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J. R. Robinson

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LARS
ULRICH
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INSIDE P.I.T.

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Features

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JOHN ROBINSON

Having recorded with a wide range of artists including Steve Winwood, John Fogerty, Michael Jackson, and Bob Seger, John "J.R." Robinson has encountered a variety of studio situations. Here, he discusses the various ways records are made, and he explains the importance of keeping up with today's technology,
by Rick Mattingly 16

LARS ULRICH

Rather than being dominated by lead guitar and lead vocals, the new "speed metal" is characterized by strong rhythm guitar and drums. The group Metallica is at the forefront of this style, and drummer Lars Ulrich is being hailed as one of the best in his field,
by Albert Bouchard and Deborah Frost 22

RICKY LAWSON

It's not easy to leave a band that you love, even if you're leaving to join Lionel Richie. But Ricky Lawson recently had to make the decision to quit the Yellowjackets in order to get closer to his ultimate goal,
by Robyn Flans 26

INSIDE THE PERCUSSION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

With a faculty that includes Joe Porcaro, Ralph Humphrey, Steve Houghton, Casey Scheuerell, and Steve Schaeffer, P.I.T. can offer drum students an education that is based on practical experience,
by Susan Alexander 30

Columns

EDUCATION

- ROCK 'N' JAZZ CLINIC**
Grooving With Two Bass Drums: Part 1
by John Xepoleas 54
- JOBGING DRUMMER**
The Jobbing Soloist
by Simon Goodwin 58
- TEACHERS' FORUM**
Professionals Only?
by Rick Mattingly 70
- STRICTLY TECHNIQUE**
Developing The Weak Hand
by Ray Fransen 72
- SHOP TALK**
Ted Johnson: Cymbal Art
by Rick Van Horn 82
- ROCK CHARTS**
Phil Collins: "Down and Out"
by Cheryl Savala 86
- CONCEPTS**
Son Of The One-Handed Roll
by Roy Burns 94
- CLUB SCENE**
Contributions To The Cause
by Rick Van Horn 96

EQUIPMENT

- ELECTRONIC REVIEW**
Yamaha Electronic Percussion System
by Rick Mattingly 100
- PRODUCT CLOSE-UP**
New Cymbals
by Bob Saydowski, Jr., William F. Miller, and Rick Mattingly 106
- JUST DRUMS..... 110**

PROFILES

- PORTRAITS**
J. M. Van Eaton: Rockabilly Rhythm
by Rob Bowman and Ross Johnson 36

NEWS

- UPDATE 6**
- INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS 108**

DEPARTMENTS

- EDITOR'S OVERVIEW 2**
- READERS' PLATFORM 4**
- ASK A PRO 10**
- IT'S QUESTIONABLE 12**
- DRUM MARKET 74**



A Lasting Influence

I would imagine that most drummers can recall being deeply inspired or influenced by another drummer at some point in their lives. It's usually not difficult to remember that exact moment when you knew you wanted to be a drummer more than anything in the world. I can remember it as if it were yesterday.

The year was 1955. I was 12 and had been studying drums for four years. As a birthday gift that year, my folks had decided to take me to see and hear a big-name band for the first time. I was thrilled.

Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, who had been on nonspeaking terms and led separate bands for many years, were together again, and billed as the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra. The place? Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, one of the great dance halls left over from the big-band heyday. Interestingly enough, it stands today (though the music has changed considerably) within walking distance of *MD's* home office.

Seated at a table in the upper-left balcony overlooking the bandstand, I had a completely unobstructed view of the band's drummer and could watch every move. I was also close enough so that the drummer could clearly see me looking down, and when he noticed my presence, immediately flashed a broad smile. The set began, and I watched in total awe as this absolutely superb drummer moved around a set of white-pearl Gretsch drums with the skill and finesse of a great dancer. Everything about his playing was flawless. It was the first time I had ever seen or heard anything like it.

But the greatest inspiration was yet to come, when at the conclusion of the first set, I noted him

making his way up the stairs to the balcony. Upon reaching our table, he introduced himself, looked directly at me, and said, "Something tells me you're a drummer." Even more to my surprise, he took a seat and began to inquire about my playing. We continued to talk drums throughout the break. I truly found it hard to believe that this great player was showing such a sincere interest in a youngster like myself.

The remainder of the evening continued in a similar fashion. The band would play, and I'd watch and listen intently. During the breaks, he'd return, and we'd talk more drums. I can't begin to express the wealth of information and advice he imparted that evening, and I remember being totally blown away by the whole thing. The inspiration from that experience was immeasurable, and from that night on, there was never any question of what I wanted to do. It was drums and nothing else.

I'm sure there are thousands of musicians who could relate a similar type of story. Suddenly, you're more serious about playing than ever before. You're willing to practice hours on end, to set goals, and take advantage of every possible opportunity to play with other musicians. It's a turning point in your life, and you can attribute it all to that initial rush of inspiration with its lasting effect.

By the way, the drummer with the Dorsey Brothers that evening in 1955 was a young Louie Bellson, who's been well-known throughout his career for taking the time to inspire and influence young players everywhere, whenever and however he can. Thanks Lou—from all of us.

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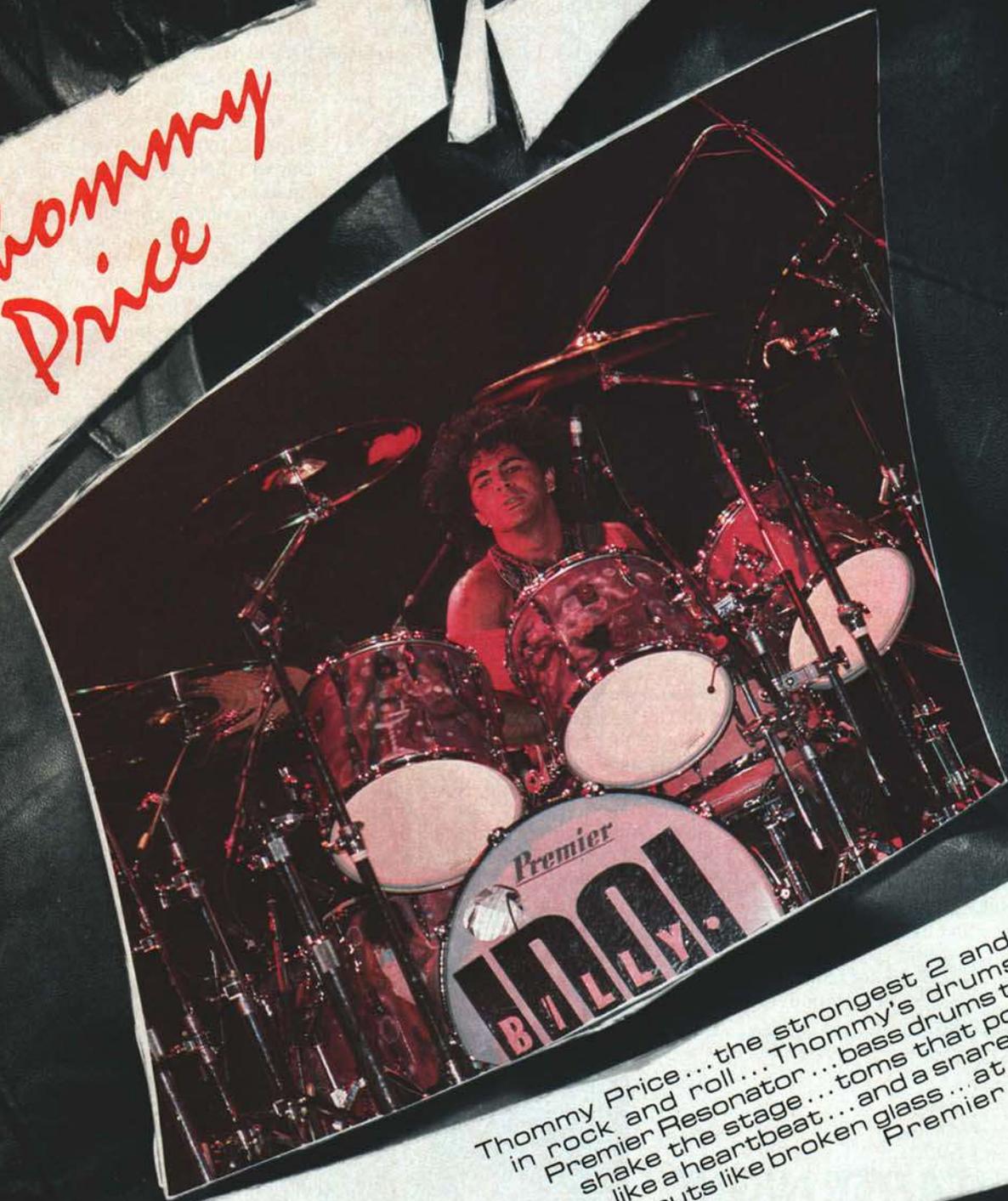
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ROD SOUND SUPPLEMENT

I would like to thank *Modern Drummer* magazine and Rod Morgenstein for the "Spicing Up Beats" article and *Sound Supplement* recording in the January, 1987 issue. This is something I've been looking for for a long time. I have found this article very beneficial, as I'm sure many other drummers have or will. This article and others like it are what you would expect from an already educational and informative magazine such as *Modern Drummer*. I hope articles like the aforementioned will continue to grace the pages of future issues of MD.

Mike Cerra
Binghamton, NY

GRETSCH AND SLINGERLAND

I was greatly dismayed to hear rumors that the Slingerland Drum Company ("The House That Krupa Built") was going out of business. I was relieved to hear the exciting news that Fred Gretsch, President of the Gretsch Drum Company, had saved Slingerland from extinction through acquisition. Both Gretsch and Slingerland will operate as separate entities. Both drums are American-made products!

I always held the late Gene Krupa in high regard, both as a musician and as a person. Because of Gene's immense popularity during the Big Band Era, everybody wanted to play the drums and sound like the "King of Drummers." Many other big-name drummers also played and endorsed Slingerland drums: Dave Tough, "Big" Sid Catlett, Ray McKinley, Buddy Rich, Mel Lewis, Jake Hanna, and others. I am grateful to Fred Gretsch for saving Slingerland and reviving Slingerland's famous "Gene Krupa Radio King" model snare drum in fitting tribute to the "King of Drummers."

Eliot Landsberg
Plantation, FL

ANTON FIG

I've been a subscriber ever since I found out about your magazine about a year ago. I was thrilled to see my favorite drummer, Anton Fig, on the February, 1987 cover. Great story!

Brian Lund
Huntington Beach, CA

JERRY KROON

Thank you for the fine interview in your February issue with Jerry Kroon. In 1963, Jerry recommended a 13-year-old kid to play a band date he had been offered but could not make because of a prior commitment. I was that insecure and frightened kid. Even during those high school days, Jerry had the virtuous qualities he showed in your interview. He was encouraging and helpful when he could have been condescending and critical. That help and friendship—given to me 24 years ago—has helped to keep me drumming all these years with, hopefully, many more to come. I am thankful for the enthusiasm Jerry instilled in me many years ago, and to you folks for printing the interview. Jerry is a real tribute to the sincere drumming comradery your fine magazine displays and encourages.

Terry Rathbun
Rapid City, SD

GLENN HEBERT

I would like to congratulate MD and Robyn Flans on the fine interview with Glenn Hebert of the Eddy Raven Band. [Update, February '87 MD] Recently, I had the opportunity of playing with and talking to Glenn at a concert in Gonzales, Texas. You won't find a nicer, more thoughtful man in the music business today. Glenn is truly a very fine drummer; best of luck to him and to the Eddy Raven Band.

Troy Guillet
West Point, TX

THANKS FROM LARRIE

I only wish I had the right words to thank you for how much you've done for us these last few years. Thanks, also, for Robyn Flans. She's a great writer who really understands what drummers want to read about.

MD is a great magazine. You give us all so much to think about and make us feel as one: drummer to drummer, giving to one another.

Thanks, also, for thinking of the Nashville drummers as part of the drum world. The feature stories you've done on Jerry Kroon, James Stroud, and Gene Chrisman, among others, show us how much you really care about us. Many, many thanks.

Larrie Londin
Nashville, TN

ONE-HANDED ROLL

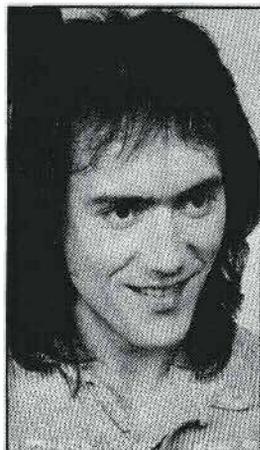
I differ with Roy Burns in regard to his statement that a one-handed roll is impossible to play. I had a percussion instructor who, by modifying the traditional left-hand grip, could play such a roll. What he did was to turn his hand over so that the palm faced down. With the stick resting on the ring finger and tension maintained in the thumb socket, he would then use his middle finger to tap downward. This is what I saw; what I heard was a roll. There was no other playing going on at the time. I'm not sure if he actually got a double-stick bounce, but single-stroke rolls are called "rolls," too. Also, what about jazz players who get up to the equivalent of 9-stroke rolls by using a left-hand buzz roll? These may be considered "mock" rolls, but they work.

R. Neely
Fairmont, WV

Editor's note: Roy addresses the "one-handed roll" controversy further in this month's Concepts column.

NIGHT AFTER NIGHT

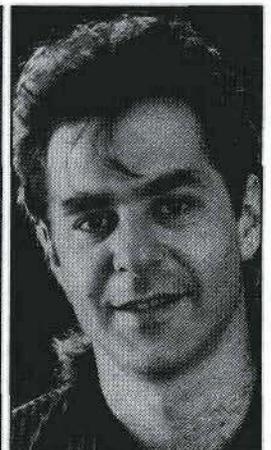
The reasons why the regular drummers on three of the four national late night TV talk shows use Yamaha Drums exclusively should be obvious by now.



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"The Joan Rivers Show"



ANDY NEWMARK
David Brenner's "Nightlife"

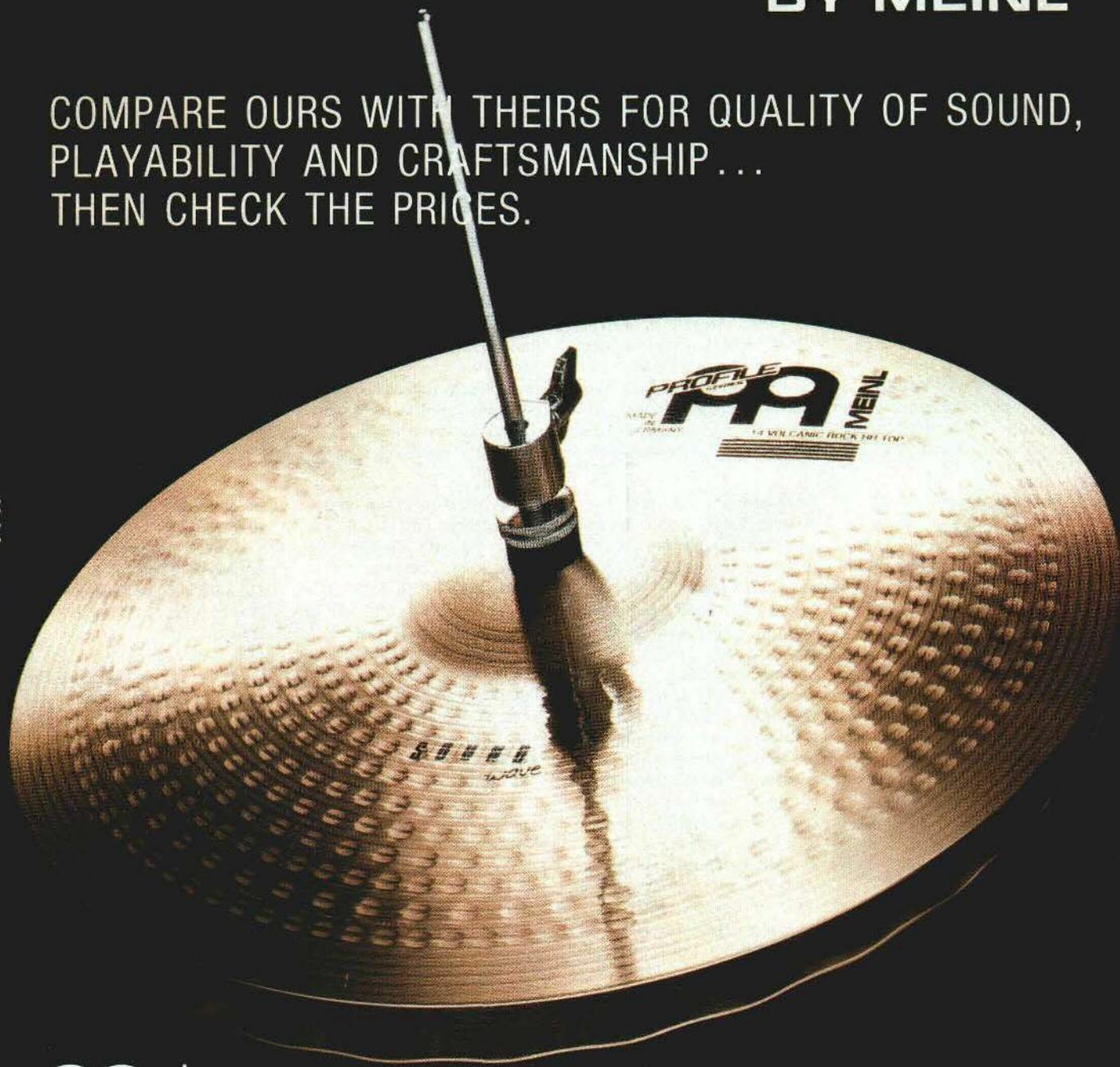


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Magic Sticks is a new feature film that's a musical fantasy of sorts, which involves a drummer with a dream, and a bum who befriends him and who eventually lays some rather powerful sticks on the young man. In this case, the drummer is played by German musician **George Krantz**, and the "bum" is none other than jazz great Chico Hamilton!

Krantz himself has been playing drums professionally for ten years, is a resident of Berlin, and is a well-known name throughout Germany and Europe. "I've played with a lot of German bands, and I

decided to go solo about three years ago," Krantz relays almost without a trace of his native accent. "I started this by doing my first single, called 'Dindata.' "

And what exactly is this "Dindata" track he speaks of? "It's a funny little dance-anarchy song," he explains. "It was born from an accident. I was on tour with a percussion group through Sweden, and one day, I just decided not to play my solo, but to sing it instead. As I started doing this people began freaking out, and through the years, I worked on it, combined it with drums, and tried to make it a song. It's always been the encore for all the bands I've played in since. Christo Franke, who's a member of Tangerine Dream, told me that I should go into the studio and record it, so I did. It's really only vocals, drums, a little bit of keyboards, and

my voice. It's crazy stuff. It went straight to number one on the dance charts here in the U.S. a couple of years ago."

So how did Krantz—a well-respected drummer in Europe but a complete novice at acting—acquire the starring role in a feature film? He used his ingenuity and came up with the idea for the story himself, collaborating on the screen play with the film's director, who George had written music for on one of his previous films. "We came up with the idea for *Magic Sticks* while we were sitting in a restaurant one night," he says. "And although people kept telling me, 'You can't do it; it will never work,' we had faith in it anyway. Although I didn't have any acting experience, it was always clear to us that I'd play the lead. Now everyone seems to feel that it turned out very well.

"It's a story about a drum-

mer who's down and out in New York City," he continues. "He comes across this bum on the streets who gives him a pair of sticks. These sticks are magical; they make people move the way the drummer wants them to move. There's a lot of adventure, a love story, a lot of music, and a lot of fun. It's really a modern fairy tale. It's been great shooting this."

George also wrote the music for the film and performed it. Back home, he's got an eight-piece band with a brass section and a second drummer, and he plans to take the group out on tour when the soundtrack album and film are released. Listen for the forthcoming single from the LP—appropriately called "Magic Sticks"—and the movie, which should be in wide release in early summer.

—Teri Saccone

At one point a few months ago, Peter Cetera was #1 on the pop charts, Belinda Carlisle was #2, Lionel Richie was #4, Amy Grant was #1 on the Contemporary Christian charts, and Dolly Parton was #1 on the country charts. What did they all have in common?

Paul Leim was the drummer on all those simultaneous hits. Not bad! Others he worked for last year include Whitney Houston, Gladys Knight, the Monkees, the Jets, Stevie Nicks, Rosanne Cash, Stacy Lattisaw, the Imperials, Dionne Warwick, Crystal Gayle, and Jack Wagner.

"Lionel went on for a year and a half," Paul recalls. "I did about three-fourths of the album, as well as stuff that didn't make the album. We cut a thing he didn't even have

words on that we called 'The African Song,' and it was just smoking. I don't know why it didn't make the album. Lionel has always been that way. He listens to playbacks in the hall, and if it's still making him move out there, then he knows he's got something.

"He's pretty demanding in the studio," Paul continues, "but he's not the greatest at expressing what he wants. The first thing Lionel will say in the studio is, 'Look, as far as putting this in technical terms, I don't have any idea of what I'm talking about, but this is what I hear . . . ,' and he'll sit down at the piano and play something that sounds like a hit record. He's amazing!"

Both Lionel and James Taylor asked Paul to tour with them last year. Although he

misses live work, Paul feels strongly about his duties as a father. "I really wanted to do Lionel's tour, because that's mostly my stuff. Jeff Porcaro did one of the hits and J.R. did a couple, but the rest of it is me, and that would have been right up my alley. But my daughter was 12 months old when he called, and I didn't want to be gone when she learned how to walk. It was really hard. I really wanted to go, but I would have had to take them with me. With a whirlwind tour like that, it would have been hard to do. I have two boys, ages seven and eight, also. I just made a decision a long time ago that I was going to be the world's greatest dad. I've got a tremendous amount of respect for Lionel and his talent, but it doesn't

mean anything compared to my family. It's funny: When I was a kid, I thought, 'If I could just play on a hit record, I'd have it made.' Then I played on my first one and thought, 'If I could just play on another hit record' Pretty soon, you wake up one morning and say, 'Wait a minute, I've already done all that. What's important is that this little kid wants me to play baseball with him.' "

Every other month or so, Paul does enjoy getting out of town for about a week and going to Nashville. A few months ago, he worked on a duet album between Gary Morris and Crystal Gayle, and more recently he worked on Gary's own project.

—Robyn Flans

Last year was the first time **Mike Bringham** got to record with Gary Morris, who he has been with for over three years. "*Plain Brown Wrapper* K Gary's first bluegrass album. We do some old songs and some new songs, and it's all acoustic. It's a strange album for me, in a way, because it's

the first album I've used brushes on. I'm mostly a stick drummer, but I blew the dust off the brushes. I've used them with a lot of jazz trios over the years, but this was my first recording using them. It was very interesting.

"To play with Gary live, you really have to be versatile.

Mark O'Connor and Jerry Douglas did some live dates with us this year, and to work with them, you have to be able to jump out of straight time and play complicated pieces. It was a lot of fun working with them. It puts an extra spark there and brings some extra playing out of you that you

just about had forgotten you had."

Gary Morris is far from what you would call traditional country music. "I never tried to put a label on it. We have some stuff where we really burn the house down that's really rock. It depends on the type of club. Gary goes out

Continued on page 8.

ALEX ACUÑA



The musical path Alex Acuña traveled from the Andes Mountains of his native Peru to the slick L.A. recording studios

is varied, with many well calculated turns in the road.

His first stop on this musical safari was Puerto Rico where Alex learned his Afro-Caribbean roots that would serve him well in every musical situation.

Even when playing drums in world class halls, Alex is thinking of what he learned jamming on the beach in Condado, Puerto Rico. So intense was his Caribbean musical experience that in Alex's words,

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and reads the audience, and then decides what to do. Sometimes he'll pull out stuff that we haven't done in a couple of months. The good part is that this rhythm section—Steve Brantley on bass, Jamie Brantley on guitar, Gary

Hooker on guitar, and Scott Saunders on keyboards—has been together for a long time, so we can really pull some stuff out. Steve and I have been together the longest. We marched in school bands together. Also, Steve, Jamie,

and I did some stuff with James Brown on his *Mother Nature* album, and I've had a chance to jam around with a lot of other musicians, like Steve Morse and Andy West from the Dixie Dregs. It brought back memories when

Mark O'Connor started pulling out his stuff. It's not exactly the Dixie Dregs' style, but as far as odd time signatures go, it is."

—Robyn Flans

Joey Scott spent a lot of time on the road last year as a member of Lizzy Borden, supporting the group's latest LP, *Menace To Society*. More currently, he's been in the studio with the band recording an EP called *Terror Rising*, enjoying a very open creative process. "We have a routine where someone will come into the studio with a skeleton of a song, and we'll go through it," he says. "Basically, we'll put it together like a puzzle, put it on tape, and give it to Lizzy, who will throw some lyrics on there. Usually the lyrics come last, although sometimes he'll have a whole concept for a song, and we'll incorporate the mood. Most of the time, though, the guitar players come up with a riff or something, and we piece it together. It's real open, so anybody can add anything he feels like. I don't think I could be in a situation where one guy came up



with the whole thing.

"Actually, I have been in that situation. It didn't last very long with somebody coming up and saying, 'I want you to play this like this.' That kind of insults my intelligence. I didn't learn to play all these years to have a guitar player tell me how to play the drums. I can see his telling me his point of view and what he

thinks it should sound like, but I need to be able to give my input."

Joey says that the music requires a lot of energy, "especially when we're on the road," he laughs. "I have to be real healthy, whereas the rest of the band can party a lot. There's no way I can get away with that. I have to stay real healthy, and do a lot of jogging and stuff. There are a lot of theatrics involved, so there's a lot of timing involved, and there are a lot of cues. When we were on the road with Motorhead, I was talking to Pete Gill, who said that he really doesn't have to hear the band because he knows the music in his head. I told him that it would be impossible for me not to have a monitor, because I wouldn't be able to catch the cues. Lizzy is like a conductor sometimes, and I have to be watching him. There are cues all the way

through the show, and there's a lot of pressure. That's another reason why I have to really stay alert."

But even though it's a lot to contend with, Joey enjoys the theatrical nature of the show. "It's not to be taken seriously, that's for sure. It's definitely a show, although the music is definitely serious. I can't think of anything else I'd rather do. I used to play in bands where it was just a musical thing, and that was alright, too. But this is basically what I've always wanted to do: play in a band that had something more to offer than just getting up there to play. It's not like our music can't stand on its own, because we opened up for Alice Cooper, who didn't want us to do any kind of theatrics at all. We were basically naked out there, playing our music, and that went as well as any of our shows."

—Robyn Flans

Craig Krampf can be heard on Melissa Etheridge's first album for Island Records. Also, you might have recognized Craig on *Solid Gold* playing "Do You Believe In Magic" with John Sebastian. Drummer **Will Rigby** working on dB's debut LP for IRS Records. Ed Cassidy can be heard on an upcoming Spirit album. As well as various production projects, **Paul Hines** recently played the Tokyo Music Festival with El DeBarge. **Harvey Mason** has been recording with such artists as George Benson, Dionne Warwick, and Phil Upchurch.

Michael Huey is back in the studio, this time wearing his producer hat, recording and mastering the new Gene Clark (Byrds) and Carla Olsen (Tones) debut collaboration for Rhino Records. Huey also recently finished work on a special for HBO/Lorimar, *Joe Walsh And Friends*, with Albert Collins and Etta James, to be aired this spring. This project should dispel any rumors that Michael is giving up drumming for producing. **Alan Jones** doing dates with David Friesen. **Ian Paice** on tour with Deep Purple. **Don Heffington** doing tracks with

Rosie Fiores and doing some work with Emmy Lou Harris. **Graeme Edge** is recording a new album with the Moody Blues. **Walfredo Reyes** recently recorded with Leonard Cohen and also did some recent work for Sergio Mendes and Mel Carter, and for the TV series *Hard Copy*. He has also been doing dates with David Lindley. **Denny Fongheiser** working in the studio with Brian Setzer and Cock Robin. **Jason Bonham** is playing with Virginia Wolfe. **Dave Weckl** is on Chick Corea's album due out this month, as well as recently released albums by

Special EFX and Michael Franks. **Myron Grombacher** is in the studio with Pat Benatar. **Gordon Gale** is on new LP by Danny Wilde. **Butch Miles** can be seen this month at the Odessa Jazz Party in Odessa, Texas. **Randii Meers** is no longer with Black Sheep and has recently been doing some heavy metal studio work with Greenworld artists Reckless Disregard. **Jay Schellen** on tour with Hurricane. **Jeff Hale** recently touring with Waylon Jennings and recording with Tony Joe White.

—Robyn Flans



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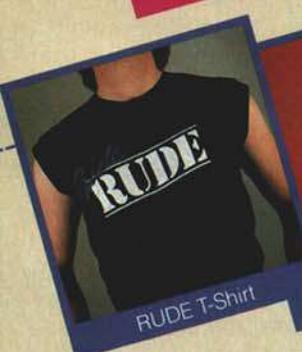
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TERRY BOZZIO



Photo by Rick Mattingly

Q. On the Paiste "Soundsheet" that you did some time ago, you played a sensational solo. In it, there's a passage where you play phrases with your hands and then repeat them with your feet. Can you write out those phrases or some similar ones that you tend to use when soloing?

Sergio LA. Conforto
Rio De Janeiro
Brazil

MUSIC KEY

A. Thanks for your letter and compliments; I appreciate them. It's nice to hear from someone in Brazil! Since I conceived of this solo in "free time," it was challenging for me to write it out; hence, no meter or time signature is indicated. But the relationship of the note values within each phrase is correct to the best of my knowledge.

For me, this section of the solo always invokes images of primitive drummers overheard "calling and answering" to each other from village to village in some remote jungle. I hope it helps you and that you have fun with it!

NEIL PEART

Q. I have noticed in some of your songs that your 12" concert tom seems to be tuned lower than your 12" closed tom. Is this the case, and if so, why? In fact, why do you have two 12" toms and no 14" tom?

Ted Taff
Burton, OH

A. Well, an interesting—if esoteric—observation! First of all, you're quite right about the tuning. I tend to think of my concert toms and closed toms as two separate groups of intervals, both in tuning and in "orchestrating" a drum part. In order to have a sequential descending scale through all of them, I simply leave out the 12" closed tom, and roll right on from the 12" concert tom to the 13" closed tom.

The reason for having two 12" drums is that, of course, the two have very different characters and uses. In fact, I think the 8x12 closed tom is one of my favorite, most expressive drums, while, in contrast, I've never met a 14" drum I really liked!

CHAD WACKERMAN

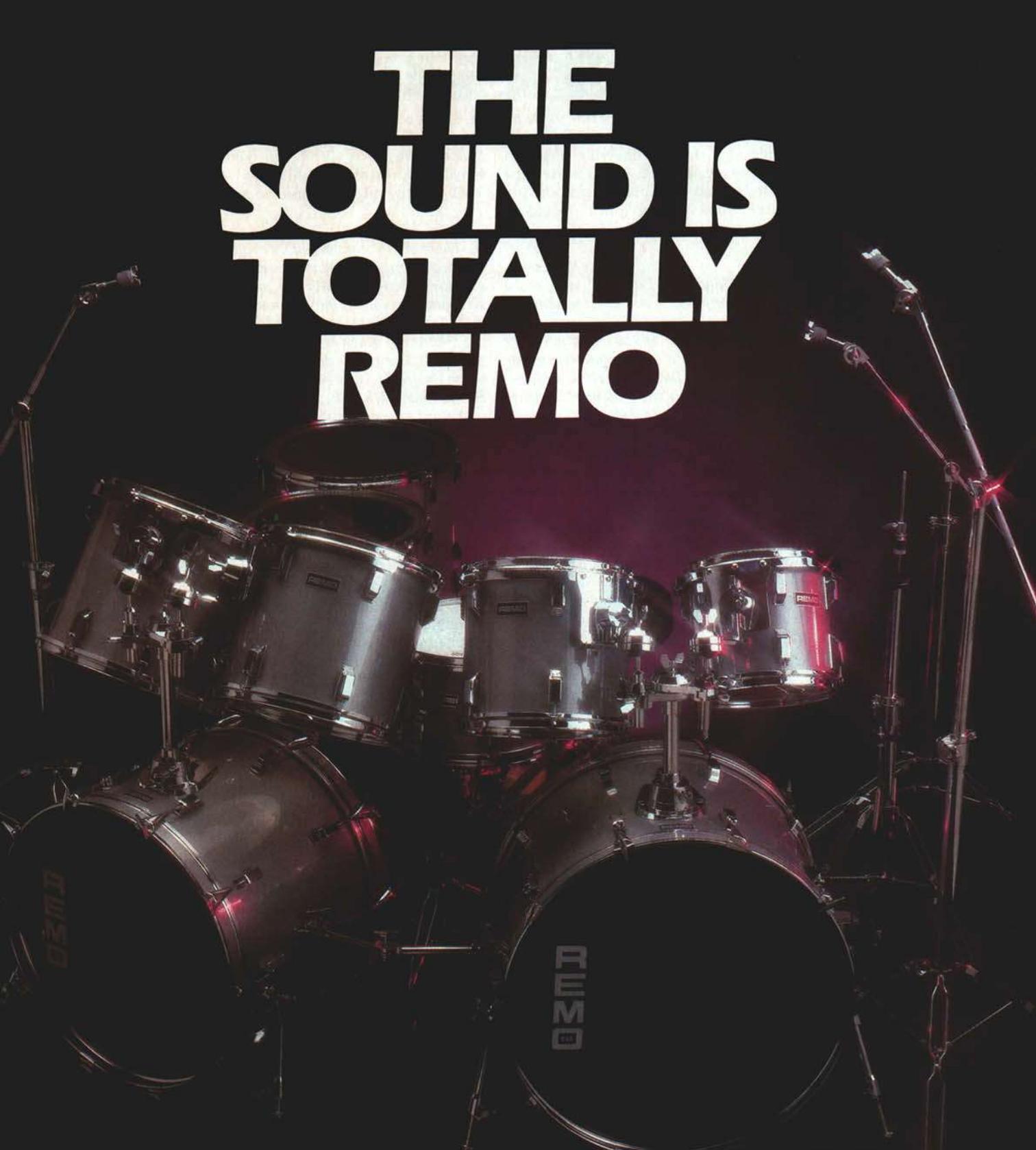
Q. On Allan Holdsworth's *Atavachron* album, you play a beautiful-sounding ride cymbal on the song "Funnels." Can you tell me what cymbal that was? I also have a question about the tune "Looking Glass" from the same album. I saw you live, and you played the intro differently than Tony Williams did on the album. Can you tell me the time signatures you play before going into the 4/4 part?

Kenny Craig
New York, NY

A. I'm afraid I can't tell you what ride cymbal was played on "Funnels," for the simple reason that I didn't play it. Gary Husband played on that track (although the record erroneously lists bass player Jimmy Johnson as playing drums). Perhaps you could get in touch with Gary through MD to find out about that cymbal.

On the album, the intro to "Looking Glass" is an improvised drum fill four bars long in 4/4 time. On the last Allan Holdsworth tour, it was two bars long in 4/4. I don't always play the downbeat, and I like to play phrases over the bar lines, so it might not be so obvious that the intro is in 4/4. In the next section of the tune, I don't count in 4/4, but rather 6/4, 4/4, 7/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4, 5/4, 4/4, 4/4, and 6/4. Each time signature is one bar in length.

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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. I have recently bought a 14 x 14 marching snare drum made by Ludwig. It is a rather old drum but still sounds great. It has the initials "W.F.L." on the side of it. I was wondering what this stands for and if the drum has any special value. I want to use it for the specific task of making a low sound while playing gigs with my set, but my regular snare drum makes a lower pitch. Would an Evans Hydraulic head lower the pitch of the larger drum?

D.B.

Lake Wales, FL

A. The "W.F.L." stands for "William F. Ludwig," and was a trademark of that company for many years. As far as whether or not your drum is "worth something" as a collector's item, that depends upon its actual age, condition, etc. If you can obtain any further details about the drum, such as a serial number and/or photos of the snare throwoff, lug design, buttplate, rims, and tensioning claws, you might send that material to William F. Ludwig, Jr., Ludwig Industries, O'Hare Plaza, Suite 285, 5725 N. East River Road, Chicago, IL 60631. Mr. Ludwig may be able to provide you with some historical information on your drum.

When it comes to achieving a lower pitch on this drum, remember that it is a marching snare drum, which was designed to project as much volume as possible outdoors and to cover a wide frequency range. Such drums are generally tensioned quite tightly, which produces a fairly high pitch from the drumhead. You may be able to achieve the lower pitch you desire simply by loosening the head. Otherwise, a heavier head might be an alternative, since it will tend to produce fewer high-frequency overtones. Hydraulic heads, in particular, are generally not recommended for snare drum use, due to the extreme muffling action of those heads. Under normal circumstances, that amount of muffling is rarely desired on a snare drum. A twin-ply, coated batter head might be a better choice for your application.

Q. I would like to know where I can get a Rogers Super Ten snare drum. I've been told that the Rogers Drum Company no longer manufactures the drums—in fact, that Rogers has become an importer rather than a manufacturer. Can you help me?

D.F.

Roseville, CA

A. The Rogers Drum Company ceased to be a drum manufacturer several years ago. Since that time, the company—owned as a division of Fender Musical Instruments—has been importing budget drum kits under the Rogers name. Thus, it would be impossible for you to buy a new Rogers Super Ten snare drum. If you are interested in a used drum, you might check with some of the major stores across the country, or in the classified ads in MD's Drum Market section.

Editor's note: In response to our appeal for information on Rogers parts and equipment, the following dealers and individuals have informed us that they can offer some assistance to our readers. Some have parts, some have drums, and some offer repairs and historical information.

Al Drew's Music, 526 Front St., Woonsocket, RI, 02895, (401) 769-3552; Northwest Music Shop, 1411 Washington St., Davenport, IA 52804, (319) 322-2746; Kevin Polifka, 11656 S. Lamon, Worth, IL 60482; Al Klopfer, 4115 Annandale Rd. #200, Annandale, VA 22003; and Don's Music Land, 1227A W. Glen, Peoria, IL 61614-4794, (309) 692-0854.

Readers seeking assistance should be as specific as possible about what they need, including detailed descriptions, photos, sketches, etc., of any parts, along with the quantity needed. Providing serial numbers, year of purchase, etc., will help in pinpointing the correct parts for Rogers drums. When writing to any of the above-listed sources, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a reply.

Q. Do you know of anywhere that I could possibly locate and obtain Pink Floyd drum transcriptions from albums such as *Dark Side Of The Moon*, *Wish You Were Here*, *The Wall*, etc.? Pink Floyd is my favorite band, and I've been hunting all over New York City to find sheet music, to no avail.

J.R.

New York, NY

A. There are no commercially available transcriptions that we are aware of. You might watch for advertisements in the Drum Market classified section of MD for private individuals who offer transcriptions for sale. It may be possible to commission such material. Another alternative would be to contact the editors of *The Amazing Pudding*, which is an all-Pink Floyd magazine published in England. They may be able to offer some assistance. You may reach them c/o Andy Mabbett, 67 Cramlington Road, Great Barr, Birmingham B42 2EE, England.

A third alternative would be to attempt the transcribing operation yourself. If you can read transcribed drum music, you can most likely write it as well. Use the difficulty you've found in obtaining Pink Floyd transcriptions as motivation to make a few on your own. Since you are a big fan, you probably already know the music quite well, which is a tremendous help when attempting transcriptions. Who knows, there may be some other Pink Floyd fans out there that you could offer your transcriptions to!

Q. I own a Pearl Export kit with a 16 x 22 bass drum. I would like to purchase another bass drum, but in the MD Equipment Annual of July, 1986, it states that Export drums can only be ordered or purchased in kit form. Does this mean that I could not buy another bass drum and could never add on to my Export kit?

M.R.

Katy, TX

A. As stated in the notes on page 51 of the Equipment Annual, add-on power tom kits (8x8, 8x10, and floor stand) are available for Export kits. Pearl informs us that 14x22 and 16x22 bass drums are now also available as component items.

Q. I've been hearing about a new Pro-Mark drumstick called Maxxum. I've tried several dealers and haven't been able to locate this product. Can you help?

T.H.

Houston, TX

A. The new Pro-Mark Maxxum line was officially introduced to the market at the January '87 NAMM show. It should be available through most Pro-Mark dealers by this time.

The sticks themselves come in three sizes, all designed for heavy-duty use. The Model 400 is 15 3/4" long, the Model 412 is 16 1/4" long, and the Model 419 is 16 1/2" long. All models are 5/8" in diameter, and all are made of American hickory with wood tips only. For further details, contact Pro-Mark at 10706 Craighead Drive, Houston, TX 77025.

Q. I am a 20-year-old drummer attending a local college. I have wanted to attend Berklee, in Boston, but have lacked the finances. Therefore, I am interested in applying for the Roberto Petaccia Memorial Scholarship to Berklee offered by MD. How do I go about it?

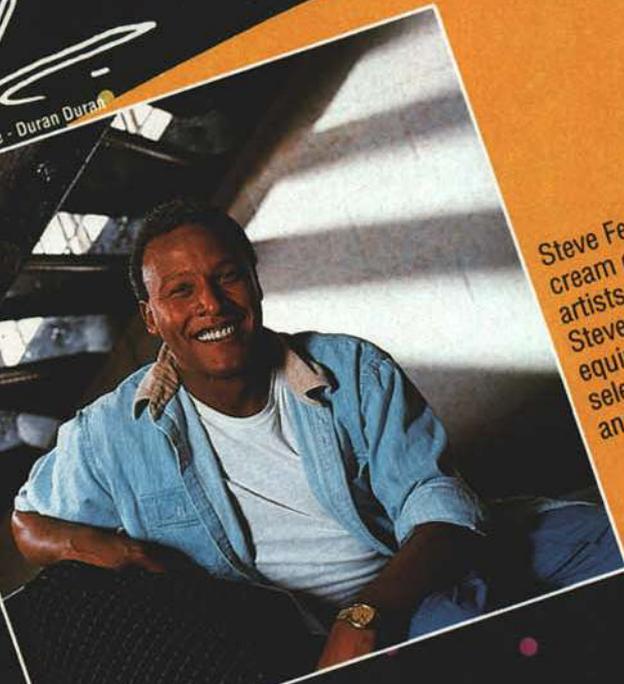
E.B.

York, PA

A. The Roberto Petaccia Memorial Scholarship is administered by the financial aid department at Berklee. Modern Drummer's editors select the honoree from among candidates submitted by a nominating committee at Berklee. For detailed information on the application procedure, you should contact Berklee's financial aid office at 1140 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02215.

