficient. The pedals are modeled after Yamaha's *700 Series*, so there are a minimum of adjustments needed to get a good feel. Yamaha seems to have another winner here. Upon its release, the twin pedal will retail at approximately \$360.00.



Tama Camco/Tama Pro Beat

Tama has two different double pedals available: the *Camco 6935* and the *Pro Beat 6945* (shown above). The *Camco* twin pedal footboards are cast aluminum with hinged-heel plates and removable toe stops. They use a chain-drive linkage with sprocket and have single expansion springs. The primary pedal's axle has two beater hubs fitted onto it, both adjustable. One is driven by the main footboard and the other by the secondary pedal. Both felt beaters can be adjusted for stroke length at their respective spring cams. The pedal clamps onto the bass drum hoop via the common plate/T-screw method.

The left side of the main pedal holds the tension spring for the auxiliary pedal, plus has the connector rod fitted onto its

# Drum Pedals

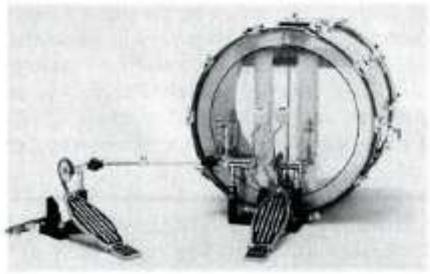
extended axle. The rod is telescopic up to 20" and locks its position with key screws. It is swivel-hinged on both sides to allow for various floor angle placements of the left pedal.

Double springs drive the auxiliary pedal—one located on the left pedal's frame, and the other on the right pedal's frame, as previously mentioned. The left-hand spring is a lighter weight than the other two on this twin pedal. All springs are user-tensionable.

The auxiliary pedal is mounted on a chromed base plate. It is fastened on at the front, but not at the heel plate. Depending upon your foot technique, this could cause some audible chattering of the metal heel plate against the metal base plate. The bottom of the base plate does not have any sort of non-skid material on it. It is simply smooth chrome, which is a definite minus when playing on certain stages, even though the pedal does have spur anchors at its front.

The two springs that operate the auxiliary pedal enable a very exacting response when playing the left side. The footboards could be a little longer; I had a hard time getting my size 11 1/2 on the heel plate without going past the toe stop. The *Camco 6935* had good action though, and I have no other complaints.

The *Pro Beat 6945* operates exactly the same as the *Camco* but has longer footboards (hooray). The chain linkages are heavier, and the beater housings are larger. On the particular pedal I played, the left beater was not working totally independent of the right. It followed the movement of the main pedal, due to binding up in the axle/beater hub connection. The *Pro Beat* has a heavier action than the *Camco*, but its footboards are definitely more comfortable to me. Both the *Camco* and *Pro Beat* twin pedals retail at \$385 each.



Sonor HLZ5382

The Sonor twin pedal is part of Sonor's

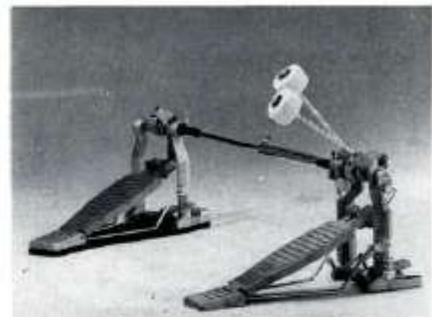
*Signature Series* of hardware. The *HLZ5382* has large, hinged-heel footboards with rubber-coated surfaces, as well as ribbed rubber beneath the heel plates and at the front of the pedal frames. Each footboard has a removable U-shaped toe stop. The pedals have chain/sprocket linkages, plus single expansion springs, stretched upward. The springs are tensioned and locked at the top of their assemblies. Sprung spurs are fitted on both bases. The main pedal clamps to the drum hoop using a long, angled T-screw that presses directly down on a clamping block very easy to get at. Another feature of the Sonor pedal that I really like is its adjustable-height posts, and there are three of them on the *HLZ5382*. The whole idea behind this is to raise or lower the strike point of the beaters, so they always hit the direct center of whatever size drum you're playing (or if you prefer, off center).

