

# MODERN DRUMMER



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The World's First International Magazine For Drummers

## Rick Marotta

STYLE COUNCIL'S

STEVE  
WHITE

GARY  
BURKE

REMINISCING WITH  
BILL LUDWIG



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# Features

Cover Photo by Leslie Burke

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# Features

## RICK MAROTTA

He didn't start playing drums until he was 19, but within a few months, Rick Marotta was being asked to do sessions in New York. He talks about his work with such artists as Steely Dan, Jackson Browne, and Larry Carlton, and explains what is behind his personal style.

by Robyn Flans ..... 16

## GARY BURKE

Currently working with Joe Jackson, Gary Burke's credits also include such diverse artists as Bob Dylan and Steve Reich. He discusses his training and experiences, and gives examples of the charts he had to play for Jackson's *Will Power* album.

by Jeff Potter ..... 22

## STEVE WHITE

After studying with no less than Bill Bruford, Steve White was invited to join The Style Council at the age of 17. He recalls his early training and talks about the group he formed, The Jazz Renegades.

by Simon Goodwin ..... 26

## WILLIAM F. LUDWIG, JR.

Having been literally born into the drum business, William F. Ludwig, Jr., traces the development of the American drum industry from the early 1900s to the present.

by Paul Schmidt ..... 30

# Columns

## EDUCATION

### JAZZ DRUMMERS' WORKSHOP

The Ride Cymbal  
by Peter Erskine..... 66

### SHOW DRUMMERS' SEMINAR

Subbing A Broadway Show  
by Larry Spivack ..... 68

### TEACHERS' FORUM

Child Drummers  
by Brooke Sheffield Comer..... 70

### DRUM SOLOIST

Roy Haynes: "Snap Crackle"  
by Karl Sterling ..... 80

### ROCK PERSPECTIVES

Recreating Beats  
by Kenny Aronoff ..... 82

### THE MACHINE SHOP

Heavy Rock From Light Plastic  
by Clive Brooks ..... 84

### ROCK 'N' JAZZ CLINIC

Styles are Related: Part 2  
by Rod Morgenstein ..... 92

### TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Consumer Rights And Options  
by Clifford J. Sherry, Ph.D. .... 94

### CONCEPTS

Showmanship  
by Roy Burns ..... 110

## EQUIPMENT

### SETUP UPDATE

Marc Droubay and Mike Clark ... 108

### PRODUCT CLOSE-UP

Joe Montineri Custom Snare Drums  
by Bob Saydlowski, Jr. .... 112

### ELECTRONIC REVIEW

Headset Microphones  
by Rick Van Horn ..... 114

JUST DRUMS ..... 122

## PROFILES

### UP AND COMING

The Smithereens' Dennis Diken  
by Brooke Sheffield Comer..... 36

### PORTRAITS

Ralph Pace  
by William F. Miller ..... 42

## NEWS

UPDATE..... 6

INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS .... 120

## DEPARTMENTS

EDITOR'S OVERVIEW ..... 2

READERS' PLATFORM ..... 4

ASK A PRO ..... 10

IT'S QUESTIONABLE..... 12

DRUM MARKET ..... 106



## On Honest Feedback

I'm happy to announce the availability of *Modern Drummer's 1987 Equipment Annual*. Similar to last year, the annual will be distributed free of charge to MD subscribers, and can be purchased at major music stores, drum shops, bookstores, or newsstands for \$5.95.

For anyone who may have missed our first *Equipment Annual*, the publication contains nearly every imaginable percussion item from a wide selection of manufacturers, along with product specifications and suggested retail prices. Company addresses are included, as well as information on major music stores and drum shops across the country. A feature article on the state of the industry offers equally important information for all drummers. Our 1986 guide has been called the most comprehensive listing of percussion equipment ever published.

While I'm on the subject of equipment, let me point out something that can be beneficial for the consumers' standpoint as well as the manufacturers'. That "something" is called feedback. One good example of feedback is when you write to tell us what you like or don't like about *Modern Drummer*. That flow of positive or negative feedback helps make MD an even more useful publication for drummers. It shows us where improvements, adjustments, or fresh new ideas can be incorporated into the magazine.

Another good example of healthy feedback occurred a while back with *Modern Drummer's* Consumer Poll. We asked for your opinion on major manufacturers and their products in that

poll. Awards were given for *Best Quality and Craftsmanship*, *Most Consumer Service Oriented*, *Most Innovative Company*, and *Most Needed New Product*. But more important than the awards was the feedback it offered the drum industry: feedback directly from the readers of *Modern Drummer*—the most serious drumming audience in the world. Companies are continually looking for input to improve their product lines and maintain a leading edge. And feedback, particularly from the drummers themselves, is the best source for gathering that information.