A CUT ABOVE...

Steve Ferrone
Steve Ferrone - Duran Duran

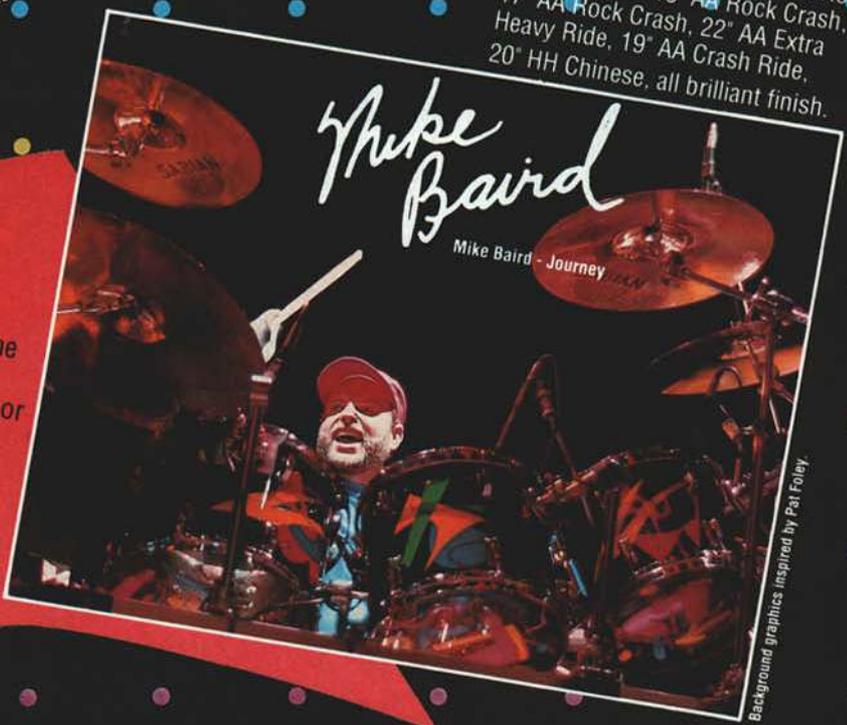


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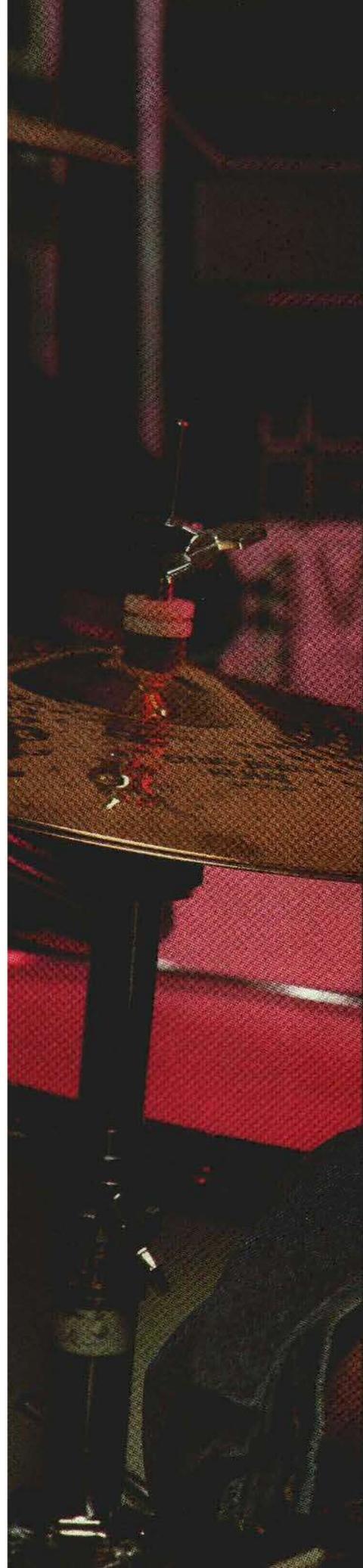
John

by Rick Mattingly

*I*t is November 1985. Steve Winwood's new album, *Back In The High Life*, is almost finished. Inside Unique recording studios in Manhattan, producer Russ Titelman is sitting behind the board, and John "J.R." Robinson is behind his drumset in the middle of the studio. Titelman tells the engineer to roll the tape, an introductory click is heard, and the tune "Split Decision" comes through the speakers in the control room. The track was originally put together with a drum machine, but that part has been turned off, and the drums I'm hearing now are being played live by J.R. Steve Winwood strolls into the control room midway through the take, listens for a moment, and then nods approvingly at Titelman.

Robinson

Photo by Leslie Burke





When the take is completed, Titelman and Winwood listen to a couple of spots, and then Titelman tells Robinson, "We'll keep that, but let's do another one." The tune comes over the speakers again, and Robinson virtually reproduces what he did before—fills and all. But when the take is finished, everyone is nodding at everyone else and agreeing that this is the one to use.

At this point, Winwood suggests that perhaps the bass drum could play a more steady pattern in a certain section. Titelman conveys that to J.R., and the engineer cues up the spot on the tape so that they can try it once. Robinson plays a couple of bars, and it is agreed that the new part is better. While the engineer prepares the tape for a punch-in, Titelman asks Robinson if he wants to practice the section first, but Robinson replies, "Nah, let's go for it." The tape starts up a couple of bars before the section that they need to punch in, and J.R. plays along, again duplicating what he did before, but with the altered bass drum part. They go a few bars past the section and stop the tape. Everyone seems happy except Titelman, who asks the engineer to run the tape back; he thought he heard a glitch at the end of the punch-in. No one else heard it, but everybody takes Titelman's word for it, so they run the tape back and J.R. plays the section again. This time, Titelman is happy. He and Winwood want to listen to the whole song now, from the top. Robinson comes into the control room to listen, but when he sees me sitting there, he invites me into the studio to check out a couple of snare drums that he brought from L.A. While we're looking at the drums, Titelman's voice comes over the speaker, "Okay, John. We've got it." The whole thing took about half an hour.

By the following August, Back In The High Life is climbing the charts, and the first single from the album, "Higher Love," has given Winwood his first-ever number-one hit. Robinson, meanwhile, is on the road with John Fogerty, whose new album, Eye Of The Zombie, is about to be released. For Robinson, it's an opportunity to do some live playing instead of the studio work that's been his bread and butter for the last few years. But as J.R. is quick to point out, "I always was a live player, and then I got totally turned around in 1978 by Rufus and Quincy Jones." It was Rufus who discovered J.R. playing in a show band. He invited Robinson to play on the Rufus/

Chaka Khan album Masterjam, which was produced by Quincy Jones, and that was the start of J.R.'s studio career. A list of the people he has recorded with since then could take up most of this article, but highlights include the Pointer Sisters, Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie, and the "We Are The World" session. Often, J.R. will appear on only one or two tracks of an album, but those tracks will end up being the hit singles.

At a Fogerty soundcheck, I listen to J.R. do live what he is called upon to do in the studio: provide basic, take-

care-of-business drumming that is short on flash but long on feel. As a colleague once remarked, "J.R. knows how to make records." He can quickly come up with just the right groove for a tune, and then he'll make that groove feel good, whether it's the first take or the 50th.

RM: You seem to be known for your memory. People have often told me stories about how you'll listen to something a couple of times and then be ready to go for a take. Often, you'll

get it on the first pass, but if it has to be done again for whatever reason, you will be able to duplicate exactly what you played the first time.

JR: To me, that's a big key to any contemporary drummer today: You have to have a retention span. You have to be able to hear a phrase once and memorize it. If you're fortunate enough to be given a chart to read, then you can concentrate more on some of the other things that are important. But if you want to be one of those drummers who does a jingle at 10:00, a record date in the afternoon, and then a band thing at night, you've got to have that ability. And it's not just me; all of the good session players in L.A. can hear something once, look at the chart, interpret it, and play it as a unit without even talking about it. The first take will have the best feeling of all the takes.

A lot of people don't understand how we do that, and sometimes I don't understand it myself, because it just comes out. I think it's the intensity, but it's also something that comes from experience—doing it and doing it and doing it. Once you've done it enough, you know what to look for. Of course, now and then something will surprise you, and that's when you have to do another take or an intercut.

RM: Obviously, your ability to remember what you just played is especially important when you're just going to patch a few notes in. Is this a skill that you worked to develop?

JR: Not really. When I was learning piano as a kid, I could always learn melodies quickly. I didn't have to keep practicing it. I was like that in music, science, and mathematics. I don't know why, but I was very fortunate in that respect.

RM: What is the relationship between what I'll call short-term memory and long-term memory? In other words, six months from now, will you be able

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Photo by Leslie Burke

to remember what you played on a song today?

JR: Probably. That happens with Quincy [Jones]. Every four years or so, he gets the notion to put his big band back together. I find that I can always remember how I interpreted the charts before. So if I were to play with someone whose record I did—let's say I were to sit in with Winwood somewhere. I've never heard his live show, but I'll bet that I could nail "Higher Love" and we would be burning, just from what I remember from doing the record. So I think that the long-term memory is also there.

RM: To me, that says that what you are playing isn't an accident. You're not just coming up with random patterns that happen to fit; rather, you are hearing something in each piece of music that triggers a specific response.

JR: Even when I'm just listening to something that I'm not playing on, I'll automatically be beating on my legs or tapping on the table. Usually it will be different than what the drummer on the record played, but that's the magic—the individual style. I

mean, listen to something like Peter Gabriel's "Sledgehammer"; the drumming on that is great. I couldn't have said it better. A lot of times, you hear your peers play and you say, "Man, that was exactly right."

RM: On situations where you are not given a chart, do you ever make one for yourself?

JR: It depends on how difficult the song is. On R&B songs, for example, most artists won't have a chart. Lionel [Richie] never has charts. That situation can sometimes be tedious, because even if the first take was right, Lionel or James Anthony Carmichael may hear something that sounds unsettled to them, and you spend another hour and a half getting the track. I use the reasoning that they're so used to hearing the Linn—they're so used to sterility—that when they hear some human deviation they freak out. I've seen that happen hundreds of times in the studio. I'll add a moving hi-hat part, but they're so used to the machines that it takes them a while to get used to it. If they're the right producers, they'll say, "Yeah, I really like what you did, because it didn't feel right with what I had." But then you get the producers who say, "Can you play it like the machine?" I say, "No."

Getting back to charts, I like to have a lead sheet or a piano part rather than a drum part. With a piano part, you see the whole song in front of you, and then it's much easier to interpret on drums. You can see the motion of the melody. How many charts have you seen where the drum part is just quarter notes? You don't know where to go. So I really prefer reading a piano part. That makes it easier.

RM: That helps you put your playing in context. I think the problem that a lot of drummers have with drum charts is that they concentrate too much on the chart itself, instead of listening to what is actually being played by the other musicians.

JR: Yeah, it's hard to get that across. I've been in some teaching situations where that subject came up. All I can say is that it takes a lot of experience doing the same thing over and over until you really understand the formula. It's not that difficult once you understand it.

RM: It took me a while to understand the difference between merely *hearing* something and really *listening*.

JR: It's funny. I've been in situations with musicians who have picked up on a certain phrase or pattern while they're



sitting in the room with you, but then when they go out to play, they draw a blank. Why is that? In other words, the connection between what they've heard and what they're trying to get out isn't making it.

RM: Another thing on the subject of listening: How many times have you heard a club drummer who is playing exactly what was on the record, but it isn't working because the rest of the band is *not* playing exactly what was on the record?

JR: Yeah, you've got to change with your surroundings. That's very true. On this tour, we've stayed in a lot of hotels that had house bands, and we've gone down and listened to them. Sometimes it's not too good. But we were in Miami a couple of weeks ago, and we heard a club band that was actually very good. They were a cover band, and the drummer had a Simmons kit. He had everything nailed, but he was also changing things—doing things his way. If you're going to do those kinds of gigs, you have to do that. Every time I did a Top 40 gig, my rule of thumb was, "Change things, but make it right."

RM: You've got to find that balance between having freedom to change things and keeping the characteristics that make that song what it is.

JR: Exactly. It's something you can't teach. You can tell people, but they're not going to understand it until they've experienced it through their own playing.

RM: Let's talk about studio work. Years ago, the entire band would record together. Then multiple tracks came along, and instruments would be added one at a time, with drums often being the first instrument to be recorded. Now, with drum machines, the drummer is often the *last* musician to be added, as you were on the Steve Winwood album. You've been in all of those situations. Can you discuss the advantages and disadvantages of those different approaches?

JR: There are advantages to being the last person to go in. Let's take the Steve Winwood situation. Steve took a couple of years out of his life and wrote new material. Everything was composed using a drum machine, and I think Jimmy Bralower helped him with that. Then Russ Titelman, the producer, organized the events and helped define a concept for each song. At some point, they put my name on a list to come in, and patch in or completely overdub on X amount of songs. Originally, I think, I was supposed to do three or four, but I ended up doing five of them.

Anyway, they flew me to New York, I brought all of my stuff and set it up, and then I started listening to the songs. What was nice about recording that way was that, with the drum machine program that Steve and Bralower had done, it was easier for me to come in because the



Photo by Rick Mattingly

form was already clear-cut. The only exception was the tune "Higher Love," where we redesigned the whole intro. I used a little Latin rimshot technique, and I think it's one of the best drum intros I've ever played. I love it so much that I put it on my answering machine at home, [laughs] The tune spoke for itself, and all I did was reinterpret the drum machine part. We did a lot of hi-hat overdubbing, except for the tune "Split Decision," which I cut totally live with a lot of room sound. We used two different hi-hats on the tune "Higher Love." On some of the bass drum patterns, I had to match the synth bass exactly, so there was some punching in and out on that.

So to answer your question, the advantage of coming in at the end is that you can hear the complete song. Whereas if you come in earlier, and maybe there's no vocal because the singer doesn't know the song yet—which happens a lot—then you don't know exactly what you can do. If you play a fill in a certain spot, you might be stepping on the vocal, but if you don't play a fill, it might leave a hole.

RM: In a situation like the Winwood record, where you are replacing a part that was originally done on a drum machine, are you hearing the drum machine part while you are recording your drums?

JR: If there's a click track, I'll just want to hear the click. But sometimes they use the drum machine part as the click track, so in that case, I'll tell the engineer to turn down the bass drum and snare drum in my headphone mix, so that the only thing I'm hearing from the machine is the hi-hat. But eight out of ten times, I won't hear any machine at all.

If they've programmed percussion sounds on the machine that they want me to play along with—like claps, or cabassa, or something—then I'll leave them in my headphone mix, but I'll turn them down so that they're just audible. Then I'll go for a take, and I'll do my best to nail it the first time so

that it feels fresh. Sometimes, when I listen to the playback, maybe something doesn't feel right, and then it might be necessary for them to turn up one of the parts that I wasn't hearing. It could be something from the drum machine or it could be a guitar part that wasn't in the mix. That usually gives me the concept, and then I'll usually say, "Okay, since I didn't totally nail it, let's give it one more shot from the top." Nine times out of ten, I'll nail it somewhere between the second and fourth take.

At that point, maybe everything is fine, but the producer will say, "That felt great, and I don't want to touch it. But it would have been nice if you had played quarter notes on the bass drum in the bridge." I'll say,

"YOU SHOULD BE DOMINANT BECAUSE THAT'S A DRUMMER'S NATURE. YOU CAN'T BE PASSIVE AND DO WHAT I DO."

"You're right. Here are the options: We could do another complete pass, we could punch in the full kit at that point, or we could just punch in the bass drum part alone." The best way is usually to just punch in the bass drum part, because when you punch in with the full kit, it's hard to get back out without a glitch in the tape. So you have to be able to split your limbs—just go out, play with one limb, and make it fit.

RM: There are still people who would call that cheating.

JR: I don't consider that cheating, because you have all of these tools in the studio that enable you to make that

record correct. I've had drummers who couldn't do it put me down for piecing a song together, like "Ain't Nobody" by Rufus. I played the snare and the kick by themselves, then I overdubbed the hi-hat part, and then I overdubbed the toms. I did it because that was what the producer wanted. There was no leakage between the hi-hat and anything else, and we didn't have any vibration noise between the snare and the toms. I've done that a lot. I overdubbed all of the tom fills on "Higher Love." It's something you have to be able to do. I've done a lot of hi-hat overdubbing. A lot of times, they'll use the drum machine, but they'll bring me in just to replace the hi-hat part. Even though the snare and kick are extremely sterile, having a moving hi-hat part can give it some groove and make it feel more human.

RM: Do you ever find it difficult to isolate your limbs like that?

JR: I often find myself keeping time with my right hand. When you're just punching in backbeats, it's easy to be behind the time a little bit, and that's very noticeable. An overdubbed part that isn't in sync is some of the worst shit I've ever heard.

RM: How was the John Fogerty *Eye Of The Zombie* album done?

JR: That was the exact opposite of the Winwood situation. Let me give you the background. I had put a band together with Neil Stubenhaus, Marty Walsh, and Alan Pasqua. Then, Lenny Waronker—the president of Warner Bros.—called me and I told him about the band. We were doing dates. So Lenny said, "I've got a great singer for your band, man." I said, "Who is it?" He said, "John Fogerty." I said, "Come on, it can't be *John Fogerty*." But he said, "Yeah, yeah." So Neil and I went down and jammed with John at Leeds one night. We played tunes from *Centerfield* and did some blues stuff. So we decided to go in and do a record. John, like Steve Winwood, had been writing tunes for a year. He had about 14 tunes written.

We booked the Lighthouse studio in L.A. and went in about three weeks later. John wanted to rehearse for two weeks before we went in, but Neil and I said, "Let's not rehearse, man. Why don't we just go in and cut, and use the spontaneity." So that's what we did. John, Neil, and I cut live as a trio, and we were getting takes every day that we cut. That's really the most fun, because it makes you feel like a band. It's not overdubbing. The only overdubbing I did was one night about six months later, when I did some percussion stuff on five or six tunes. But that's the really pure way to make a record.

Another example of that is the Bob Seger record, *Like A Rock*. They had cut all of that stuff with another drummer, but they only ended up keeping two of the songs. I heard the tracks, and I could have just overdubbed new drum parts. But Bob said, "Hey, we're going to start all over again and do it." So we recut everything with a live band—no overdubbing.

RM: Haven't you also been in situations where you were asked to program a part rather than play it?

JR: Right; that's another way to do it. Here's an example: I recently did four tunes for Michael Jackson's new album. Michael has written about 25 new songs. Quincy gave me tapes of five of them, and I took them home—where I have my own studio—and programmed them, with my E-mu *SP-12*. That's what they wanted me to do. They've got a new 32-track digital Mitsubishi, a *Synclavier*, and the whole nine yards. So I went home and spent 12 hours a day programming four of the songs. I couldn't do the fifth song, because there weren't any vocals on it. Michael had this strange

drum part, and I didn't want to mess with it. I'll do that later.

I took a few liberties. One song was very funky, and I put this 32nd-note fill on it. When Quincy heard it, he stopped and looked up at me. I know he's going to take that fill off the record, but it's the best fill I've ever programmed. I'll have to remember it; as Quincy would say, "Save it for your own record." So anyway, I laid the drum part down, and now they'll piece it together from the beginning. I think that the next thing they added was Louis Johnson on bass. At some point, I'll go back. In fact, by the time this interview comes out, I will have probably played live on a lot of the tunes. I'm going to take all my stuff—my live setup as well as my Yamaha electronic system. With 32 tracks and Bruce Swedien engineering, I can probably do a full acoustic pattern, then do a full electronic pattern, and then they can use some of this and some of that.

RM: How do you feel about piecing records together that way?

JR: It's just a different school of making records. I don't necessarily believe in that way. I've been producing now for a little while, and I don't like to make records that way. I like to go in and make them raw, unless it's for a specific concept and I know that the drummer would prefer to come in at the end. On a lot of records that I do, I come in at the end, because they've got something great but it needs a little magic. I have to create a magical element that's going to take that record over the top.

RM: A lot of people feel that records have become a producer's medium rather than a musician's medium. How do you feel about that, having seen it from both sides?

JR: That's a good question. I'm starting to see a return to the old way of doing it—like Fogerty and Seger. I think that most of the L.A. players—and it's probably the same in New York—would rather go in and play raw. I prefer to do that as long as the tune is completed. But if the tune isn't totally written, then you get those vibes from each player, like, "If I make up my own melody, do I get part writer's royalty?" You shouldn't think that way, but anyway I see a trend back to the old days. It's a slow trend, though. It's kind of like saying, "Big bands are back." They never left, as far as I'm concerned. They just kind of got overshadowed by all of this other bullshit.

continued on page 48

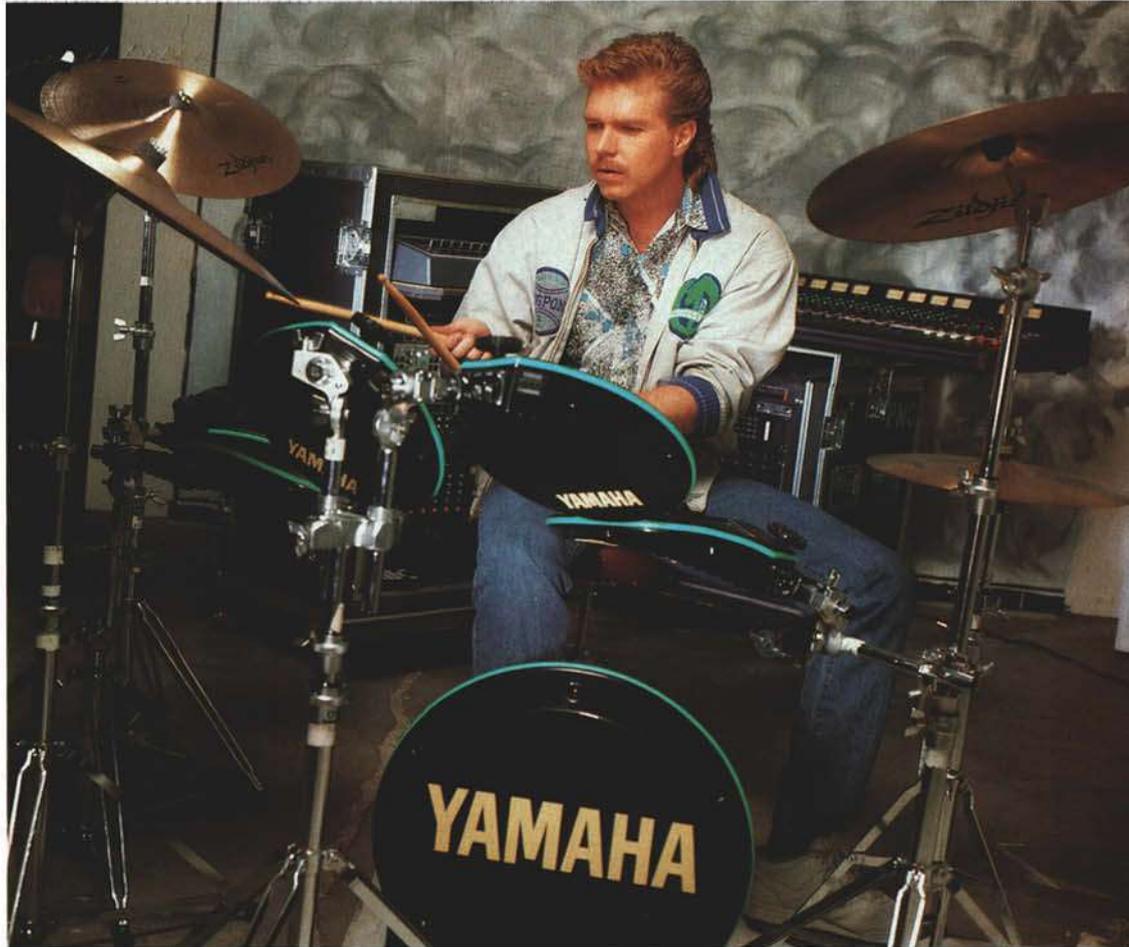


Photo by Leslie Burke

LARS

FROM the moment of their first independent release in 1982, Metallica had passion and potential to burn. With their third album, *Master Of Puppets* (Elektra), Metallica not only outdistanced the rest of the speed metal pack, but began to change heavy metal forever. Even those who prefer melodic vocals and boy/girl content to James Hetfield's martial barking and subjects of doom have to be impressed by the utter individuality and complexity of Metallica's rampaging rhythms, textures, and sensibilities. Metallica's creative breakthroughs in song structure—delicate acoustic passages unconventionally combined with tricky meters and galvanizing speed-of-light riffs—are as revolutionary as Led Zeppelin's were in their day. Their sheer power and youth (the "old man" of the band, guitarist Kirk Hammett, is 24) alone might make Metallica heroes of the studs-and-leather set. But their defiant, do-it-yourself business attitude (as well as their ripped jeans and T-shirt posture) owes more to punk than Zep, and their time changes and non-formulaic musical approach have more in common with jazz than old metal.

But perhaps the biggest difference between Metallica and most heavy bands is that what dominates their sound is neither lead guitar nor lead vocals, but rhythm guitar and drums. A Metallica show is one of the few concerts you see where a large segment of the audience is playing air drums. So perhaps it's no surprise to discover that Metallica was founded by drummer Lars Ulrich, who is as unique a character as Metallica is a band.

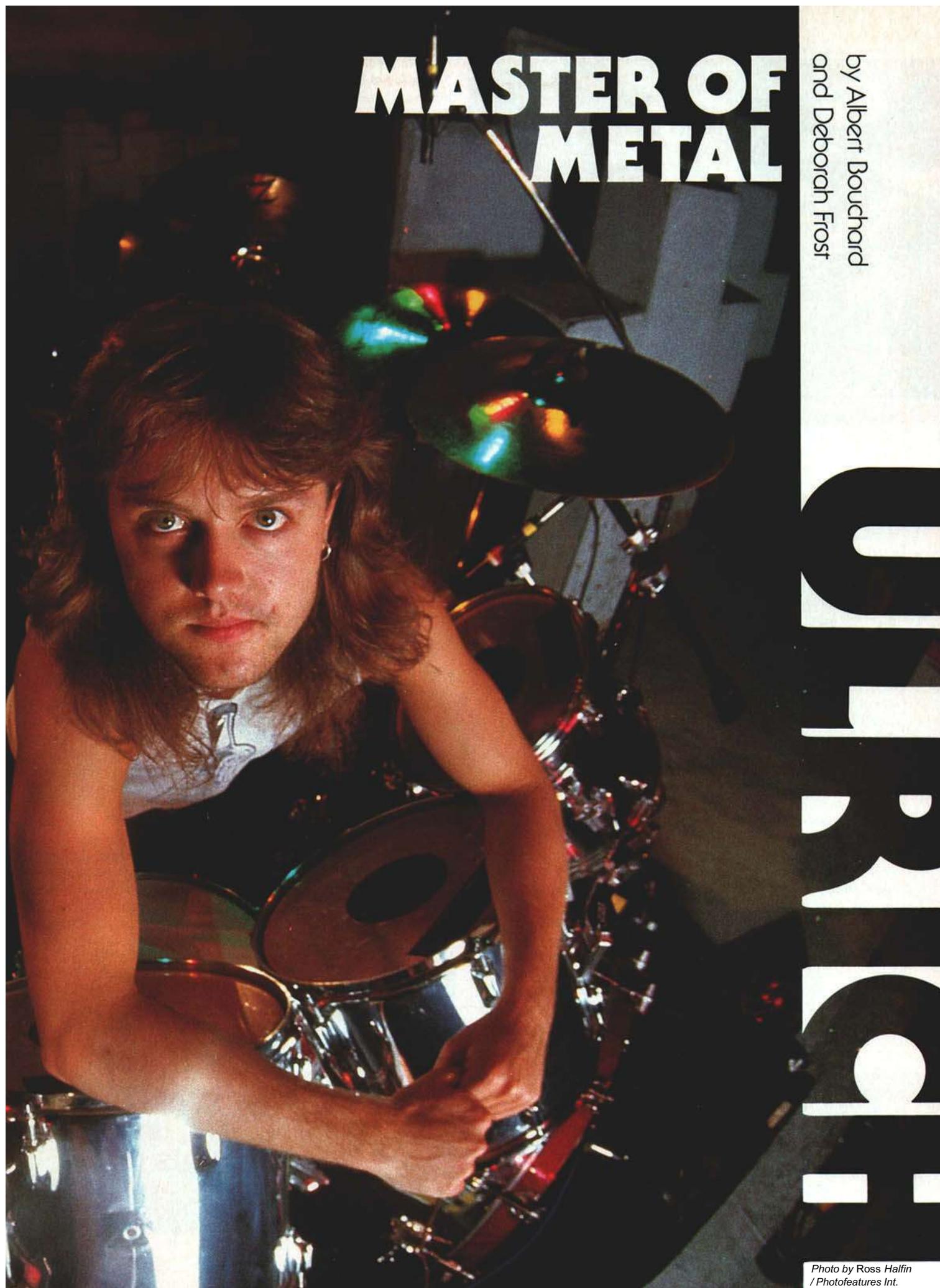


MASTER OF METAL

by Albert Bouchard
and Deborah Frost

OVER

Photo by Ross Halfin
/ Photofeatures Int.





Lars' father, Torbek Ulrich, was a tennis pro who hung out with jazz musicians to relax from the rigors of his sport. One of his friends, the great saxophonist Dexter Gordon, who lived in the Ulrichs' native Copenhagen for some time, is Lars' godfather. That in itself might have indicated a musical future, but Lars grew up thinking that, when he got to Madison Square Garden, there would be a net in the middle of it. He still hasn't quite escaped his tennis past. When Lars greeted us in the lobby of his New York hotel, he wore a rock 'n' roller's stubble, three earrings, a Metallica sweatshirt, sweatpants, and mismatched socks—one of which was decorated with little tennis rackets.

Unlike most rock stars, once Lars found out that we wanted to interview him, he made the phone calls and arrangements himself, although he has a staff and record company who are supposed to handle such details. Lars, who'd seen Blue Oyster Cult as a teenager in Copenhagen and San Diego, was as excited about meeting Albert as Albert, who considers Ulrich the most innovative drummer of his generation, was about meeting Lars. Later, we heard the Cult's *Cultosaurus Erectus* blasting from Metallica's Felt Forum dressing room before the band went on stage.

This interview began in the restaurant of Lars' hotel, where we were interrupted by a friend of Lars' announcing that "Charlie Watts is in the lobby, looking old," and the other diners were somewhat shocked when Lars and Albert pushed back their chairs to trade blistering licks on their knees and stamp out imaginary bass drum riffs on the floor. We continued on the band's tour bus, before and after Metallica's soundcheck and show at the Capitol Theater in New Jersey. Lars wanted to make sure we came to the Felt Forum show two nights later, too, where the band would have the full light system the Capitol couldn't accommodate. "I'm bragging about the lighting," he said, "only because I'm impressed by it."

Although, when we first met, Lars said that he still hadn't recovered from jet lag due to a nonstop flight from Tokyo and was fighting a cold, he was always the perfect host, constantly in motion, making sure that we had everything we needed—from ample time with his drum tech, Flemming Larsen, to crew dinner and souvenir T-shirts. At 23, he seemed remarkably in control of his life, and radiated intelligence and boundless enthusiasm. An elfin figure who defies the metal drummer-as-big-bruiser stereotype, he punctuated his conversation with his hands—making sweeping gestures in the air, socking a fist into his palm to emphasize a point. You could almost forget that this extraordinary young man had, only two months before, survived the horror of the band's tour bus crashing on an icy Scandinavian road, killing their bassist, Cliff Burton.

MD: Number one, how do you pronounce your last name?

LU: In English, I would say "Awlrick," but in Danish, it's a little sharper—"Ooolreek." I'm Danish. I didn't know if you knew

that. We used to travel in America with my dad, and "Uhlrick" is the way he had his name pronounced. He was traveling in something very similar to this.

MD: He was a professional tennis player.

LU: Yeah. There are so many similarities between the whole circus of heavy metal and the whole circus of tennis—the environment I grew up in. We have to smile to people, and there's always somebody we have to talk to—meet this guy, meet this guy. It's cool, but there are just so many similarities.

MD: So how did you start playing the drums?

LU: All through the '70s, when I was growing up, I was playing tennis as my main thing. There was not too much pressure from my dad to follow in his footsteps. It was just natural for me. My dad was very different in the white sport of tennis. He still, to this day, has longer hair than I do and a very long beard. He was like the hippie freak tennis player. In 1973, my dad and a couple of his hippie friends had tickets to see Deep Purple in Copenhagen. They had an extra ticket, so I was dragged along.

MD: How old were you?

LU: Nine. I was very impressed with the whole thing and the way Ritchie Blackmore was throwing his guitar around. The next day, I went out and bought my first record, Deep Purple's *Firehall*, which was the only one the record store had by Deep Purple. And since then, this heavy rock and metal, or whatever you want to call it, has been my escape from the discipline of tennis. Down in the basement, my friends and I were always pretending that we were the orchestra. We had a table football game, which was the key-boards, and tennis rackets were the bass and guitars. I had cardboard boxes with some of those sticks that you mix paint with as the drumkit. Finally, in about '77, I talked my grandmother into buying me a real drumkit. It was like one Premier tom, one Slingerland floor tom, and one Ludwig kick drum. I would just sit there and pretend I knew what I was doing, and hey, I'm Ian Paice.

MD: When you got your drums, did your friends have real guitars?

LU: No, no.

MD: So you never really had a band in Copenhagen?

LU: Never. I was getting seriously into tennis, so we decided that, in the best interest of my tennis future, we would relocate to Los Angeles in 1980. That was mistake number one for the tennis thing. In Denmark, I was someone. I was ranked in the top ten as a 16-year-old. But in L.A. in August 1980, I was absolutely nothing. I didn't mean anything on the block that I lived on, tenniswise. So at the same time as the tennis began to slowly fade out for me, the music that was going on in Europe, which I'd just gotten a taste of when I moved from Denmark, took over.

MD: When you listen to most people, you can say, "Oh, he copped from this or that," but it's hard to pinpoint your influences.

LU: I'm sneaky in that all my influences are unknown drummers. I had a lot of influences—a lot of very small British bands. In 1979, there was a whole upsurge of new young bands coming out of Britain. The biggest were Iron Maiden and Def Leppard. But there were hundreds of smaller bands that had records out on completely unknown labels. The punk attitudes that sprung out, you know, in '77 and '78, hit a lot of the heavy metal bands, and a lot of bands

"THERE COMES A POINT WHEN YOU JUST WANT TO FIT IN WITH THE MUSIC THAT'S GOING ON AROUND YOU, INSTEAD OF DOING ALL THIS SOLO STUFF."

found they could do it themselves—record demo tapes, record small independent singles, and do tours. I landed in L.A., where none of this was going on. And I was so far removed from it that it became an obsession to be very interested in what was going on in Britain and Europe. The new bands and new ways of doing it—Iron Maiden, Def Leppard, Motorhead, obviously, Saxon, and a lot of bands I don't know if you've heard of—Samson, Diamond Head, Trespass—they did it themselves. They didn't just sit around and wait for the majors to come to them. That whole attitude gave me the kick to do it myself.

MD: Did you have any sort of formal teaching?

LU: I got into that then in Los Angeles.

MD: Who did you go to?

LU: West Coast Drums. It's about five miles from where I used to live in Orange County. It was in a warehouse where they paid very little rent, so they could give really good deals, and the guys running it were so friendly. I had a vibe with this guy Joe. I took lessons from him for about a year. I really trusted him, and he worked at the store. The first kit he sold me was an old Camco kit, one of the last of the Camco line. The first thing I did as soon as I could sort of go one-two-three-four was form a band. I didn't want to sit there for years and go paradiddle, quadruple flam, and all this. I wanted to *play* and create music. I had all this energy I wanted to get out. And I felt the only way I could get it out was by playing with people who played really loud rhythm guitar.

MD: How did you find people to play with?

LU: Through *The Recycler* in L.A., a classified newspaper. I'd put ads in that said, "Drummer longing for other people into European bands like Tygers of Pan Tang, Diamond Head, Angelwitch." People would call up saying, "It all sounds great, but who are these bands?" I'd jam with some guy. The guy would live like 40 miles away, and it would only last a couple of weeks. I wanted to play all these songs that were favorites of mine from the new wave of British heavy metal bands. I would always sit and play air drums to them, and it was the greatest thrill to play real drums and real guitar with these songs. During the entire spring of 1981, I was just fooling around in L.A. There are a lot of flakes, as you know, in L.A. I became fairly annoyed and wanted to go back to Europe for a while, because the whole thing was really taking off in Europe. So I went back to England in July '81.

When I went to England, I hooked up with these guys in Diamond Head, because they were my favorite of those bands. They had an album in 1980 called *Lightning To The Nations*, which, to me, is the best of all those records from that period and the most influential in both the early sound of Metallica and the early influences on my drumming. They played a gig in London the day I arrived. I hung out at the gig and introduced myself as the kid who'd been writing letters from America. They instantly took me under their wings. I was invited to Birmingham, where they lived, and ended up spending the next six or seven weeks with them. It was those six or seven weeks that really influenced me to go back to America and get my own band together. So I came back late for school in November of 1981 and called James up, who I'd met in the spring, and said, "Listen, let's do it." And we did it.

MD: In the story by Xavier Russell in your concert program, it says that at first James wouldn't play with you, because you didn't have a decent drumkit and your cymbal would fly across the room every time you hit it.

LU: They put that in the program because it was funny. By the time I called him up again after my stint in Europe, I had my Camco kit and he was ready. We got together and basically formed Metallica. All this time, I was still taking lessons. We had the first complete lineup of the band in February '82. We did our first gigs in March '82.

MD: This was the band with Dave Mustaine?

LU: This was Dave Mustaine on lead guitar and James Hetfield on vocals. James could play guitar great, but in the band situation that he wanted to be in, he wanted to be a singer. So for the first six months of Metallica, he was just the lead singer. We had Dave Mustaine on lead guitar and James' housemate on bass. We were

continued on page 60



Lars Ulrich's Equipment

Flemming Larsen, Ulrich's fellow Dane and an accomplished drummer in his own right, came to tune the drums for the recording of *Master Of Puppets*, and stayed on to tour as Lars' drum tech. He graciously filled us in on Lars' setup and equipment needs, as well as inviting Albert on stage during the last few songs of the Felt Forum set. There, Albert took note of the extra pair of dry shoes and socks behind Lars' drums, as well as a bathrobe, which Lars, like the other members of the band, wears as he's led off stage. Lars sweats so much that steam rises from his soaked drum throne when he gets up.

Lars uses Regal Tip 5B sticks and doesn't wear gloves. His drums are the Tama Superstar series. The 24" bass drums are tuned exactly the same (although a small stuffed monkey sits on the front of the left one). His Tama power toms are 12", 13", 14", and 15". There are two 18" floor toms. He keeps his prized Ludwig Black Beauty snare off the road and tours with Tama 6 1/2" chrome snares. Other than extra snares, "we haven't got room for spare drums," says Flemming. "We have two kits, though—an American kit and a European kit. And we can always call Tama and have something sent out." According to Flemming, Lars "takes the same pedals and tom holders everywhere we go. He's very worried if he changes to new tom holders." Lars uses Tama King Beat pedals, Tama stands, and Tama hi-hats with a DW clutch, which he feels is somewhat more durable. "The design of the hardware is terrific—the best I've ever seen," says Flemming. "Everything holds up, but the finish is coming off. They're getting rusty, because Lars sweats a lot and spits a lot. I can't wipe everything off after the show—go in all the little corners." Flemming carries three or four spare stands, two spare pedals, and as many sticks and heads as possible.

Lars' heads are Remo transparent *Ambassadors*. The snare head is coated with a black dot underneath to give it more strength, "because sometimes he uses a head for each gig, and we can avoid that with the use of the black dots." Cymbals are the Zildjian *Platinum* series, which, Flemming acknowledges, is "very nice for me. They're very easy to polish."

He uses an 18" China Boy low, 16" medium thin, a 19" medium; (unless they're all broken—which happened on this tour, in which case he uses an 18"), an 18" medium thin, 16" medium, 17" medium thin, 20" China Boy low, and 20" Rock ride. He uses Z series *Dyno Beat* hi-hats.

Mick Hughes, Metallica's sound mixer, mikes the kick drums with AKG RE20's; toms: Sennheiser 421 S; snare: Shure SM-57 (top), AKG 224 (bottom); cymbals: AKG 460. Noise gates are DBX 904 sharp attack, short hold. For ambience, he uses the Lexicon PCM60 and the Yamaha REV 7.

Photo by Jaeger Kotos



Ri

MOVING TO

by Robyn Flans

Ricky Lawson

It was a hectic time for Ricky Lawson when we finally got together at the beginning of the year. He was only home for a brief stay before going back out with Lionel Richie, and he was trying to spend as much time as possible with his family. He was also grappling with career choices. The Yellowjackets were demanding his full attention and so was Lionel Richie. It was a crossroads for Lawson, who had been in the Yellowjackets since the band's inception in 1982. Not only had he been a founding member of the band, but he had once told me that the group was his baby.

But as Ricky explained, he has always had an uncanny sense about what job to go with, from Roy Ayers, to the Brothers Johnson, to Flora & Airta, to Stevie Wonder, to Al Jarreau, to the Yellowjackets. Now, Ricky had a feeling it was time to be moving on.

Working with Lionel Richie will unquestionably bring Ricky closer to his ultimate dreams and goals. It will afford him the time and financial means to really pursue becoming a full-time producer. No doubt, his recording experience with such artists as the Emotions, George Duke, Jennifer Holliday, Maurice White, Anita Baker, and, of course, the Michael Jackson and Paul McCartney hit "Say, Say, Say," will have served to help make that wish a reality, not to mention his writing abilities, as particularly noticeable with the Yellowjackets. All that, plus Ricky's ability to get along with people, will have helped create the total musician/producer/writer that Lawson aspires to be.

RL: I just got a new computer, and it's a powerful little unit. It's got 240 million banks of memory that you can store.

RF: What do you need that for?

RL: I can use it to sequence my musical instruments, like my DX7. I have an E-mu SP-12 drum machine that I can sync up to this thing and do all my composing on. I can turn it into a 24-track recorder. All I need is a board to EQ the different instruments. I can do all my composition and then transfer it to tape, or I can go straight from the computer to the mixing process. Therefore, it gives me something real clear. When you transfer it from there to tape, it's like making a digital recording, because all the instruments you're recording are digital instruments.

RF: Do you mostly write on keyboards?