Like the other pedals reviewed, Sonor's connecting rod is key screw locked and has universal swivel joints. The rod fuses with the post assembly for the secondary beater, and the entire post assembly is then screwed onto the side of the primary pedal. This way, you could use the main pedal alone, simply by removing the auxiliary post. The left footboard is extendable a maximum of 23" from the main pedal. A horizontal clamp is fastened onto the left frame, presumably for attachment to a hi-hat stand to further brace the auxiliary pedal.

Both beaters supplied are felt, and both have bent shafts. The left beater can be angle-adjusted via a ratchet for equal, longer, or shorter throw.

The Sonor twin pedal is quite heavy in weight. There's a lot of solid steel in there! I liked the feel on both sides smooth and effortless. All adjustments use Sonor's slotted key screws, and there are enough adjustment points to truly allow one to "customize" the pedal for individual needs. I must mention that I had quite a fight getting the radius rod connectors into their holes on the pedal frames when setting the unit up—probably a case of mismachining at the factory.

If you're seriously interested in the Sonor twin, you'd better start saving up. I realize that the German mark/U.S. dollar exchange is in constant fluctuation, but even so, to me a \$945 retail price is steep.



Cosmic Percussion CP507

Latin Percussion's drumset division, Cosmic Percussion, just recently released its double pedal, the *CP507*. I've put CP's pedal into this position because it's really in a different price and performance category than any of the others reviewed in this article. This imported pedal has cast hinged-heel footboards with adjustable/removable toe stops. A fat chain is used for linkage on each pedal; there is no sprocket mating with it. Both pedal bases have sprung spurs, and the usual plate/T-screw clamp is used on the primary pedal. Each beater is operated by its own single expansion spring. On the main pedal, the top of the left post branches off to hold the secondary beater housing, spring, and connector rod attachment. Both beaters have independent stroke length adjustment at their spring holders.

Once again, the connector rod is telescopic and utilizes universal swivel joints. The only difference is that it telescopes to the left instead of the right, as with the other pedals. From hinge to hinge, the rod can span approximately 19". One thing I noticed, which may not even make a difference to some, is that the left footboard sits W higher than the right, due to the thick, ribbed-rubber backing, which is adhered to the auxiliary pedal's base plate.

The *CP507*'s feel is not bad at all, though I thought it was a bit "tighter" than the other pedals I tested. If you don't have the bucks to spend for the other twin pedals, the *CP507* is quite a good deal at \$199.95.

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# INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

## HIGHLIGHTS OF PASIC '86 IN WASHINGTON, DC



Roy Haynes



Casey Scheuerell



Jack DeJohnette



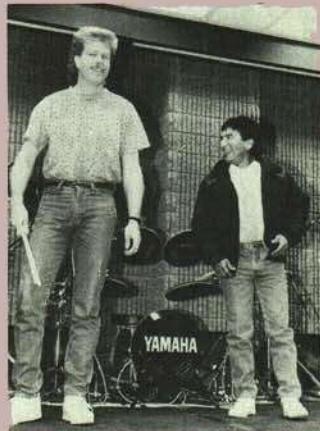
Ed Soph



Terry Bozzio



(L to R) Jack DeJohnette, Horace Arnold, Ed Thigpen, Bernard Purdie



J.R. Robinson and Alex Acuna



Steve Gadd

Photos by Lissa Wales

Additional coverage of PASIC '86 can be found in the March issue of *Modern Percussionist*.

### PIT RETRACTION

This is a retraction from Musicians Institute's recent announcement about Jeff Porcaro's participation in the school's Percussion Institute of Technology (PIT). Porcaro had agreed to come to PIT and counsel the students on an informal basis, but due to the busy schedule of his band, Toto, he found it very difficult to come to PIT on any regular basis. Unfortunately, many people assumed that Porcaro

would be on staff at the school all the time, which was not the case.

Due to the possible misunderstanding of Jeff Porcaro's participation at PIT, it was mutually decided that he would not visit the school in the future. Pat Hicks, president of Musicians Institute, regrets any misunderstandings caused by the announcement of the addition of Porcaro to PIT'S staff of noted percussionists.