RL: I go back and forth. I just started playing bass a little over a year ago. As a matter of fact, I wrote the tune "And You Know That," which is on the Yellowjackets *Shades* album, on bass right there at that little Yamaha MT-44D four-track. I can have my own little studio here where, in essence, I'm the producer, the engineer, the maintenance man, the musician, and the building itself. Then I have my tape deck and two drum machines over there.

RF: There are no acoustic drums set up here.

RL: I usually have those set up in the living room, and I rehearse right here. I have my own piano, my own bass amp, and my own bass, so the guys literally just have to show up.

RF: Are you talking about Yellowjackets rehearsals?

RL: Those and others. Bobby Lyle, Nathan East, and I did a couple of jazz concerts at colleges in San Diego last summer, and we rehearsed right in the living room.

RF: When you have those drums set up,

WARDS GOALS

what do you do with them?

RL: I'll play just for the sake of playing every day. If you're going to be a writer, you should write every day. I try to practice every day, and while I don't get to every day, I'm always touching music one way or another. You can physically practice, and you can mentally practice. When I say mentally, I mean that you listen to tapes and records, and your mind becomes like a tape. All of a sudden, you go to your instrument, whatever it may be, and you can play things where you say, "Dang, that was that thing I heard today." Then it actually becomes a part of you. That's how a lot of people come up with their styles.

RF: Where do you think your style comes from?

RL: I have an uncle who played drums in the local bars, and I talked him into letting me borrow his instrument. He would play Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. I'd pick up his drums Monday evening and play Monday through Thursday.

RF: What made you want to do that?

RL: I was basically a pretty shy guy, and there was this girl I liked. I just couldn't figure out a way to talk to her, and once I did, I couldn't keep a successful conversation going. Then I got some neighborhood guys together, because there was going to be a talent show at school. We got in the show, they gave me a little solo, and the girls went nuts. The girl I liked went crazy, too, so I found out that, by playing the instrument, people would come to me. It gave me an outlet to be popular.

RF: When did you start working?

RL: Through word of mouth, I got a chance to play with a good local band called the Ebony Set when I was 16. The bass player was really good. They needed a drummer, and I was a nice guy: I didn't smoke, I didn't drink, I had a nice instrument, I was easy to get along with, and I wanted to work. A lot of the guys didn't really want to work—I mean, *really* work. I would go home, study those songs, learn

all those licks, and have it down pat by rehearsal.

RF: You weren't still borrowing your uncle's set, were you?

RL: I borrowed it until he wouldn't lend it to me anymore. Then I got another uncle to cosign for my first set of drums—a Slingerland set. I was into the way Buddy Rich looked. I also had an uncle, named Paul Riser, who worked for Motown. He did some really neat stuff while he was there. He arranged "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," "My Cherie Amour," "Papa Was A Rolling Stone," "Car Wash," "Which Way Is Up," and "Cloud Nine." He wrote that tune "What Becomes Of A Broken Heart" by Jimmy Ruffin. He still lives in Detroit, and I used to hang out with him a little bit. He was really inspirational in regard to learning the trade correctly and in learning to be the best you can be. I owe a lot of my success to him, my mother, and my aunt Joanne. These three people really helped keep me on the right track—not getting involved with drugs.

RF: Why didn't you?

RL: It never turned me on. For one thing, it smelled bad. But for another thing, I was not going to throw away that little bit of money I was getting. You actually would be better off smoking the money than smoking the dope. I would see people who were doing it, and they would look so bad to me.

RF: You haven't felt that some people look badly upon you for *not* doing it?

RL: I always keep myself in situations where I don't have to deal with that. Usually, the people around me are on that same wavelength. And if there are people who do it, they have enough consideration to do it in the privacy of their own little thing. It's certainly always available. At every gig, there's someone inviting me to go home and do whatever, but I don't go. They understand. I've never had to deal with peer pressure. I always knew what I could do, and I knew that drugs were a hurdle I didn't really need to have to jump over. Then the people you work for appreciate that, because at one time, it was very unusual to find a musician who didn't smoke or drink something.

RF: While you were getting into drums more, did you have a way of actually learning how to play them?

RL: I'm self-taught. I listened to records. In his *Mark III* car, my uncle had an 8-track of "Walking In Space" by Quincy Jones that I loved. The Ebony Set would play "Red Clay," which was a big hit for Freddie Hubbard. We had a *Shaft* medley, two Sly Stone medleys, and we were playing some really hip stuff. I had to listen to everything because I would wind up play-

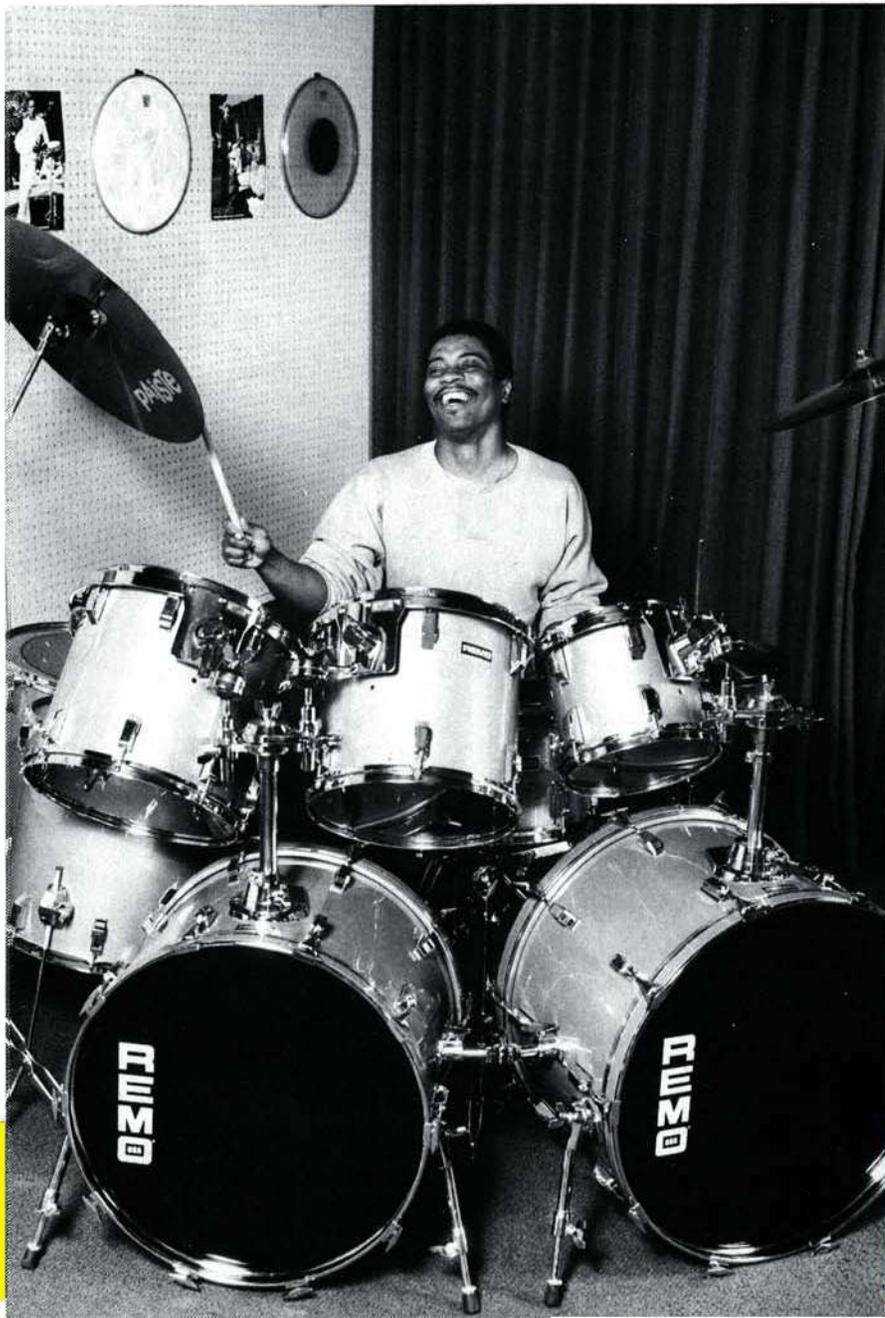
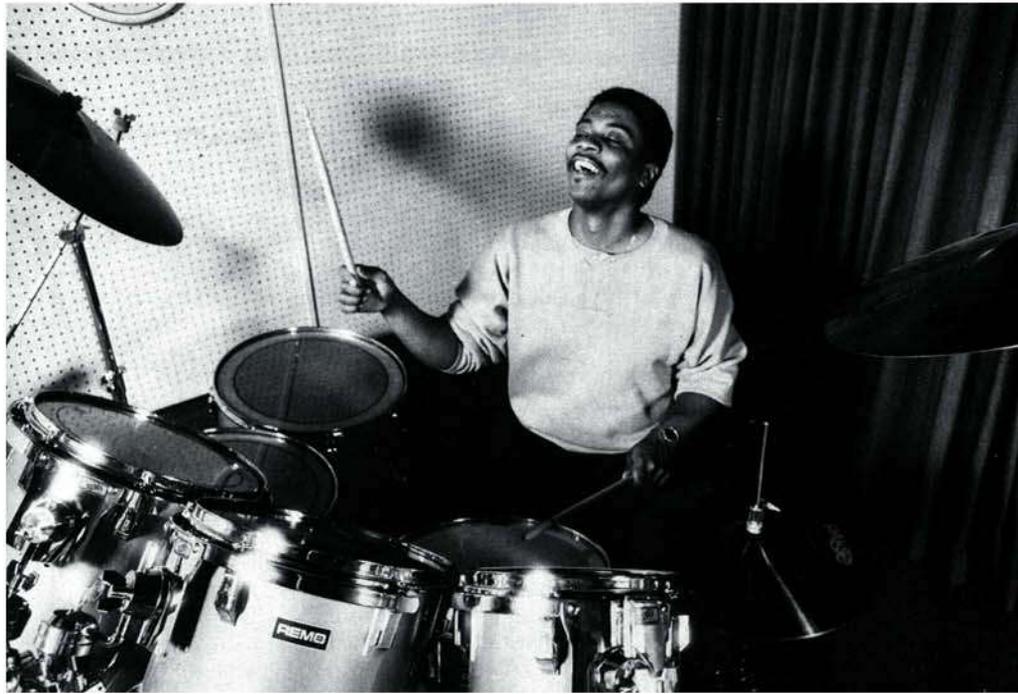


Photo by Jaeger Kofas

Photo by Jaeger Kotos



ing it. Mainly, I listened to Quincy Jones, Grady Tate, Bernard Purdie, and James Brown. Then Billy Cobham showed up, and I just got sick. Then the guys turned me on to "Four And More" by Miles Davis with Tony Williams. I would go home and imitate the record, so when I did the gig, I would just play it like the record. We played enough of it so that I could at least get the concept. Once you have the concept, you know how to glue it together.

RF: You can imitate people, but how do you end up with Ricky Lawson?

RL: It's a conglomeration of all my influences and what I feel on top of all of that. I think it's more of a straight-from-the-heart kind of feel, because that's how I learned to play. When I worked with the Brothers Johnson, I had to learn Harvey Mason's licks. You take a little bit of this and a little bit of that, and you glue it all together. All of a sudden, people are saying, "He sounds like . . . , then again, he sound like . . . ," because I've been able to play everything pretty much like the drummers who play it for a living. I can play enough bebop to sound like a bebop cat. I can play just enough Latin to sound like a Latin cat. I can play just enough funk to sound like Parliament Funkadelic. I can play just enough fusion to sound like a fusion cat. Therefore, I don't get caught up having to play one kind of gig.

RF: Where did you learn to play bebop?

RL: Just hanging. They used to have a situation happening in Detroit called Metro Arts, which was sponsored by the city. All you had to do was show up, and you could play a Fender bass, Slingerland drums, or a Fender/Rhodes piano, and it was free. So the older cats would be playing bebop tunes, and I'd watch them every day. Then I'd go home and imitate them. I'd learn a song, and they'd say, "Hey, do you want to sit in? What songs do you know?" I'd say, "I know that one." I'd play it, and then I'd remember what I did wrong and what I did right, so I'd know how to do it better the next time. It was a lot of trial and error, but if you don't remember what you did, you don't know what you're doing right and what you're doing wrong. I'd tape myself as well. I'd do a lot of homework. Sometimes the guys would think I had an incredible ear, but I'd be home studying. One thing I learned fairly early was that a drummer's job is to play time first. If you don't play time first, then you're not doing your gig.

RF: How did you work on time?

RL: Playing records. They're pretty consistent. So I'd play along, and then when I got on the gig, if I found myself rushing, the other musicians would always let me know. So that was one thing I always worked on. A lot of that has been part of

my style: being aware of what I'm doing, and playing straight from the heart, because a lot of sessions that I do don't have charts. I have to write my own charts.

RF: You taught yourself how to read?

RL: Yes. You see a phrase, and the next session you do, you see that same phrase, so you remember it. Early in my musical career, I was around older musicians, so they helped pull me along a lot quicker than I would have been if I were playing with people my own age. But the older players knew what was happening: "Ricky, when you get to this part, you've got to play a little more open, so you go to the ride cymbal. On this part, you play cross stick," etc. And you just remember that stuff. It really helped pull me through early in my musical career, because 16 is kind of late to be starting to play an instrument.

RF: It's not usual to meet a drummer who is self-taught in jazz and fusion, and who can play odd times. That's quite an accomplishment.

RL: Working locally in Detroit, I knew that if I could play Top 40, I could work with this band, but if I could play jazz, too, I could work with this band *and that* band. And if I could play country & western, I could play with three bands, so instead of making \$25 a week, I could make \$75 a week. Then I noticed that it made me a better musician, concept-wise, because I would take jazz and interject it into funk, or take Latin and interject it into funk, or vice versa. Like in Earth, Wind & Fire, a lot of the rhythms they use are Latin rhythms, but they're playing it in an R&B,

pop, and funk situation. Playing jazz over rock 'n' roll, you have to be sensitive, and that's hard for a lot of people. They don't understand the concept of when it's quiet. You can come off just as strong playing quiet as you can playing loud. Then you get into dynamics and things like that, which a lot of people aren't aware of. It takes different kinds of technique to play different kinds of music. It takes another kind of technique to play jazz over funk, rock, R&B, or country & western, and another kind of concept mentally. So you've got to be able to put this hat on, and then go over there and put that hat on, and cover all the ground. Playing R&B and the funk thing, everything is on the downbeat, whereas when you're playing jazz, most of the stuff is on the up, anticipated beat. You can play a lot more notes within a smaller time frame. For instance, there may be four beats in a bar, and in funk, you play just the four beats. In jazz, you can play 16, 17, or 20 notes in that one bar. You've got to be able to do it all, though. Then you won't corral yourself into one thing. Then you're a musician, which is what I am. Actually, I want to be a producer.

RF: That's what you want to do now?

RL: Yes. I just produced a tune for a group called Fatt Burger from San Diego. It's called "Good News," and I produced it up at George Duke's house. I'll tell you, if there ever has been a great person in the music business, it's George Duke. He cares about people first. Maurice White is another person. They've done very well for themselves financially, and they don't have to worry about too much of anything, yet

continued on page 76

**"YOU CAN COME OFF JUST AS STRONG PLAYING QUIET
AS YOU CAN PLAYING LOUD."**

A couple of years ago, a musician friend of mine told me that he would love to find a place where musicians could meet, trade tips, and jam together without feeling competitive. He hasn't found that ideal situation yet, but I think that I have. An historic building in Hollywood offers just such an outlet, but in a little more formalized setting called a school—Percussion Institute of Technology (P.I.T.) to be exact.

The school, part of Musician's Institute (M.I.), which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary, offers a wide variety of classes and services. The students have the advantage of having their studies built around their needs, goals, and abilities.

Musician's Institute buzzes with the excitement and nonstop energy of young, dedicated musicians. The walls reverberate with the sounds of drummers bashing away in individual labs, or playing with guitarists and bass players. The musicians gather in small groups to discuss lessons, artists, their own bands, and new ideas and concepts. One fellow had saved for four years to come to this school all the way from Switzerland.

Pat Hicks founded M.I. in 1977 with guitarist/educator Howard Roberts. The guitar school opened first, followed by the bass school in 1978. Finally, in September of 1980, the drum school came into being. "We're an industrial school in close harmony and communication with the music industry," says Hicks. "It's important to us that our graduates go out of here with an awareness of the music industry and the business. There's a minimum of theory and paperwork, and a maximum of performance and workshops."

The instructors are all active, working professionals. Says Hicks, "The music scene is constantly changing, and we've got to be on top of that. Joe Porcaro will come in, after having been at a studio date the day before, and tell everybody what he did. That means that the curriculum is constantly changing to keep up to date. The fundamentals of music never change, but styles change and the emphasis changes.

"That's one of the reasons why this school is so successful. We choose some of the finest players in the world as instructors. We're very fortunate that they're also excellent teachers.

"The number-one responsibility of

good teachers is to inspire the students to want to learn. If they do that, they've done their job, because people learn what they want to learn when they want to learn it. Until they're motivated to want to learn, they're not going to, no matter how good you think you are as a teacher. Good teachers motivate their students to want to learn. A person who does that is a very compassionate, caring person. That's the primary thing. The secondary thing is that an educator is somebody who really senses students' needs and addresses those needs."

M.I. operates differently than other music schools. It is only a one-year course, but there is so much packed into that one year that, as one student put it, "the paperwork alone that I'm getting is going to carry me on for four more years after I leave school."

Hicks explains his master-class principle. "What I call a master class is what Segovia used to do. He would bring one student up in front of the class and teach that student while the other students looked on. Therefore, everyone in the room got a music lesson.

"A slightly modified version of that is that more than one student gets up, and it's also a follow-up to the video lesson that the students studied prior to the class. It's a live workshop that they prepared for, first by seeing the video, and then by taking a private lesson and woodshedding for that master class."

Because the school is fully accredited, financial aid is available to the students. P.I.T. offers a summer session as well as its two full-year programs. A Musicians' Referral Service is available free for the students. This has proven to be an invaluable aid to both students and people in the industry looking for good players.

"That took off like wildfire," exclaims Hicks. "Michael George is in charge of that. He calls up contractors, A & R people, bandleaders, and cruise lines, and he gets gigs for our kids. That's how it started. Now, it's snowballing, and people are calling us. We've got two percussionists on the *Fame* show. One of our drummers is in the new Michael J. Fox movie. He has a speaking part, and he's a drummer in the movie. They called the service because we had sent them a guitar player on the last Michael J. Fox movie who

really cut it. So, the reputation is growing.

"Our students are good players. When they're sent out, they do the job. Kurt Bissquera is with Morris Day, and that's through the Musicians' Referral Service."

P.I.T. is open from 9:00 A.M. until 1:00 A.M. daily, so that students can study at the best time for them. The school offers computer-assisted learning with P.I.T.'s custom software. This system enables the students to learn at an increased rate. They have the freedom to go over any problem areas, and to do it at their own personal learning speed.

P.I.T.'s latest innovation is the use of video. With individual video labs, the students can study at their best biological learning time, whether it be day or night. "The tapes are especially produced for maximum retention," explains Hicks. "We have frequent breaks in the tape, so the students have a chance to absorb what they're seeing. There's a danger in video learning in that you can go into what is known as the alpha state. So about every two minutes, we snap them out of that kind of semi-hypnotic state with, 'I want you now to do the following thing,' or 'Let's take a five-minute break and come back.' This is vital to the system.

"The other thing is that video gives the teacher freedom to be more creative and to make it a more interesting subject. The student and school are assured that the curriculum is being taught properly through the video. It frees up the teachers in master-class situations to talk about the gig last night or do what they want to do as it relates to their particular subjects.

"A 30-minute dry lesson on video isn't going to inspire the kids. The video isn't a substitute for the live teacher. It is purely the dissemination of information in a very concise, clear, effective method. The students take that information into a classroom where they will perform it, discuss it, review it, and expand it.

"We take the students right from the first quarter and start them in what we call Music Video Training, so they learn how to play in front of a camera. Then, in the third and fourth quarters, they are allowed to do a music video demo in which they can form a band, rehearse it, and put a concert on for the student body. We will videotape it for them. This gives them something to shoot for. They go out of here with that

THE PERCUSSION OF TECHNOLOGY

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videotape in their hands—those who want to."

P.I.T. also offers creativity training, live performance workshops, and courses on the "business" of the music business. At the end of their fourth quarter, the students will write, arrange, and produce an album, as well. This, along with the videotape, can then be used as a demo to promote their band. Tom Tedesco takes students with him to recording sessions around town as part of his recording-session class. When the time comes to make that record, the students are ready.

The Live Performance Workshop is taught by Joe Brancato. He covers showmanship, stage presentation, mic' technique, interaction with the audience, and conquering stage fright. The school also has elective classes, which include odd meter, groove, big band, and jazz. Drum Tech focuses on the hi-tech aspects of the drum world. The course covers electronic drumkits, drum machines, sequencers, programming, sampling, triggering, time coding for video and television, plus the expanding world of MIDI.

"This school has a reputation of being on an extremely high level," says Hicks. "The staff here are monsters, but the students aren't and they don't have to be. We want them to know that, with all our sophistication and our high-level players, we understand that these kids are scuffling. We scuffled. We understand the kids who are coming in here who can't read or don't know jazz.

"Maybe you're a rocker and that's all you want to be. That's great. Come on in. This is not a jazz school by any stretch of the imagination. This is a music school. So whatever your aims or goals are, that's what we want to enhance and help you get.

"One thing kids walk out of this school with is a maturity about the music business. They know who they are and what their direction is. They know what the music business is all about. No more are they in fear or in awe of it, or intimidated by it. They come out of here ready for their careers.

"A real important thing, too, is this blend of so many different people with the instructors and the students coming from all over the world. There's a big exchange from one kid helping the other kid out. There's a tremendous amount of com-

radery here, and that's good.

"Knowledge kicks open the door to growth and creativity. You can't be creative if you don't have any tools. We give the tools through knowledge, technology, and creativity. We balance that here. We don't have a bunch of technicians coming out of here. We have artists coming out of this school."

Besides seminars from visiting faculty, a three-horn band workshop and a big band workshop, made up of some of L.A.'s top session players, are conducted once a week. Visiting musicians also give concerts and clinics at the school—many of which are videotaped so that the students can watch them long after the concert is over. The list of guest artists reads like a Who's Who of the music world. Included in this list are Simon Phillips, Alex Acuna, Chester Thompson, Tris Imboden, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Neil Peart, who took students on stage and conducted a seminar right on the Forum stage. Bill Bruford not only gives seminars, but he also offers a scholarship to the school. *Modern Drummer* is cosponsoring another scholarship with the school in honor of Shelly Manne. The support does not stop there, however. Many drum and cymbal companies have donated instruments and equipment to the school. They also send clinicians.

All this seems like a lot, and the program is intense, but students seem to love it, once they get used to the pace. Jim Alioto, a first-semester student, says, "Everybody's in tune with everyone else. Everybody's there for one thing—music." Tom Freeman, another student, agrees, "It tends to be a very supportive atmosphere. There's not a lot of competition, per se." The instructors give private counseling to their students, which includes everything from playing tips to business and personal relationships.

To keep up with the demand, the school will be moving to a new building that has much more space. The drum school will move into the building in the summer. The new site will also house singers' and writers' schools, as well as a music store and restaurant. The concert hall will seat approximately 1,000 people, which is a lot more than the current facility.

Probably the most exciting aspect of the new site is that it will house The World Institute of Percussion, which begins

classes in September. Emil Richards and Steve Houghton will be the directors of curriculum. Hicks explains, "It will be aimed at drummers who want to gain percussion skills, as well as experienced percussionists who want to fine tune their skills from the best in the world. The ideal thing would be to go through P.I.T., and then continue on and go through the percussion school for a second year."

Richards' idea is to create the ambience of the ethnic music the students are studying by inviting authentic ethnic musicians and stocking ethnic food in the restaurant. They are enlisting some of the top percussionists in the country for visiting or permanent faculty positions.

The current roster of teachers is very impressive. Ralph Humphrey and Joe Porcaro devised the curriculum. They are assisted by instructors who have proven track records in the music business. These include Steve Houghton, Chuck Flores, Efrain Toro, Casey Scheuerell, Ed Roscetti, and Steve Schaeffer.

I sat down with Ralph Humphrey, Joe Brancato, Steve Houghton, and Joe Porcaro to pick their brains about the school, their teaching philosophies, and what the school has to offer the fledgling drummer. SA: How do you decide who is admitted to P.I.T.?

Brancato: I do the auditions for P.I.T. If people are coordinated enough to want to play the instrument and have enough desire to come to us, we can do something for them. The curriculum is geared for the average, everyday, starting players who want to do it.

Porcaro: The audition is sight-reading. We see where their sight-reading level is at. We have them play some rudiments.

Brancato: It's more of an evaluation, rather than a pass/fail.

Humphrey: It's just to get profiles on the drummers—what they're capable of doing. Then, as Joe says, the desire element is really important.

Porcaro: Again, we put them in a level that we feel they will do well in.

SA: I understand that, if you come across students who aren't really ready for the school, you help them out by advising them and giving them material.

Brancato: Sure. We don't turn anyone away by just saying no. The desire's important.

INSTITUTE

by Susan Alexander



Howard Roberts (left) and Pat Hicks (right) founders of Musicians Institute

Humphrey: We offer a summer-school program that is preparatory for the regular school year. If we feel a person needs that, we'll say, "We want you to come to school, but first, if you spend some time in summer school and get a few things together, you'll be ready."

Brancato: It's not as in-depth as the regular P.I.T. curriculum, but once you go through it, there's no audition for our regular class. We feel that you're prepared enough by then. If we do our job, then you are.

Houghton: There's a preparatory guide that goes out that's pretty extensive. If you go through it, you'll certainly be ready for the school in terms of knowing note values, counting systems, and things that you need to know before you get here.

SA: Your teaching system is rather unique. It's not like going to a regular four-year school. It's very intense.

Brancato: Very intense. It's very vocational. It's always hands-on. Drummers are walking around with their sticks in their hot little hands, and we supply them with good instruments. Our kits are quality, and these instructors go to the factory to pick out cymbals. We do care.

SA: You start with a sight-reading class?

Humphrey: Yes. It's like daily calisthenics to get them into reading things more routinely—getting used to seeing certain figures go by. Using the overhead-projector system, they spend at least half an hour a day working on that kind of thing, as well as their regular core curriculum courses. Hopefully, that will accelerate their reading ability. A class called Contemporary Drumming is sort of a catch-all category, but it deals with modern approaches.

Porcaro: All the classes, even the Playing Techniques class, are developing form—developing your wrist, fingers, and forearms—and really getting into what I call the nuts-and-bolts of playing techniques—rudiments, Stickings, and so on. The Play-

ing Techniques class eventually goes off into jazz conception and applying all techniques to the drumset in all styles.

Humphrey: We require, at least in the beginning, that the students learn a couple of styles that maybe they're not used to, like jazz and Latin. We feel that it's important for them to have the experience of these things, even if they never use them again. Somehow it works into their playing. Whatever they learn, it all comes together as one thing.

Houghton: The students come here for different reasons, but I think they all leave more versatile. Most of them are much better readers when they leave. It gives us pleasure to think that we send out more versatile drummers.

Brancato: The school is a microcosm of the working scene. The students are prepared. They're going to go out and play tunes they don't want to play. They're going to play them at tempos that they don't want to play, and they may even be

working for leaders that they don't like, but that's real-life stuff. This is vocational, which means that you make your living at it. I take what they get in the classroom and apply it in the Live Performance Workshop. We even go so far as to have colored lights and fader switches, so we can dim the house lights. They have spotlights on them.

When Joe, Steve, and Ralph go out and work in the clubs, they let the students know it. The students catch these guys at it and see what it's really like. They see it applied.

Humphrey: We are all professionals, and on almost a daily basis, we're doing studio work or playing with bands live in clubs. That kind of thing is great for the students. They're not just seeing professors in classrooms who are wasting away and getting bored with their gigs.

Brancato: And talking about theory.

Houghton: The great thing about this city is that everything about the music business can be found here—the good and the bad. Our students can see every facet of the music business from the record scene, TV, film, jingles, breaking of new groups, jazz clubs, lounge acts, cruise ships, and Vegas-type acts. That's really unique, and no college can offer that.

Brancato: We have crossovers, too. There are P.I.T.ers that will attend G.I.T. [Guitar Institute] classes and vice versa. I've seen guitar players sitting in Joe's classes, for instance. The P.I.T. players will go into a harmony and theory class, or a style and analysis class just to see what's going on.

Humphrey: I sometimes find myself counseling bass players, because they saw one of my classes or one of my drummers told them about what was happening and showed them something. I try to help them



Neil Peart giving a clinic on stage at L. A.'s Forum



Instructor Joe Brancato in class.

out.

Houghton: There's a real affinity in the school between the bass and drum school. The bass players and drummers are really hanging out together and visiting a lot.

Brancato: We encourage that. That's the unique part of the rhythm section, anyway, in my opinion. If you can't get together with your bass player—you know the old ax: If it's swinging, you don't have to ask, and if you ask, it's not swinging.

SA: Tell me how the performance workshops work.

Brancato: You usually sign up for it either the day of the performance or a week ahead of time. In the three-horn band, Steve will go over the charts with the drummers. It's very structured and intense. By the time a band's finished playing, another band is waiting. We just switch bands and go right on with it.

In my class, I don't want drummers to be used as human metronomes. They must be contributing. I want them to be able to follow the form. They see a figure, they hear a rhythm, and they equate it. It's just simple things. It's knowing where to make the break. They have to keep their eyes on the charts for this, because they're going to go out into a club, a Top 40 band, or a reading big band and read down some parts.

Houghton: The Rock Performance class is a little different. They have lights and costumes, and they're into the production factor. They talk about the vocals and the motions on stage.

SA: You all still play professionally. How do you work out your schedules?

Porcaro: We have substitutes who know the curriculum cold, and we have a great backup system in our videos. The substitute teachers could come in an hour or two before class, and watch the videos. Between the video and us getting together with them, they get to know the curriculum

pretty well.

SA: Do you limit the size of your classes?

Houghton: We try to keep the classes down, especially for performance time in the classroom. We're trying to give more people a chance to play. I think the limit is 20 to 25.

SA: Teachers who teach privately sometimes have problems with their students wanting to imitate them instead of developing their own style. Do you run into that problem much?

Brancato: It's a minor form of idol worship at times. They'll just rave about one of us at some time or other, or all of us, hopefully. They'll ask me what I would recommend for solos. My theory on solos is: Play what you hear—what you feel. That's your moment. Their signature sound has to be something that I can identify. I'm satisfied with that.

Humphrey: I encourage a person to develop his or her own self, rather than to try to imitate, and my class is structured that way. This is especially true in my Con-

temporary Drumming class, where we get into areas of rhythm structure, the more involved odd rhythms, and things like this. The exercises that I give the students are built so that they have to draw upon their own creative efforts to come up with something. Every year, without fail, I hear students who come up with stuff that I've never heard before. Every student approaches it differently than the next person. It makes me feel great, because I know it's working and the student is really trying to come up with something that's his or hers. The students are developing themselves as personalities on the drumset—as musicians.

Houghton: A lot of my teaching here deals with reading and interpretation of music. I try to stress fitting in. I lay out a framework from which to build. I hear the same charts every year, but there's no one way that they're supposed to be played, and I hear every conceivable version. It's great. I just ask my students to be musical and to fit in. They're constantly asking me what fill to play, and I say, "Well, this works, but it's not the only thing. So, you can try this and this and this, and you've got to worry about the dynamics and all this and that." A lot of evaluation is going on on their part. They're learning interpretative skills, which is great. That will later turn into their own style.

Humphrey: There are drummers around town who the students happen to be particularly involved in. They'll go out and worship these drummers, and then come back and say, "Listen to what he did. I copped this." I'll listen and say, "That's great. I'm glad that you were able to hear that enough to be able to sit down on the drumset and come up with your version of it, even if it's not the same thing." They learn from that, because they try to figure out how a drummer's thinking—how that drummer's creating. There is a certain

continued on page 90



Joe Brancato (left), Joe Porcaro (middle) and Ralph Humphrey (right)



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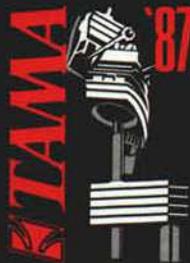


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by Rob Bowman and Ross Johnson

J.M. Van Eaton: Rockabilly Rhythm



Along with D.J. Fontana, Earl Palmer, and Jerry Allison, J.M. Van Eaton ranks as one of the paramount drummers in rock 'n' roll in the 1950s. In some ways, he was simply in the right place at the right time. Looking at it from a slightly different angle, he was the perfect man for the job. J.M. was born in Memphis in December of 1937. He started playing drums at school in the eighth grade and, about four years later, found himself behind the kit with Billy Lee Riley & The Little Green Men—as well as in the house band at Memphis' legendary Sun Records.

Sam Phillips had started the Memphis Recording Service in 1950. His first few years were spent recording a variety of R&B artists—including Ike Turner and Howlin' Wolf—and subsequently leasing the masters to independent labels in the North or on the West Coast, such as Chess and Modern. After seeing many such records become R&B hits, Sam started the Sun label in 1952, continuing to record primarily black material until 1954. In that year, Phillips also recorded a significant amount of country music and, of course, found a young singer by the name of Elvis Presley. The house drummer for the country and early rockabilly material—including Presley's last three Sun 78s—was Memphian Johnny Bernero.

Van Eaton assumed Bernero's duties from 1956 to 1961, playing on virtually all of Jerry Lee Lewis' Sun material, all of

Johnny Cash's recordings for Sun after July 1957, Charlie Rich's first two years of sessions, and Billy Lee Riley's rockabilly classics, as well as innumerable sessions with lesser-known artists. Van Eaton is the man driving such stellar performances as Rich's "Lonely Weekends," Riley's "Red Hot," Cash's "Ballad Of A Teenage Queen" and "I Guess Things Happen That Way," and Jerry Lee Lewis' "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" and "Great Balls Of Fire." In fact, on the latter, the only two instruments heard are Lewis' pumping piano and Van Eaton's rim tapping and unique shuffle.

It is that shuffle that is Van Eaton's chief claim to fame. Ultimately derived from the rhythm heard on many a big band swing recording, Van Eaton shifted the accents and added a heavy backbeat. In the July 1982 issue of *Modern Drummer*, Scott Fish referred to it as "almost a Latin rhythm, but not quite." Van Eaton's originality also extended to his surprising placement and execution of fills. In addition, he was always a sensitive and sympathetic percussionist, able to shift tempos and styles depending on the needs and talents of the featured performer.

In 1961, Van Eaton married and, consequently, retired as a full-time drummer. He continued to play on sessions for a variety of labels owned by fellow Sun house musicians Roland Janes and Billy Lee Riley, and he has never ceased to play the

odd live gig whenever the context has met his fancy. These days, that generally occurs at one or another of Memphis' annual music festivals, when Van Eaton joins a number of his old cronies for an hour of scintillating '50s rockabilly. The following interview was conducted in two separate sessions in Memphis.

RJ: Was yours a musical home?

JMVE: No, not really. I think probably on my mother's side there were a few musicians—mostly rhythm guitar pickers and things like that. There weren't any drummers that I know of.

RJ: Were you formally trained or self-taught?

JMVE: I was just like any other student, I guess. You get in the seventh grade, and you can either play in the band or go sing in the chorus. I tried to get in the band, but the first year they wouldn't let me in. So I wound up in the vocal end of it. I did manage to get in the band in the eighth grade, but it was full of drummers, so they gave me a trumpet to blow. It wasn't until the ninth grade that I started playing drums in the marching band. I really started to feel some changes coming on in the type of music I liked to play compared to what was going on at the time.

RJ: What was your favorite music then?

JMVE: Believe it or not, I liked Dixieland music a lot. There was a lot of country music in my home and I liked that, but I guess I liked Dixieland because the drummer always had a pretty good part. When you got to take little drum solos, that was my type of thing. We had a Dixieland band at school before the Elvis era hit, and I enjoyed that. I used to listen to the Dukes of Dixieland. I don't know who the drummer was, but the group as a whole was pretty hot stuff. Really, I guess the reason I liked Dixieland was because it had a pretty heavy backbeat. You go back and listen to the early Dixieland, and it's a whole lot like what we're doing now. The drummer was featured more than on other stuff.

And then I was also influenced by the big band era. I always thought Buddy Rich was one of the best drummers there ever was. I mean, that guy can do more with drums than anybody else I've ever heard. But I never was one to really listen to other people. I played my way, and it either worked or it didn't.

continued on next page

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RJ: How did your professional career get started?

JMVE: I was in my junior or senior year of high school when I really started to get into the recording end of music and started playing with some of the bigger names. I really didn't realize *how* big it was. I thought it was just a local thing—just Memphis musicians. I never dreamed that it was a worldwide thing. But at that point in time, there were a *lot* of good little groups around.

I started doing a lot of session work in high school. As a matter of fact, I didn't even have a car. Jack Clement, who was the engineer at Sun, used to have to pick me up and take me to the session. I bought my first car when I was 18, and I'd been playing a couple of years before that.

RJ: What was the first band you played with in Memphis, and how did you get introduced to the Phillips/Sun thing?

JMVE: My story is similar to Elvis'. In those days, you could get a little group together, go down to Sun, and cut a record. You'd give them 15 bucks, and you'd do two sides. That's what we did. There were a couple of guys in school who were pretty good musicians, and we'd been playing this Dixieland thing from an early age. Then we dropped the trombones and trumpets, kept the saxophones, and added some stringed instruments: guitar and bass. At that point in time, I was still awfully young. We started playing some of the nightclubs around Memphis. We had a pretty good little group, and we decided to go down to the studio and cut a record like everybody else. In essence, we were auditioning, although I didn't realize it at the time. Jack Clement asked Marvin Pepper, who was the bass player, and me if we'd be interested in playing on some sessions. Of course, I said yes. He invited me to come back, and he introduced me to some other people, including a guy named Billy Riley. It just kind of started from there. One thing led to another, and it didn't take long before everybody wanted me to come and play for them.

RJ: Was that 1955?

JMVE: It was probably '55 and '56.

RJ: So they didn't even have a staff drummer at that point?

JMVE: Well, Johnny Bernero was playing drums at that time. But Johnny was more into the country stuff they were doing then. Sun really hadn't gotten into rock 'n' roll yet. Even Elvis went a long time before he ever decided to use a drummer. I think the first drummer he used was a guy named Jimmy Lott. I was the first drummer who ever played with Johnny Cash. I didn't go on the road with him, but I played on his sessions. It was the first time they ever tried to put a drum with Johnny Cash.

RJ: Most records on the Sun label sounded raw and unpolished compared to what was on the charts then. Was there a consciousness of trying to do something different

from the mainstream?

JMVE: We didn't think we were doing anything different. The public's *reaction* to what was going on made it what it was. If the public had not accepted it and had not wanted that type of sound, it would never have made it to first base anyway. They'd have said to heck with it.

It was a combination of a lot of things. It was a feel created by Memphis-bred musicians, like me, with a black church background. I know people have heard this over and over, but I can remember very well that, when I was a junior in high school, we used to go over to East Trigg Baptist Church on Sunday night just to hear the music. It was great. It had a feel like Ray Charles or Aretha Franklin. And they were doing this in *church*! I was in awe of all this. We wouldn't miss it for the world; it was an every-Sunday-night thing. But that was before the racial turmoil came into effect. It's a shame, because there was a real good rapport at that time. We were welcome there. We sat on the front left-hand side of the church every Sunday night.

We took that feel and incorporated it with the country music that a lot of us were brought up on. I like all music. I'm going to tell you that on the front end. There's very little music that I *don't* like, provided that it's done well. I like good country. I like good rock. I like good classical. I don't know what it is that separates good from bad, but I know what I like and what I don't like.

RJ: I'd like to ask you about microphone placement in the studio at Sun. I understand that five mic's in all were used, with only one mic' for the drums. Is that correct?

JMVE: Right. They had one microphone, and it was over the snare. They tried using two, adding one for the bass drum, but they would always bring the bass and the bass drum in on the same mic'.

RB: Did you lock in with the bass player in the studio?

JMVE: I didn't even know the bass player was in there. I was having a hard enough time playing what I was playing, much less trying to play what a bass player was playing. Most of the time, they used that slap bass thing—until they got into the electric bass. It really and truly didn't matter that much because we weren't playing a lot of different types of patterns anyway. They were pretty much straight ahead.

RJ: Who did you do most of your live work with?

JMVE: Well, I played with a lot of different groups. I went on the road with Jerry [Lee Lewis]; I played with Roy Orbison; I played with Conway Twitty . . . I stayed out a lot. We played wherever the demand was. I didn't get on the West Coast, but we worked from Canada to Florida, on down the East Coast.

RJ: So you got a full taste of that.

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JMVE: Yeah, well, I enjoyed it. I was young and single, and it was a big thing then. It was something special. One of my biggest experiences was in Canada with Conway Twitty. We were playing in a lounge setup there. People were lined up for like six or seven city blocks—and it was raining. I couldn't believe it.

It wasn't always that way, of course. When you're young, you make some bad decisions as to which groups to play with. Probably, if I'd stuck with just one group . . . I really thought Riley was going to be a big star. That was one of the best bands I've ever played with. There were some musicians in that band that were as good as anybody in the country at that time. And I

just enjoyed being with that particular band. The only thing that kept Riley back was that he never had a big hit record. I think what it really boiled down to was that Sun Records didn't want us to have a hit record, because they would lose their staff band.

RJ: Did Sam Phillips try to set up a mood in the studio? Did he influence things in an active way?

JMVE: He knew what he wanted, and the records he released were the records he obviously liked more than others. Sometimes, some of the stuff would get too "uptown" or not commercial enough, and a few of those records may have been released. Sam is a good friend of mine, and

I think the world of him. He gave you the freedom to do what you wanted to do. At the same time, if you weren't playing what he wanted you to play, then you probably wouldn't be in there. He'd have somebody else in. Jack Clement had a lot to do with it, too. When we first started down there, Jack was doing most of the engineering, and Sam was just there. He'd come in later and listen to what was done. He'd make suggestions: "Let's do it over," or "That sounds great." Then he brought in Bill Justis.

I was pretty young at the time and didn't realize that there was a lot of conflict going on between those people. It's a shame that they couldn't have all stayed, because what that combination produced was definitely something that was catching on worldwide. It's like any good corporation: You've got to have a good leader, but you also have to have good people working for you. And that's what happened down there. I think it was a combination of everybody. Sam had the right people at the right time. I enjoyed it. Now that I look back on it, those were probably some of the happiest times of my life.

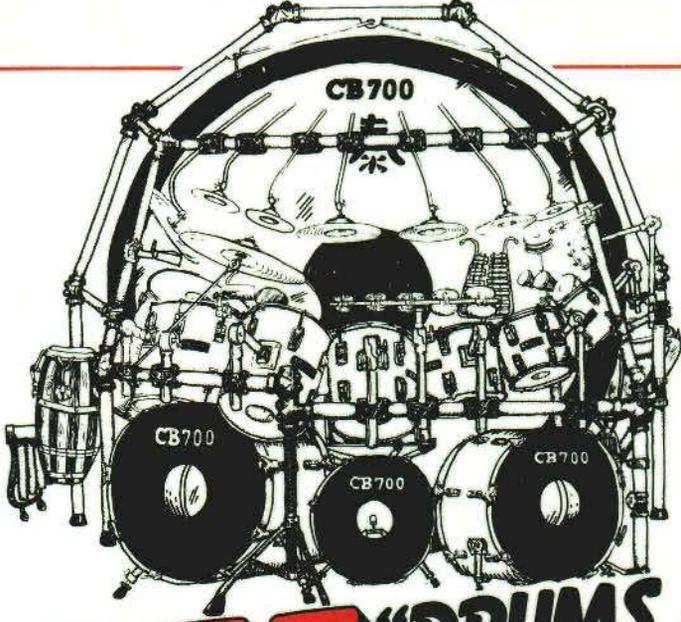
RJ: The records reflected that. They were very raw and sounded different from what else was going on at the time.

JMVE: Let me throw this in now. One thing that made a big difference was that Sam never rented out that studio like a lot of people would do. If you weren't one of his artists, you didn't record there. It was a personal-touch type of thing. You were *his* artist, and he was going to try to do the best he could for you and give you that Sun sound. I'm sure he had a lot of opportunities, but to my knowledge, he never rented that studio to other people. I think that's interesting. You can go to Nashville today, and rent different studios, cut demos, or whatever if you've got the bread. Right now, you can go down there [referring to Sam Phillips Recording Service, currently located on Madison Avenue in Memphis] and rent time, but back then, you couldn't do that.

RJ: Did Sam ever tell you *not* to play something? Did he ever tell you to leave certain things out if they got too fancy?

JMVE: To just give you a straight-out answer, yeah. Everybody was trying to keep it commercial. You can label it what you want to. Stax did it; RCA did it; all the big labels did it. Once you have a staff band, those records sound like factory records. Every one of those records has got the same basic band tracks. You come in. You've got this tune. "So okay, let's play the riff we did on this other one. We'll take this from what we did on this other guy's record."

But the drummer had a lot of freedom. They didn't hold me back. If there was anything I felt like doing, they would all really go for my suggestion. If it didn't work, they'd be quick to say, "No, it's not coming off. Try something else." They



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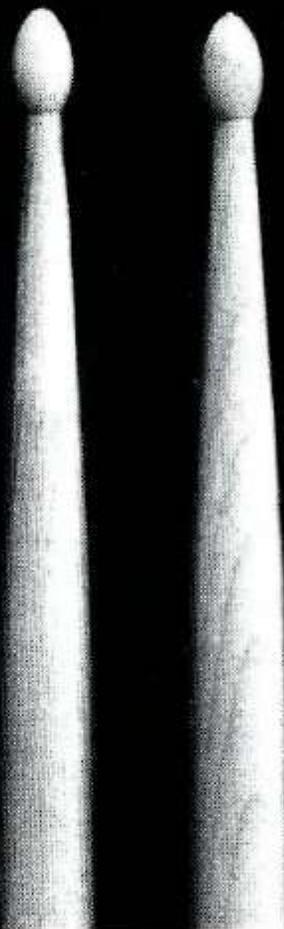
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would always leave it up to me to decide what else to try. They wouldn't come out and say, "Hey, play it this way." Now, Jack [Clement] would, because he was more of a musician than Sam. See, Sam, to my knowledge, is not a musician. He's a radio man and he knows *sound*, but he's not a musician. Jack, on the other hand, could come out and say, "Let's change this chord progression; it doesn't sound right," or "Do this rhythm pattern here." But most of the time, they were kind of excited as to what we might come up with. If we hit on a chemistry that worked, then that was it. "Hey, that sounds good. Let's cut it." And it was that simple.

It was a thing that just had to happen for Memphis at the time. It's like Elvis. There won't be another Elvis Presley. There was only one. There were a lot of imitators. Now there may be somebody else somewhere down the line who'll do something nobody else has done before. Everybody will try to copy, but there's only going to be one. The Sun Records thing was just a happening because my style of playing, Jerry Lee's style of playing, and Roland Jane's style of playing all just kind of came together. We didn't *work* on that sound. I'd never seen Jerry Lee before we cut his first record. I'd just met him that morning. **RB:** It must have been something that just gelled.

JMVE: I don't know how you view things, but it was a spiritual-type thing that brought everybody together at the right time. It just happened to be there. If Jerry had come to Memphis and had a different drummer and if Roland had been somebody else, then it might never have happened. Who knows? It all came together.

RJ: For that to have turned out to be a salable formula must have been quite impressive.

JMVE: Well, that was the amazing thing. If you play to your relatives, they're going to say, "That's great." But if you play to a genuine audience—a critical audience—and *they* like what you're putting down, those are the things you need to go into the studio with. That's how "Whole Lotta Shakin' " came about. It was just an old song of Jerry's. We did it at a club we were playing at. He was on the road, and "Crazy Arms" was doing pretty good. So we were out doing some dates on that. He didn't have a long list of songs; his repertoire was pretty short. So he said, "I used to do this one when I was playing in the club," and people went *crazy* over it. It was the first time I'd ever heard it. At that time, we played these 9:00 to 1:00 gigs, and we probably did that song four or five times that night. People kept coming up saying, "Play that 'Shakin' ' song." So the next time we were in the studio, we cut it. And the success speaks for itself.

RB: On some records, you alternate between the swing-type shuffle beat and a straighter 8th-note feel on the ride. Was

that something you just fell into during a song, or did you plan that alternation of patterns on the ride cymbal?

JMVE: I probably just got tired and switched around, [laughs] Man, I was just trying to get through. Half of the records we cut were never intended to be mastered. You'd be cutting a track and you'd get tired of doing this thing, so you'd say, "I'll just do *this* for a while." Then you'd kind of relax and go back into the other. It could happen that simply. I know you think that's funny, but that's probably how it came down. Jerry Lee is not good after about three or four cuts. If you don't get him then, you might as well go on to the next song. It's one of those deals where you've got to capture that magic.

A lot of times, I would change in the middle of a song to see which rhythm pattern I liked best. I'd be changing, saying to myself, "Do I like *this* better than *that* ..." and that would be the cut they wanted to keep. I mean, I might have been experimenting, rather than trying to do something on purpose. The producer may not even have been listening to the drums. He was probably listening to the voice or the left hand on the piano. If it got like he wanted, then that was the cut he'd take and to heck with everybody else. If the drum part wasn't just right, well, that was tough. At that point in time, there were only a few songs that we really worked hard at doing. And the ones we worked the hardest on probably sold the least amount of records.

RB: On your recordings with Jerry Lee, there seem to be tempo shifts throughout the songs. Who was responsible for this?

JMVE: I think it was a little bit of both of us, really. He still does that to this day on stage. I know that, when music professors get that metronome going, they want things to be right on time. If that's your thing, there's nothing wrong with it. I admire people who can play that precisely and still play with feeling. But to me, you lose something when you've got to be that precise. If you're playing a song, you're in a groove, and it feels good to do these certain things, that's what makes it. And I think that's the way the people who were involved with the music we made at that point in time felt about it.

RJ: How did you come up with your distinctive shuffle pattern? Also, how do you account for the unpredictability of your snare rolls and fills? I can never tell how one of your fills is going to come out.

JMVE: I can't either, [laughs] I did most of it with just one hand. If there was any one change in music, that was it. Most of that sound came from the cymbal rhythm. At that time, big bands and country bands were playing that swing shuffle rhythm. It was on everything. "Rock Around The Clock" and even the earlier rock things were that type of stuff. We were rehearsing with a group one night, and I said, "I wonder if we could get that swing shuffle pat-



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tern going with a backbeat and see what we come up with?" That's where it came from. When Jerry Lee came in, that was the rhythm he played. A lot of people try to copy Jerry Lee Lewis' sound, but they'll never copy it because they're trying to play a straight 4/4 beat when, in fact, it's a shuffle with a backbeat. That's the whole rhythm.

I went out with Jerry recently. We did three nights, and the rhythm was there. You can feel when you hit it. I know that the drummers he's been using just don't play it that way, and it makes all the difference in the world, because it's right on top of it. It's straight. It's a shuffle beat, but it's not the country shuffle. That was done

on the snare drum like boom-chick, boom-chick. I never could play that. They wanted me to play it, and I can't play it to this day. I'll be the first to admit it. I can play it for maybe eight or 16 bars, but after that, I start falling off the stool. It's labor for me to do that, [laughs] I've got to concentrate. If you've got to concentrate to play something, musically you're in trouble. You lose the feeling of it. It's got to come naturally. The other was just so natural and was something I wanted to get into. I think that really made a big change in the rhythm pattern of that type of music.

Later, rock 'n' roll went on into straight rhythm stuff. We wound up doing some of

that down at Sun, but the basic thing was really that shuffle, and it was 99% done on the ride cymbal. They would tape that thing up to where it wouldn't sound like a ride cymbal. It wouldn't have that ringing sound to it.

RJ: That's very interesting to know. I was under the impression that you didn't tape or muffle drums and cymbals much in those days.

JMVE: Yeah, we did a lot of it.

RJ: Was that how your snare sound was achieved? Was the drumhead taped to get that dry, wooden sound?

JMVE: Well, it was mostly done with tape. It deadened the sound on the snare. Or you could take your billfold and lay it on the head, and it worked. I had a set of Gretsch drums, and—just like with any instrument—some of them just sound better than others. That was the best-sounding set for what we were doing. I could use other drums, but they wouldn't sound the same. This one particular drumset had that sound. I have a hard time duplicating that sound now.

RJ: Did you have any specific preferences when it came to drumheads or cymbals?

JMVE: We had Zildjian cymbals. That Gretsch set was probably one of the better sets, and Premier was making some pretty good drums. You see, we didn't have Tama and all these other names you have now. The set I've got now is really a mixture. To me, unless you've got a lot of dough, you've got to be crazy to spend what they want for some of these drums. If you know what you're doing, you can put together a good set of drums a lot cheaper than some walk-in-off-the-street deal. You can find drums on sale at various places, if you know what you're looking for. Of course, there's some cheap stuff out there that wouldn't be worth 50 cents on the dollar, but you *can* find some bargains.

RJ: I understand that you had a front bass drum head made out of calfskin with hair on it.

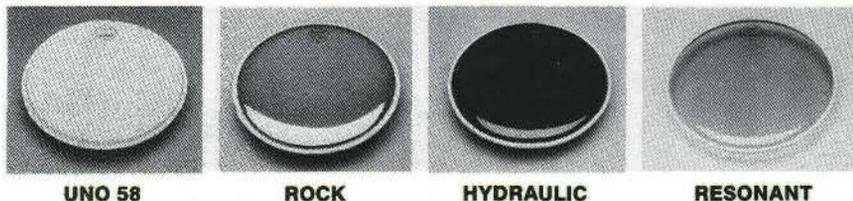
JMVE: That's right. To my knowledge, there were only two in the world. Elvis' drummer, D. J. Fontana, had one, and I had one. His was tan and white, and mine was black and white. I think I picked it up in Dallas. It may have been a big thing out West; western swing bands all had drummers. I went to pick up some sticks or something at a music store in Dallas, and I saw the thing. I said, "Elvis' drummer has one; I've got to have one." That was before they went to taking the front heads completely off the bass drum. Back then, they always had exotic pictures drawn on the front heads. But I had to have it. It was a conversation piece if nothing else—although it was a legitimate bass drum head. I don't know that it had any bearing on the sound.

RJ: On most of your Sun recordings, your hi-hat can hardly be heard. Was this due to it not being miked?

JMVE: Probably. We did use it on just

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about every session. But I think one of the key things to the rhythm patterns at that time was that they were played on the cymbals—particularly the ride cymbal. There wasn't that much of the closed hi-hat ride done until later. If we went back and started reviewing this record and that record, I could probably point it out to you.

RJ: Did you use a full set in the studio?

JMVE: No, all I used was snare, bass drum, ride cymbal, and hi-hat. I had tom-toms and I used them out in public, but they never could record them. Tom-toms threw the needle all the way over, and the engineer would go crazy. We did have some tom-tom stuff on a few songs—very few.

RB: How did tom-toms fit into your live playing style? Were you much of a tom-tom player?

JMVE: Not as much as they're using them today. About the only guy that used tom-toms much was Bo Diddley. We did a lot of Bo Diddley stuff, so consequently, I had to do that. And then they came in in solo stuff. When I played with Billy Lee Riley & The Little Green Men, we did have a lot of arrangements where we did some things like that. We did some pretty far-out stuff for a rock 'n' roll band.

RB: You mentioned solos. Can you give us an idea of how they sounded back in the '50s? There's not much on record.

JMVE: Well, they just sounded terrible, [laughs] What can I say? I don't know what to tell you.

RB: Were they long?

JMVE: Oh, we used to have this thing where all the other musicians would leave the stage like they were going for good. We were probably one of the first ones who started that. I was playing with Charlie Rich once, in his hometown. He said, "We're going to let the drummer do his thing." They turned me loose and left the stage, and I thought they were coming back. But they were gone like five minutes. Then it was ten minutes. I'd about had the course, so I looked around and saw Charlie in his limo already! He wasn't coming back; he was going home! So I just left, too.

RB: You'd often have five-minute solos then?

JMVE: It's hard to say. Sometimes they were pretty lengthy—depending on whether or not everybody was getting into it. I had a couple of records out that had some drum solos on them.

RJ: Did you use a crash cymbal on any recordings? It sounds like you might have used one at the beginning of Billy Lee Riley's "Flyin'" Saucers Rock And Roll."

JMVE: It wasn't a crash cymbal as we know crash cymbals today. It was just one big cymbal. You'd just hit it harder if you wanted it to crash.

RJ: You place your ride cymbal on the left-hand side of the kit when you play live today. Were you doing that back then?

JMVE: That's always been kind of comfortable for me.

RJ: Have you always played with a matched grip?

JMVE: No, as a matter of fact, I used to play the "legitimate" way.

RJ: Traditional grip? Was that how you played on a lot of Sun sessions?

JMVE: I really can't remember. I think a lot of Memphis drummers started playing matched grip on slow records, in order to get that cross-stick sound on the rim. You can't do that playing traditional grip; you have to turn the stick over and deaden the drum with the palm of your hand.

RB: I notice you often switch off playing on the rim and playing on the drumhead between bridge and verse. Was that planned or just part of your natural style?

JMVE: No, I think that was probably something the artists wanted done. They liked the verses to be laid-back and soft, and the bridges to come on stronger. So that was about the only way to do it. I'd change from one sound to another to try to keep from being repetitious.

RJ: Are you aware of what stylistic influence you've had on rock 'n' roll drumming?

JMVE: Well, I didn't realize that it was that much of an influence, really. At that point in time, I didn't realize I had a style. I didn't think we were setting trends to be followed; I was just playing. I wasn't trying to perfect what I was doing, because I didn't know that it needed perfecting. I was just playing it because that was what came natural to me.

RJ: I've run into so many drummers who cite you as a major influence. They wonder what you're doing musically these days and if you're still playing the clubs in Memphis.

JMVE: I just got to where clubs were not where it was at for me. And I don't have any desire to play with groups that are not good pickers. Whenever an opportunity comes along to play, it's kind of like the old-timers game in baseball. I enjoy that. It's not so much that I can't keep up with the younger musicians. It's just that I don't really want to try to do that. They've got their own thing to do, and more power to them.

RJ: Has age played a part in developing this attitude toward playing music?

JMVE: Maybe age really doesn't have that much to do with it. You gain knowledge through age, and your priorities change. Things that used to mean a lot to you don't mean anything. That, I guess, is the biggest thing. My priorities changed. It's fun to do some sessions. I go in there with the attitude that I'm going to have fun or I'm not going to do it. If it gets to be work, I've already got a job—you know what I'm saying? If it gets down to one of those deals where there's a producer sitting up there going crazy, it's just not worth it to me. Music is supposed to be fun. You're supposed to enjoy what you're doing. If you're not enjoying it, you're doing the wrong thing. You need to play where you can enjoy it.

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Robinson continued from page 21

Of the producers I know in L.A., eight out of ten are musicians. Some of them aren't, or they were frustrated musicians so they locked into their own little niches. But with someone like David Foster—who's one of my all-time favorite producers—you walk in and David says, "Okay cats, here's what it is." He starts playing, and we start playing with him. Pretty soon the tape is rolling, and it's done. That's fun.

But then there's the other type of producer. There's this one guy in particular—whose name I won't mention, but he's associated with a prominent singing group. Back in the old days, he would bring in a live band, and we would record the whole thing right on the spot with the singers and everything. That was great. But now this guy buys a songwriter's demo that was done on a 24-track tape with machines, he maybe brings in a synth player to put a little frosting on it, then he brings in the singers to redo the vocals, and that's the record. That upsets me, because he broke up a good team that was making hit records. I guess he feels that he has to stay innovative by using all the new technology. But you can still use a live rhythm section. Don't use all of this machine shit. **RM:** From that last statement, one could infer that you are against machines. But I happen to know that you own quite a few of them.

JR: I have a house full of machines. I have

eight synths, five drum machines, two Macintoshes, the new Yamaha Electronic Percussion System, and all this different stuff. I use them as tools to write with. I have produced a record using all machines, but that was because the guy who was funding it didn't have much money. I had X amount of dollars to make the record with, and I did it.

RM: In addition to all of that stuff you have at home, you have quite an elaborate setup out on the road. The audience is seeing a guy playing an acoustic drumset, but they're hearing a lot more than that. You're triggering a Yamaha electronic setup as well as a couple of Simmons brains, an SP-12, and various effects racks. The question is, does today's drummer need all of that stuff?

JR: Probably not. The reason I have all of that stuff is because I had the urge to do it. I like to play real hard, and I like to have a lot of power. For example, my monitor system is over 2,000 watts—just for me. I want to have a sound that no one else has. So by experimenting with different triggering systems—I'm now using Marc triggers—I can trigger all of the electronic stuff, blend it with my acoustical sound, and create a huge, fat, dominant sound. I don't have to play as hard, but I can sustain the power and excitement that today's shows deserve. That's really why I have all of that stuff.

Plus, it's fun. I have a Yamaha 2404

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mixing board right next to me so that I can control all of my sends. I can be my own engineer, which is exciting. I can remember throwing drumsticks at monitor mixers, because all I was getting from my monitor was "OMMMMMMMMM." This way, I can control all of that myself. It's easier for the monitor mixer; it's easier for the house system; it's easier for me. It makes sense to have that stuff at your disposal.

On some of the songs in John's show, I'll pull the Simmons completely out, and have the rest of the electronics down to a third or less. On one tune, called "Sail Away," it's mostly acoustic. The only thing I'm doing is triggering a cross-stick sound from the *SP-12* that I mix with the acoustic cross-stick sound. It's like a stereo cross stick, which gives me a unique sound. Other than that, I've just got a little bit of high-end bass drum mixed in from the Yamaha *TX816*. Even though I'm not always using a lot of the electronics, it's nice to have so many options available.

RM: Do you use a setup like that in the studio, too?

JR: So far, most of my records have been done acoustically or with a little bit of Simmons. I was not one of the first drummers to jump on a rack. I held out. But a keyboard player I used to work with a lot kept telling me, "You've got to get this electronic stuff. Everybody's got it, and if you don't, you'll lose work." So I thought

about it and decided that I probably should get into it. I got a Simmons kit, and I did get work because I had it. Then I gradually started getting other things and learning how to use them. I started with an Oberheim system, and then I got a Roland sequencer and learned that. Next I got a Yamaha *QXI*, and then I learned the Macintosh. I don't regret a minute of the time I spent learning all of that stuff, because it helped me to have what I wanted: a total grasp on the situation.

The new Yamaha system intrigued me, because it has something that nothing else has: FM digital synthesis. These are alpha rhythms, and you can blend them with acoustic sounds and sampled sounds to create a whole new element. When Alex Acuna and I demoed the system at the NAMM show, we were playing melodies. I composed a tune with steel drum sounds, and I could play scales on the pads, which meant that I could improvise freely. I even had a pitch-bend pedal. It's great. I had keyboard players coming up and saying, "You drummers shouldn't be allowed to have this stuff." [laughs]

RM: Look at all of the keyboard players who have drum machines in their setups.

JR: That's right, and this is still in its infancy. Can you imagine what a drummer like Jack DeJohnette or Alan Dawson could do with this stuff? Those guys are so melodically inclined that they could create unbelievable things. I don't know if tradi-

tionists like them would want to get involved with something like this, but the possibilities intrigue me, and that's why I've gotten so involved with it.

I've had this system in the studio recently, and it worked out great. I just did three songs for Bryan Ferry, and he was totally amazed. The stuff we got on tape is absolutely unlike regular fat drums. It's totally different, and it may create a whole new direction. I also did some things for the Commodores' new record where I played real drums first, and then I did another whole pass on the electronic drums, exactly in the same time frame. We mixed them together and got a new element.

That's the thing—to set the pace and be innovative without stepping on anybody else. When you go into the studio now, everybody wants to hear something new and fresh, because everyone's spoiled. So drummers are going to have to take the time to learn about this stuff. Of course, the other side of it is that drummers who have invested in all of this technology—myself included—are having to raise their rental price, because you have to get something back for it. So that's another aspect of the business. Some producers might want to pass on it rather than spend the extra time and money. At one point on the Commodores session, the engineer said, "We could spend a week in here," because I had so many variables. It takes a lot of

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RM: As fascinating as the new technology is, you mentioned a few moments ago that most of your work has still been with acoustic drums. And I know how fond you are of traditional instruments. When I visited you at the Winwood session, you couldn't wait to show me a couple of the classic snare drums that you had brought from L.A. to use on that record.

JR: Right. I used a 1930 7 x 15 Ludwig on "Split Decision" and a *Black Beauty* on "Higher Love." I collect Ludwig brass snare drums from the '20s and '30s. I've been talking to Scotty at Jack's Drum

Shop in Boston, and he has a 1925 5 1/2 *Black Beauty*. You can print that, because I plan to have it by the time this comes out. I really want that drum. I played it, and it was so bright. I used a *Black Beauty* on the David Lee Roth tunes "California Girls" and "Just A Gigolo." I had it wide open and tuned as high as I could get it.

I also have a DW brass snare drum that I've used a few times and a Yamaha prototype. Yamaha has a new 8" brass snare drum that sounds great. I'm going to start using that live. I've been using a *Black Beauty* live, but I'm going to switch to this new Yamaha.

Whenever I put up a wood snare drum,

it's usually a Noble & Cooley. I'm very fond of that company, because it's making a *Radio King* type of shell. When I first played one, I thought, "Man, listen to the brightness yet the depth coming from that wood drum." That was a 7" drum, which I ended up buying, and then I bought a 4" piccolo drum that is absolutely incredible. It's got so much top end, but it doesn't sound choked. Then Noble & Cooley made a 9" drum for me, and I've used that one on a lot of sessions—probably 30 so far. I used that on the Seger record, because Bob wanted a really fat and beefy snare drum sound. I also used that drum on Lionel's songs "Say You Say Me," "Love Will Conquer All," and "Dancing On The Ceiling."

The other snare drum I should mention is a *Radio King* from around 1930 that I bought from some lady for \$7.00. I had it reconditioned, and it looks great. It would be perfect for a bop gig, because it's so dry. As a matter of fact, Bear—my tech—just bought an old Leedy drumkit for a couple of hundred bucks. This snare drum would be perfect with that kit.

RM: I think that covers snare drums. What about the rest of your kit?

JR: Well, for the Fogerty tour, I'm using a Yamaha *Power Recording Custom* set with a 26" bass drum on my right and a 24" bass drum on my left. A lot of people freak when they hear that I'm using that big a bass drum on my right. A lot of 26" bass drums would be real boomy, but the Yamaha is not like that. It has a real nice point. I could record with that drum any day of the week.

For the past eight years, I've used a Caroline bass drum pedal. I use a square wooden beater on it, and that gives me pinpoint definition. I tune my bass drums pretty low. If I release the beater off the head and play flatfooted, it gives me more power. Ed Soph helped me develop that style when I was a teenager. On my left bass drum, I've been using a Yamaha *Tour* series pedal. It feels good because I play toe method with my left foot—hi-hat technique. And while we're talking about pedals, I use a DW electronic pedal with the Yamaha electronic drum setup. In fact, in

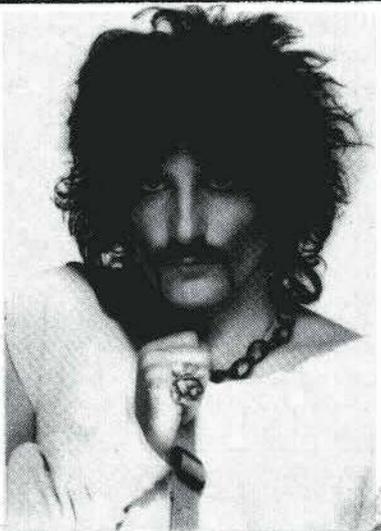
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the Yamaha demos, Alex Acuna and I are both triggering the eighth input in the *PMCI* from a DW electronic pedal.

Getting back to my acoustic kit, my toms are all double headed. I've got 12" and 14" rack toms, and 16" and 18" floor toms. I like to have my toms open, with no muffling whatsoever. Muffling tends to detract from the purpose of the drum. I only muffle the bass drums a little bit on the bottom of the shell with a packing blanket. On my snare drum, I've been using a head that Remo made for me. It's a coated *Emperor* with a coated dot on it. That way, I can play the drum wide open with no muffling.

In the studio, I usually use the Yamaha kit I got in 1981, which has a 24" bass drum, and 12", 13", and 16" toms. That kit reminds me a lot of my old Gretsch kit. I have a 9" Yamaha snare drum with that kit, which the Japanese made specially for me, and that's what I used on "We Are The World."

RM: What about cymbals?

JR: Ever since I was a kid, I've had a love affair with cymbals. I was always intrigued with the different sounds, but there was no place to buy them in the town I'm from in Iowa, so I'd have to drive to Des Moines to get cymbals. Finally, I went to Boston and met Lennie DiMuzio at Zildjian, and I actually learned about cymbal selection.

I'm still partial to As because of the variety. They tend to be able to cut any situation. I also have a couple of old Ks, and I'm using a 19" K *China Boy*. I use bigger hi-hats than most people—15" *Quick Beats*. I find that I can cover all of the bases with those, whether it's a light jazz thing or real hard, bashing rock 'n' roll. On my left, I use a 20" thin A crash, and it cuts through the band. For ride cymbals, I have a 22" A heavy ping ride and a fantastic 22" K that has great stick definition. I also have two 22" swishes and another 20" thin crash with a different pitch. Then I have an 18" thin A, which cuts like a 16". I've also got a pair of 13" K hi-hats locked together on my right side, which gives me a higher-pitched hi-hat sound. And finally I have a 20" Zildjian gong.

RM: Is this the live setup you always use,

or is this specifically for the Fogerty tour?

JR: This is the Fogerty setup, although I'm gradually locking into a similar setup, especially with the drums.

RM: Regarding cymbals, then, what are some of the considerations for choosing cymbals for a specific situation?

JR: That's a good question. I have drummers call me up and say, "I'm looking for a new cymbal," and they haven't even experienced an 18" thin crash. When I was first learning about cymbals, I got a 16" thin and an 18" thin, and those were the perfect crash cymbals for the gigs I was doing at that time. When I got into heavier playing, I found that I had to go to 18" and

20" thins, with the same pitch difference. A lot of times, even on the lightest of gigs, I can still get away with that 20". But if I feel that it is too heavy for a particular situation, then I'll go back to a 16" and 18". I always carry an array of cymbals. Even on the road, a different hall can require different cymbals.

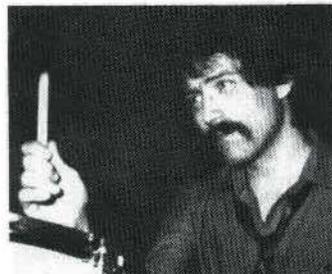
RM: I was looking through some old cymbal setup books recently, and I noticed that a lot of the older drummers have pretty much stuck with the same cymbals for most of their careers. Younger drummers, however, seem to have a variety of cymbals that they use in different situations. Has music changed to where a drummer needs

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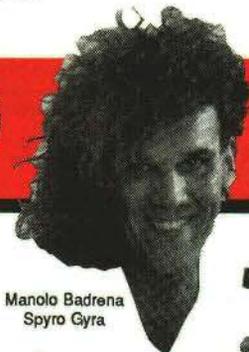
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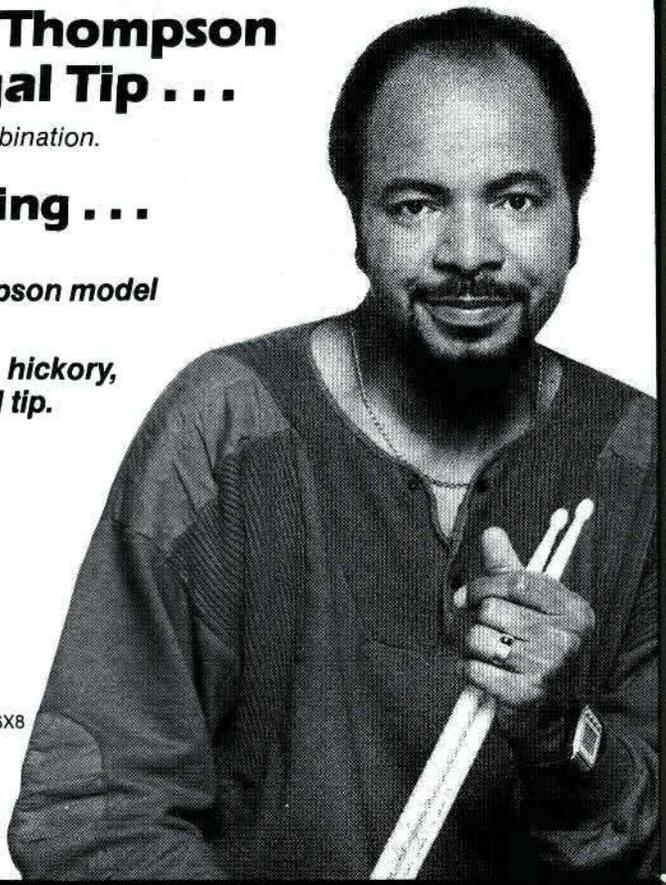
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more variety, or are today's drummers simply more aware of the nuances of sound?

JR: A lot of us who went through the Top 40 club scene for a long time learned that you have to play all these different styles of music during a five-sets-a-night gig. You start your first set, there are only a few people there having dinner, and you can only play light things with brushes. So you need tasty cymbals for that. On the next set, you start to play a little more George Benson type of music, with more groove. Then the singer comes in for the third set, and so on. By the end of the night, you're doing some full-out bashing. It's kind of like that with the music today. You have to have the variety covered with your cymbals.

If you're doing a jazz gig, like something Elvin or Tony would do, then you can pretty much stick with what you've been successful with. Of course, even if you set up heavy As for Elvin, I'm sure that he would still burn on them.

RM: By the same token, I've heard other people play on Elvin's Ks, and they don't make them sound the way Elvin makes them sound, which proves that it's not just the cymbal.

JR: Oh, absolutely. He pulls that sound out of them. That's why this electronic stuff will never replace cymbals. A few months ago, Lennie DiMuzio asked me if I was using electronic cymbals. I didn't even know what he was talking about. I may experiment with electronics, but I'd never use something to replace a cymbal, because nothing could. It's not even the same if you sampled a cymbal and played it with a pad, because the interaction between your arm, the stick release, and the cymbal is irreplaceable.

Using cymbals instead of drums can create magic. I think of cymbals like a bridge. A lot of times on a ballad when there's a little interlude between verses, instead of doing something with the hi-hat and a cross stick, I'll play a soft 8th-note or 16th-note pattern between the hi-hat, my left crash, and my ride cymbal. That allows it to breathe. When it gets to the chorus and you add a beefy snare, it's very special. Cymbals set that up.

RM: You're obviously very interested in the sound of your instruments. In the studio, how much control do you have over your own sound?

JR: Quite a bit. On a typical studio date, I'll show up an hour early. I've got a tech who sets things up, but I can't expect him to tune it the way I hear it. So I come in and change heads, make sure the pedals are working properly, and basically adjust the kit to the room. Maybe a particular room has a ring to it that causes the snares to rattle if I hit the tom, so I have to tune one of them up or down. By the time the other cats arrive, the engineer and I will have the drum sound. Depending on the room and the engineer, that can take from five min-

utes to half an hour. With most engineers, I can get it pretty fast.

I've heard horror stories about drummers who haven't had much experience going into the studio and the engineer saying, "You've got to really muffle your snare drum and put a big pillow in your bass drum." I hate that more than anything, because it gets rid of your sound. If you're intimidated by the engineer, all it does is create tension on the session. You don't want that. You want to have a clear-cut relationship with the engineer. You want to be able to make suggestions, like, "Hey man, let's try an SM-57 on the snare."

RM: What if the engineer says, "You play the drums; I'll get the sounds"?

JR: Then you grab your biggest mallet . . . [laughs] No, if the engineer does say that, then you say, "Hey, I'm just making a suggestion. What do you think?" If the engineer is still flustered by that, then chances are you're not working with a good engineer.

RM: Obviously, if you're going to make suggestions to an engineer, you better know what you're talking about.

JR: Yeah, well you wouldn't want to make a statement unless you knew what you were talking about. But then sometimes, an artist is looking for something specific. When I did the Seger record, he wouldn't let me use anything high-pitched—nothing. I brought in a couple of my beautiful brass snare drums, and he wouldn't let me use them—even if I tuned them way down. So I used the Noble & Cooley wood drum the whole time. Winwood was the exact opposite: He wanted high-pitched brass snares, which I really love. That was great.

You really have to have enough experience to know all of the variables in all of the different rooms. You've also got to know when to say something. Let's say that you've done five takes in a row, the snare drum is losing its tonality, but the producer wants to keep cutting. You have to stop the date and say, "I need a few minutes to change this head and get it back in tune." Producers who are hip will let you do it, because they know that then they'll get another five great takes.

RM: With all of your years in the business, I'm sure that producers and engineers respect you enough to listen to your suggestions. But what if you're new to all of this? Should you maybe keep your mouth shut on your first few dates, until you know what's going on?

JR: If you're going into a date for the first

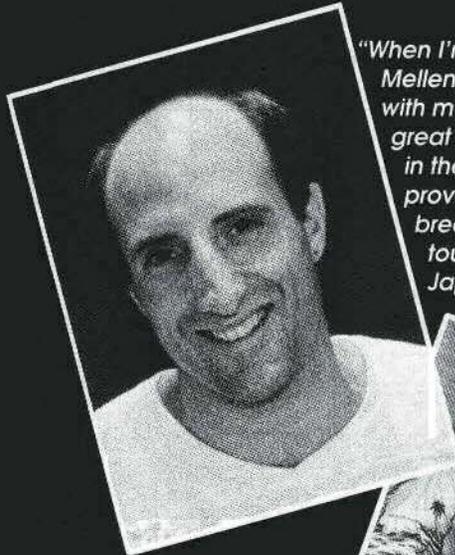
time and you don't know anybody, that can be very intimidating. But I never kept my mouth shut. I would never smart off, but I never kept quiet. If I had gone to dates and kept silent, they would have never known who I was. If it's your first date, you should be cautious, but at the same time, you should be dominant because that's a drummer's nature. You can't be passive and do what I do. You have to be dominant—without being obnoxious. The drummer runs the band, man.



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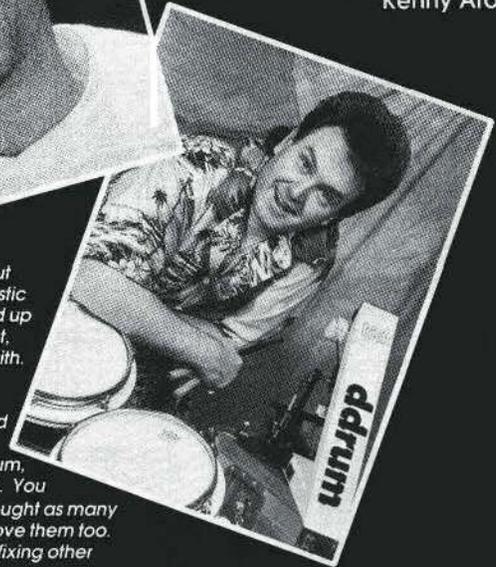
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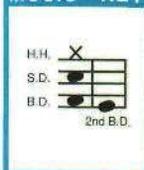
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by John Xepoleas

Grooving With Two Bass Drums: Part 1

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Up until a year ago, I was terrified of playing with two bass drums. Every time I tried, it seemed like mass confusion. The few books that I had approached on the subject seemed too difficult, and I must have read a thousand times that, "you should be able to play everything with your feet that you can with your hands." All of this led up to a lot of frustration, which I'm sure that many of you can relate to.

Not wanting to let my frustration get the best of me, I searched for a simple and less intimidating approach to the subject at hand. I found that the answer was to incorporate the bass drum patterns into simple grooves. These grooves will give you an easily understandable approach for playing two bass drums. In the following patterns, pay close attention to the foot "Stickings"; they're all based on a right-foot lead. Also, try playing the hi-hat part on a ride cymbal as well.

After learning the previous basic patterns, work on the following grooves. These involve beats that are varied through the four beats of the measure, as opposed to the previous examples, which were based on two-beat patterns. Once you are comfortable with these exercises, take it from there and develop your own variations.

Another way of applying all of the previous exercises is by changing the hand patterns over the top of the bass drum parts. Apply the following hand variations to the previous foot patterns. Remember to start all of the exercises slowly and work for a solid groove, along with a good feel.

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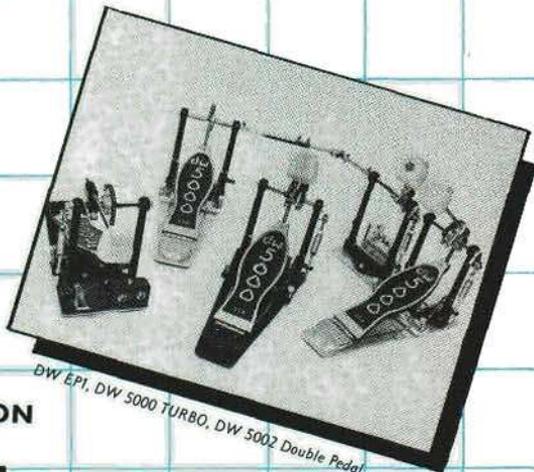
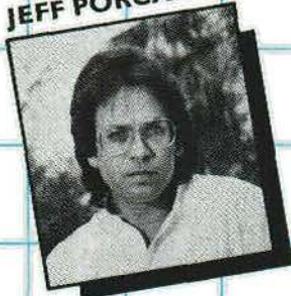
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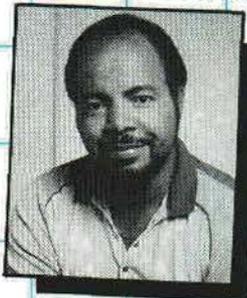


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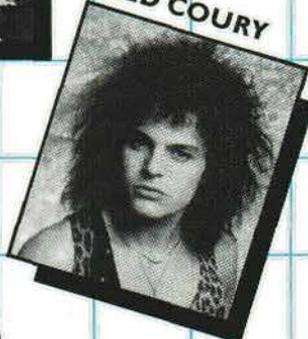


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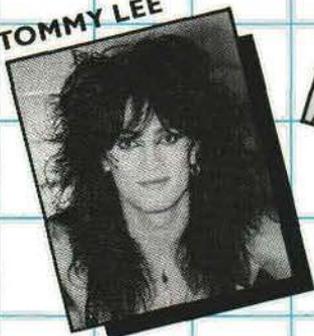
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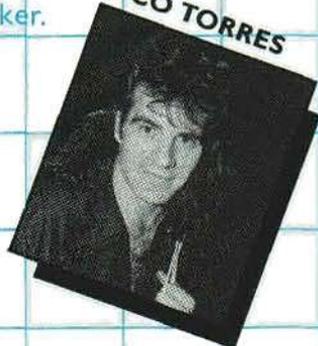
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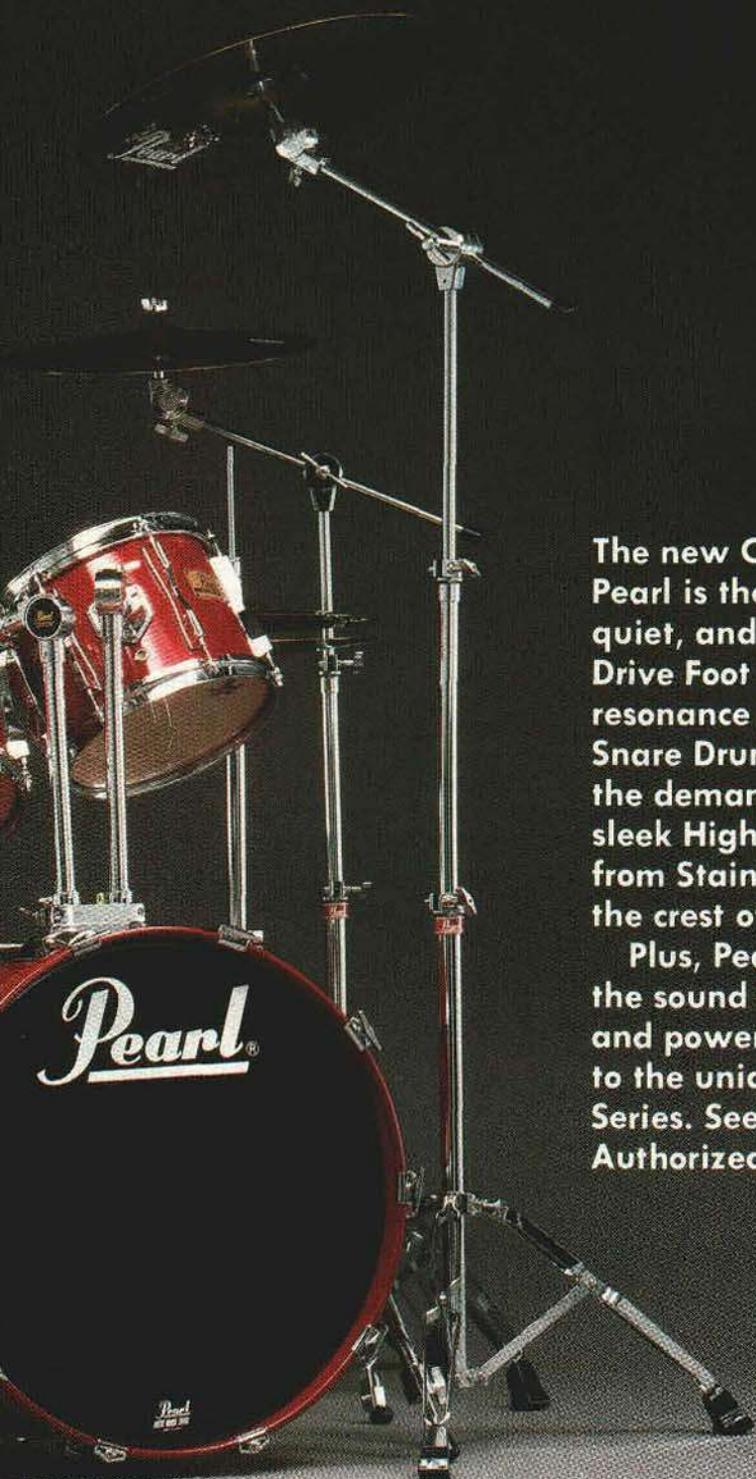
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The Jobbing

Drum solos can mean different things to different people. Generally, they can add excitement to a show by emphasizing the rhythmic elements in the music and bringing them to the fore. This appeals to the basic primeval instincts in an audience, some of whom might be able to relate to percussive improvisation more easily than melodic and harmonic structures. On a nonmusical level, audience members often like to see the drummer being given his or her moment of glory in the spotlight. Unfortunately, some people also like to see a musical performance being turned into a display of physical prowess.