### ENDORSEMENT NEWS

**Bob Stone**, currently heading his own big band, has joined Pro-Mark's roster of artist endorsers. Bob began as a staff musician with Motown in 1968, and has played with such artists as The Supremes, Count Basie, Woody Herman, Vic Damone, Frank Sinatra, Lionel Hampton, and Andy Williams. His band's current album, *Breakin' Out*, can be heard on Fantasia

records . . . Simple Minds' **Mel Gaynor**, and Nik Kershaw's **Gary Wallis** and **Mark Price** are now Tama endorsers; Mel is on an *Artstar* kit, while Gary and Mark are using Tama's new *Granstar* line. All three drummers are also using Tama's *Power Tower* system as well . . . **Jeff Porcaro** is now endorsing Dynacord's *ADD-one* electronic drumset system.

### SLOBEAT ADDS CALATO LINE

Regal Tip and other products by J.D. Calato are now available through Slobeat Percus-

sion, the exclusive distributor in the Rocky Mountain Region. The line includes Regal Tip

nylon- and wood-tip drumsticks, Regal brushes, Regal Corps sticks, *Blasticks*, and mallets. Mike Stobie, president of Slobeat, said, "We're

thrilled to be carrying the Regal line. It has really helped to round out our drumstick inventory."

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# J U S T D R U M S

## NEW TAMA KITS AND SNARES

Tama has recently introduced two completely new drumkit lines, along with several new models of snare drums. Also featured on the new kits is a new style of hardware.

Tama's new *Artstar II* kits feature Canadian hard rock maple shells, and are available in piano white and piano black lacquer finishes. The kits are fitted with Tama's *New Direction* hardware, including totally redesigned tom holders, tom brackets, bass drum spurs, tension lugs, hoops, and bass

drum claw hooks. Also new from Tama is the *Granstar* line, which offers drums with 7-ply, all-birch shells covered with Tama's "road proven" covering material. This covering, according to Tama, acts as an acoustic regulator. The *New Direction* hardware is also standard on these kits, which are available in Nile blue, silky yellow, cherry rose, gun metallic gray, pure white, jet black, and dark red.

New snare drums from Tama in its *Artwood* series include a

14-ply all-birch drum in 6 1/2 x 14 and 8 x 14 sizes, and a 9-ply all-birch drum in those same sizes plus 5 x 14. Both drums are available in candy apple red, cherry wine, piano white, and piano black finishes. Also new are an 8-ply bird's eye maple drum and a solid maple drum (made from one piece of maple 3.5mm thick). These drums feature a new lug design from Tama that allows the tuning of either the top head, the bottom head, or both, all from the top of the drum. These

drums also feature a new cam lever strainer, bell brass snares, and die-cast hoops. The bird's eye maple drum is available in 5 x 14, 6 1/2 x 14, and 8 x 14 sizes; the solid maple drum (in amber wood finish only) is available in 5 x 14 and 6 1/2 x 14 sizes. For further information, contact Hoshino (USA) Inc., 1726 Winchester Road, Bensalem, PA 19020, or call (215) 638-8670.



*Artstar II Kit*



*Granstar Kit*



*Artwood Solid Maple*



*Artwood Bird's Eye Maple*



*8-ply Artwood Birch*



*14-ply Artwood Birch*

### TRANSLATOR 2 MIDI DRUM CONTROLLER

The *Translator 2* MIDI Drum Controller from Phi Technologies greatly simplifies a drummer's use of MIDI. The unit has been designed to allow a straightforward, yet flexible, implementation of MIDI so that pre-MIDI and non-MIDI electronic drumsets and drum machines can send and receive MIDI triggering information. A reliable, efficient, and versatile addition to the contemporary drummer's art of communication, the *Translator 2* can also be used as an acoustic drum trigger interface.

The primary purpose of the unit is to translate the input of

up to six standard drumpads into a MIDI output. Owners of non-MIDI electronic drumkits such as Pearl's *Drum-X*, Simmons' *SDS5*, 7, and 8, Tama's *Techstar*, Dynacord's *Percuter*, and many others can use the device to trigger MIDI drums, drum machines, keyboards, and sequencers. Many other useful applications can be found for the *Translator 2* based on its flexibility. For further specifications and application information, contact Phi Technologies, Inc., 4605 North Stiles, Oklahoma City, OK, 73105-3328, (405) 521-9000.

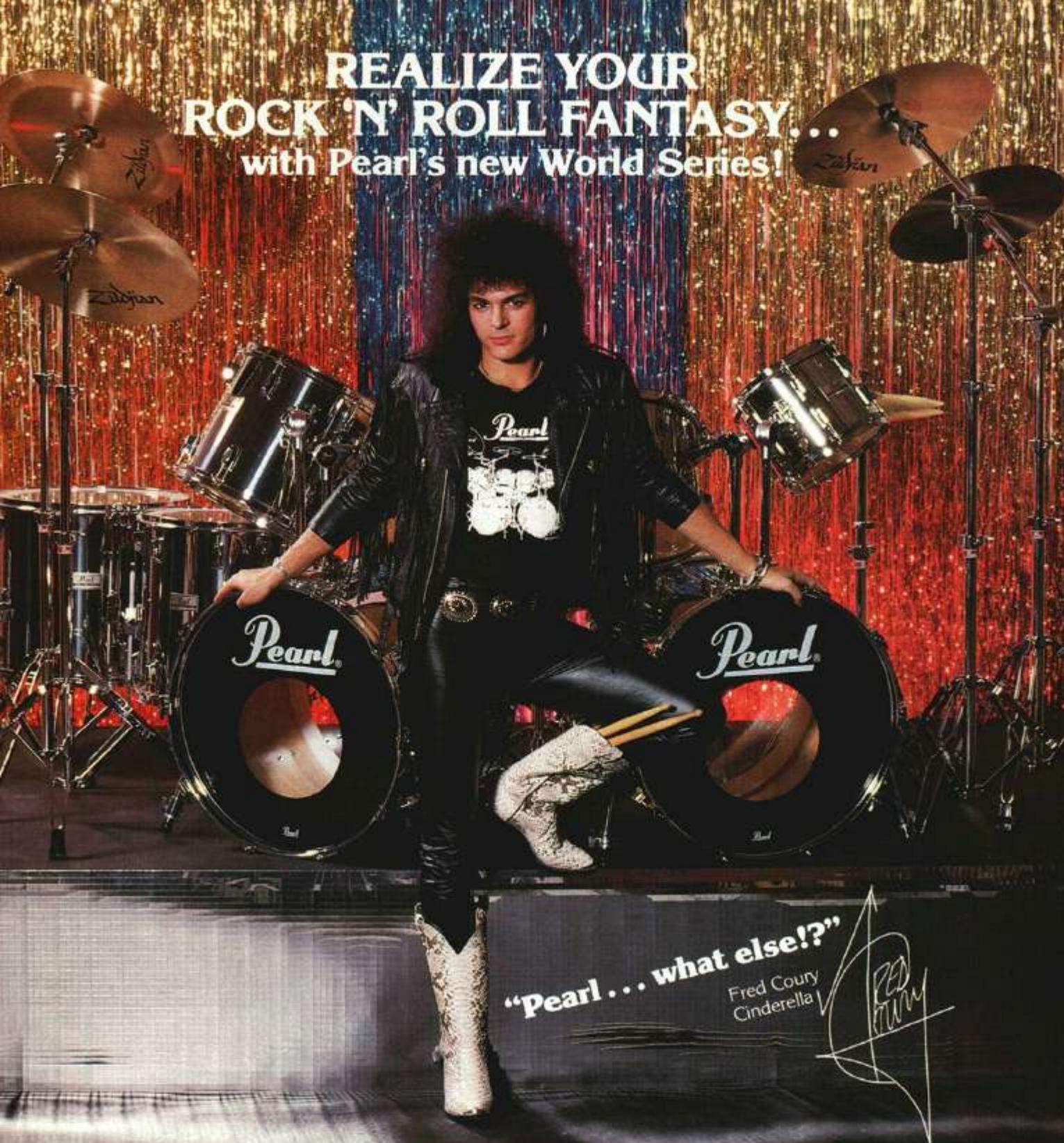
### NEW FROM DRUM WORKSHOP

Drum Workshop recently added to its line of bass drum pedals with the new 3000 series. These imported pedals combine outstanding value with many of DW's top-of-the-line features, including the patented chain & sprocket drive system. The series includes the 3000CX single pedal and the 3002 double pedal.