For the drummer, it can be therapeutic, although this on its own is hardly a valid reason for soloing. It gives you the opportunity to be creative entirely on your own and to use your instrument as an extension of your feelings. Less positively, it allows you to show off your technique without the constraints of playing music with other people. For the rest of the band, there can

be a sense of pride and reflected glory in a virtuoso performance by the drummer. Drum solos give them a chance to take a rest, and, perhaps, to play tricks such as leaving the drummer on a revolving stage and setting it in motion!

Before continuing, I had better define my terms. We understand a solo to be when an instrument is played unaccompanied, or when an improvisation is played on an instrument with backing from other instruments. The latter situation seldom applies to drums, although it can happen (in Latin music, for instance). In the case of the unaccompanied drum solo, I'm really talking about the extended variety in which the drummer *takes it* for a chorus or more.

We usually associate drum solos with virtuoso drummers playing concerts with name bands. Jobbing drummers are not expected to play solos as a matter of course. The fact is that jobbing drummers, more often than not, are playing functional music for background, for dancing, or for accompanying shows, rather than music to be listened to for its own sake. In these contexts, solos are inappropriate.

However, we *can* find ourselves playing solos. Perhaps a popular current dance number contains a drum solo. Sometimes show backing requires some solo drumming for a dance routine. And we sometimes find ourselves in a situation where we're called upon to put on a show ourselves. In addition to this, there is always the possibility that we might get the chance of "promotion" from jobbing drummers to name band/concert drummers; if this chance comes, we must be prepared for it.

Being prepared to play a solo can be a problem for the jobbing drummer. It's very difficult to keep soloing skills up to the mark when we're only able to put them into practice once in a blue moon. If your band plays the sort of gigs in which you are able to do a solo as a regular part of the set, it's worthwhile to take the opportunity to develop this aspect of your playing. Otherwise, you can only resort to working on solos when you practice at home. A disadvantage of doing this is that you can enjoy

entertaining yourself in this way *too much*, and you don't spend enough time working on other things. Another point is that something you can do to entertain yourself isn't necessarily going to entertain an audience. If the drummer is obviously enjoying what he or she is doing during a solo, it helps to transmit some enthusiasm to an audience. But this in itself is not enough.

A drum solo has to be suitable for the situation in which it's being played. There's a choice between playing an improvised solo or one that is worked out in advance, as well as a choice between playing a solo that sticks to a steady pulse or one that varies its feel. Rick Van Horn, in his article on soloing (*MD*, Dec. '81) describes this second pair as "Dance" or "Show" solos. Obviously, if you're playing for dancing, any drum solo must retain the tempo and mood of the piece in which it occurs. Otherwise, you're not fulfilling the function for which you are there. On the other hand, if you are putting on a show and the audience is sitting there watching and listening, there's much more freedom to stretch out and explore different time relationships and dynamics, and generally to be more adventurous. The disadvantage of this is that the additional freedom brings with it the additional responsibility of *putting on a show*, and being interesting and entertaining. Comparisons can be drawn to top concert players who set standards that are difficult for the average jobbing drummer to live up to. A "dance" solo, which involves laying down a groove and embellishing it while never losing sight of it, is much less nerve-racking to play. It's also more within the technical terms of reference of the jobbing drummer, and *can* give you more feedback when you see the audience dancing and obviously enjoying themselves.

Once we get into the discussion about whether drum solos should be improvised or worked out in advance, we're entering a slightly controversial area. Top jazz players will always improvise their solos. Jazz is an improvised music. But a jobbing drummer in a jazz situation *might* find that his or her improvisational skills are insufficient to be sure of turning out a good solo every time. However, to take a very basic example, if you know that you're going to take a chorus in "The Saints," it's relatively simple to work something out in advance that you know is going to work well. Aside from music that *ought* to be

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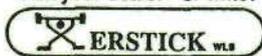
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by Simon Goodwin

Soloist

improvised, there's usually room to improvise within certain structures if that's the way you want to do it. But I would say that there's no reason to be ashamed of doing a set solo. If a guitarist plays the same solo every night, why shouldn't a drummer do the same thing? Another advantage of doing a set solo is that the rest of the band should find it easier to come back in. With an improvised solo, you can play a set number of bars and give them a clear count to bring them in. But you can *still* find that half of them have become either so bored, or so mesmerized, that the reentry of the band is a mess.

Before I leave this particular aspect, it's *most* important that the rest of the band know what the cue is for coming back in: a musical signal, a count, or, to be on the safe side, both. Otherwise, they might leave you on your own forever, or worse, take it upon themselves to force their way in while you're in full flight and not expecting them.

The jobbing drummer doesn't always have artistic control of the musical environment, and it's quite common to be told that you're taking a solo in a particular number. Bandleaders have a nasty habit of calling for drum solos in the fastest tunes in the repertoire. For this reason, it's a good idea to practice soloing at fast tempos. The problem, of course, is that, although it's easy to maintain a level of excitement at a fast tempo, there's less space available in which to explore rhythmic possibilities. If you're able to choose your own solo vehicle, it's better to go for something that suits you, your technique, and your musical attitudes, rather than in terms of maximum impact.

Well-known drum solo numbers should be avoided *unless* you're prepared to do a reasonably faithful reproduction of the original. I don't mean that your solo should be copied note for note, but the same spirit, intensity, and general structure should be adhered to.

In 1969, I played in a rock band that did my version of Ginger Baker's "Toad"—with half the equipment and less than half the talent. In retrospect, it was a big mistake! I was asking to be compared with Ginger. If you're not able to do justice to an established solo feature, it's much better to do something of your own that will be judged on its own level. This doesn't mean that you compose your own tune to solo to. There are plenty of tunes around

that lend themselves to the purpose, but that are not generally associated with drum solos.

How do you develop soloing techniques? Where do you find ideas and inspiration? These questions can only be answered in the same way as questions on any aspect of drumming and musicianship: Listen to records. Watch and listen to other people. Try things out for yourself. Analyze what you think goes into a good drum solo and avoid pitfalls. There have been some very helpful articles in *Modern Drummer* (Neil Peart [Dec. '83], William F. Miller [May '86], David Garibaldi [May '85], Ken Meyers [Nov. '82], and others). There are also solo transcriptions that are usually very demanding to play. But they are very valuable as study materials, to show how solos can be developed and to help you formulate your own ideas.

As a final thought, we should gaze into the crystal ball, and consider how recent technology is affecting drum solos and how these effects will develop. Whether it's an acoustic set with an interface facility to trigger additional electronic sounds, an all-electric kit, an acoustic kit with additional electronic pads, or a combination of the first and third, we've now come to accept the fact that there are many more sound possibilities open to drummers. In addition to the usual drum sounds, drummers can get almost any sound they want by striking a surface with a stick. MIDied up to synths, drumpads can produce notes and chords. Sequencers can have any number of sounds accompanying what a drummer is doing. These sounds are controlled by the drummer, but once they've been set in motion, all four limbs are free to play other things. This indicates that a drummer's creativity is likely to depend more on hi-tech developments, and less on the drummer's development of drumming technique. For anybody playing progressive music, these additional sounds are becoming the norm. Soon, the drum solo will be expected to include electronic effects. Not *so* long ago, the average drumkit consisted of four drums, a hi-hat, and two or three cymbals. It was only the top players who had four or more toms, and more than one bass drum. It's progress, and we'll need to follow suit if we are to survive.

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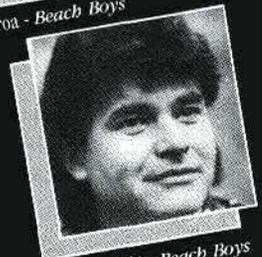
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Ulrich continued from page 25

interested in getting a rhythm guitar player. We didn't want two lead players. We were very determined on that for some reason; I'm not really sure why. And none of the people who came in wanted to play just rhythm. So one day at rehearsal, James picked up his guitar and said, "Screw it. I'll do it." He wanted just to be the rhythm player then, and we were looking for a singer for about a year. We couldn't find a singer that'd fit in. So James ended up doing what he does best—singing and playing rhythm.

MD: When did you record "Hit The Lights"?

LU: That was the first recording that we did—on a small compilation LP in Los Angeles called *Metal Massacre*, which a friend of mine put out. That was even before we had a lineup in January, 1982. We had a Teac 4-track. I played the drums, James played rhythm and sang, and we had a black friend of ours on lead guitar. It was difficult for us in L.A. at the time, because Motley Crue, Ratt, and Quiet Riot were the club bands, before any of them broke out. We were obviously very different. We were doing all these songs of European bands. In the spring of '82, we just started getting into our own songwriting. And we played in the clubs and did all this heavy stuff with the emphasis on rhythm guitar. We were also very different visually. We didn't care what we looked like, and there were all these bands with their hair and their makeup. To say that we didn't go over so hot is putting it mildly.

MD: How did it feel when the band didn't go over and groups you didn't have any respect for seemed to be more successful?

LU: We just went out and played. We'd have a circle of 50 friends out front yelling, "Yahoo." "Slowly people started saying, "Metallica—they're different. What's going on here?" The big savior was when we did a gig in San Francisco at the Stone in September 1982 to promote this compilation album we were on. We came out and played all these British metal songs. What we weren't aware of was that, up there, there was a huge underground scene—the equivalent was completely nonexistent in L.A. And all these people came to the first gig—like 200 or 300 of them. They knew all the Diamond Head songs and the Sweet Savage songs, and were going crazy. Then, over the course of the next four months—September through December of '82—we kept going up to San Francisco and playing there.

MD: You eventually moved there when Cliff Burton joined the band, didn't you?

LU: The switch of bass players made us move to San Francisco. But the whole scene in San Francisco was our type of situation. All these people were into the same bands we were into from Europe. People came out in jeans. There was none of this L.A. b.s. with your hair and your makeup, and standing over in the bar trying to pick up chicks. They were there for the music, which is what we were there for. All of a sudden, we had all these people. We started getting letters in the mail. It was like we were a real band up there, whereas in Los Angeles, we were a bit awkward.

MD: Who influenced your drumming then?

LU: Diamond Head's Duncan Scott and the guy in Motorhead, Philthy Animal Taylor, were definitely the two biggest influences. Duncan Scott and Phil from Motorhead were two very, very different drummers. Phil was all over the place, doing a lot of quick fills and a lot of stuff that sounds to me these days like a sort of speeded up Ian Paice. The other side of that is the guy from Diamond Head, who drummed a lot more on accents—a lot of heavy accents emphasizing the rhythm guitar, utilizing a lot of the toms.

MD: In Metallica, everything, including vocals and lead guitar, is subservient to the drums and James Hetfield's guitar.

LU: He and I get the songs together. We formed the band. The basic sound of Metallica is the rhythm guitar and the drums. Accenting the rhythm guitar seems to me more powerful than doing all these brrrrrrrr rolls. When I listen to the first record, the rolls are there, but they don't really do anything. They're sort of hanging out, emphasizing the end of a measure or whatever. One thing I really picked up from Duncan Scott was to accent cymbals on the snare hit, which I do a lot. I hit probably 75 percent cymbals on the snare hits instead of on the kick drum. There's something about that accent itself that's really [*socks fist into palm*] powerful.

Basically, what Metallica comes down to musically is power. I try to emphasize that power and push it out to the other three guys in front. I'm not interested in showing off and doing fancy things that don't really do anything for the music as an overall picture. The less you can play, the more you want it to come across that you really can play, and the more you feel that you can play, the less you need to prove it. That has been a very important point in my development over the last three or four years. I wish there were more people who felt that way. I think that comes with confidence. There comes a point when you just want to fit in with the music that's going on around you, instead of doing all this solo stuff.

MD: On some of the really fast songs, like "Fight Fire With Fire," how do you even get the sticks off the drums in time to hit them again?

LU: I play all the fast stuff on the Tama *X-hat*, because I can get my snare hand further back. So on "Fight Fire With Fire," "Damage Incorporated," and "Battery," I play on the *X-hat*. I used to play all the fast things on ride cymbal, but I've grown really bored with the sound of ride cymbals. I prefer hi-hats. To me, hi-hats sound a lot heavier. The only time I use ride cymbal on *Master Of Puppets* is on a really slow break on "Disposable Heroes" to get that really fat sound. But to play fast on the ride cymbal sounds really weak, I think. Right after we finished recording *Ride The Lightning*, I got my *X-hat*. I guess playing fast is something you get used to; it just takes practice. We do play "Fire" as the very last encore, and it's the end of the set. We've been playing for an hour and 40 minutes and here's "Fight Fire." We just go for it, as fast as we can go; see ya.

MD: When you recorded it, was it as fast as you could go?

LU: At the time, yeah.

MD: That's about one of the fastest tempos ever recorded. Motorhead never got close to that speed.

LU: That whole thing with speed really bores me. Is this band faster, or is this song faster . . .

MD: You don't care about being the fastest foot in the West?

LU: Absolutely not. The thing that separates my really fast songs from some of the other fast drummers who play the same tempos is that most of the other drummers only hit one note. For instance Slayer—nothing against him; I think he's one of the best new drummers today—but he does all this fast stuff. He only hits one note on the kick drums between every snare hit. I throw triplets in all the time, which makes the whole thing sound a lot fuller. I mean, anyone can do ones real fast.

MD: Tommy Lee said he attached a pedometer to his foot, and it said that he did the equivalent of six miles during a show. How many miles do you think you do?

LU: If Tommy Lee does six miles, I would do at least a marathon.

MD: One difference between old heavy metal and this wave is that older metal is based on the blues. The only time a blues feel even surfaces in Metallica is on "Orion." Do you have something against the blues?

LU: The whole middle section of "Orion" came from Cliff Burton. A lot of the more off-the-wall stuff you hear, especially on the last two records, he was responsible for. Kirk, James, and I did fairly much of one thing. Then Cliff would do something very different to the songwriting. He was into a lot of old Thin Lizzy, Lynrd Skynrd, and old Z.Z. Top. And it's not anything we're against. "Orion" is one of the most interesting songs we've done, simply because it is so different. And without saying anything bad about the new guy, I'm a little sad that we miss Cliff's input into the songs.

MD: Your name is on every song. What exactly do you do in the songwriting? Do you write lyrics?

LU: No, that's completely James' lyrics. James and I lived together and had sort of a rehearsal studio. When all four of us were in the same room, one guy was going cling cling, the other guy was going doo, and it was very difficult for us to focus. We'd have tapes from Kirk and Cliff of their best ideas, and James and I would simply build the songs. I can bring ideas to life through him. He can get the chord progression I hear in my head without my

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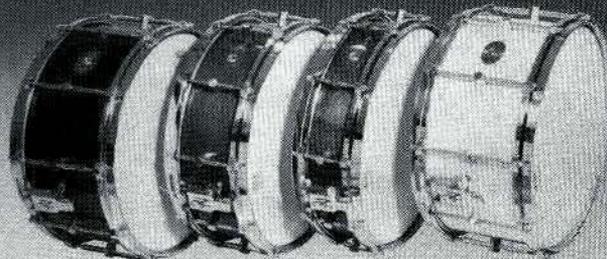


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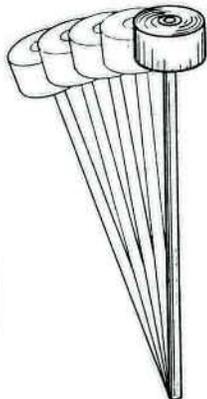
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having to play guitar. I hear a riff in my head, I hum it out, and James plays it. It's a riff that I've created through James. When we'd have the basic skeleton of the song, one guy would come in at a time, make suggestions, and take it from there. When we write a song, we try to approach it really separately and differently from the song before or after it. My biggest input into the songwriting is the structures, the mood changes, and how the song shifts from an intro into a verse and a middle break. That influence comes from the early Diamond Head. You know, you don't wake up in the middle of the night and all of a sudden have the most original thing in the world. Everything comes from somewhere.

MD: Do you ever see yourself editing down to a conventional three- or four-minute format? Has there ever been pressure to make a single?

LU: There's never been pressure for us to write anything in any different way than we do. On *Ride The Lightning*, we deliberately tried to make a song short, mid-tempo, and have a catchy chorus. When the whole album was over and done with, that was the worst song. We could see it was a huge mistake and realized we couldn't do anything any other way than by instinct. We've proven to the record company that we don't need any outside interference. We're always open for a creative idea or a second opinion, but we're not the kind of band that can be locked in and told what we have to do. On *Master Of Puppets*, we had quite a close thing with Geddy Lee. There was talk of Geddy Lee actually producing the album, but that didn't happen. There are people we have a lot of respect for—our managers Cliff Burnstein and Peter Mensch, along with Geddy Lee, who we talk to. We don't need any idiots up on the 23rd floor at the record company telling us what to do, because they don't really have any contact with the street, the way we feel we do.

MD: Do you think that, as you get more successful, it may be harder to have that contact with the street?

LU: It could get harder if we wanted it to get harder. It's more difficult now than it was, say, a year or two ago, but we are trying. I think part of the reason we're successful is that we know what's going on around us. We make a lot of conscious efforts to avoid really overdone, cliché things. Heavy metal today is the biggest cliché in the world. We see a lot of things we dislike, so we make sure we avoid them. What's the point of doing something if it's already been done? If you can't do something new and different in whatever particular area you're talking about, then don't even bother.

MD: Sometimes what happens when you become successful is that, if something works, you feel you have to repeat it.

LU: You know the old rock 'n' roll cliché statements like "We're doing this for the people," "We want to give the people what they want," and "We want to let people have a good time"—as far as I'm concerned, that's complete bull. We're completely the opposite. We're here for ourselves. We want to make sure that *we* have a good time. It might sound a bit arrogant or whatever, but that's really the way we feel.

MD: It seems like you're just beginning to discover what you can do in the studio.

LU: We have a very peculiar way of recording. People would be a little disappointed if they hung out in the studio with us. Everything is so completely unspontaneous. It's amazing that we make it sound the way we do in the end. We do everything separately. There's not even bass and drums together. Basically, the way we recorded all of *Master Of Puppets*—except for "Battery" and "Damage" because they're really fast songs that would be impossible to do this with—was that James and I would set the tempo of the song to a click track. James would lay down one cue rhythm guitar track, and then I would be alone with the engineer, Fleming Rasmussen, who we worked on the last two albums with. I would have the rhythm guitar and the click track, and we would just go. If things started getting wavy, we would go back and punch in. He's the best engineer in the world for punching in. Engineers say, "Yeah well, you can punch a guitar in or vocals, but you can't punch drums in." Why not? We have mastered some sort of

way of recording where there's never, at any point, more than one of us recording, and there's still some sort of live feel to it. That's because we know that, when that red button is pushed, we simply give as much as . . . I mean, I'm sitting there, and there's no one else in the studio. A lot of people probably couldn't get a vibe off it. But when he says, "Rolling," I just let out everything I have inside of me for 30 seconds or however long it takes for it to get wavy again.

MD: Did you do that on *Ride The Lightning*?

LU: On *Ride*, the budget was very different. *Master* was the first time we had the opportunity to go in the studio, and it was like, "Here's the studio. Just send the bill when you're done," because it was the first record with Elektra. On *Ride The Lightning*, we had a lot less time, so it was, "Well, that's good enough." For *Ride The Lightning*, we had about six or seven weeks, including mixing. *Master Of Puppets* took from September to January continuously—just two weeks off for Christmas. *Master Of Puppets* was the first time we really wanted it to be as good as it could be. Nothing else was accepted.

MD: Do you do any drum overdubs on the records?

LU: A lot. One thing we throw in a lot is extra toms on accents—big heavy accents. Toms are good to overdub, because you can really make it sound fat and huge. On some parts, the snare is doubled. There's the occasional punch in when I throw in an extra cymbal. That's the hard thing about punching in drums. If I hit the cymbal, it'll still be hanging in all the ambient mic's around the room 10 or 15 seconds later, and you'll punch in and hear a crssh . . . So a lot of times, I'll play along—the exact same thing—the cymbal should still be in the room, and he'll punch me in. But sometimes, you can just vaguely hear it. I know I'm too paranoid about it. I'm the only one that hears this stuff.

Sometimes we'd spend a minute getting the song down and eight hours on the snare sound. I had to end up with someone else's snare drum, because I couldn't get the sound together. Rick Allen is a good friend of mine, and he has four or five of the classic *Black Beauty Ludwig* snare drums. I always heard about this *Black Beauty* stuff. They're so rare, and they don't make them anymore. We spent four days when we were trying to get a snare drum sound,

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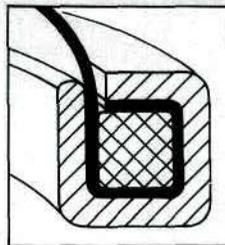
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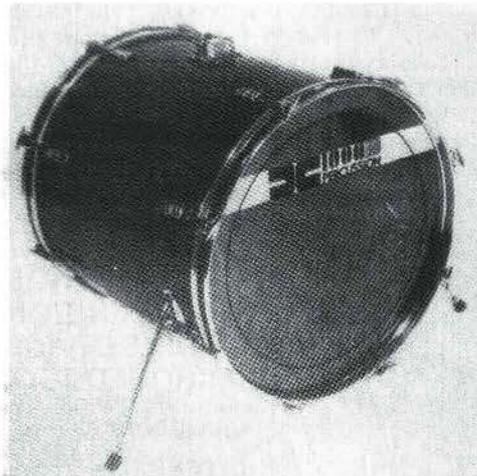


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and absolutely nothing happened. So finally, I called up Rick and said, "How about letting me use your snare drum. It's so legendary." Everyone said, "Yeah, sure." But we tried everything else. So it was sent over from England. We took it out of the box, I hit it three times, and that was it. That was the snare sound I was looking for. Then what happened was I walked into this music store in Copenhagen and told the guy in the music store the story about how this *Black Beauty* saved the snare sound. He said, "Stay here for a second," ran to the back room, and came back with a box that was unopened. He opened it up and pulled out a brand-new, never before touched 6 1/2" deep Ludwig *Black Beauty* snare drum. It had just been sitting in his back room for seven years, and it had never even been opened. I'm so paranoid about it that I don't take it on tour. I just want to use it in the studio. I have it stored in a bank vault in San Francisco.

MD: Did it seem weird to you to play in headphones in the studio? Did it seem unnatural or that you were cut off from the live energy?

LU: I never had any problems with headphones. I just used to wear the same headband that I used to play tennis with so they'd stay on. The thing I really had a problem getting acquainted with—and really hated at the beginning—was the click track. The first song we did click track for was "For Whom The Bell Tolls" on *Ride The Lightning*. On tempos that slow, I'd always done quarter notes. But it sounded a lot heavier to do half notes on the hi-hat. It was a bit wobbly, because I never really played that tempo before. Fleming said, "It's click track time." I tried it for about four seconds, threw the headphones down, and ran out. Slowly, you actually get into it. We recorded the rest of *Ride* like that. We came to *Master*, and I was actually up for it. I'll never record any less than the really fast songs without a click track now. It's a challenge—you against a click track—and you want to win. It brings out something in me that I like. I really, really got into it on the last songs on *Master*—"Sanitarium," "Thing That Should Not Be," "Orion." It felt right. It was a really cool thing when I went up against this click track, and I was going to win and not let it mess me up. It helps me when I play live a lot.

MD: Do you own a drum machine?

LU: No. [We're interrupted by a roadie bringing tape for Lars' sticks.] This is one thing I copped directly from tennis. They have this gauze tape you use to tape the racket with. It's not any drum-stick thing. It's just green gauze tape. You wrap it on. It doesn't stick to anything; it just sticks to itself. They don't slip out or anything. If I drop them, it's because I'm stupid.

MD: Do you ever see yourself owning a drum machine?

LU: They're a lot of fun. At the studio, they had a super up-to-date one that cooks breakfast, dries hair, and everything. Yeah, I could picture that, but it's not high on my list of priorities at the moment.

MD: What drums and cymbals are you using now and why?

LU: I feel the 18" medium-thin Zildjian crash cymbal is a good standard. It makes a lot of noise. It's not too heavy to hit. It cuts through well. The rest of the cymbals are just one up and one down from that. I have a lot of 18s. I specifically use Zildjian cymbals, because I think they sound good. Live, I prefer the A Zildjian *Platinums*. They're not too high ended, but they're very, very crisp. My hi-hats are Zs, which are the heaviest. My drums are Tama power toms. I have all bottom skins in the studio, because drums simply sound better that way, period. The bass drum is open. Live, we mike them from underneath because Mick, our soundman, prefers it that way. And even though we know the drums themselves don't sound as good without bottom heads as they do with bottom heads, he still says the difference in the drum sound itself isn't as big as the difference he gets with the separation with the mic's in there. It's the same thing with the cymbals. Live and the studio are very different in terms of how I have the bottom skins and how I have the cymbals set up. I prefer the *Platinums* visually, because they look really cool with a lot of lights. I don't think I would use *Platinums* in the studio. I would use just regular A Zildjians. The audio side of it is so minimal. It's like a waterfall that hits you. Live, the difference you get if you have bottom skins on or not is so minimal. But these things are a lot more important

when you record.

MD: Do you use any electronic effects?

LU: Live, the Yamaha *REV 7* and noise gates. In the studio, sometimes echo on cymbals is really cool. In one place, we flanged a cymbal. There are ideas you come up with in the studio. With the drum room itself at Sweet Sound Studio, which is where we've done the last two records and where I would prefer to record the rest of my life, and the way Flemming Rasmussen works the room with ambient mic's, you don't have to put too much stuff on.

MD: Were you using double bass on *Master Of Puppets*?

LU: Every song.

MD: You can't always hear it.

LU: That's probably one of my only complaints: When I do double bass, it's not as upfront as it should be.

MD: Are you using just ruffs and flams?

LU: That's one thing I've been getting into a lot. I used to only do triplets [*does a figure on the floor with his feet*], but now I'm getting into more like this [*does a more complicated figure on the floor*]. But I do this all the time [*does double-bass roll on the floor*].

MD: Do you lead with your right or your left?

LU: I'll demonstrate it, and you can answer that question.

MD: You lead with your right. Do you use two different sticks?

LU: That was true. It's not anymore. I changed when we came off the *Ride The Lightning* tour. I had it for about two years. My thought behind it was that I liked real heavy snare, so I had a 2B for a snare stick, and I would shift between a 5B or a rock stick for the ride because some of the songs are so fast. Every time the drum roadie back then would hand me a stick, it was like a huge complicated thing.

MD: Do you ever get a cramp in your legs?

LU: No, but if I'm on a night of low energy, I try to do less of the visual side. When I'm really on, I sit up, play out to the people, and have a lot of eye contact with the people. When I'm high on energy, I do that very well. On the nights when I get a little tired, I just sort of go down and I wouldn't say I hide, but I get down. Most of it is

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mental. Sometimes I'm tired, but I tell myself that these people have been waiting outside for four hours and why shouldn't I just keep this going? Or I'll tell myself that it'll be over in twenty seconds. Then, I'll put it on autopilot, and think about going to the bakery and getting a pastry.

MD: Seeing you in concert, it's hard to imagine that you're ever thinking about going to the bakery.

LU: I try to remove myself from what's going on in my body for a few seconds. There's one place in "Ride The Lightning" where, if I'm having a low-energy night, I get away with switching to single bass. It's right after I play the longest stretch of double bass in the whole set. If I'm really, really tired, I just kick into single there without anybody noticing and saying, "Hey, the drummer just switched to single bass. I want my money back!"

MD: Do you use oxygen live?

LU: Some people say it's bull and some say it's not. I have it usually around encore time. I just read some reports in magazines where doctors questioned if it actually gives you a kick or not. But if it doesn't work physically, it works mentally. If you take three sucks off an oxygen tank and just mentally you think you feel better, it's worth it. I've done it all year. Now it just depends how hot it is.

MD: How do you relate to the bass player? Where most drummers and bassists lock in together, you key off the rhythm guitar.

LU: I have absolutely no bass in my monitor, period. I have a very different monitor setup than most drummers. I can't hear him. I play with the rhythm guitar; that's it. In my monitor, I have 25 percent kick, 25 percent snare, 50 percent rhythm guitar, and a hair of toms. I have none of Kirk's guitar, no bass, and no vocals.

MD: So on stage, the difference in bass players hasn't had a radical effect on your playing.

LU: In terms of how it was with Cliff? Obviously, I can sense it. I told Jason [Newsted, Metallica's new bassist] very early on that one of the things I feed off a lot is what's going on with the three other guys on stage. If you notice the way the set is designed, I'm fairly far out there. I pretty much designed that part of it. There's a lot of room for the guys to hang out on each side of me. One thing I really hate is to be left alone back there. I told Jason that I wanted him to come up because it gives me a lot of kick. When he comes up, we do something together—just eye contact or whatever.

MD: What do you think is your greatest strength as a drummer?

LU: In a band where so much is built on the rhythm guitar and the riffs, it's good that I don't want to be all over the place all the time. When I'm on, I really can push the rest of the band. I can play quite fast and I can play heavy quite fast. Some people can play fast, but there's not a lot of power being emitted. I think a lot of the energy in the Metallica music starts back around me, and then I emit that power out to James and the rest of the guys. They throw it further out in the crowd, and they throw it back. It's a circle that starts back with me. Someone once called me Angus Young on drums. When I play, I just get heavily into it. I mean, people like John Bonham are heavy drummers, but you see them sit and play, and yeah they're roaring, but . . . I'm not a particularly heavy guy, but I give 100-and-whatever percent pretty much every time.

MD: Weaknesses?

LU: On some of the nights that I don't play very well, I really play bad. It's strange how I can psych myself down in a gig. I can make a couple of mistakes early in the gig and bring myself even further down thinking about the mistakes in the beginning. When I lose my confidence, things can get ugly. That's my biggest weakness. Also, everything has to be right. I can almost go out of my way to search for something not to be right so I can use it as an excuse. If the monitor is not spot on, I can always blame the monitor. If one cymbal is two inches further to the left than it should be, I can always blame that. If I do 80 gigs in 110 days, my mood goes up and down. The kids don't notice it, but I notice and the band notices. The worst thing of all is that I notice it.

MD: So you want to be perfect every time?

LU: I don't care if I do a fill and the fill is not perfect, or if I reach for a cymbal and it's not there. My greatest concern is not messing up and messing the other guys up. The other thing that I hate is

when I'm a little cautious. I just want to be in the really confident mood. I play best when I don't think about what I'm doing. I usually sit and make stupid faces at Flemming Larsen, my drum tech. When I start thinking about what I'm doing, sometimes it can be a disaster. Last night, there was one place in "Ride The Lightning," and for some reason, my mind just focused in on it about a minute earlier in the song. For that whole minute, I was thinking, "Okay, here it comes. I've done it 800 times before. It's the easiest thing in the world," and when I got there, it just fell to pieces. But again, it's not something that any of the kids out front would notice. So I don't know if it's strange to hear someone being as honest as I am right now. It's easy to say, "Well, I never screw up." I'm just overemphasizing the things that happen maybe three percent of the time.

MD: The band is very tight and the set is very structured. Although the show is fresh, there doesn't seem to be much improvisation. James even says essentially the same thing every night at specific points.

LU: One of the things I thought was great about a lot of stuff in the '70s ... I collect a lot of Deep Purple tapes, and if you listen to the same song on two different nights, one night it's eight minutes long, and the next it's 12 minutes. Ritchie starts a solo, and when he doesn't want to solo anymore, he'll cue the drummer to go to the next break. That kind of thing is cool. In a way, that's missing quite a lot. We play fairly much the same set every night. That works best for us. It's not often that, all of a sudden in a gig, I'll throw in something completely new. But every year, I upgrade the songs. When we come back from this tour, a lot of *Master* will get upgraded. Off the road, I play a lot. Where James and I used to live for three years, we had a house and a garage. It was the easiest thing to wake up in the morning, and go out and play all day.

MD: One more question: You've helped explain what makes your playing and Metallica's music so unusual. But there's one thing that you do that defies rational explanation and makes life difficult

for your drum tech. On stage, why do you only have one spare stick on each side?

LU: I don't usually drop more than one at a time. If I drop one, Flemming's right there to put another right in. I have a stick in my hi-hat stand, and I've got the biggest, oldest piece-of-junk stand ever. It's rusty. It's like a little bottom half of a stand. It's got a broken drumstick glued inside so the drumstick just sticks up. I've had it for over three years. I've got this superstition. I'd be lost without it.

It's Questionable continued from page 12

Q. A few weeks ago, I read an advertisement for Zildjian's *Platinum* series cymbals, which stated that "*Platinum* finishes won't chip or peel, no matter how hard you play." After seeing this, I went to a music store to get a pair of *Platinum* hi-hats. The manager told me that they *do* chip and peel, and showed me a pair of peeling hi-hats to prove his remark. My question is, do these cymbals chip and peel or not?

G.E.
Laurel, MD

A. We put your question to Zildjian's Lennie DiMuzio, who informed us that the original issue of *Platinum* cymbals did have a problem with peeling of the plated finish on the outer edge of some cymbals—such as crashes and hi-hats—where drumstick impact would abrade the plating and loosen it up. Dealers were notified of the problem, and faulty cymbals were replaced. The process has since been refined, and the electrolytic plating has been dramatically improved. According to Lennie, instances of chipping or peeling are now extremely rare; perhaps one to two percent of Zildjian's entire production of *Platinum* cymbals since the improvements have been made show any problems. If you do have a problem with a *Platinum* cymbal, you should notify your dealer, who should, in turn, notify Zildjian. Zildjian does have a return policy on faulty cymbals within a certain period after purchase.



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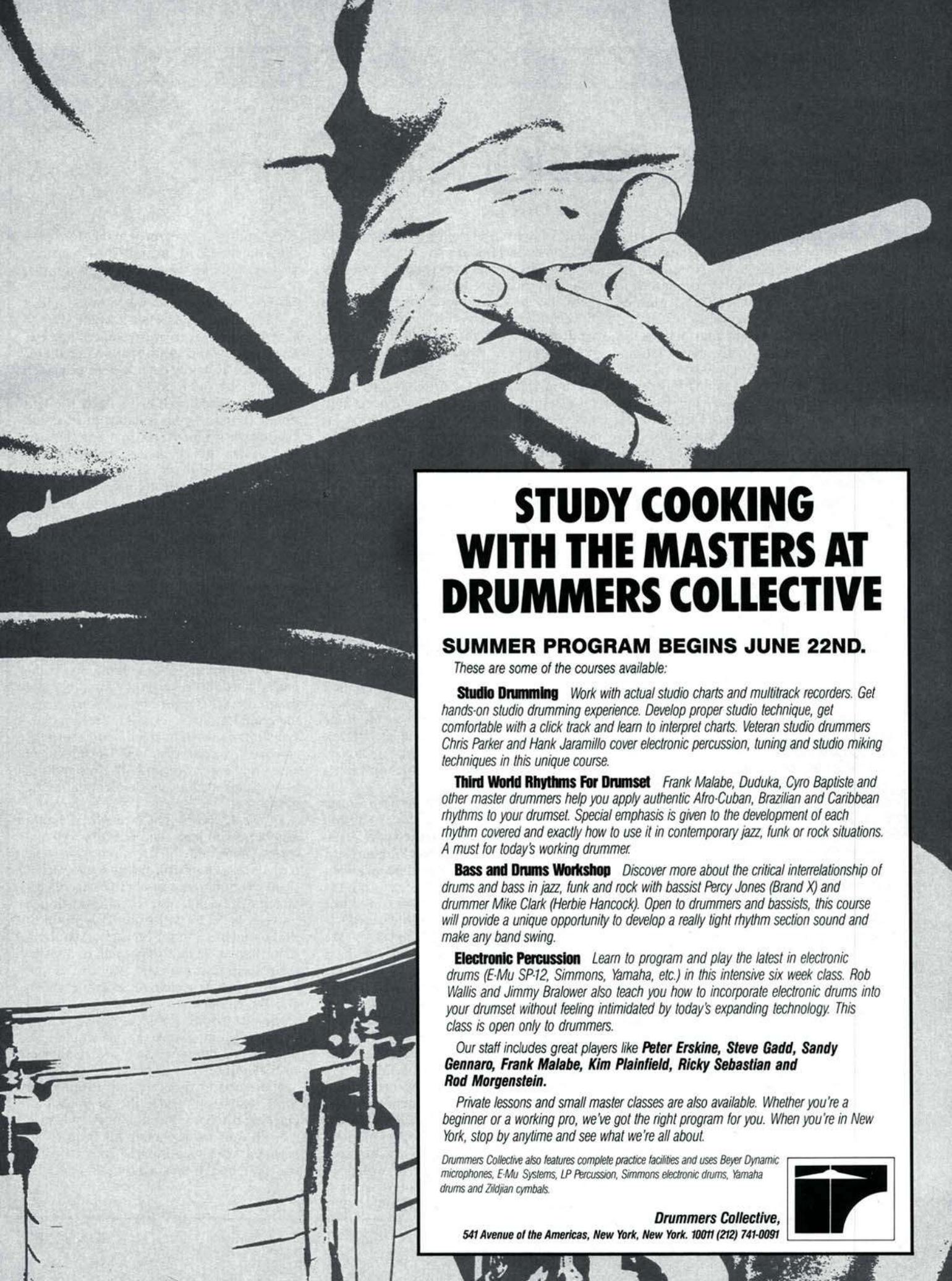
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Professionals Only?

Perhaps some people don't deserve to take drum lessons. That seems to be the attitude of some teachers, anyway. A number of teachers hold "auditions" for new students, and if a prospective drummer doesn't show enough promise, then the teacher refuses to accept that person for lessons. Of course, there are situations such as college programs where it does make sense for a student to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency, but I'm not talking about that. Rather, I'm referring to a typical music shop or teaching studio where the students tend to be at a beginning or intermediate level.

So what do you do if your student doesn't seem to be making very much progress? Assuming that you are conscientious and are not just looking to get the money for the lesson, handling this situation can be difficult. A good place to start is by talking to the student. Often, a youngster doesn't especially want to be taking music lessons in the first place; the parents are the ones who are insisting on the lessons. (This happens a lot with drums, in particular. The child figures, "Well, if I have to take music lessons, maybe drums would be fun.") In a case such as this, you might explain to the parents that forcing the child to play an instrument can ultimately turn him or her against music, and that it's better to wait until the child expresses an interest in music. If the parents reply, "Someday our child will thank us for insisting on these lessons," then you will have to gently inform them that their child is not making very good progress, and you can't guarantee that the child will ever be much of a player. If they still insist on the lessons, at least you've been honest with them.

But don't think that you are now off the hook. It is still your responsibility to do your best to motivate the student. And keep in mind that it takes some people longer to get started than others. I once had a ten-year-old student who didn't show much talent or enthusiasm. But around the time she turned 11, she suddenly began to progress rapidly.

A more difficult situation occurs when the student really wants to play the drums but shows no natural affinity for the instrument. As the teacher, you have to be very careful in a case like this. The student should not be led on to think that everything is going fine. But at the same time, anyone who wants to play an instrument

should be given every opportunity to do so. Some teachers are so concerned with their own reputations as teachers that they will only accept "gifted" students. But good teachers are more concerned with their students than with themselves. The students who are *not* particularly talented are the ones who need teachers the most.

I'll never forget T——. He was about 16 when he signed up for drum lessons at the music store where I taught. He never said much—just came in, played through his lesson, seemed to listen to what I said, and then left. I really couldn't tell if he was interested or not. His face was perpetually blank, but he did keep coming back week after week. After several weeks, however, I began to have doubts about him. His progress was very, very slow. I sensed that he would never be able to play with a group of any kind. I made up my mind that I was going to talk with him and suggest that he stop taking lessons, as he wasn't making enough progress to justify the money he was spending.

As I walked into the store on the day of his next lesson, one of the salesmen was taking a new Ludwig drumset off the shelf where it had been on display. T—— was standing there, and when he saw me come through the door, he exclaimed, "Look what I just bought!" This was obviously *not* the time to advise him to stop taking lessons.

We started working on basic drumset coordination. I could tell that he found this more interesting than the snare drum studies that we had been working on, so I hoped that the new set would be just what he needed to spark his enthusiasm. But the progress was painfully slow. It took three full weeks for him to master the coordination necessary to play 8th notes on the cymbal, straight quarters on the bass drum, and snare and hi-hat on 2 and 4. He was working out of a book that contained very basic rock patterns, and he was only mastering about one new pattern per week.