Drum Workshop has also expanded its line of electronic trigger pedals, adding the new *EP-3* and *EPR*. The *EP-3* features the same triggering mech-

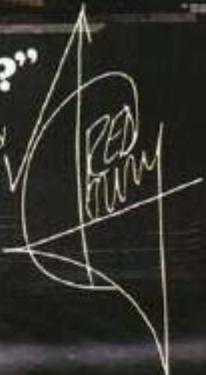
anism as the original *EP-1*, with a modified 3000CX bass drum pedal mounted on it. The *EPR* is a non-skid electronic pedal plate that can be used to convert most existing bass drum pedals into electronic pedals. Both units are compatible as trigger units with most electronic drums and drum computers. For more information, contact Drum Workshop, 2697 Lavery Court, Unit #16, Newbury Park, CA 91320, or call (805)499-6863.

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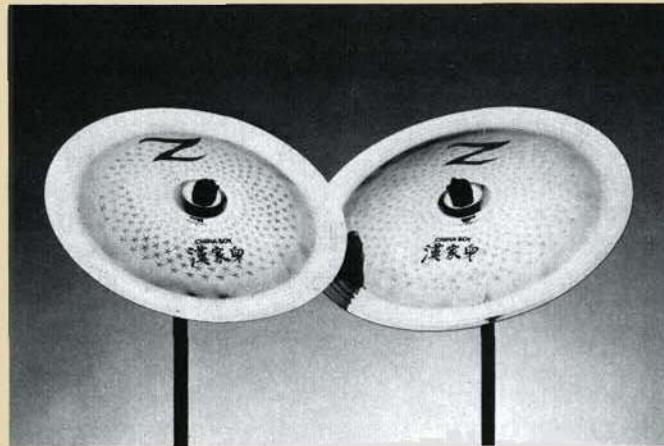
## NEW ZILDJIAN MODELS



The Avedis Zildjian Cymbal company has expanded its variety of special effects cymbals with the new *EFX #1* cymbal. The first in a new series of special percussion effects, the *EFX #1* is a small, thick cymbal that produces a high-pitched, piercing, and defined note. It is ideal

as an addition to the drumkit, offering yet more color to a cymbal setup. The cymbal can be used as a bell/accident cymbal or as a heavy splash cymbal for the hard rock player. Models are available in 8", 10", and 12" sizes.

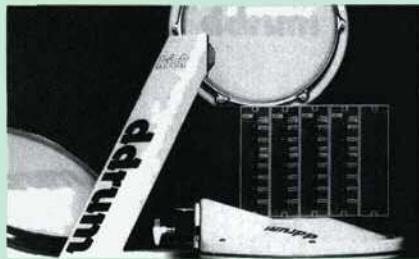
Also new from Zildjian are



18" and 20" *Z China Boy* cymbals. Zildjian has combined its special *China Boy* design (a swooping edge and unique square bell) with the radical shaping made possible by its exclusive computer hammer device. The result is a "China" cymbal that is louder, more

aggressive, more cutting, and more powerful than has ever been available before. For further information on any Zildjian product, contact Colin Schofield, Avedis Zildjian Company, 22 Longwater Drive, Norwell, MA 02061, or call (617) 871-2200.

## DDRUM PLUS



The new ddrum *Plus* is a 19" rack-mounted digital drumkit system that offers sounds and response similar to the ddrum *Studio* system. The new system has a built-in mixer and is expandable to eight modules. Each module has controls for pitch, bend, sensitivity, sound selector, decay, treble, bass, and volume.

The ddrum *Plus* system also includes the unique ddrum pads, which have an authentic

and natural feel because of their special design, which incorporates real drumheads and real metal hoops.

All ddrum *Plus* sounds are real, acoustic, percussive sounds, digitally recorded and stored on interchangeable EPROMS. Each EPROM contains up to four different sounds. For further information, contact ddrums at 1201 U.S. Highway One, North Palm Beach, FL 33408, (305) 622-0010.

## CAMBER SAVAGE CYMBALS



Camber cymbals recently unveiled a new addition to its line: *Savage* cymbals. This new selection offers tremendous price value, and is designed for the rock drummer by combining the sharp, modern looks of fierce logos with the heavy, hammered sound that delivers the ultimate punch. The new

series offers 14" matched-pair hi-hats, 16" crash, 18" crash-ride, and 20" ride sizes, and is available as individual cymbals or in pre-pack sets. For further information, contact Camber Cymbals, P.O. Box 807, Lynbrook, NY, 11563, or call (516) 887-3531.

## MIDI AND SYNTHESIS BOOKS AVAILABLE

his or her instruments. Written by Steve De Furia (featured columnist in *Keyboard* magazine) and Joe Scacciaferro (a leading industry consultant), *The MIDI Book—Using MIDI And Related Interfaces* is designed to give the musician practical and useful information for understanding and using MIDI technology for

By the same authors, *Secrets Of Analog & Digital Synthesis* helps musicians to understand fully the world of analog and digital music, as well as to apply that knowledge to their instruments. The book provides insight into virtually every major manufacturer's synthesizer products, and covers such topics as: The Physics of

Sound, Making Waves, The Sound Designer's Tool Kit, Synthesis and Editing Techniques, and Digital FM Synthesis.

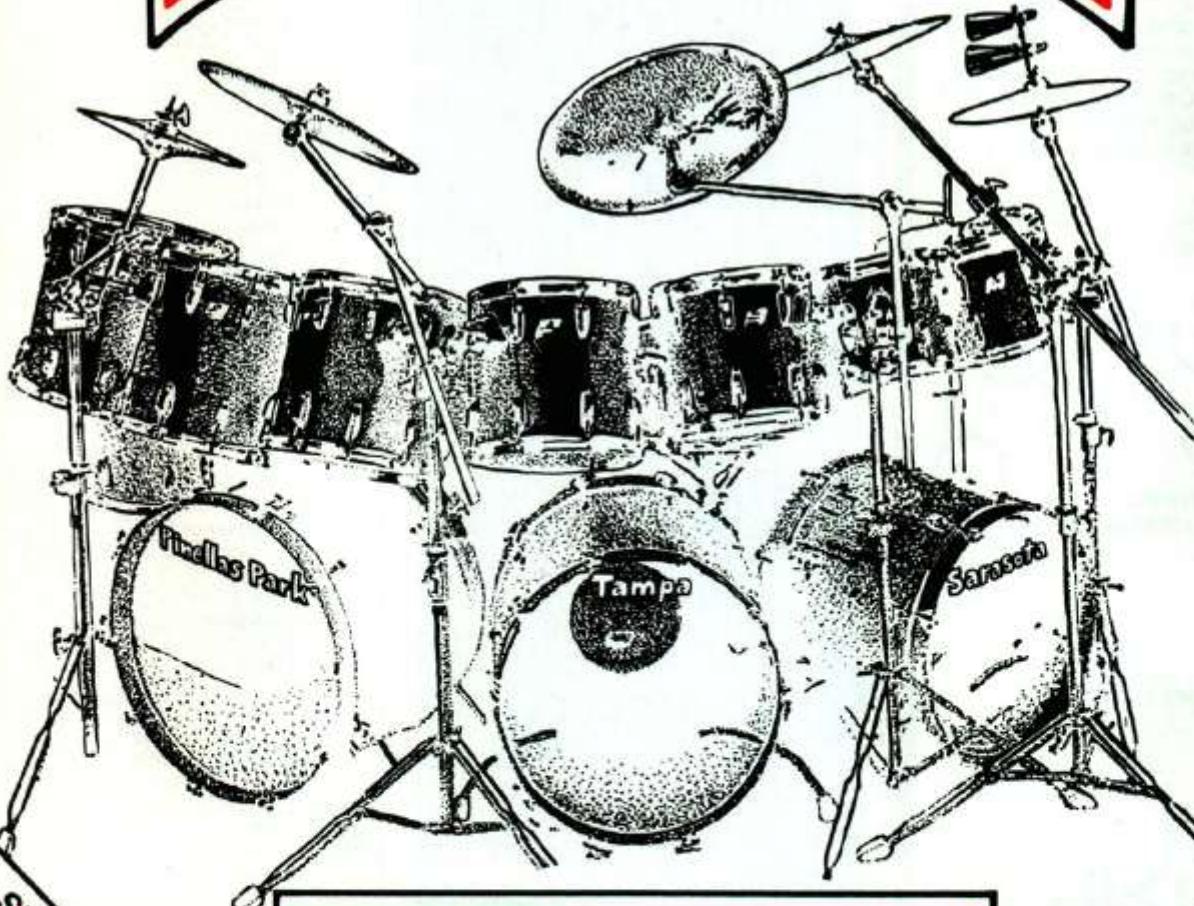
For further information on these and other technical publications, contact a Hal Leonard sales representative at P.O. Box 13819, 8112 W. Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, WI 53213.