But something else *was* happening. He started coming out of his shell and talking more. He would come into a lesson and discuss the drumming on a record he had bought, or tell me about a drummer he had seen on TV or at a high school dance. Then, for several weeks, he gave me progress reports on a room he was building out in his family's garage, in which he would be able to play his drums without bothering anyone. When the room was fin-

ished, one of the salesmen in the store gave him some old Ludwig and Zildjian posters to hang on the walls. In the meantime, T—— was starting to progress a little faster—two patterns a week. Sometimes I would get frustrated when it would seem to take him forever to grasp something new. But then I would see the expression on his face when he finally got it. I've seldom seen anyone look so proud.

I once asked him if he had ever thought about trying to join a band, but he said that he wasn't interested in doing that. As long as he could spend a couple of hours a day playing his drums in that room in the garage, he was perfectly happy. When he got out of high school, he continued to do the same thing. He enrolled in a trade college, and would play his drums for an hour or so every night before studying. He was listening to more records, going to a few concerts, and checking out some different types of music. At one point he discovered jazz, so we started mixing in some jazz patterns at his lessons.

After a year at the trade college, he got a job as an apprentice at a company, so he had to finish his schooling by taking night courses. At that point, he had to stop taking drum lessons, but I would see him from time to time when he would come into the store to buy a pair of sticks. The last time I saw him, he was working full-time and still playing his drums in that room in the garage.

In the 12 years that I taught, I had a number of students who did very well and went on to play professionally—some part-time, others full-time. A couple of them went on to major in music in college, and one of them is now teaching music at a university. Needless to say, I'm proud of those students, and it feels good to think that I may have had something to do with their success. But in many ways, I feel that T—— is just as successful as any of them, and I'm embarrassed to recall how close I came to stopping his lessons, simply because I didn't think that he would ever be good enough to play a professional gig. In that respect, I was probably right; my mistake was in thinking that turning out professional players is the only goal of teaching drums. I doubt if T—— will ever make a cent from playing his drums, but perhaps those lessons enriched his life in a way that money never could.



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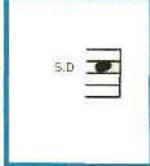
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Developing The Weak Hand

MUSIC KEY



One of the most confidence-shattering problems facing any drummer is the realization that one hand just doesn't *work right*. At best, the *weak* hand will feel just a little clumsy; at worst, it can feel like it simply does not exist. However, this should come as no surprise, since most of us go through our day using our dominant hand almost exclusively. The next time you're at a drive-thru window, notice the person in the car ahead reaching clear across his or her entire body to retrieve an item. The left hand *doesn't* exist.

To help eliminate this problem, you should begin using your weak hand in daily activity. It could be something as simple as carrying an object or unscrewing a jar. Don't confine yourself to just strength activities either. The goal is to develop hand and finger control, as well as strength and coordination.

You should also try to concentrate on technical drumming exercises that emphasize the weak hand. If your weak hand is 25% weaker than your strong hand, balanced exercises will strengthen both hands, but the weakness will *continue* to exist. The secret is to work the weaker hand 25% more. The following exercises will help you attain that goal.

The studies are written for right-handed players, so lefties should reverse the sticking. Go for repetitions first, and then for speed. Remember to be precise, but above all, be patient. Good luck!

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J.R. Robinson with his Beyer Percussion Mics, photographed on his studio kit. Kick—M 380, Snare—M 422, Rack toms—M 420, Floor toms—M 201, Hi-hat—M 422, Overheads—MC 713 (2).

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Lawson continued from page 29

they still come back to where they were—back to earth. And Lionel Richie is another one—incredible. So George let me use his studio, and I did this thing for Fatt Burger. I think they have a lot of potential to be a dominant force in the music business. It's jazz instrumental, pretty close to Spyro Gyra, where a lot of the Yellowjackets' stuff is more hardcore—more for the musicians. There's some stuff that's hard for me to listen to.

RF: Like what?

RL: On *Shades*, there's a tune called "Sonja's Sanfona." It's a great tune, but there's a lot going on. A lot of people don't want to have to think about a lot—just in life, let alone in music. Being in a group situation, of course, you have to give and take. I usually wrote more of the funkier tunes because most of my background is R&B and funk. The other guys come from more of a fusion jazz background, so they use a lot of progressive chords.

RF: Why does production interest you?

RL: I can still have all of the goodies, but I can still walk the streets. I can help people. I know what it's like, because I'm a so-called jazz musician. When I played with the Yellowjackets, I was a jazz musician; with Lionel, I'm a pop musician—so I understand where they're coming from. It's hard, and you need all the help you can get. I have the time and the expertise to help them do what they're doing, and that helps me become a producer, too. That way, I don't have to go on the road, and I can stay home with my family. Record companies will give a rock band a million bucks, but they won't give a jazz group ten grand. It's not fair.

RF: A minute ago, you said that with the Yellowjackets you're a jazz musician, and with Lionel you're a pop musician. But where does your heart lie? Do you have a true love?

RL: Other than my wife, no. I like it all. At the level I'm at, I find myself dealing with it all. With Lionel, we play pop, rock, funk, and country with "Deep River Woman." If you don't get into this stuff, you find yourself running into these bridges you're trying to climb over.

RF: What was your first big job?

RL: My first really big gig was with Roy Ayers. I did that *Mystic Voyage* album, which was one of my first recordings. Roy took me all around the U.S., so I was able to meet a lot of people, and people were able to see me perform. I was here in L.A., and my uncle Paul Riser did the horn and string arrangement for the Brothers Johnson's very first record. They needed a drummer, so my uncle got me hooked up with Patrice Rushen and Harvey Mason—who had worked on the project—and they got me hooked up with Quincy's office. I invited the guys down to hear me play with Roy Ayers, and we blew them away. The band was hot! Quincy wanted to hear me, so I had to go down and play on tape. I

took a friend of mine, Greg Phillinganes, down with me, and he wound up playing piano on the session. Greg also got a chance to meet Quincy.

That was back in '75, so I worked with the Brothers Johnson. At that time, they were real hot, and a lot of people came to see them—word of mouth. I worked with them for about two and a half years, and then I left and started working with Flora Purim and Airtó, which was Brazilian.

RF: How did that come about?

RL: Ndugu and George Duke had seen me playing with Roy Ayers. They knew Flora Purim and Airtó were looking for a drummer, so they recommended me for the gig. Flora called me to audition, which is where I met Jimmy Haslip. I met Jimmy walking across Flora's driveway, carrying his equipment in. We got in the house, and I thought she was going to have some stuff she wanted us to play. I had gotten her records and had become familiar with her material, but she was sitting on the couch eating dinner, and she said, "Okay guys, play." It was just Jimmy and I—bass and drums—and I said, "What do you want us to play?" She said, "Whatever you feel." So Jimmy and I fired up, played for about 40 minutes, and got the gig. I played what I knew, although I forget what it was that I knew at that time. Whatever it was, it worked. So I got a chance to work with her and Airtó, which helped my Brazilian chops.

RF: What was it like working with Airtó?

RL: It was great! It was like going to school on the gig. When he played drums, I played percussion, and when I played drums, he played percussion. I got a chance to dabble in percussion a little bit, and I was exposed to a different audience. George Duke and Stanley Clarke would come out and see us because George had produced a couple of Flora's projects, so these seeds were being planted. When Flora's group split, I worked with Roy Ayers again for a little bit. Then I replaced Ndugu when he left George Duke's band. When that split up, George used us on a lot of his recordings and productions. That helped get me into the recording thing. We did a Dee Dee Bridgewater project, one of Flora's projects, and three or four of George's projects. We did one project in Brazil with the Brazilian Love Affair Project, Milton Nascimento, and George Duke in 1980. So I was getting into the studio scene.

RF: How did you develop your recording skills?

RL: By doing it. There's no school you can go to. It's like reading a book to teach you how to drive a car. Until you get out and drive a car, you don't really know. It's experience. Do it. Play as much as you can. Listen to as much as you can. Go hang out as much as you can. Everybody has something to offer. Just keep yourself in situations that allow you to play. Sitting in is a

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RF: What kinds of things do you have to think about when you're recording as opposed to playing live?

RL: When you play in the studio, the tape does not lie, so you've got to be on it. On the gig, you have to be on it, but once you've made a mistake, it's over. Live can be more laid back, but in the studio, things cost so much money that people have the tendency to be uptight. Playing-wise, it's not that different, but you don't have to play as much in the studio. Of course, it depends on the musical situation. If you're doing a pop record, you don't have to play as sophisticated as I did when I played with the Yellowjackets. But when I played with the Yellowjackets, I played just like I did on the gig. In the studio, you don't have to compensate as much as you do live, because live, you don't have all the effects you have in the studio. Playing live, things are less controlled, and you have less to say about how you sound.

RF: How did the Yellowjackets actually come about?

RL: Jimmy Haslip knew Robben Ford, and Robben knew Russell Ferrante. Robben and Jimmy got together, they were bringing Russell down from San Jose, and they needed a drummer. Jimmy told them about me, so we got together, and the rest is history. That was around 1982.

RF: How did it evolve?

RL: We just got to playing together. We were doing a lot of original material live that was not on Robben's album, and the people loved it. So Gary Borman, our manager, fronted the money and said, "If you guys get the deal, great. If you don't, we'll just chalk it up." We did a digital demo at the Record Plant, and a month later, we had a record deal as the Yellowjackets. It was Russell, Jimmy, and I. Robben had a deal with Elektra. Then Robben lost his deal, and we wanted to make him a member of the band, but he didn't want to sign contractually, because if something

came up, he wanted to be able to do it. Originally, Carlos Rios was going to be the guitar player, but he got an offer to play with Lionel Richie, so he went there. We ended up hiring Marc Russo on saxophone, and he doubles on keyboards as well.

RF: Did working with a saxophone change your approach?

RL: It changed the sound of the music, because we'd never had a horn as a dominant instrument. It changed the concept, and it changed the way I played, because rock guitar is a little bit harder to listen to, whereas saxophone is a little bit easier to listen to. So I approached it with an easier attitude.

RF: You got a chance to solo with the Jackets. Have you gotten a chance to solo with many others?

RL: Probably the freest situations I've been in were with Flora Purim and Airtio, and the Jackets, for the simple fact that there were less people playing in the band, so there was less going on and less people to keep together.

RF: What do you try to do when you solo?

RL: I try to tell a story. Drums talk, just like any other instrument. Just tell a good story for whatever song you're playing. It wouldn't be good to play a three-minute avant-garde solo in an Aretha Franklin tune. You have to find the right hat to stick on for whatever situation you have.

RF: You recently left the Yellowjackets.

RL: While I was off with Lionel, they felt that my commitment to the band was not there, and they had to move on. I could not be there physically to do what had to be done, and I literally could not afford it, so I had to step down. I had a chance to play more with the Jackets, but I would have made way less money. So what it's coming down to is whether I want to play or whether I want to make some money. I have to stay out a month with the Yellowjackets to be able to make my bills for the month. After a month with Lionel, I can pay my bills for the next year. What's neat, though, is that it frees me up to pursue some of the things I want to do for Ricky Lawson.

RF: Do you want to put together your own thing?

RL: It's not so much that as concentrating on writing and producing, which is like my own thing.

RF: Will you stop drumming?

RL: Never. Although I guess you never know. I may stop drumming in the capacity of how I'm doing it now—being on the road all the time—but never altogether.

RF: When you produce, do you plan on playing on the projects as well?

RL: If I need to in order to get the project happening. I did it on the Fatt Burger tune, but we were pressed for time, so I had to.

RF: Is it difficult to drum and produce at the same time?

RL: Yes. It's a lot easier to sit back and

say, "Hey fellas, do this." It's harder to produce from your instrument, because the way it sounds inside and the way it sounds outside are two different things. Through headphones, it sounds one way, and through the speakers in front, it sounds another way.

RF: What, besides good time, do good drummers have?

RL: They listen. I think those are two of the biggest things. The time thing comes with experience, but being able to listen and comprehend quickly is important. You have to be open-minded to every kind of music also.

RF: Speaking of other kinds of music, you've had a couple of other major road gigs. Which came first, Al Jarreau or Stevie Wonder?

RL: I first met Stevie in about '73 through my uncle. He took a big vacation, though, so when he finally went on tour in '84, it was a big deal.

RF: What was it like playing Stevie's music?

RL: That's a jam session at rehearsal and on stage.

RF: Is it real improvisational?

RL: He loves for you to create within his music and enhance his music. A lot of musicians don't know when to do what. And a lot of musicians can play, but they don't know how to get along with people. That's important, too. Playing his gig is great, because Stevie is the cat! He's never afraid to try anything. You've got a guy who can't see, yet he's trying to figure out how he can stand on top of a piano, jump off, and land on his feet. Stevie is a genius, literally. He's got some things that can change the way music is played today. Playing with Stevie is like going to school, because you learn how to play all that syncopated stuff. For his earlier records, the stuff would be so sophisticated that they needed two drummers to play it, so they split the part up. On the gig you've got one cat playing it, so you've got to figure out how to make the stuff work. He's got all kinds of computers and synthesizers operating on stage, and you've got to be able to fit in with that stuff. You've got to be able to pay attention to him all the time and watch him, which is discipline. He'll give you the most subtle signal and expect you to be on top of it. That lets him know you're paying attention and you want to work. It's like going to the school of "get it together quick." He'll come in and say, "Rick, play this beat," on stage in front of 15,000 people—writing tunes on stage. Get it together or seriously be embarrassed.

It was a great time. I was still doing the Jackets, and it worked out that when they weren't working Stevie was working, and when Stevie wasn't working the Jackets were working, and when the Jackets weren't working Jarreau was working. Jimmy and I did the Jarreau gig together.

RF: How did that gig come about?

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RL: It stemmed from the Montreux *Casino Lights* album with Al Jarreau, the Yellowjackets, Randy Crawford, etc. I was supposed to play with the Jackets and with Randy. Things got going so good that I wound up playing with Randy, the Jack-ets, Mike Mainieri, Larry Carlton, and Al Jarreau and Randy together. When I fell into the gig, it was at a time that my style was real conducive to what he was doing, with a real solid backbeat and a real strong, good feeling. It worked out great for him and for me, because I fell in right when I needed to fall in. Jimmy had been doing the gig periodically, and we got together like cake and ice cream. Then we got a chance to do his video project, *Live In London*. Jimmy couldn't do it, so they called Nathan East, and that was another ice cream and cake. If Jimmy and I couldn't do the gig, they'd call Alex Acuna and Nathan East. It worked out where Nathan and I were free. The stuff sounded good, so they did an album.

RF: How did the Lionel Richie gig come about?

RL: We talked about it, and he understood the fact that I would have to leave the Yellowjackets for a while to do his gig. He told me, "If I was doing any other tour, I'd say, 'Rick, do what you've got to do,'" because he used to be in the Commodores, so he knows what it's like to be in a self-contained band. He said, "But this is like my *Victory* tour." He hadn't been out for a year and a half, he had a new album out, he had done "We Are The World," he had a real good momentum, and everyone was dying to see him. Before his record was even finished, there were orders for three and a half million copies. He said, "This is not the tour to miss. Whatever you want, I'll get it for you." I said, "Well, I want to get the Yellowjackets to do it." He came out and heard the band, and we blew him away. He was going to take Marc Russo when he didn't even need a sax player. We had a meeting with him, but we wouldn't be able to play any Yellowjackets' music. If we really had wanted to do it, we could have done it, but in essence, the guys didn't want to play his music. So they decided not to do the gig, and I told Lionel I couldn't do it. We went away for a couple of weeks, and he called me and said, "Ricky, I need you. How much money do you need to do this gig?" I named it, and he said great. I talked to my wife, and I talked to George Duke about it. I told the guys what was happening, and they said, "We understand. You've got to do what you've got to do." So I'm doing the gig with Lionel.

RF: Is it at all challenging for you? It's way different from the Yellowjackets.

RL: It's a challenge to see if I can make the number-one songwriter in the world happy. It's a challenge to adapt from the Yellowjackets to a real simple situation. To play Lionel's music, you have to have discipline. A lot of people don't have it.

That comes from playing in the studio. You have to know when to step forward and when to step back. I've learned how to do that.

It's great playing with Lionel, because he cares about what I'm doing, playing-wise, and he cares about my personal life. So when I get a chance to do something for him, I give my all. If anything is wrong, he says, "Come to me; I'll take care of it." You don't have to go through three or four people to try to get something taken care of. Musically, it's a treat to work with him because he's different from a Jarreau or a George Duke, so it's discipline in regard to being consistent. That's not to say that you

don't have to be consistent playing the other gigs, but his stuff is so simple that the simplicity of it is difficult. You get bored, and you cannot let that happen.

RF: How do you not let boredom happen?

RL: I look at Lionel, and he's always smiling. When he's smiling, I know I'm doing my job, and when I know I'm doing my job, I get on it.

RF: What is your live equipment like with Lionel?

RL: I have the Remo *Encore* acoustic set—which is Remo's top-of-the-line drumset—Paiste cymbals, Drum Workshop foot pedals, and Dean Markley drumsticks.

RF: Are you using electronics on stage?

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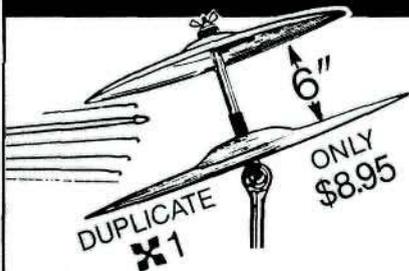
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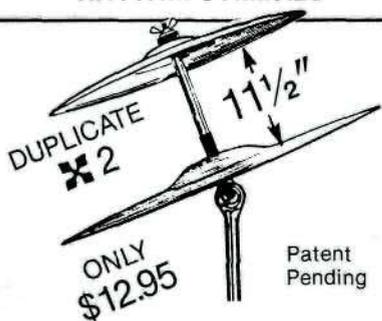
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RL: Yes. One of the Dean Markley foot pedals is an electric trigger. I have an eight-channel Ramsa board made by Panasonic. I have a Roland *DDR30*, which is Roland's version of the Simmons, an *SP-12* with the turbo, the Roland percussion machine, three *SPX90's*, a Yamaha power amp, and a Roland *Octapad*. Plus I have some Barcus-Berry contact mic's that attach to my acoustic drums to trigger some electronic sounds. All of that, except the contact mic's and the *Octapad*, is in a rack.

RF: When do you apply the electronics?

RL: In Lionel's show, there are a couple of tunes on his new album that have a drum machine. I can either program the machine to play the song, or sample the drum sounds on the record and play them myself. That way, I have the drum machine sounds, but with a real person playing it. When people hear the show, they say, "Wow, that sounds just like the record." Live, it's hard to have the songs sound like the record, which is what the audience is familiar with. One song is "Dancing On The Ceiling," and another is "Don't Stop." Also, when we do "Penny Lover," our percussionist comes down front and sits on the piano. But in the song, there are bongos and congas, so by my having the Roland percussion machine, it allows me to cover the percussion parts. On "Say You Say Me," there's a big drum break in the middle. On the album, they were able to use a lot of really neat effects to produce this sound, so I can sample that sound, bring it to the stage, and have the exact same big cannon sound.

RF: Speaking of which, what does it take to play a ballad well?

RL: It takes sensitivity, and it takes getting into the song as if you had written it. Like on Anita Baker's album, she sings a lot of ballads, so you really have to get into that mood. It's not intense playing-wise, but it's intense mentally because you have to be real sensitive. You have to be super-conscious of time, because there's not that much carrying it. Usually, what carries a ballad is the feel and what the ballad is saying. It also takes the discipline of playing simple. It's almost like being a small orchestra, because you've got the drums, the big cymbal crashes, the cymbal swells with the mallets, the bell trees, and all that kind of stuff going on. It can be a real trying situation, but you have to be sensitive to do it.

RF: Is there a difference playing for instrumental music as opposed to playing for vocal music?

RL: Oh yes, because you don't have the vocalist to worry about. Playing instrumental music, you pretty much worry about the instruments, which, of course, can have the tendency to be a little bit louder or fuller sounding. When you have a vocalist, the instruments should enhance what the vocalist is doing. You're back a little bit because the vocalist is on top. An

instrument like a bass or piano is pretty consistent sound-wise, but a vocalist really isn't. Vocalists might get a little hoarse and not sing with the same intensity, so you always have to keep your eye on them to feel out what they're doing vocally and how they sound. Do they sound real strong? You can tell when someone comes out of the gate killing, as opposed to singers who are a little reserved because they're trying to save themselves for the next night or for later on in the gig. They do that, because it's hard for a vocalist to have that kind of consistency, sound-wise, that an electric instrument has. It can be an uphill battle. Al Jarreau is a musician—not to say that others aren't—but when Al is not singing lyrics, he's creating sounds that will blend into the instrumental side of what's happening. That's hip! And he's always involved, which is another real hip thing.

RF: When were you with George Benson?

RL: In '82, for about a year and a half.

RF: In his band, is the guitar or the voice the central instrument?

RL: Sometimes he does vocal tunes, and sometimes he plays instrumental tunes. It kind of goes back and forth across the fence, which is really cool. When I was playing with him, there was a really neat bass player in the group by the name of Stanley Banks. Stanley played tambourine with his foot while he was playing the bass. Then we had a percussionist, Vicki Randall, and three horns, which were really cool. All of the guys in the band were really cool, so it was a nice musical situation. We could play instrumental music, and one of the guys in the band—George—could really sing, so all of a sudden, we would be playing behind a singer who was a musician. You don't have the restrictions that you sometimes have with a straight-out vocalist.

RF: With all you've done, how would you like to be known?

RL: I want to be known as Ricky Lawson the songwriter/musician/producer, and be known as a really, really nice guy who cares about other people.

Drum Market continued from page 75

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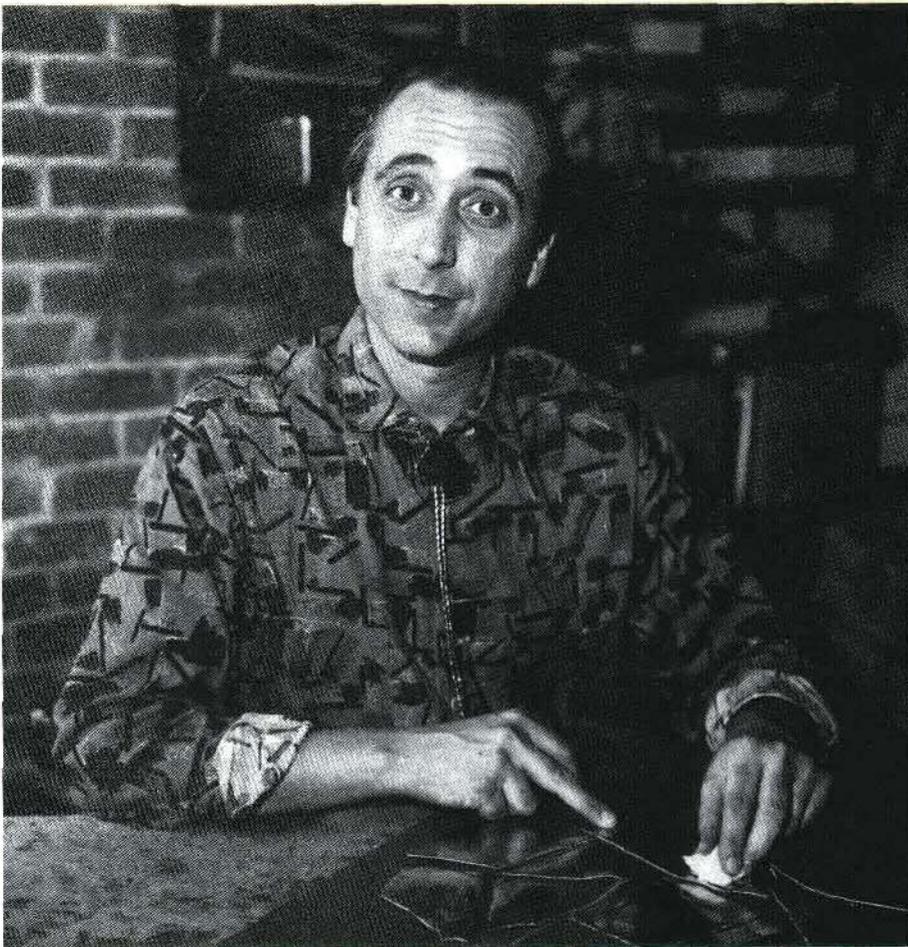
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Ted Johnson's Cymbal

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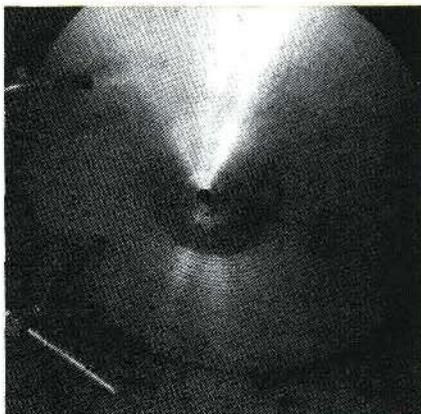
After a couple of years of jewelry making, Ted's efforts expanded into other areas. Once again, his interests in other art media led to new creations. "While making some larger pieces of jewelry, it occurred to me that I could use cymbal pieces in my paintings. From this, I began a series of mixed media works, using cymbals in a new manner. I completed a series of 34 of these works in a little over a year. That led to yet another way I could use cymbals, which was to create what I call my *Abstract Works*." From the abstract designs, Ted ultimately expanded his creativity into his current efforts—what he terms his *Turkish Explosion* series. He explains the evolution of that series as follows.

"I had a lot of broken cymbals. In a separate stack, I kept the parts of the cymbals with the logos on them. I thought it might be interesting to create works that were unique artistically, but that focused on the fact that they were, in fact, created from pieces of cymbals. I wanted to keep that identification with the cymbals themselves. The first works in the *Turkish Explosion* series were small—what I call the *Turkish*

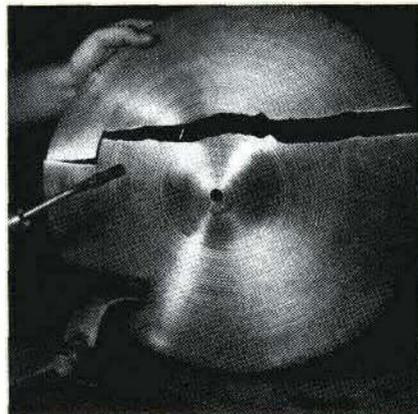
Ted Johnson is a percussion artist in every sense of the word. An active player, he began playing drums at the age of 13, holds a B.A. degree in Percussion and Music from California State College, Hayward, and completed graduate studies in Electronic Music and Recording at Mills College. But he is also heavily involved in "fine arts," having pursued additional graduate studies in Creative Interdisciplinary Arts at San Francisco State College. Ted's joint interests in music and media arts led to the creation of a unique form of

artwork: cymbal art.

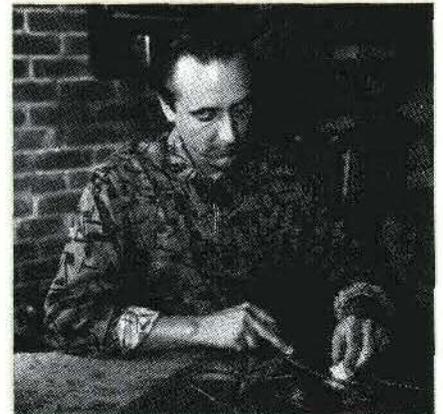
The story starts simply enough: While rehearsing one day, Ted discovered a piece of broken cymbal on the floor. As a media artist, the piece intrigued him; he was sure he could do something interesting with it. So he created a piece of jewelry in the shape of a long arrowhead. That led to the creation of still more jewelry, some of which has been purchased by such artists as Louie Bellson and Larrie Londin. Each piece of jewelry Ted makes is hand-shaped and then machine-buffed. The piece is



After freezing, the cymbal is heated.



The cymbal is broken into pieces.



Ted carefully hand-polishes each piece.

by Rick Van Horn

n: Art

Explosion Portions. They are made up of just a portion of the cymbal, either intact or in fragments, with the cymbal logo in the center. Next came the *Turkish Explosion Sections.* Those works are constructed from the top half of the cymbal. With them, I could continue—and expand on—the fragmentation. Each work is unique; I cannot duplicate any single one. I worked on the *Portions* and *Sections* for over a year before I thought of any larger works. But eventually, I began the *Full Turkish Explosion* series, which are complete cymbals, fragmented and then reassembled to create a stillness against motion."

As with any new form of art, not every work was a success. As Ted puts it, "I started out by making a lot of mistakes. You can't go about smashing up cymbals without a bit of technique, and I've got a lot of really messed-up cymbals to prove it. If the overtone ridges are smashed, or if you try to break the cymbals up from the inside, it looks bad, and you stand a good

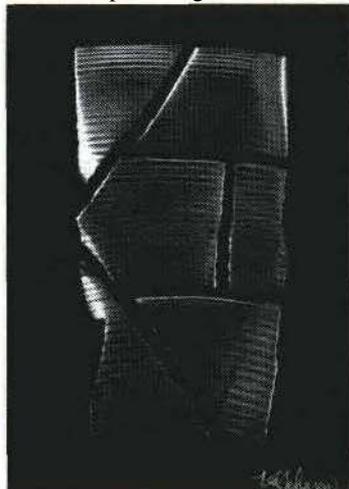
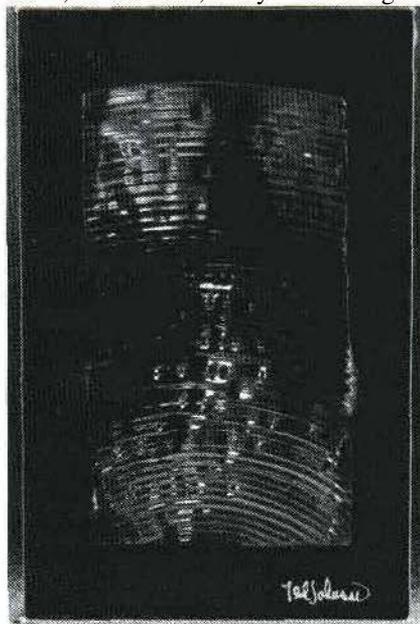
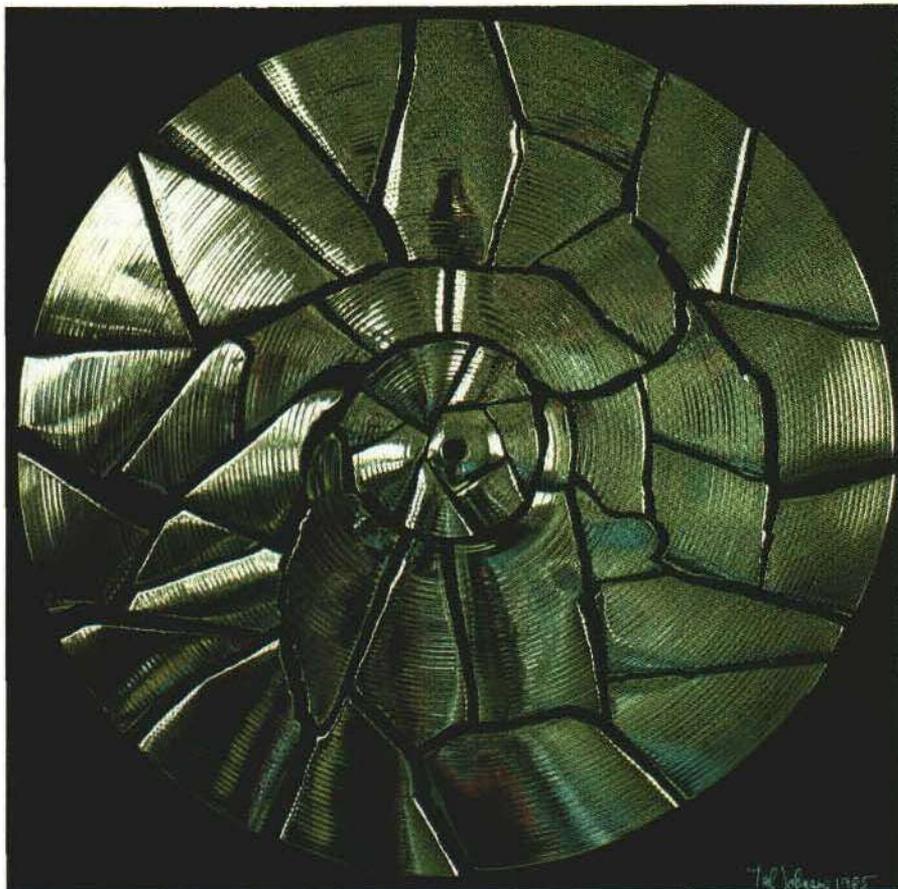
chance of trashing the whole cymbal. Eventually, I found a method by which to disassemble the cymbals without much visible damage. I use a combination of freezing the cymbals and then using a torch on them later, just before the work is started. Basically, I scare the hell out of them, and before you know it, they're apart!"

After the cymbals have been successfully fragmented, Ted's work really starts. "I begin by polishing each piece on a buffing machine with both a rough and a smooth polishing wheel. After that, each

piece is then hand-polished and cleaned repeatedly, until all dirt and tarnish is off the surface. After this, I seal the surface of the cymbal with a metal sealer and then polish it with a good metal polish. I've probably tried over 90% of the polishes on both the commercial and professional markets by now. A lot of them look good at first, but later tend to yellow or fade. I'm pretty satisfied with the one I'm using now."

Ted has been asked whether his process can be applied to functional cymbals, by drummers who'd like to have unique-looking cymbals on their sets. He has also discussed his process with cymbal manufacturers, who have told him, "That's not applicable to our products, due to the intensive labor." Ted points out that that's very true; it takes him literally hours and hours on each work to get the high color and gloss that he achieves.

After completing the work on the cymbal itself, the ultimate *Turkish Explosion* artwork is only partially finished. Ted then



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Ted's unique works have created a great deal of interest throughout the art world—he's had showings in several states and has been mentioned in *Art In America*—and throughout the music industry, as well. Examples of his work hang in the offices of Remo, Inc., Sabian Cymbals, Zildjian Cymbals, and other major manufacturers, as well as in many drum shops across the country. Perhaps his greatest exposure to date was the appearance of one of his works as the cover art for *Modern Drummer's* first *Equipment Annual* in 1986. In addition, Ted has completed several privately commissioned works.

"I've done several works for people with broken cymbals that they just couldn't throw out. Those are a lot of fun to do. In fact, a private commission was my biggest work to date. I made it from a 28" gong! When the work was completed and framed, it measured 32" x 32" and was very heavy. The bigger the work, the more weight, the more polishing, the more time—and the more expense."

Ted doesn't have a standard size in his *Turkish Explosion* series but generally works with cymbals that are 14" to 18" in diameter. However, he's currently working on a new type of *Full Turkish Explosions*, using 6" to 8" thin splash cymbals. "Because of their size," says Ted, "they're so tight—so together; they communicate to a very wide range of people. They are, of course, fun to make, and so very, very beautiful."

Ted doesn't really have favorites when it comes to cymbals with which to begin his work. "I like all cymbals. They're like people; they all have different personalities, like the *Rude* crash cymbals or *Earth* rides. It takes all kinds. I make jewelry or artwork out of almost all types of cymbals. Each has a separate property. And a nice thing about my works is that almost all of them began out of the ruins of other people's misfortune: broken cymbals. I think that's rather a credit to the *Turkish Explosion* series—sort of a phoenix rising from the ashes, so to speak.

"The *Turkish Explosion* series is a method of sharing my visions and personalizations with people, both inside and outside the music business. I see the series as a process—an art form that is in concert with its function. In addition, each work is a time capsule in which can be found value, love, and a sense of history." For those interested in contacting Ted regarding his unique cymbal art, he may be reached in care of Pro Ra Nata, P.O. Box 1585, San Leandro, CA 94577, or by calling (415) 481-2769.





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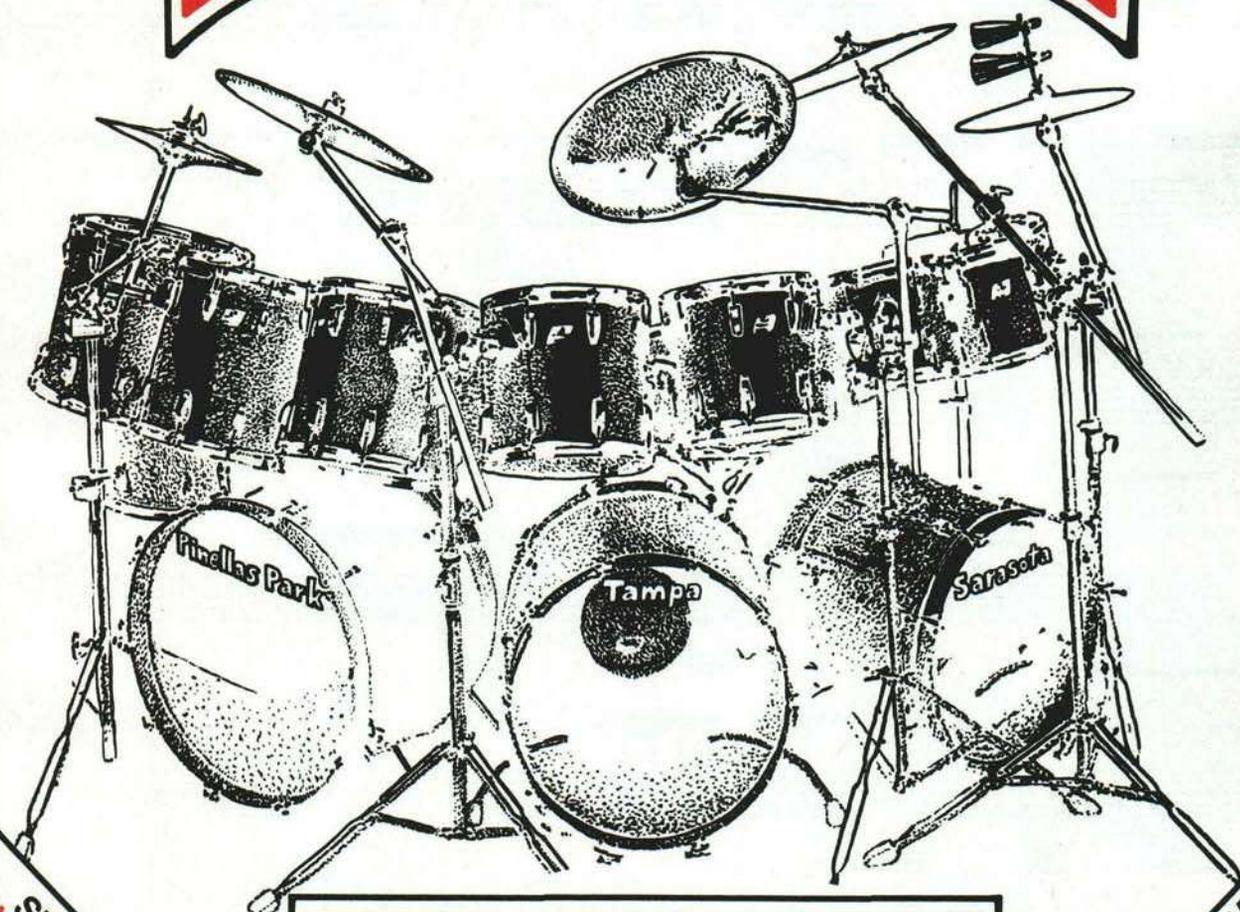
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Phil Collins: "Down And Out"

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H.H.	X	Chinese	C.C.	R.C.
T.T.	●			
S.D.	●			
F.T.	●			
B.D.	●			

Adcl
Toms

This month's *Rock Charts* features Phil Collins on the Genesis album, *And Then There Were Three* (Atlantic SD-19173, recorded September 1977, released April 1978). Over the past few years, Phil Collins and Genesis have become very successful pop acts, but there was a time when Genesis was a bit more progressive and Phil showed some of his impressive chops. On "Down And Out," Phil reveals some good speed and endurance with his hands and feet, and the 5/4 time feel he plays during most of the song is very driving. Much of Phil's playing from this album and earlier Genesis works is excellent. The chart begins with the guitar intro, which enters after the sustained synthesizer part. Note that, wherever a hi-hat ride is indicated, the hi-hats are played partially open.

This page of musical notation is for a bass guitar piece, consisting of ten staves of music. The notation is written in bass clef and includes various rhythmic patterns, triplets, and dynamic markings. The first staff begins with a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff features a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes. The third staff contains a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes. The fourth staff has a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes. The fifth staff includes a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes. The sixth staff features a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes. The seventh staff has a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes. The eighth staff includes a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes. The ninth staff features a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes. The tenth staff has a triplet of eighth notes and a triplet of sixteenth notes. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and triplets. Dynamic markings, such as accents (>) and slurs, are used throughout the piece. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a final note.

(synth. ending)

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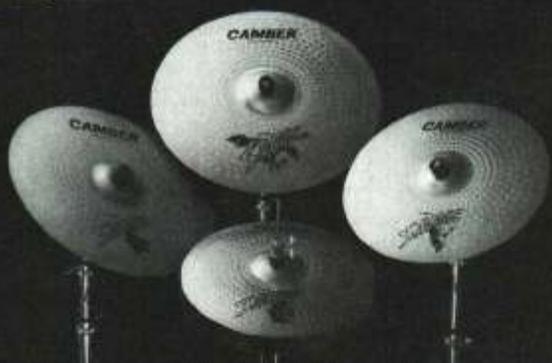
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P.I.T. continued from page 33

amount of imitation, but I think they use that constructively, rather than trying to become clones of those players. There are some players that you'll never be able to clone. They're just too great.

Brancato: When someone does get involved with a real note-for-note—almost a transcription—of another player, I will ask that student as politely as I can to leave that specific drummer at home. I want to hear the student.

SA: Sometimes students will reach a certain stage, and they can't seem to get over that hump. How do you help them deal with that?

Brancato: I must tell you in all candor that it is very rare in this school. We're geared for that. We try to keep them away from the little catches and snags. I equate the learning process as trying to balance a box on its edge. It's going to feel a little shaky. It's going to feel new. But we get them over that by repetition and familiarity with material.

Porcaro: I deal mostly with technique at school. Of course, I'm teaching my theory and my way of playing technique, but I don't force it on them. If a student comes to me in counseling and says, "This really isn't working for me," I'll encourage that student to get together with Steve for counseling time.

I get into a reverse finger kind of technique, and I get into buzz rolls. I approach the buzz roll differently than Ralph or Steve, but I'll tell them, "Get together with Ralph and Steve, and learn their approaches. Keep an open mind about it all."