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# Profiles in Percussion

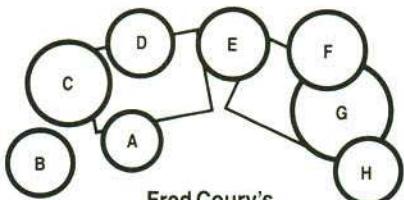
Fred Coury



Fred Coury is responsible for the powerful drumming behind the new heavy rock sensation "Cinderella." Described as the ultimate in "all-American good time party rock," Cinderella's music is propelled by Fred's driving backbeat.

He was born in upstate New York, and by the age of 21 had already worked with Kool and Ozzy Osbourne before joining Cinderella in early 1986.

Fred loves the sound of Zildjian platinum cymbals. "I tried every cymbal and nothing comes close to the durability and sound of Zildjians... why bother with anything but the best?"



Fred Coury's  
cymbal set-up.

- A. 14" Z. Dyno Beat Hi Hats
- B. 16" Impulse Crash
- C. 19" A. Thin Crash Platinum
- D. 16" A. Rock Crash Platinum
- E. 17" A. Rock Crash Platinum
- F. 18" A. Rock Crash Platinum
- G. 21" A. Rock Ride Platinum
- H. 16" Z. Power Crash

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next month in

## MODERN DRUMMER

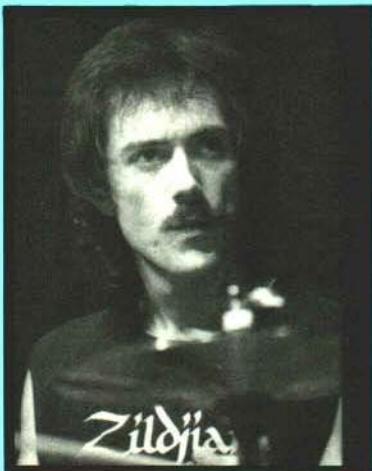


Photo by Bill Douthart/Douth Image

## Vinnie Colaiuta

also

## Stan Levey

## Music Medicine

plus:

## Neil Peart Sound Supplement

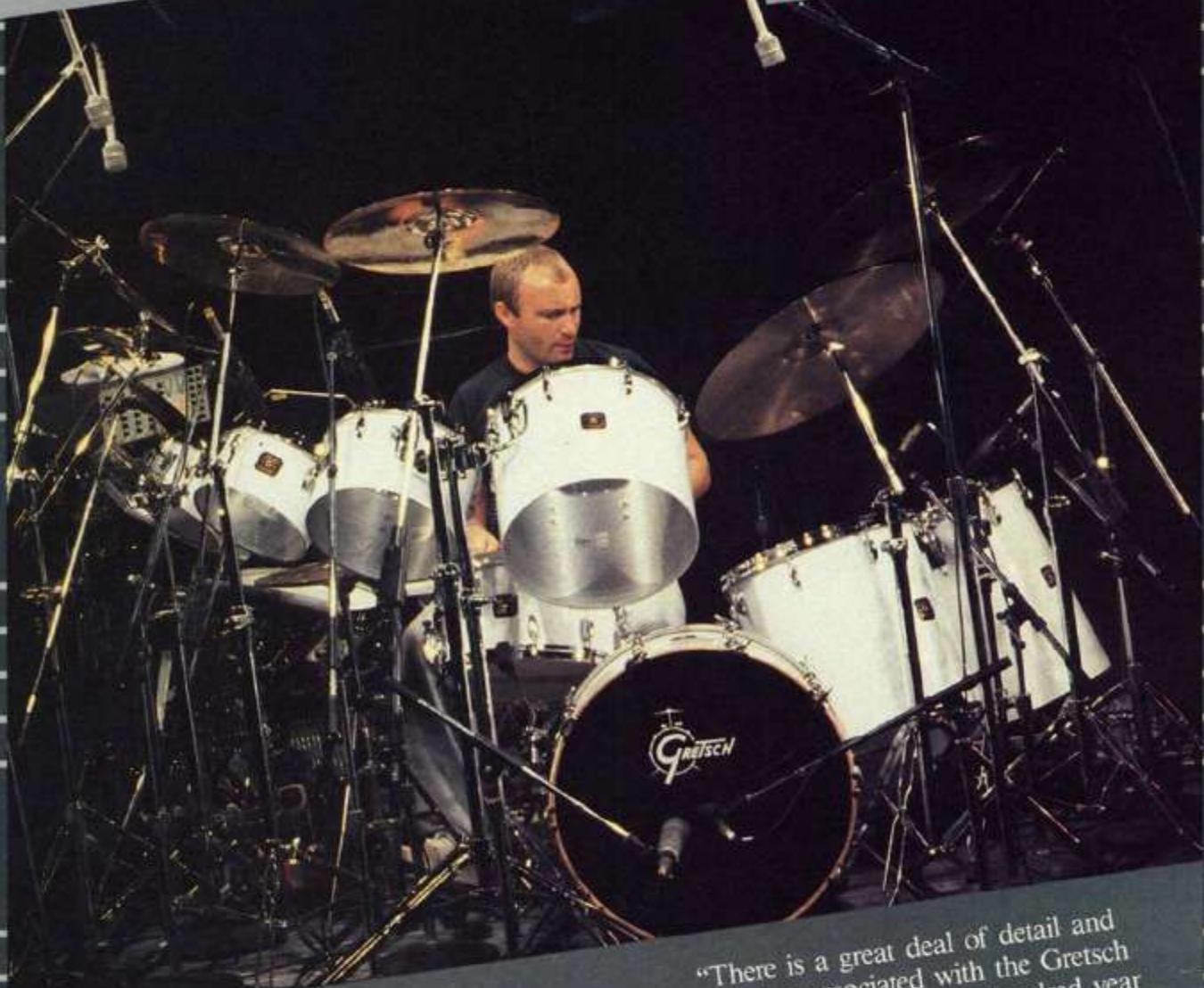
and much more...  
don't miss it

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# Why do I play Gretsch?

Phil Collins  
Genesis, producer & solo artist



"When I was about fourteen or fifteen years old, a good friend of mine who played drums in Joe Cocker's grease-band was playing Gretsch. I persuaded him to sell me his kit. From that moment, I was a Gretsch player. I still own that kit and it still sounds great today."

"Gretsch has always been 'a drummer's drum' and when the opportunity developed allowing me to play Gretsch again, I jumped at the chance."

"There is a great deal of detail and sophistication associated with the Gretsch product, name and over one-hundred year heritage. Sometimes I wish I did everything as well as they do."

"How do I like my new drums? They're beautiful in sound and looks...And most important, they're Gretsch."



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## GREGG AND RANDY CATCH SOME Z'S.

When Zildjian introduced the Z Series, we woke up the rock world—with new sounds, new music and a new way of thinking about cymbals.

We use sophisticated computer hammering techniques to shape our special cast alloy into a heavier, louder line of cymbals. Z's give rock music's hottest drummers the explosive volume potential, quick response and powerful projection they demand.

It's no wonder heavy hitters like Randy Castillo of Ozzy Osbourne and Gregg Bissonette of the David Lee Roth Band play Zildjian Z's.

"They're so powerful. So loud. They really cut. The Z Power Crash—I call it the beast. It's wonderful," says Randy Castillo.

"Z's are great for hard rock music—big rock," adds Bissonette. "I like the way they cut through a wall of amps. With the Z Ride you can have your stick off the bell and it will still sound real piercing, real definitive. And they're loud. You can feel the sound. Z's make you shake."

Z Series cymbals are hammered in carefully designed patterns to produce a variety of specific sound characteristics. And they're highly buffed for a dazzling visual effect. But what

drummer Randy Castillo likes best about the Z's is that they're made for hard-hitting rock'n roll.

"I used to go through cymbals like chewing gum. The style and volume of music I play with Ozzy demands something that takes a lot of punishment. But it's got to have the sound. The Z does both. It has everything I want in a cymbal. It looks great. It sounds great. And it takes a beating."

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."

If you'd like to experience the power of Zildjian Z Series Cymbals, stop by your Zildjian dealer. And tell him you want to catch some Z's.

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