Humphrey: Even though the core curriculum is basically the same, I teach a studio drumming techniques class, and I try to keep that class very current. I'll relate experiences that I had in the studio to the class. The thing that has probably changed the most in the last few years is the drummer's role on a record or a film date. Whereas before the bass player, drummer, guitar player, and piano player would go in and do basic tracks, a lot of times it's not that way anymore. The drummer may go in last and overdub on whatever's there with a click, a Linn machine, or whatever. The process is different. I try to convey that to the students. So their questions and my responses, a lot of the time, are a lot different than they used to be. We try to address that situation as much as possible within the class.

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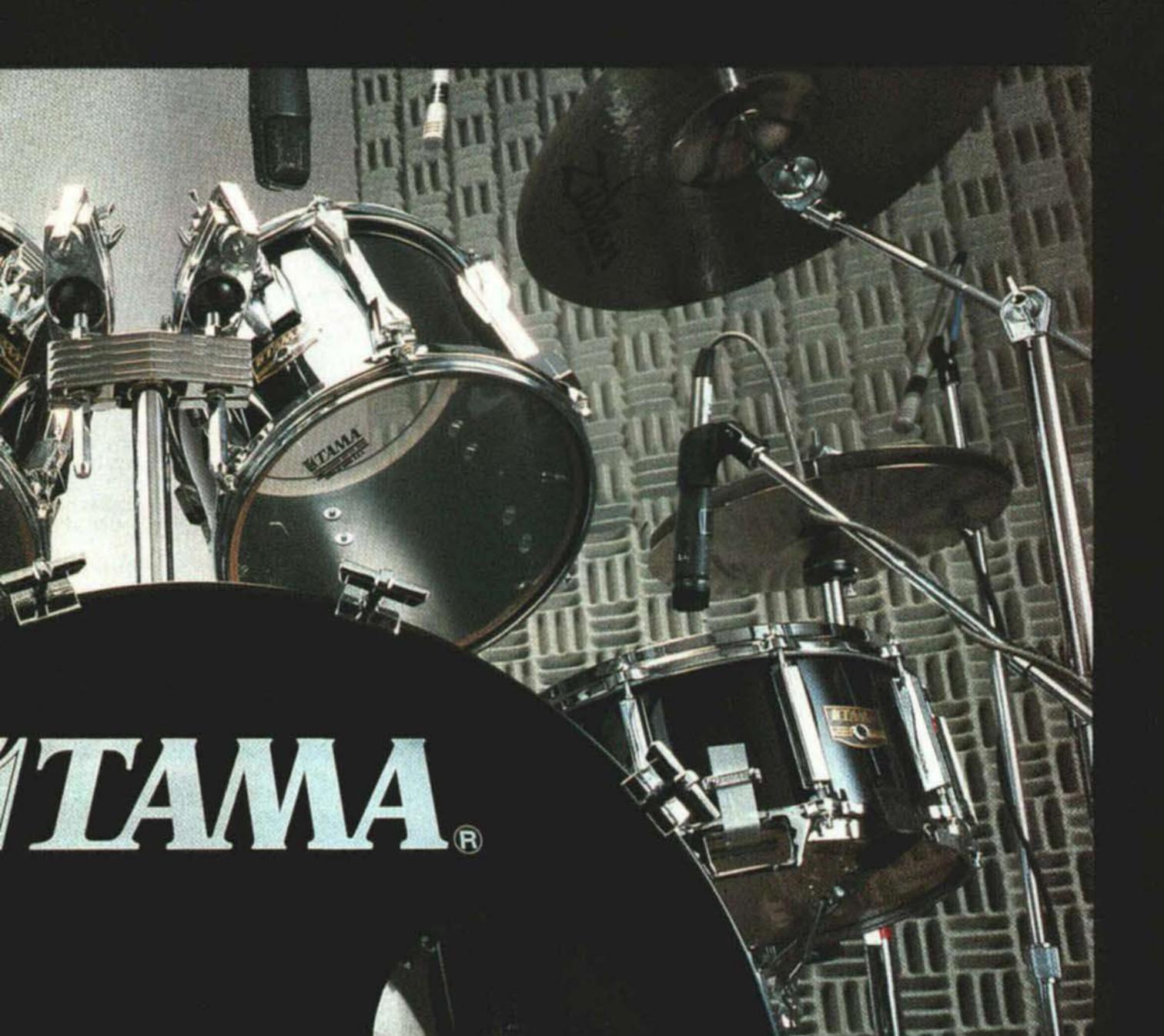
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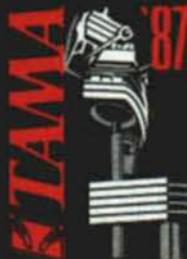
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by Roy Burns

Son Of The One-Handed Roll

In a recent article, I made the comment that there is really no such thing as a "one-handed roll." Much to my surprise, I received a couple of letters demanding a retraction. One drum teacher in particular even offered to give me a demonstration of this mysterious technique.

I believe what has happened is that semantics have helped to create a communication problem. What these drummers/teachers refer to as a "roll with one hand" is what I refer to as a "controlled finger bounce." In fact, in one letter, a teacher described the finger-bounce technique as his method for achieving a one-handed roll. This was somewhat ironic, because the technique he described was actually thoroughly explained (with photographs) in a book that Lew Malin and I wrote in 1958. The book is entitled *Practical Method Of Developing Finger Control* and was edited by Henry Adler.

Drummers cannot make a truly sustained sound, such as can be made by a trumpet or the human voice. However, we can create the "illusion" of a sustained sound, which is my definition for a roll. On the snare drum, this can be achieved by

rebounding double strokes rapidly—such as in the rudimental style. The closed or orchestra roll is a series of overlapping "buzzes"; one buzz is played in such a way as to overlap the next one. This "illusion" of sound is much like a movie film: individual pictures played fast enough to create the "illusion" of sustained, smooth movement.

On timpani, the roll is executed by playing rapid single strokes. The speed of the single strokes depends somewhat on the hardness of the mallets and the size of the drum being played.

Although I have used the finger-bounce technique for over 30 years and I teach it, I never refer to it as a roll. The reason is that many young drummers become confused by the term. If I say, "Today we start work on the one-handed roll," their eyes usually glaze over as they imagine some super-trick that will make them super-fast. They begin to imagine weird techniques and beats just playing themselves. Generally, they wind up blowing the whole thing out of proportion.

Everyone uses fingers to control the bounce and the rebound of the sticks. The "finger-bounce technique" uses the fingers (primarily) to *motivate* the stick with a minimum of wrist motion.

My understanding is that this technique originated with French symphonic drummers. To my knowledge, it was Louie Bellson who popularized this technique in America. Joe Morello developed it even further. I studied an approach to finger control with a teacher by the name of Jack Miller. I later studied another approach with Jim Chapin, who combined it with the Moeller system of playing accents. I learned from all of these people. Eventually, Lew Malin and I developed our own method, incorporating what we had learned combined with our own ideas.

Let's get back to the definition of the roll. I've heard drummers say, "He can play a roll on the bass drum with just one foot." Well, actually even Buddy Rich can only play very fast individual beats on the bass drum. Buddy's bass drum technique is truly amazing, but I, personally, would not refer to it as a "roll"—even when played as fast and as beautifully as only he can do it.

If the conductor of a TV show asked for a snare drum roll and the drummer launched into loud, open, double strokes, that drummer would not have the job very long. Conductors expect to hear the buzz or closed roll in this situation. The open double-stroke roll sounds great when six drummers perform it together on six parade drums. However, one person playing open double strokes on a 6" snare drum creates an entirely different effect. It sounds like fast individual beats. If a symphony part called for a "roll" and the drummer launched into fast 32nd notes with the left hand, the conductor would not be amused.

I guess what bothers me a bit is that there is a tendency among drummers to label anything that is played rapidly as a "roll." This is especially true of drummers who have not studied, because they do not recognize sticking patterns. For example, I am often asked by young students to "teach them a roll around the tom-toms." As any experienced player knows, there are limitless variations in sticking patterns for getting around the drumset. If you are interested in this, see *Rhythmic Patterns For The Modern Drummer* by Joe Cusatis. It's the best book I know of on the subject. Joe also uses and teaches a finger-bounce technique.

The "controlled finger-bounce" is a wonderful technique for speed, delicacy, touch, control, and beauty of sound. It is incorporated into a total technique using wrists, arms, and fingers. It is not for speed alone, but to complete a player's all-around approach to the instrument. Every student that I have taught this technique to has improved his or her sound, relaxation, endurance, and touch.

In reference to the letters I received, I want to thank the gentlemen who wrote them for taking the time to help me clarify a point that apparently could have been misunderstood. Their sincerity and dedication to the art of drumming is without question. Perhaps now we have cleared up any problems with semantics.

Last but not least, this is what *Modern Drummer Magazine* is all about. It is a forum where drummers of all styles and experience can exchange ideas. It is one of the few places where your ideas will get fair consideration, even if you are not a star or a big-name drummer. So participate! Write in, ask questions, or disagree. But if you do disagree, do so with the understanding that all drummers are in this thing together. No one knows it all.

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Contributions To The Cause

I received a letter recently from a club drummer in a four-piece band. His group was successful from a musical and business standpoint, but there was a familiar-sounding internal problem that was bothering him. Let me give you the gist of the letter:

"Much of our equipment, including about 70% of our small P.A. system, belongs to our guitarist/leader. He is also the one who conceived the concept of the band, does all of the chart transpositions and arrangements, and selects most of the material.

"I've been in a few bands in my relatively short career, and have gone out of my way—many times at my own expense—to make sure that the band has everything it needs to perform professionally (other than the various players' personally owned equipment). These were always considered as purchases that would remain in my possession long after the group broke up.

"The problem is that our 'leader' wants us to reimburse him for the cost of the P.A. and other band-used equipment—all of which was purchased long before the band was put together. Now, I don't object to his getting extra compensation for his time and effort in arranging and transposing material, or to reimbursing him for long-distance phone bills, recordings, etc. But I do object to paying for someone else's instruments and equipment. He has gone so far as to tell me that, without his equipment, there would *be* no band. He also says that, if the band should break up, we would not receive any money or equipment in return.

"A lot of time and effort have been expended by *all* of the band members, and we have become not only a tight band, but tight friends as well. This problem, however, seems as though it could put an end to both situations in a hurry. In other bands I've been in, it was understood that all members, regardless of financial commitment, have been worth an equal cut. I resent our 'leader's' attitude that his contribution is somehow greater than ours and, therefore, he deserves greater compensation. I also resent the fact that he thinks I would be musically unemployed without him. Can you shed some light on how other bands might deal with the problem of 'who owns what and what it's worth'?"

This is an all-too-common situation that occurs within bands. When it comes to a band's internal business arrangements, there are many ways to approach things, and none are "right" or "wrong." The main, overriding condition for a successful system—no matter what it may be—is that it be clearly spelled out and understood by all parties concerned. It's not usually the details of a business arrangement that cause problems; it's usually misunderstandings of those details based on different perceptions.

In my experience, there have been two basic arrangements under which my bands have operated. One was a clear-cut employer/employee relationship between the bandleader and the other band members. The second was a totally democratic "team" arrangement. Let's look at each, in light of the points brought up in the letter.

Employer/Employee

This situation exists when a band is made up of a bandleader and sidemen. It isn't really too common in club bands anymore; it dates mainly from the time when someone would hire a leader and the leader would then contract different musicians just for that gig. But there are some very successful club bands that do work on this system, and it does make things pretty clear-cut. The leader hires the sidemen, who are responsible for their own instruments and personal equipment, and who are paid a certain salary. The leader is paid substantially more, and is therefore expected to cover any and all expenses necessary for the group's performance other than the instruments of the sidemen. That would include a P.A., lighting, etc. If any individual member of the group has additional equipment to offer for general band use, the leader generally pays that player for the use of that equipment—just as if the item had been obtained from an outside source.

This all sounds pretty cold, but it's a good, simple business arrangement that leaves nothing to doubt or misinterpret. Everyone understands his or her own responsibilities and financial situation. I worked for several years under an arrangement like this, and was provided with my band clothes, the use of the P.A. system, transportation expenses when necessary, and any and all non-drum-related ex-

penses. In return, I understood that I was to make about half of what the leader made. It wasn't that he was *worth* more; it was simply that he had the responsibility for all of the band's operating expenses.

The Team

As I said earlier, the general situation in most club bands today is not likely to be the employer/employee relationship, but rather a democratic, "team" arrangement. In this situation, everyone has an equal say in the band's operations, everyone makes an equal amount of money (at least to begin with), and everyone has an equal responsibility for the success or failure of the group.

The problem with this rather idyllic arrangement is that it leaves a great deal undefined. When it comes to equipment, nobody I've ever known expected the other band members to help defray the cost of his or her own personal instrument or equipment. (I've never been asked to help pay for a guitar or a bass amp, for example.) But what about equipment used by the whole band, such as a P.A. system, electronic effects equipment, or lighting? What about extra time and money spent by individual members preparing material for the band? What about phone calls, mailers, and other promotional expenses incurred by band members in order to obtain work for the band? What about . . . ? The list goes on and on.

As far as I'm concerned, there are some simple ways to approach these problems. But often, what appears simple and obvious to one person is totally unacceptable to another. So I offer my comments as suggestions only, for your consideration. Much of what I feel is based more on my own personal ethics than on solid business sense, so take it for what it's worth.

When it comes to contributing to my band's welfare, I'm very old-fashioned. I believe in a "one for all and all for one" philosophy. I feel that anything that I can contribute to the general good of the band is also automatically for my good, because the better the band sounds, the better I sound. The more the band works, the more I work. With that in mind, I have no qualms about offering any personal equipment—over and above my drums—for general use. Most of the musicians I've worked with over the years have felt the same way. Again, everybody provided his

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or her own axe, amp, etc. Most have owned their own microphones and stands (if they sang). When it came to P.A. systems, those who owned any or all of the components made them available to the band at no cost. After all, a P.A. system is useless unless you have a band to use it. In my particular case, I provided lighting equipment I owned. It never occurred to me to ask the band to pay me for its use.

Let me stress that, so far, I've been talking about equipment already owned by the various members of the band. I honestly believe that every member of a band should contribute whatever he or she may own—for use by the entire band—as a natural part of *being* a member of a band. The concept that "the band couldn't work if it wasn't for my P.A. (or whatever)" is one that I find totally repulsive. That kind of attitude has no place in any band. After all, a drummer could just as easily say that the band couldn't work without his or her drumset; the bass player could say the same for his or her equipment, etc. It's a team effort, and every piece of equipment used by the team has an equal value as far as I'm concerned.

However, the team approach does have a problem when it comes to the purchase of new equipment that cannot be handled by one individual. Obviously, individually owned equipment comes and goes with the individual who owns it—be it a drumset, a bass amp, a P.A. system, or whatever. But

what if the group decides to buy a new P.A. system *as a group*? And what about operating expenses such as those I mentioned earlier (phone calls, mailers, band clothes, etc.)? How can they be handled equitably?

The best way I know of to cover group expenses is by the use of a "band fund." This is simply an operating account, into which each member contributes an agreed-upon amount out of each paycheck. The band determines what operating expenses are to be deemed "group" expenses, and then reimburses *whoever* incurs those expenses. The money in the fund is generally considered nonrefundable and remains there even if a member leaves the band. Now, before you start screaming, let me add that the idea of this fund is not to build up a huge surplus. It should be figured in such a way as to be adequate to cover regular, predictable operating expenses. Each player's contribution amount should be determined on that basis. If the fund goes for quite a while without having to pay for anything, contributions should be halted until the fund is drawn upon and reduced in size. In this way, there shouldn't be so much in the fund at the time of a player's departure from the group that it becomes an issue.

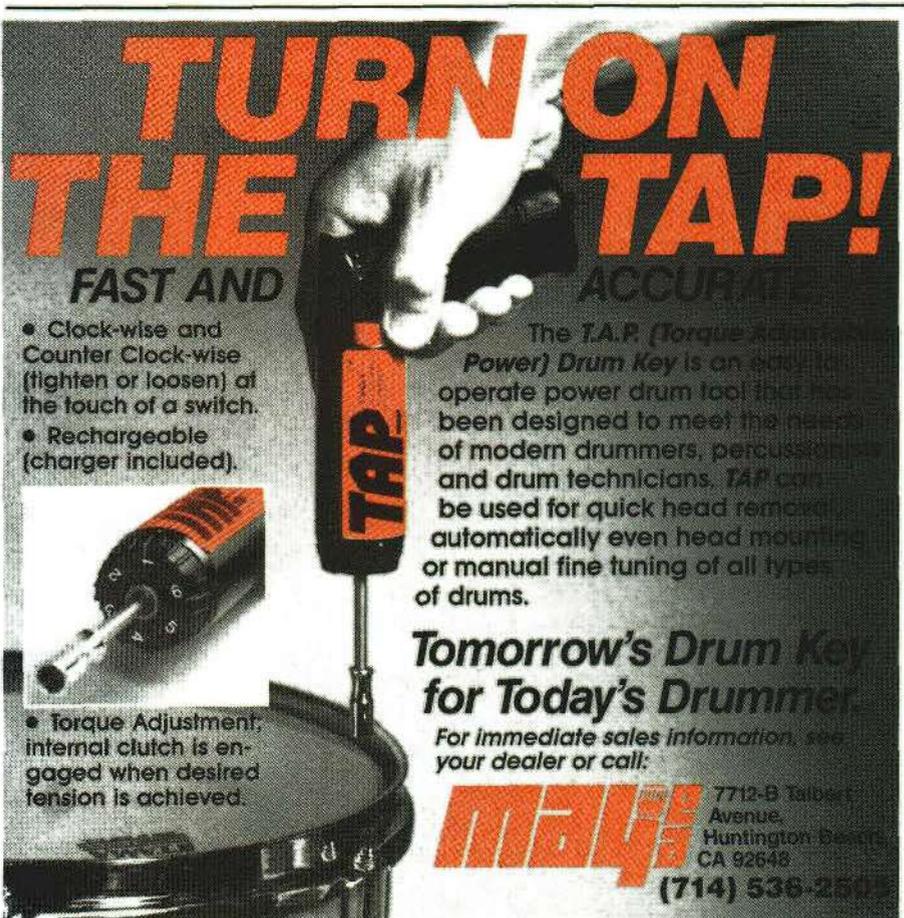
"Ah," you say, "but what about that elusive P.A. purchase? Surely a small operating 'band fund' couldn't handle that. And what about band clothes? Who

should pay for those?" Again, there are no absolutes here, but I'll tell you what I feel can work successfully.

When it comes to a very large purchase, like a P.A. system, you should *not* get the group involved in a time-payment obligation. This becomes almost impossible to deal with if a member leaves. (Who picks up the departed member's share? Is a replacement member obligated to make payments for something he or she had no say in buying?) I suggest that such a large purchase only be made in cash, with equal parts being paid by all existing members of the band. If this takes some time to save up for, then so be it. A signed agreement between the members should state that, in the event of the departure of one member, the other purchasing members will "buy out" that player for an amount that reflects his or her purchase share, less reasonable depreciation. If the members of the group can't agree on such an arrangement, I earnestly suggest that you don't make such a purchase. If necessary, *rent* a P.A. system (a band fund expense) until a single band member can afford to purchase one or until a workable agreement can be reached.

Band clothes aren't too much of a problem today, since very few bands are uniformed anymore. I've always felt that what a person wore on stage was his or her own responsibility, in terms of purchase, alterations, cleaning, etc. But when a band does wear uniforms, the question often arises as to whether they should be considered the personal property of each member—and therefore a personal expense—or the property of the group as a whole. Practically speaking, it never seems to work out that a new member can fit into the outfit of the departing member, so it seems a bit silly for the band to hold onto uniforms. And it's been my experience that finding new band clothes to match those purchased by older members a year or two ago is also nearly impossible. What it boils down to is, when band membership changes, band wardrobe usually has to change, too. That makes band clothes "expendable items" to my way of thinking. Once again, expenditures for such items can come out of the band fund or out of each member's pocket, depending upon what the band members have arranged. In either case, it seems only practical and logical that the clothes stay with the individual band members.

I have very little time or sympathy for people who feel that they have to be compensated for every single thing they do in and for a band. *Everybody* has extra talents to contribute, whether it be in acting as a booking agent, repairing equipment, driving the band truck, or preparing arrangements. It's all for the good of the band, and the good of the band is what keeps you employed. When you contribute to the cause, you also reap the benefits. 



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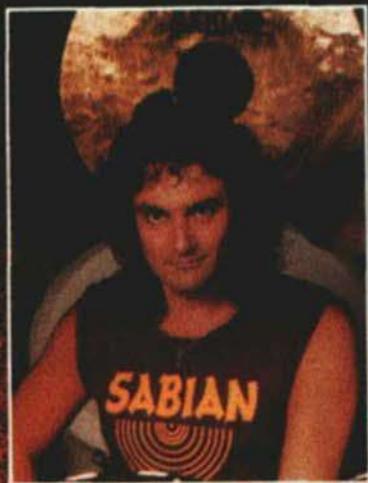
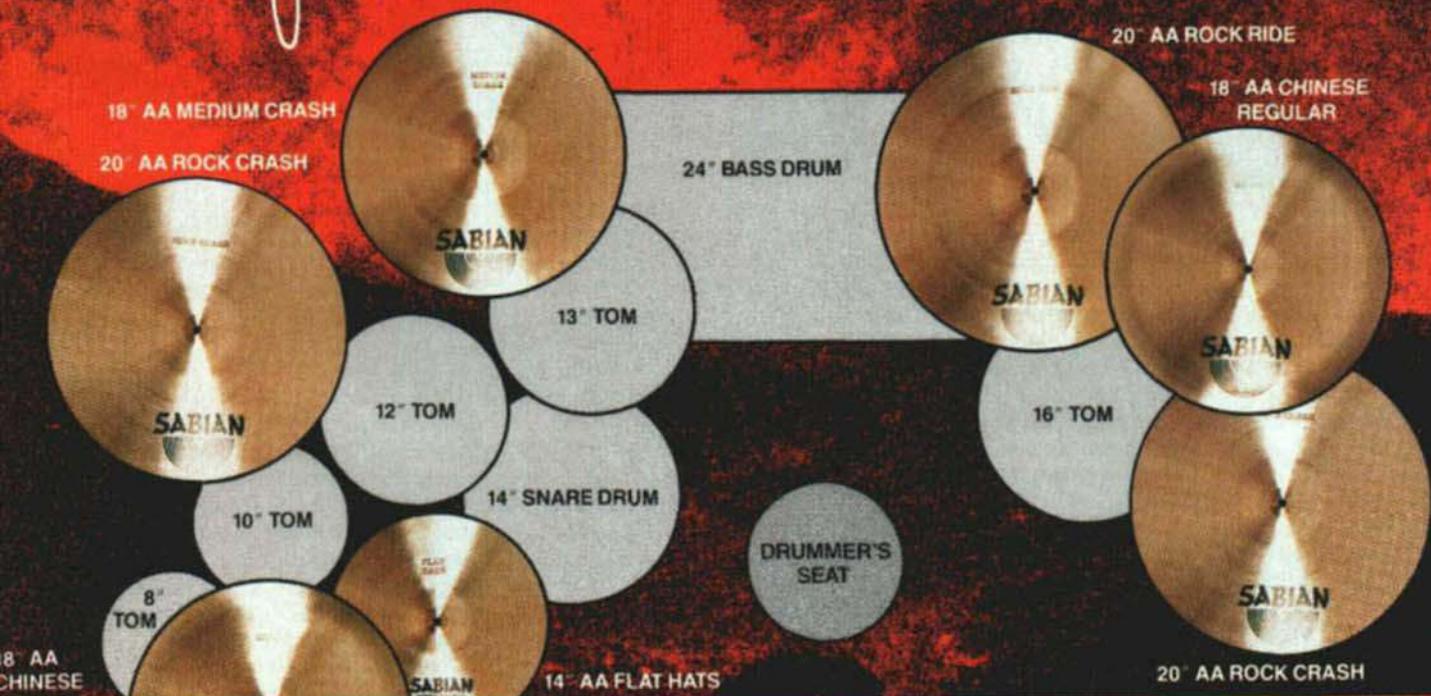


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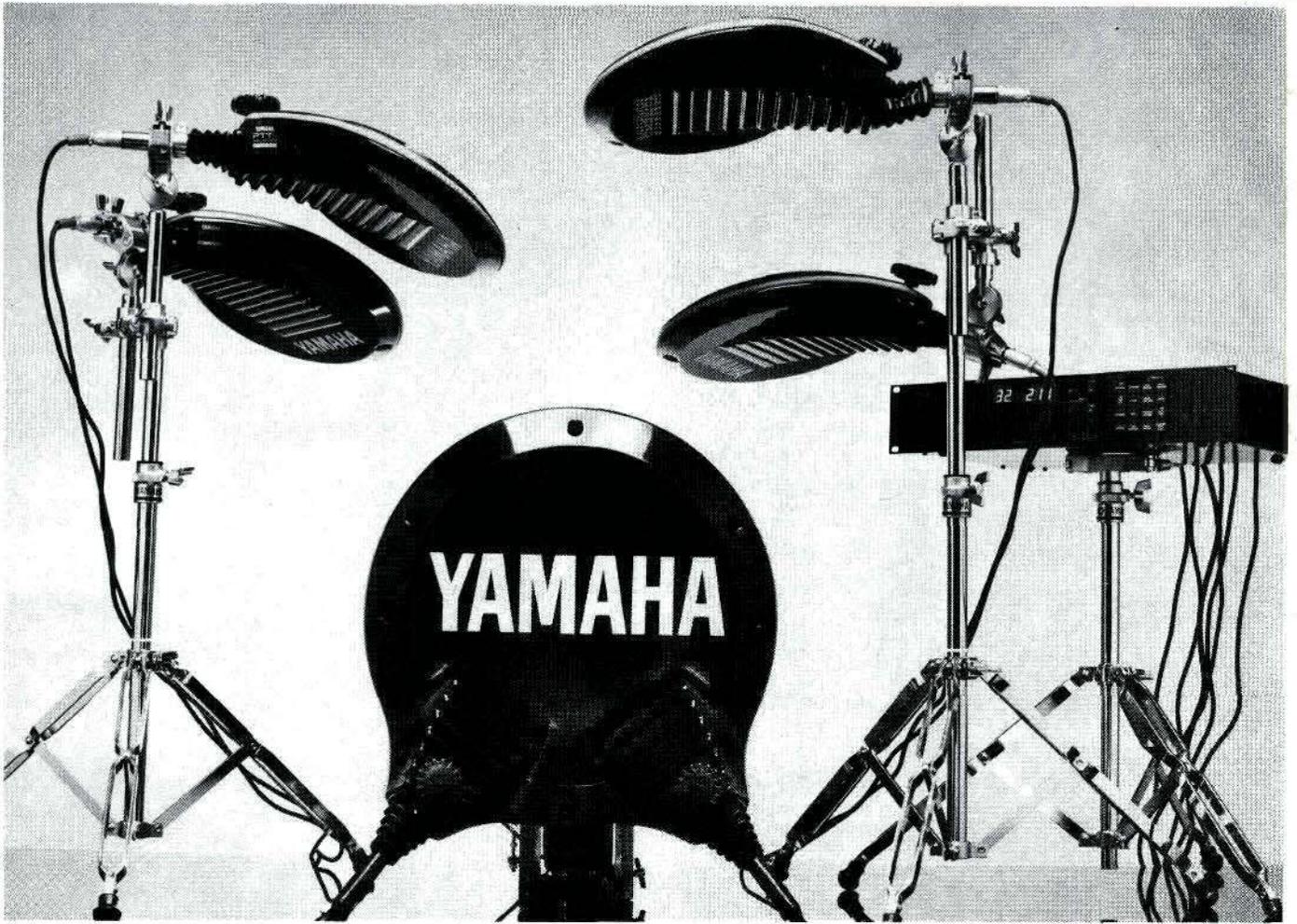
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Considering Yamaha's involvement with technology, it seems strange that, for a long time, the company did not have any electronic drums. Many long-time industry observers, however, note that Yamaha is not traditionally quick to jump on a bandwagon, but when the company does get involved in something, it tends to do so in a big way—often setting new state-of-the-art standards. As an example, Yamaha certainly did not invent the synthesizer, but *did* introduce FM technology, and the *DX7* became the keyboard against which all others were judged. By the same token, Yamaha entered the acoustic drum market well after Ludwig, Gretsch, Slingerland, Sonor, Pearl, and Tama were well established. But Yamaha drums took their place next to those other companies almost immediately, due to their high quality.

Another aspect of the Yamaha philosophy worth noting is that, when getting involved in a new area, the company traditionally starts at the top and then works down from there. In other words, the initial product will be top of the line—both in quality and price. Once that product has been established, models will be introduced that have fewer features and lower

prices.

That brings us to the Yamaha Electronic Percussion System. As predicted, Yamaha has attempted to set a new standard with this system, from the pads, to the MIDI converter, to the FM tone-generating capabilities. The system has been promoted at recent trade shows through performances by John Robinson and Alex Acuna—performances that were clearly designed to overwhelm the listeners with the capabilities of the system. And if the sounds don't overwhelm you, the price probably will. At the Percussive Arts Society convention this past November, Yamaha's Jim Coffin was asked about the cost of the system that Robinson and Acuna were performing on. Coffin's reply: "A small farm." From what I hear, these days you can probably acquire a small farm for *less* than the \$16,970 list price of the setup that Robinson and Acuna were using, which included sequencers and effects boxes. The good news is that, because this is a component system, you don't *have* to buy all of that stuff at once; in fact, you could probably do without some of it.

The basic Yamaha Electronic Percussion System is made up of one *PMCI*, one

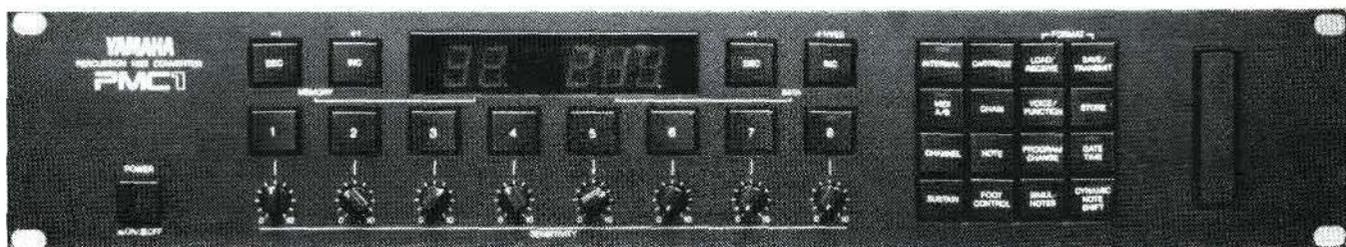
PBD1, and four *PTTIs*. Through MIDI you can incorporate such devices as the *TX816*, *QX1*, *RX21*, *RX5*, *FB-01*, *TX7*, or even a *DX7*. (For further information, contact Yamaha's Jim Coffin [*JC-1*] or Steve Ettleson [*SE-X*].)

The Pads

The Yamaha system uses two pad designs: The *PBD1* is the bass drum pad; a number of *PTTIs* can be used as snare drum, toms, cymbals, percussion sounds, or whatever. The difference between the pads is more cosmetic than functional, as you could program either type of pad to trigger any sound, including snare drum sounds from the *PBD1* and bass drum sounds from a *PTTI*.

According to the Yamaha literature, the *PTTI* pad features a hard top layer over a soft bottom layer, which is designed to provide a combination of rebound and "give." This is then mounted on a plywood backing plate that "floats," which adds to the flexibility and also eliminates "crosstalk" between pads. (Get to the point, Mattingly. What do they feel like?) They feel pretty good. I'm reminded somewhat of the feel of a *Gladstone* practice

Yamaha Electronic Percussion System



pad, which doesn't feel exactly like an acoustic drumhead, but it's a lot better than some of the other electronic pads I've played on. Feel, of course, is a matter of personal preference, so I suggest that you check this out for yourself at your local drumshop. I can say, however, that I found the pads to be very responsive, and the playing area is large enough to be quite comfortable.

The pads can be mounted on regular Yamaha tom holders. The ball joint at the end of the pad offers easy positioning by means of a large knob, and I had no trouble with it slipping after it had been set. There are also memory locks, so you can easily get the pads in the proper positions each time you set up. The output connection plug is located at the end of the stem, and that design helps keep the cables out of the way of anything else.

The *PBD1* bass drum pad is constructed much the same as the *PTT1*, although it also has a "drumhead type material" between the surface material and the backing plate, and it also contains a hollow center. The point is that it feels good; I personally prefer its feel to that of the small pads. Again, the sensitivity is good, and there is a large enough striking area to accommodate a variety of beater lengths. The *PBD1* has two large, pointed spurs that keep the

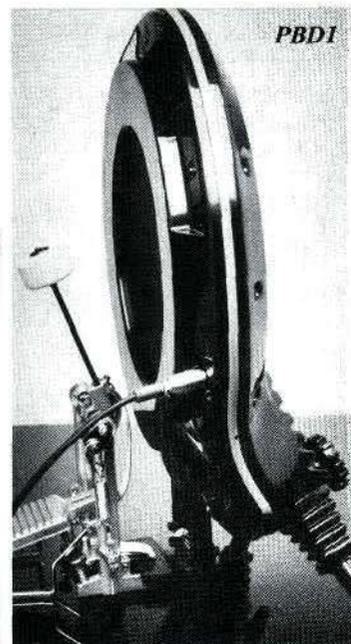
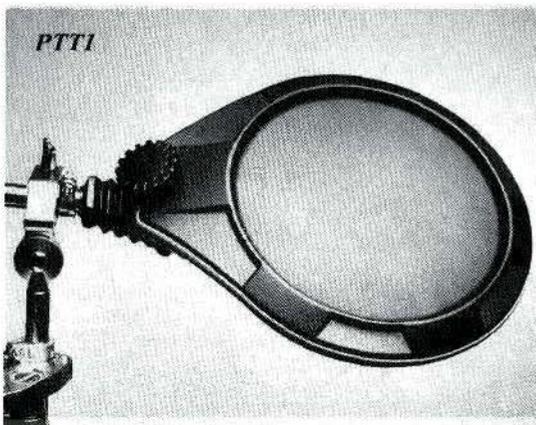
thing in place and a mounting bracket for a bass drum pedal.

The PMCI

The true heart of the Yamaha Electronic Percussion System is the *PMCI*, which stands for Percussion MIDI Converter. This is the unit that converts the voltage from the pads into MIDI signals. It also sets programs and directs the information that goes to the tone generators.

The *PMCI* has inputs for eight pads, and each input has its own sensitivity control. This lets you set the dynamic range of

each pad as well as the response. In other words, you can set a pad so that, no matter how hard you hit it, you get the same volume, or you can set it so that it will go from very soft to very loud, depending on how



hard you hit. You can also set a pad anywhere in between the two extremes I just described. (In other words, this system is velocity sensitive.)

Above each sensitivity control is a numbered Pad Select Switch. These are used when you want to program an individual pad. Each switch has an LED that lights up when that pad is selected. Also, whenever you strike a pad, its LED flashes. (That can be handy in making sure that you're programming the pad you think you're programming.)

On the top left of the *PMCI* are the Memory Select keys. The unit can hold 32 memories, each of which contains such information as tone-generator assignment, gate time, sustain, etc. Once you have your system programmed the way you want it, these are the buttons you use to call up the programs. An LED to the right of these buttons displays the number of the program.

To the right of those controls is another LED and the Data Increment/Decrement keys. These are the keys that are used to program each pad. There are a number of parameters that can be programmed. Some of them, such as Sustain, have numeric values. Others, such as the Sustain Pedal, are either ON or OFF. Still others, such as Pitch Bend, are either UP or DOWN. The LED will display the appropriate values.

To the right of the unit is a group of 16 buttons with a variety of functions. The Internal button is used to select the 32 memories that are stored in the *PMCI* itself. Next to that is the Cartridge button, which gives you the option of using 32 different memories that are stored on a RAM cartridge that can be plugged into a slot on the far right of the *PMCI*.

Next are the Load/Receive and Save/Transmit keys. These are dual-function keys that allow you to do such things as

load data from an external cartridge into the *PMCI*'s internal memory; save voice and function data from an external source onto a memory cartridge; save *PMCI* internal memory onto an external cartridge; or transmit voice and function data from an external cartridge to an external tone generator. What that all translates to is that you have a lot of options for different sounds.

The MIDI A/B button is an especially nice feature. It operates in conjunction with the two MIDI-out terminals (labeled "A" and "B") located on the back of the unit, and it allows you to send two different sets of MIDI information at the same time: different MIDI channels, different notes, and different program-change data. While "B" does not send out as much MIDI information as "A," it works fine for such devices as drum machines.

The next button sets the Chain function. You can have a total of eight chains with up to 20 steps each, which should get you through most situations. Let's look at a practical example of how this works. The *PMCI* allows you to have 32 different setups available at any one time. Let's say that, on your gig tonight, you need to use setups 3, 15, 5, 3 (again), 28, 21, and 12, in that order. You can program that order into the Chain function, and then you can step through those setups with a footswitch. Not only does this allow you to change setups quickly between songs, but you could even change in the middle of a song.

Next is the Voice/Function key, which is used in conjunction with the Load/Receive and Save/Transmit keys (which are located directly above; the layout definitely has some thought behind it). This allows you to select whether you are loading and saving *PMCI* data, or sending and receiving voice and function data. It doesn't sound too exciting on paper, but

it's quite useful.

The Store button is easy to explain. Whenever you program or edit something on the *PMCI*, you use this button to save the change into memory. There is also a safety feature built in. When you press the Store button, one of the LEDs asks you if you want to store. You answer "yes" by hitting the increment button. This might seem like double work, but keep in mind that, when you store something, you are wiping out previous memory. Having to go through this extra step will probably be a pain in the butt *until* the first time that you realize that you didn't mean to hit the Store button. After that, you'll be glad for that extra step. The Store button is also used to copy programs back and forth between the *PMCI* and external RAM cartridges.

The Channel button allows you to select which MIDI channel each pad will transmit on. Each pad can have its own channel, or all pads can transmit on the same channel. (Actually, by using the MIDI A/B function, each pad can have its own two channels.) This button also allows you to select which channel the *PMCI* receives data on through its MIDI-in terminal.

The Note key allows you to assign any of the 128 MIDI notes (pitches) to a pad. Being able to assign the notes yourself gives you a great deal of control over your tone generators. If you are using an FM tone generator such as the *TX816*, you can actually use the note key to "tune" the sounds. If you are getting sampled sounds from, say, one of the *RX* drum machines, the note number is used to select the sound.

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Let's look at a practical application of this, which will also help explain the MIDI A/B function. Suppose you have MIDI A plugged into a *TX816* and MIDI B plugged into an *RX11*. Select MIDI B, and set the note number so that you get a snare drum sound from the *RX11*. Then switch to MIDI A, which will give you a snare drum sound from the *TX816* (providing you are on the right program and pad). You can change the pitch of this sound with the Note button so that it will blend with the sound from the *RX11*. This is how you can combine sampled sounds with FM sounds.

The next key controls Program Change. This allows you to set a value between 0 and 128, which is used to select voices from external tone generators. By using MIDI A/B, you can send two different program changes simultaneously.

The Gate Time key is one of the most useful. Let's say that you've found a tom sound that you like on an external tone generator, except that it rings too long. Use the Gate Time key to shorten it. You can have a different setting for each pad.

The next two keys are used in conjunction with footswitches. When the Sustain key is ON, you can hold a sound for as long as you want by holding down a footswitch. (That only works with certain sounds, however. A sound that is programmed in the tone generator to be very short, such as a woodblock, cannot be sustained.) The Foot Control key allows you to apply pitch bend or modulation to a note, via another footswitch.

The final two keys are, perhaps, the most interesting. The Simul-Notes button lets you produce up to five notes at once from a single pad. There is also a "touch" function, which allows you to control how many notes are sounding, depending on how hard you hit the pad. For example, you can program a five-note chord into a pad. By playing very softly, you will get the first note; play a little harder and the second note is added; play harder still and the third note joins in; and so on. The notes can be programmed in any order; the order you program them in will be the same order they sound in as you strike the pad harder.

The obvious way to incorporate a feature like that is to use some sort of melodic-instrument sound—such as marimba, piano, guitar—and to play chords. But there are drum applications, too. Using the bass drum pad, I programmed two notes an octave apart and used the "touch" function. With soft to medium volume, I got a normal bass drum sound; when I played louder, a bass drum note an octave lower kicked in. You didn't really notice that second pitch, but it gave some extra punch to accented notes.

The Dynamic Note Shift button is similar, in that different pitches can be programmed into a single pad; the difference is that only one note sounds at a time. You

first set the range, which can be up to one octave. Then you set the distance between steps within that octave, with the widest distance being 12 (each "step" is actually a musical half step, of which there are 12 in an octave—get it?). Let's look at some examples. If you set the range for an octave and the step distance for 12, you get a one-octave jump. If you set the range to an octave and the step distance to 3, you get five notes, each a minor third apart. If you set the range to an octave and the step distance to 1, you can play a chromatic scale (although you will need tremendous dynamic control to do that, as the notes will be so close together). You can also set the range for less than an octave. The Yamaha brochure talks about using this feature to play melodic lines, and yes, with practice, it could be used for that. However, I should point out that you cannot program any scale (such as a major scale) that involves a combination of whole steps and half steps. But there are other applications that are more "drumistic." For example, you can program the pad to give you two notes, and set them far enough apart that you have to strike the pad considerably harder to get the second note. Then you can program the pad so that a normal stroke gives you a ride cymbal sound and an accented stroke gives you a crash cymbal sound. By the same token, a normal stroke could be set to give you a closed hi-hat, with an accented stroke giving you an open hi-hat. Another possibility would be for a normal stroke to give you a snare drum sound and an accented stroke to give you a rimshot. Having sounds such as those on a single pad makes a lot of sense, and being able to control them by the force of the stroke is relatively natural.

There are a couple of other useful features worth noting. One is the Edit Recall function. If you have been editing and you accidentally lose your work by selecting another memory, you can restore the data that you were editing. Anyone who has ever lost something by accident will appreciate a feature like that.

Speaking of not losing data, once you have your *PMCI* programmed the way you want it, you can copy the data onto either a RAM cartridge or a floppy disk. That way, you can always reload it if you lose it. A floppy disk is less expensive (about six dollars), but you will need another piece of equipment to be able to use it, such as a *QXI* sequencer (\$3,095) or an *MDF1* MIDI Data Filer (\$395). A RAM cartridge is easier to deal with, but costs about \$100. Of course, that's still cheaper than an *MDF1*.

Another useful function is Merge. This allows you to, say, plug a sequencer into MIDI-in and play along with it. The sequencer can even handle the program change information, so if you need to change the sounds on the pads in the middle of the sequence, the sequencer can do it



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for you. You can also use this function to select whether merged data is sent out of the MIDI A or MIDI B terminals.

Learning to use the *PMCI* takes some time. As with most electronic devices these days, many of the controls are multi-function. That saves a lot of space in the unit (and I'm told that it helps keep the cost down), but for the user, it's not always obvious just what a certain button is doing at a given time. For example, on the MIDI A/B button, you've selected A if the LED is glowing, and you've selected B if the LED is blinking. Several of the buttons are like that. After you've fooled around with the *PMCI* for a while, you gradually learn what the various buttons, LEDs, and flashing lights are used for. But at first, the *PMCI* can be rather mysterious. I'm not sure that I would classify it as "user friendly." Yamaha is now including a very helpful videotape with the unit, which takes you through the various controls and functions. The owner's manual is also helpful, but I did encounter one small omission. In one section, there is a list of "error messages." One of these messages indicates that "the MIDI buffer is full," but it doesn't tell you what causes that message to appear or what to do about it.

But to be fair, given the variety of things that a *PMCI* can do, the time needed to learn how to use it is probably not unreasonable. Also, once you get a set of sounds programmed the way you want them,

that's it. From then on, you only need to call up the programs, and that's easy.

Price

The list price of the basic Yamaha Electronic Percussion System package is \$1,890. That includes a *PMCI*, a *PBD1*, four *PTTIs*, two *WS-802* stands to mount the pads on, and various clamps, cables, and spurs. Individual prices are: \$720 for a *PMCI*; \$270 for the *PBD1* bass drum pad; and \$180 for a single *PTTI* pad.

Tone Generators

Thus far, I haven't said anything about how this stuff sounds. The reason is because nothing I've described so far *makes* any sound. The pads translate the strokes you make into voltage. The *PMCI* translates the voltage into MIDI signals, and it also allows you to "edit" those signals. But if you want to *hear* something, you need a tone generator.

A tone generator can be something as simple as a small drum machine, or as complex as the Yamaha *TX816*. Obviously, the sounds you are able to get will depend on the quality of the tone generator(s) that you are MIDled into. If you have, say, a Roland *TR-505 Rhythm Composer*, and you are happy with its sounds, you can use that as your tone generator. I did, and it worked okay. I didn't have a great deal of variety, and there were functions on the *PMCI* that I couldn't use,

such as Program Change, but I got a decent drumset sound and a few other percussion sounds. Of course, using a simple drum machine such as the *TR-505* as your only tone generator with a sophisticated system like the *PMCI* is ridiculous. But if you need to start out a step at a time, that could be a first step. And you could still use the *TR-505* with MIDI B once you got a more sophisticated tone generator to plug into MIDI A.

The other extreme would be to use the Yamaha *TX816*. This unit is made up of eight modules, each of which is equivalent to a *DX7* synthesizer. This is the unit that Robinson and Acuna use in the Yamaha Electronic Percussion System demos, and that artists such as Peter Erskine have been using. If you want the ultimate benefit from the system, this is the tone generator to have, along with a Yamaha *RX* series drum machine.

I don't want to go into too much detail about the *TX816* here, as that could take an entire article in itself. But a couple of points are worth noting. First, it has FM technology. This is something that is exclusive to Yamaha and that provides a unique set of sounds. The *PMCI* comes equipped with a ROM cartridge of FM voices that can be used with a Yamaha *DX7* synthesizer or *TX* series tone generator. It also comes with a floppy disk of voices for the *TX816* (again, you'll need a *QX1* or an *MDF1* to be able to use it). With those voices loaded into the *TX816*, you'll have 32 different "setups": 16 of them are drumsets and the other 16 are percussion sounds.

The second important point about the *TX816* is that the eight modules allow for "component voicing." For example, a typical snare drum voice on the *TX816* is actually a combination of three sounds. One might be the "crack"; another might be white noise; the third might be the basic pitch. In many ways, this corresponds to an acoustic snare drum, on which you can tighten the heads, adjust the snares, and have the option of using a wood shell or metal shell. Let's look at this in comparison to a sampled snare drum sound. Suppose you were to sample a 5 1/2" snare drum, and then you wanted to raise the pitch of that sample. Since a sample is essentially a recording of a sound, you raise the pitch by speeding up the recording. But that affects the whole character of the sound, just like when you play a 33 RPM record at 45 RPM: It sounds like the Chipmunks. So if you speed up your sample of the 5 1/2" drum, you're going to end up with something that sounds like a 3" piccolo drum. On an acoustic drum, you can tighten the heads to raise the pitch without affecting the snare tension or the depth of the shell, and you can do the same thing on the *TX816*. It's also fairly easy to mix and match the various components to create even more sounds.



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Yet another advantage of FM is that you can create your own voices. To do this, you'll need another piece of equipment, such as a *DX7* synthesizer or a Macintosh computer. The process is *not* easy, and not everyone will want to bother with it when there are so many ready-made sounds already available. But for those who *are* interested, it is possible.

The only drawback to the *TX816* is its price: \$5,495. You can buy a two-module version, called the *TX216* for \$2,495, and you can add individual *TF1* modules at a cost of \$625 each. That allows you to get involved with FM technology a little at a time. You could also use a *TX7* FM Expander (\$925), one of the *DX* synthesizers, or the *FB-01* FM Sound Generator (\$350). Be forewarned, however, that some of the smaller units do not have the capabilities to respond to a few of the *PMCI's* commands. For example, if you are using an *FB-01*, you will not be able to program a Chain.

If I've given you the impression that the Yamaha Electronic Percussion System is *only* FM, let me correct that at once. Because of MIDI, you can also use sampled sounds or other types of synthesized sounds. I've already mentioned that I was MIDIed into a Roland Rhythm Composer. After I experimented with the Roland sounds, I mixed in sounds from the *TX816*. They complemented each other beautifully. You could mix and match Simmons sounds, Dynacord sounds, Korg sounds—anything that has MIDI capabilities (and just about everything that is manufactured now is MIDI).

The System As A Whole

Now that we've been through the individual components, it's time to look at the system as a whole. First of all, it might be useful to define what is crucial to a Yamaha Electronic Percussion System and what is not. If you want to take full advantage of its possibilities, you'll want the Yamaha pads, the *PMCI*, and the *TX816*. You'll also want one of Yamaha's *RX* model drum machines, so that you can have digital sounds in addition to the FM sounds in the *TX816*. In addition to all of that, you'll probably want some sort of effects box, like a *REV 7* or an *SPX90*, and having a mixer wouldn't be a bad idea, either. And don't forget about an amp (at least) or a P.A. system to run all of this through.

If that sounds like a lot of stuff, it is. But keep in mind the Yamaha philosophy of starting at the top. If you *do* put together a system like the one I just described, it will be quite a system indeed. Again, that's what the drummers like Robinson, Acuna, and Erskine are using, and they seem quite happy with it. And because the system has full MIDI implementation, it is open-ended.

Perhaps that last sentence deserves some

further explanation. Before MIDI, most systems were basically self-contained. You could not mix and match pieces from different companies, and sometimes you couldn't even mix different models from the same company. If a company came out with a new model, you often had to start over. That could be frustrating. I used to envy a friend of mine who played guitar; he was always up on the latest sounds and effects, but through it all, he was able to use the same *Stratocaster* that he'd bought in 1968.

Granted, a guitar is a very different instrument than a drumset, but I suspect that a lot of drummers aren't too thrilled about having to completely replace their equipment every time there's a new breakthrough in technology—which seems to happen about every six months. It would be nice to have a constant—like my friend's *Strat*—that could simply be plugged into anything new that came along.

Some drummers are attempting to do that by using various types of mic's or triggers on their acoustic kits. Others are looking for a set of pads that they can use as their drumset. Still others are using a combination of acoustic drums and pads. Each of these approaches is valid. All you need is a system to trigger and/or plug into that has the capability to be versatile and to grow.

The Yamaha system has such capabilities. The Yamaha pads feel pretty good, and they were designed specifically for this system, so you will probably get the maximum benefit from the *PMCI* by using them. But if you already have a set of pads that you are comfortable with, or you'd prefer to trigger the system from your acoustic drums, go ahead. (Neil Peart is using Simmons pads with a *PMCI*.) If you want to use another brand of pad, you might need some type of voltage converter between the pads and the *PMCI*, but that's no big deal. As for triggering from acoustic drums, John Robinson used his acoustic Yamaha kit to trigger a Yamaha electronic system on the John Fogerty tour.

On the other end of the *PMCI*, as I've already mentioned, you have a lot of possibilities for sound sources, from drum machines, to synthesizers, to FM tone generators. As long as something has MIDI implementation, you can probably use it with a *PMCI*.

Which brings us back to the fact that the *PMCI* is really the heart of the system. With everything else—from pads to tone generators—you have a choice. Decide what you want to play on (pads, drums, or both), hook them into a *PMCI*, and you shouldn't have to worry about that much of your system becoming obsolete. You'll have a great deal of MIDI control over most of the equipment that's available now, and that's likely to be available in the foreseeable future.



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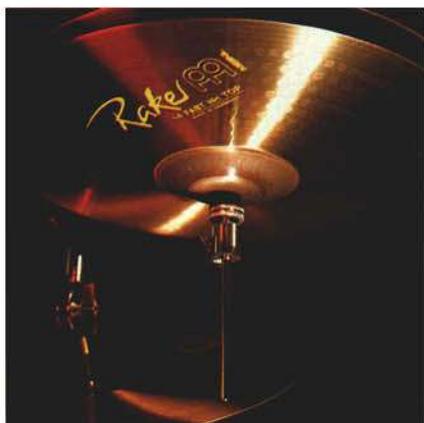
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New Cymbals



Meinl Raker

Roland Meinl of Germany has a few different lines of cymbals. (The *Profile* series was reviewed *MD*, June '85.) The *Raker* line was inspired, the company says, by the electronic drum sounds of late. As with all Meinl cymbal lines, the cymbals in the *Raker* series are all tuned to complement one another, giving a complete, definite tonal structure for the series. If you were to go out and purchase a complete setup of *Rakers*, you would have a balanced cymbal set of precise tone intervals. Along the lines of Paiste *Rude* and Sabian *Leopard* cymbals, the *Rakers* have a hammer-dotted, unfinished appearance and hold up well under aggressive playing. Models available include 14" Medium and Heavy hi-hats (with a new *Soundwave* model available in each weight), 16", 17", and 18" Crash and Heavy Crash, 10" Splash, 20" Ride and Heavy Ride, and 21" Ride.

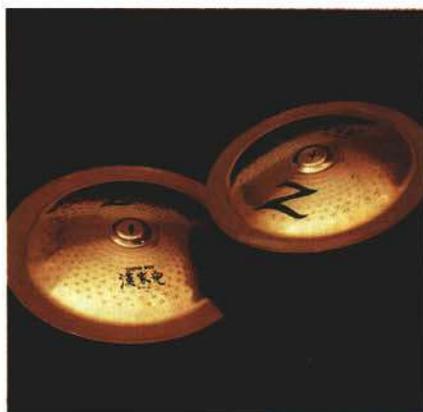
The 14" Heavy hi-hats have a bright, metallic sound, reminding me somewhat of Paiste's 2002 *Sound Edge*. They're quite able to cut through and have a great sounding "chick" when played with the foot. The 16" Heavy Crash also has a brilliant shimmer to it, and I found that it blended in quite well with other manufacturer's cymbals. One nice thing about the cymbals is that you don't have to play hard to make them sound good, because they're pretty dynamic. The 20" Ride has a clean stick sound with an average overtone buildup; the Heavy Ride is somewhat dry.

My favorite *Raker* cymbals seem to be the heavier weights. They all have a clean sound, definitive bell, quick response, and are able to take a bit of punishment. Also, I'm a high-end freak, and the *Raker* line places emphasis on the higher frequencies of the tonal spectrum.

The Meinl *Rakers* are higher pitched and more brilliant than the *Rudes*, and a bit

more "alive" than Zildjian's recently discontinued *Impulse* cymbals. I picked up a *Raker* crash for myself, and have been able to use it in many varied musical situations. The *Rakers* are a quality cymbal line at a not-too-burdensome price. 10" Splash = \$58; 14" Hi-hats = \$150; 16" Heavy Crash = \$100; 17" Crash = \$110; 18" Crash = \$115; 20" Ride = \$130; 21" Ride = \$160.

—Bob Saydlowski, Jr.



Zildjian Z China Boy

Zildjian has recently added some new models to the Z series. These are 18" and 20" Z *China Boy* cymbals. The idea behind these cymbals was to combine the *China Boy* design (a swooping edge and square bell) with the Z line's computer hammering process. According to Zildjian, "The result is a 'China' cymbal that is louder, more aggressive, more cutting, and more powerful than has ever been available before."

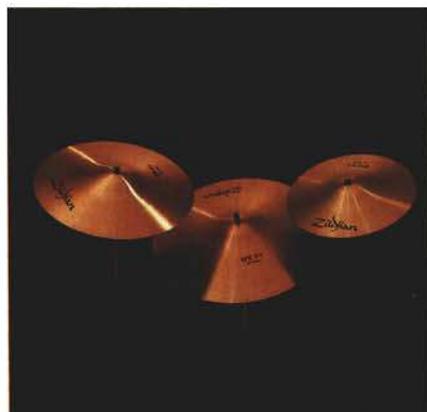
It can be difficult to describe the sound of a cymbal, especially since it is such a subjective thing. However, in trying to be as thorough as possible, I played both the 18" and the 20" Z *China Boys* alone, in a live situation with a band, and in a "live" videotaped performance for a local cable-television show (which gave me the chance to hear what they sounded like when recorded, and also allowed me to judge their sound within the overall sound of the band). In each of these varied settings, I was able to gain a little insight into the different characteristics of these cymbals.

As Zildjian states, these cymbals are louder and more powerful than other types of Chinas that I have heard, but the overall sound is more pleasing and not as overbearing as the usual "trashy" China sound. They are clearer and more cutting—less of the usual white-noise sound of China types. The length of decay is rela-

tively short, with the 18" lasting a bit longer. I found that I could play busier ride patterns on the 20", and that the 18" worked better for loud punctuations and quarter-note-type ride patterns. Both cymbals worked very well in building the intensity and climaxing through the solo sections of songs I played with the band.

Basically, these are two of the best China cymbals I've heard. They sound great within the context of a rock band. Also, I was knocked out by their recorded sound. I realize that no two Zildjian cymbals are identical, but the basic properties of these cymbals should be similar. If you're thinking about adding a China-type to your set, be sure to check these out! The 18" lists at \$236; the 20" is \$265.

—William F. Miller



Zildjian EFX #1

Zildjian is now producing a line of special effects cymbals called (appropriately) *EFX*. *EFX #1* is the first in the series, and it consists of small, thick, bell-like cymbals available in 8", 10", and 12" sizes. Although they look like splash cymbals, their sound is quite different. Since they are of a heavier weight, the sound they produce is a bit "clangier" than a splash. They are high-pitched, and resemble the sound of cup chimes; they have more of a definite pitch than a normal cymbal.

At soft volumes, the *EFX #1s* have a very clear tone, and they sound good when played with mallets or triangle beaters. (Percussionists should definitely hear these cymbals.) At louder volumes, I found them to be piercing, and their tone was more direct. According to Zildjian, they can be used as a heavy splash cymbal for hard rock players. The 12" could be used in this application, but the 8" and 10" don't really have the spread when played hard. I

preferred them at softer volumes, and they would make a good addition to a cymbal setup to add a more delicate sound. List prices: 8", \$77; 10", \$92; 12", \$107.

—William F. Miller



Zildjian K Custom

Drummers playing in high-volume situations often have to make a choice in terms of cymbal sound. If they want a lot of projection and definition, they need to use heavier cymbals (such as Zildjian's Z series), but those cymbals tend to have a lack of overtones. Drummers who like a lot of overtones—particularly the "trashy" sound that is associated with Ks—have to accept the fact that those cymbals are not the best for cutting through loud volume levels.

But Zildjian has now come up with the K Custom series for people who need projection, but who also want a K type of sound. The cymbal is sort of a cross between a K and a Z. Physically, it looks a lot like a Z, in that it is a heavy cymbal that has been computer hammered, and that has a smooth bell and a *Brilliant* finish. But the hammer marks are not the geometric designs of the Z series; rather, they are smaller, more K-like hammer marks. The result is a cymbal that can be heard through a loud band, but that has a lot of the "trashy" characteristics of a K.

The cymbal is available in three sizes: 16", 18", and 20". According to Zildjian, all three were designed as ride cymbals. The 16" that I tried had a rather high pitch and could be used as a ride in certain situations, but despite what Zildjian says about this being a ride cymbal, it's a killer crash. Hit it hard, and it explodes and then dies almost immediately. It's like having a big, full-bodied splash cymbal.

The 18" sounded the most like a K when I played it—a lot of overtones and spread. But when I asked a friend of mine to play it so that I could hear it from a distance, it didn't have quite as much body as I would have expected. It could also serve as a loud crash cymbal, but I preferred it as a ride.

The 20", in my opinion, is the best at

doing what these cymbals were designed to do. It has a very good blend of definition and overtones, especially when heard from a distance. The bells on all three of these cymbals are clearer than on traditional Ks, with the bell on the 20" being especially nice.

Zildjian has definitely filled a gap with the K Custom cymbals, and they should prove popular with drummers who were raised on the jazz sound of Ks, but who are playing in loud situations that traditional Ks were never meant for. Reportedly, Dave Weckl gave Zildjian a lot of input on the design of these cymbals, and he tested the prototypes in the studio and with the Chick Corea Elektric Band. When musicians—rather than marketing departments—are involved with a new product, the results are usually worthwhile, as is the case here. The 16" lists at \$197; the 18" is \$227; the 20" is \$257.

—Rick Mattingly



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ROB THE DRUMMER JOINS ANTI-ALCOHOL DELEGATION TO U.S.S.R.

Robert Gottfried—also known as children's entertainment character "Rob The Drummer"—recently visited the Soviet Union as part of a U.S. delegation there to determine the scope and specific methods of treatment of alcohol abuse problems in that country. According to David Johnson, Program Director of Community Alcoholism Services headquartered in Santa Rosa, California, "Rob The Drummer's" performances worldwide, offering the arts as a nonverbal alternative to changing one's perception, may be an innova-

tive and effective tool to motivate and educate the Russian children to avoid *all* types of substance abuse."

Rob has worked extensively in the anti-drug field with a variety of government- and corporate-sponsored programs, and has had great success with his approach concerning the critical issues of alcohol and substance abuse. He is a resident of West Hartford, Connecticut and New York City, and is also a recognized jazz-rock performer and recording artist.

REMO HONORS SPELLISSEY



Spellissey with Louie Bellson

Remo, Inc. recently presented its first E.P.P.I. (Excellence in the Profession of Percussion Instruction) award to Gary J. Spellissey, of Chelmsford, Massachusetts. Remo initiated

this award to recognize the efforts and achievements of the "unsung heroes" of the percussion industry. The award was presented to Gary by renowned drummer (and Remo vice-president) Louie Bellson.

Spellissey heads the percussion department at the University of Lowell, the Belmont School of Music, and the All-Newton School of Music. In addition to his rigorous teaching schedule, he is also an active performer in the greater Boston area.

GROVE SCHOOL TO OPEN NEW LOCATION

The Grove School of Music will be moving to new facilities in time for the July 1987 quarter. The new location will be in the Daily News building at 14539 Sylvan Street, in Van Nuys, California—about four miles

from the school's present location.

Plans for the 38,000-square-foot facility include construction of four recording studios, an auditorium, 14 classrooms, practice rooms, library, student

lounges, and administrative offices. According to director Dick Grove, "This modern plant will give us the opportunity to meet the physical demands of our expanding enrollment, as well as providing

those additional facilities like practice and playing rooms and lounges that will allow our students to make the most of their stay at the school."

DRUM WORKSHOP AND DYNACORD SPONSOR NAMM CONCERT

Drum Workshop, Inc. and Dynacord Electronic Drums cosponsored an after-hours concert at the NAMM Winter Market in Anaheim, California. On Saturday, January 17, guests were treated to an exciting performance by Karizma, a band made up of some of L.A.'s top contemporary musicians. The group, consisting of David Garfield on keyboards, Brandon Fields and Larry Klimas on saxes and flute, Jimmy Johnson on bass, Mike Landau on guitar, Carlos Vega on drums, and Luis Conte and Lenny Castro on percussion, delivered two exciting sets of high-energy, Latin-tinged jazz/rock. Many of the tunes quite deliberately showcased the drums and percussion—obviously playing to a drum-ori-

ented audience.

That same audience was treated to guest appearances by Vinnie Colaiuta, Chad Wackerman, Casey Scheuerell, and Danny Gottlieb, all of whom sat in on Dynacord electronic drums. (Chad also replaced Carlos for a few tunes on the acoustic kit.) Toward the close of the evening, groove master Bernard Purdie joined the group on acoustic drums, laying down a particularly solid feel on an instrumental rendition of "Heard It Through The Grapevine." With so many drum and percussion giants in one place at one time, the audience left with the feeling that they had enjoyed a once-in-a-lifetime performance.

—Rick Van Horn



Karizma



(l. to r.) Vinnie Colaiuta, Chad Wackerman, and Don Lombardi



Luis Conte



Casey Scheuerell



Carlos Vega



Bernard Purdie

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NEW LUDWIG PRODUCTS



Ludwig Industries recently announced the introduction of several new products in its drum and hardware lines. Among those new products are a new 16 x 18 jazz bass drum, available in either *Classic* (six-ply) or *Super Classic* (four-ply) maple-shell series, and a new double-bass rock outfit available in either of the above series plus Ludwig's *Rocker II Power-Plus* series. This double-bass rock outfit includes two 16 x 24 power bass drums, 16 x 16 and 16 x 18 floor toms, four power rack toms in 9 x 10, 11 x 12, 12 x 13, and 13 x 14 sizes, a 14" deep-shell snare drum, and Ludwig's *Modular*

hardware. Also introduced were new components to the *Rocker II* line, including a 16 x 24 power bass drum and a 16 x 18 power floor tom. A deep rock snare drum in 10 x 14 size is also new. It is available in either the *Classic* or *Super Classic* series. Also, a new, low-profile snare drum stand in the *Modular II* hardware line was introduced. It makes the use of extra-deep snare drums both comfortable and practical. For further details on any of these new items, contact Ludwig Industries, c/o the Selmer Company, P.O. Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515.

ZILDJIAN RELEASES NEW CATALOG AND PRODUCTS

The Avedis Zildjian Company has announced the availability of a completely new, full-color cymbal catalog that presents a modern-day view of the Zildjian company and its range of cymbals. In addition to complete product listings, the catalog includes pictorial spreads outlining the history of the Zildjian family and detailed descriptions of the processes involved in the making of the various Zildjian cymbal lines.

Also new from Zildjian is the first-ever specially designed miking system for cymbals. The Zildjian company joined forces with Barcus-Berry Electronics, Inc. to create the *ZMC-1* miking system. The unit gives the drummer complete control over the sound and balance of his or her cymbal setup, in addition to providing the ultimate in acoustic cymbal amplification, according to a spokesman

for the Zildjian company. The system includes a powered mixer, five patented electret mic's for cymbals, and a specially developed mic' for hi-hats. The mixer provides built-in effects loops to allow the use of effects such as echo, reverb, and flanging on individual cymbals.

Zildjian has also added several new models to its drumstick line, including the *Absolute Rock* double-butt-ended model, and *3A*, *Jazz*, and *Session Master* models, all available in natural or black satin finish, with wood or nylon tips. Also new is the availability of the existing *5B* and *Rock* models in a deep red satin finish. For further information on any Zildjian product, contact Colin Schofield, Zildjian Product Manager, Avedis Zildjian Company, Longwater Drive, Norwell, MA 02061.

GROVER DRUMSTICKS

Grover Enterprises recently announced the addition of professional model snare drum sticks to its product line. Snare drum sticks *Model S*, for concert, rock, or marching use, and *Model E*, for jazz, combo, and all-around drumset playing, are both turned from carefully selected hickory that has been dried and aged. Each stick is rolled to ensure straightness, and is carefully sanded, sealed, and waxed prior to being pitch-

paired. The *Model S* is just under 5/8" in diameter and 16 1/2" long. It has a short taper and rounded oval bead. The *Model E* is formed from specially compressed hickory, is 1/2" in diameter and 15 7/8" long, and has a slight back taper for greater balance. For further information, contact Grover Enterprises, 274 Round Swamp Road, Melville, NY 11747, (516)367-7846.

BOMB BASS DRUM MUTE



The *Bomb Bass* is an air suspension drum mute for bass drums—the first of its kind to use an air inflatable membrane in conjunction with sound acoustic foam. The unit eliminates unwanted bass drum overtones while enhancing low-

and mid-range bass drum frequencies. The *Bomb Bass* is easily installed, adjustable, reusable, and adaptable to any size of bass drum. For more details, contact Sterling Products, 33532 Five Mile Road, Livonia, MI 48154.

MAY EA EXPANDS LINE, OFFERS PACKAGES

New additions to the May EA professional drum miking systems include the Sennheiser *409* (for snare drums and rack toms), *421* (for kick drums and floor toms), and the *AKG 112* (an updated *D12* for bass drums) microphones. The new mic's are available along with May EA's existing line of Shure models, enabling May EA to offer drummers whatever response or quality of sound they prefer for drumkit miking applications. All May EA mic's are mountable on May EA's

patented non-drill internal shock mounts, eliminating the need for separate mic' stands or for any shell holes.

To help make drummers more aware of the features of the system, May EA is offering four specially priced "kick & snare" drum mic' packages. See your May EA dealer for further information, or contact the company directly at 7712-B Talbert Ave., Huntington Beach, CA 92648, (714) 536-2505.



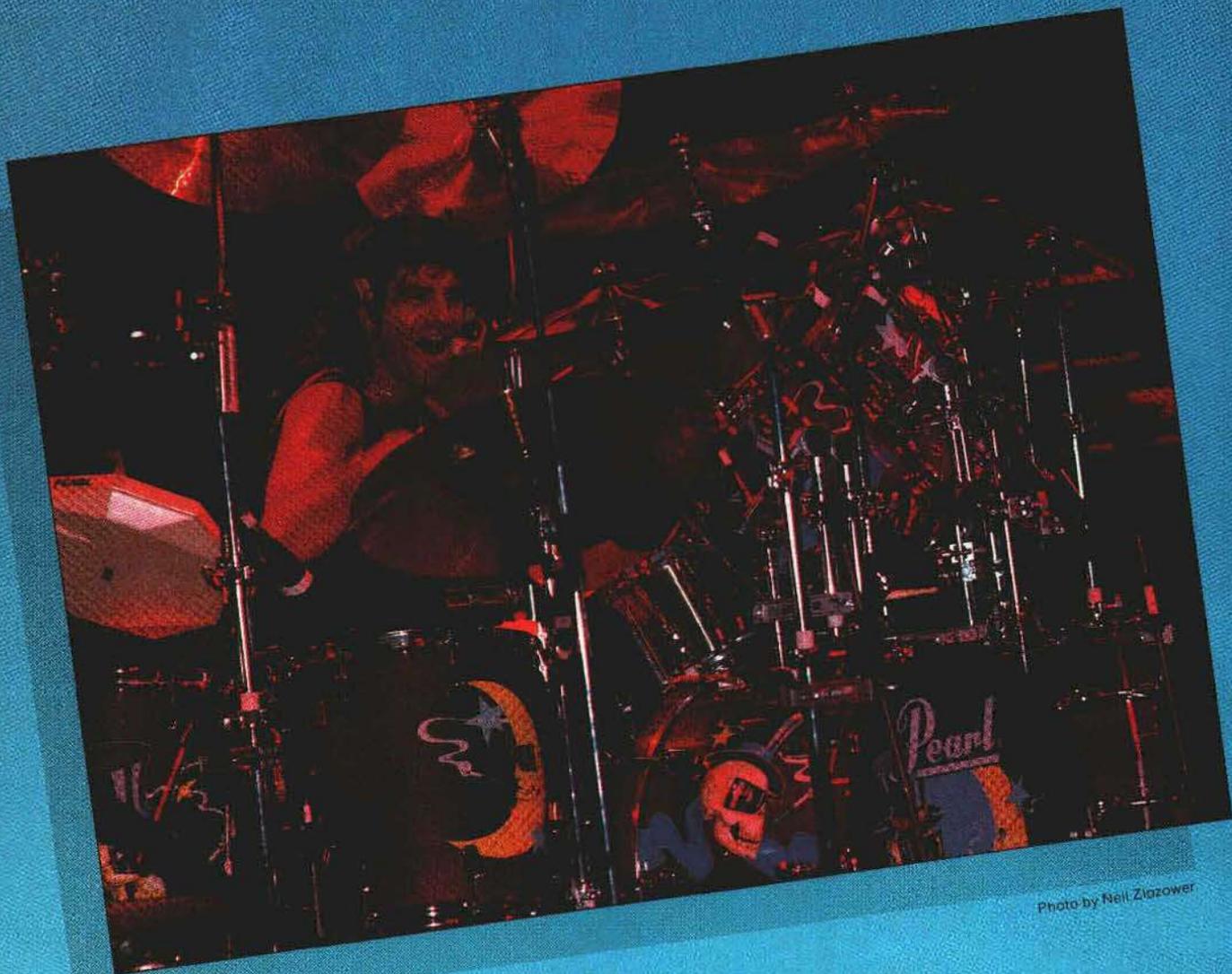


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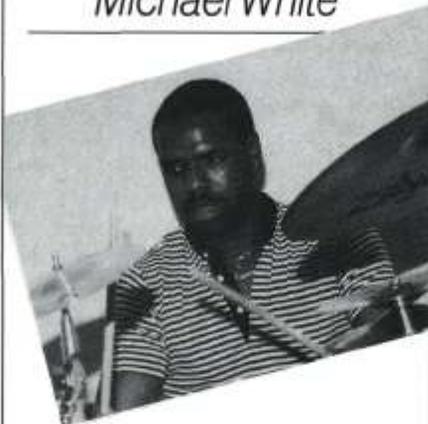
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Profiles in Percussion

Michael White

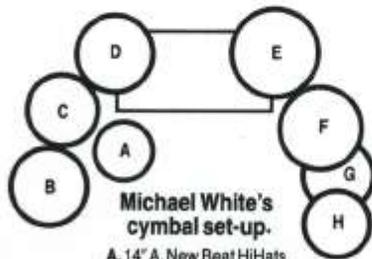


Michael White is one of the most sought-after drummers in contemporary R&B. His unmistakable groove is currently the backbone for one of the world's most successful bands, Maze, featuring Frankie Beverly.

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

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

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



Michael White's cymbal set-up.

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- C. 17" A. Medium Thin Crash
- D. 18" A. Medium Thin Crash
- E. 20" K. Ride
- F. 19" A. Medium Crash
- G. 17" K. Dark Crash
- H. 16" A. Medium Thin Crash

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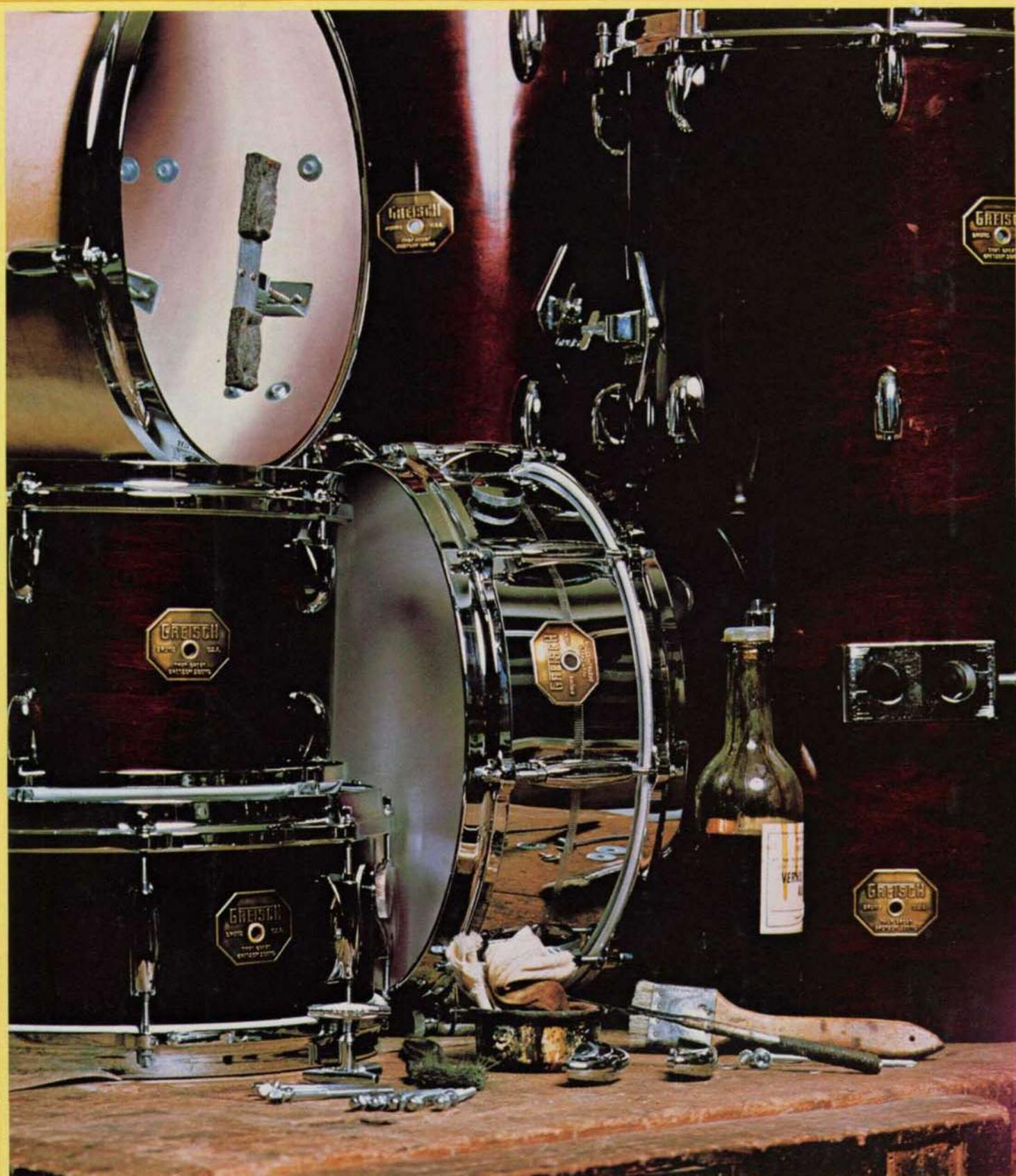
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Advertiser's Index

APM/Kahler	37
Atlanta Pro Percussion	51
Beato Musical Products	39
Beyer Microphones	73
Camber Cymbals	89
Casino Percussion	63,78
CB-700	40,48/49
Cosmic Percussion	52
Coss Drum Products	62
DC1000	64
DCI Music Video	68/69
D.C. Publications	50,76,88
ddrum	53
D & F Products	62
Drum Connection	46
The Drum/Keyboard Shop	65
Drum Workshop	55
Drum World	88
Drummers Collective	68/69
Dynacord	41
Evans Products	44
Fibes Drum Sticks	42
GC Music	60
Gretsch Drums	Inside Back Cover
Grover Enterprises	8
Hot Licks Productions	50
Impact	84
Imperial Creations	8
JT Enterprises	48
Latin Percussion	7
L. T. Lug Lock	51
Ludwig Industries	Inside Front Cover,63
Manny's Music Store	64
Maxxstixx	79
May Ea	98
MD Back Issues	90
MD Equipment Annual	81
Meinl	5,97
Musicians Institute	91,107
Noble & Cooley	61
Paiste Cymbals	9
Paragon Music Center	85
Pastore Music, Inc.	76
Pearl International	56/57,102,111
Percussion Center	63
Percussion Paradise	53
Phi Tech	104
Polybeat Drum Sticks	66
Precision Drum Co.	8
Premier Drums	3
Promark	38,59,94
Regal Tip/Calato	52
Reed, Ted	58
Remo	11
Resurrection Drums	76
RIMS	71
R.O.C. Drums	67
Rolls Music Center	66
Sabian, Ltd.	13,99
Sam Ash Music Store	84
Shure Brothers	43
Simmons Electronic Drums	45
Slobeat Percussion Products	65
Sonor	109
Tama	34/35,92/93,103,105,107
Taw's Sound & Drum Works	80
Thoroughbred Music	63,77
Thunderstick	94,102,107
Universal Percussion	61
Valley Drum Shop	88
Vic Firth, Inc.	47,60
Steve Weiss Music	53
The Woodwind & The Brasswind	76
Xerstick	58
Yamaha	4,14/15
Zildjian	95, 112, Outside Back Cover

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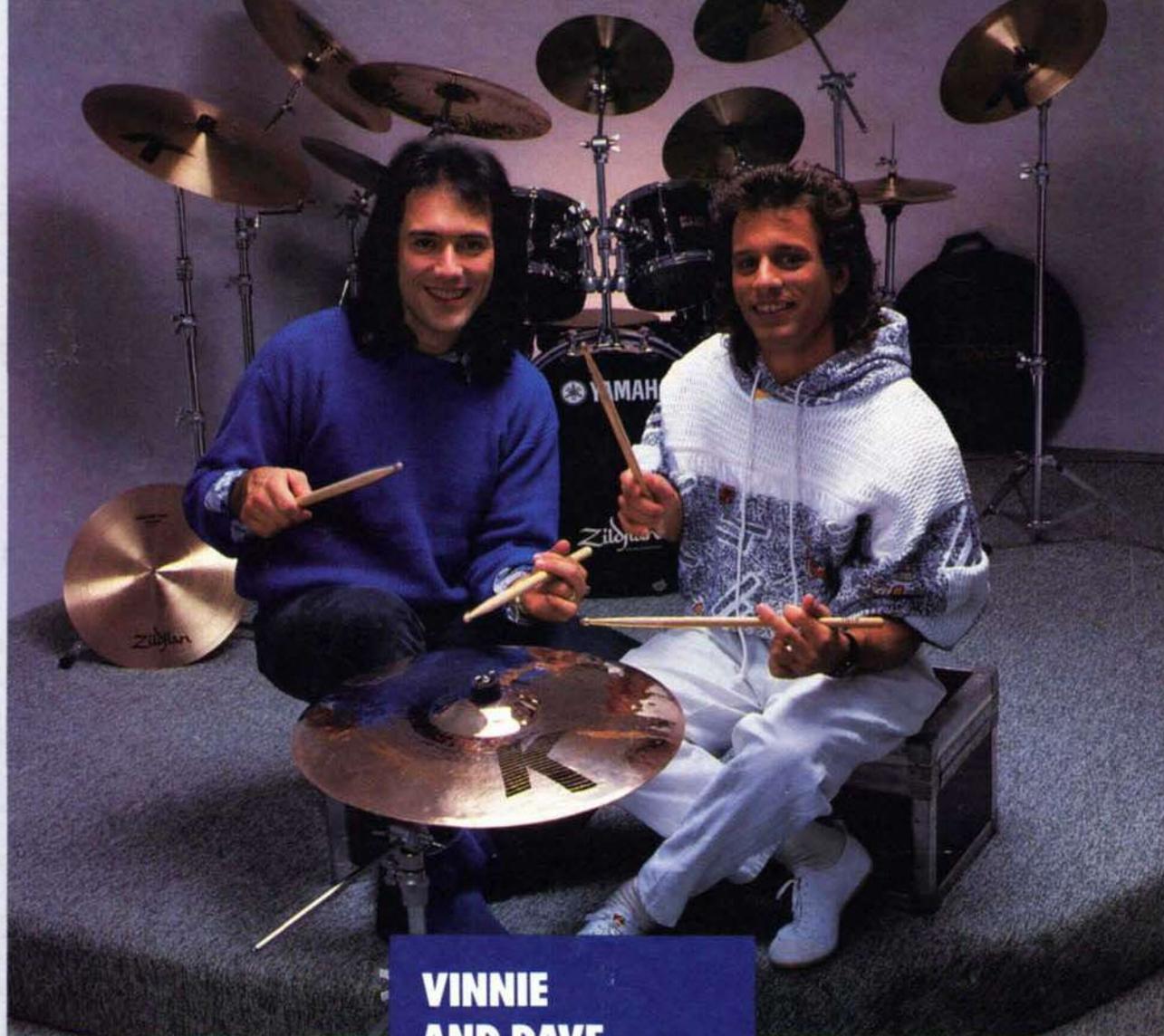
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"Zildjian is really tuned in to the needs of the drummer. Their people are out in the field listening and doing research, asking drummers what they want in cymbals," says Vinnie Colaiuta, L.A. studio drummer who's played with Frank Zappa, Joni Mitchell, Gino Vannelli, Tom Scott, Chaka Khan and The Commodores.

Dave Weckl, currently with Chick Corea, explains. "I told Zildjian I wanted the perfect ride cymbal for all occasions. One that had just the right amounts of brilliance and attack, but not too pingy. Sort of a dry definition that would allow me to carry out the emotion of the music."

"So I actually worked in the Zildjian factory, experimenting with new designs. We combined "A" machine hammering and "K" hand hammering, no buffing and buffing. The result is what is now the K Custom."

"The K Custom is a nice, warm, musical ride cymbal with a clean bell sound, yet it's not too clangy. I can turn

around and crash on it without having to worry about too many uncontrolled overtones. It blends perfectly," says Colaiuta.

Zildjian continues to play an instrumental role in shaping the sound of modern music—by working closely with leading-edge drummers like Vinnie and Dave.

"I'm always looking for new sounds and so is Zildjian. In fact, that's how we came up with the idea of mixing a Z bottom and K top in my Hi Hats. The K gives me the quick, thin splash characteristic I like. And the Z provides that certain edge. They really cut through," says Weckl. "Which is important because of all the electronics that I use.

"Zildjian's really hit upon a winning combination in terms of delivering new concepts. They're creating cymbals that have a musical place and make a lasting impression," claims Colaiuta.

"Zildjian is as sensitive to the needs of drummers as the drummers are towards their instruments," concludes Weckl.

If you'd like to learn more about Zildjian A, K or Z cymbals, stop by your Zildjian dealer. And discover the virtue of listening.

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