Obviously, there's no need to wait for a Consumer Poll to express your opinion. Let the companies know how you honestly feel by writing directly to them, by going through your local music dealer or drum shop, or by speaking to company reps at clinics sponsored by individual firms. If you've discovered real value in a product and it's made your life as a drummer that much easier, tell the manufacturer about it! Likewise, should you find a distinct shortcoming with certain merchandise, let the manufacturer know about *that* as well. When you do this, you supply that all-important feedback from which a company can draw. And, if in doing so, should just *one* company update a valuable old product, redesign a poor one, or spring forward with a totally unique idea as a result of that feedback, then we've all gained from it, haven't we? Keep this in mind as you browse through the new *Equipment Annual* or anytime for that matter.

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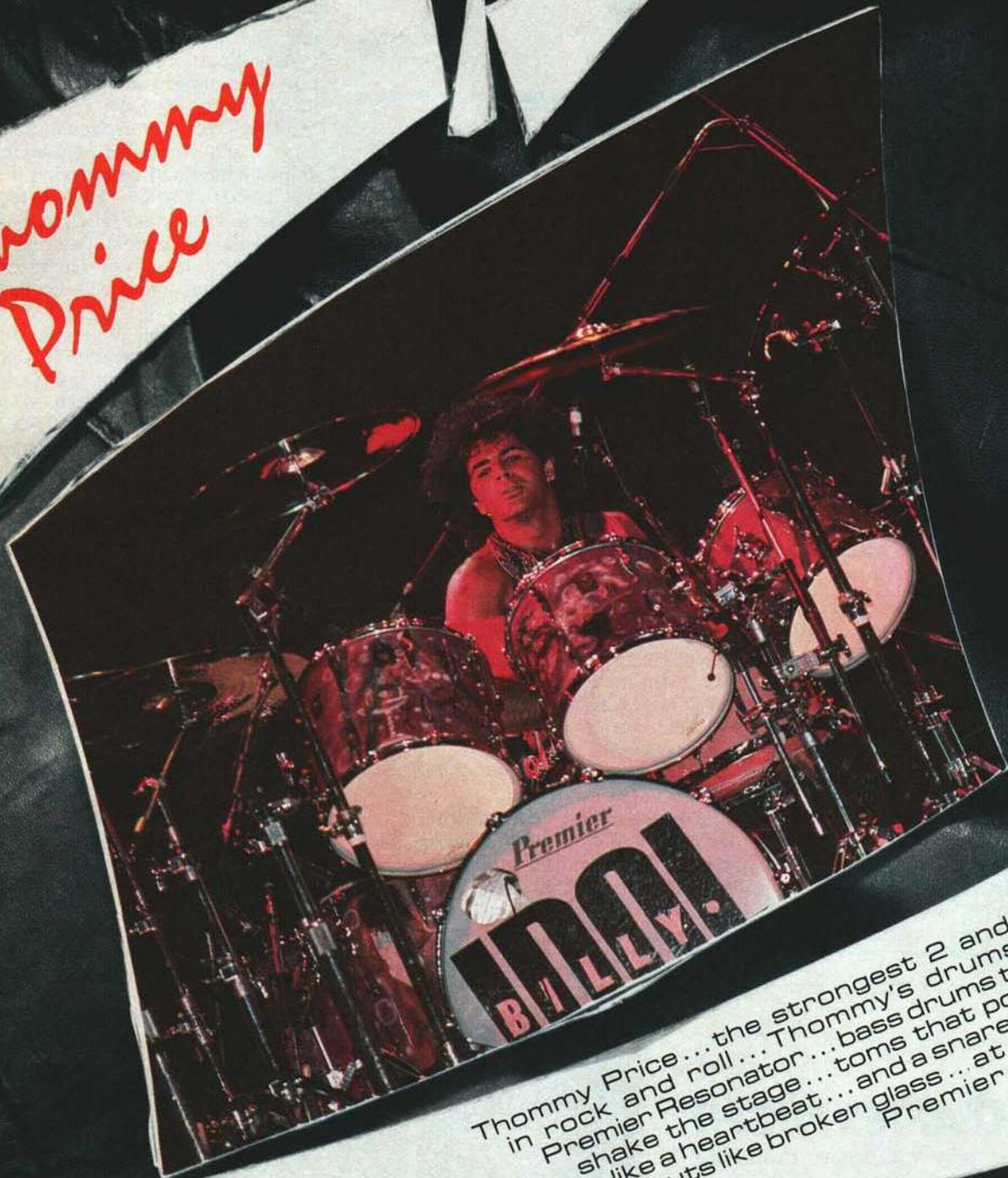
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# READERS' PLATFORM

## LARS ULRICH

I would like to thank you for your great article on Lars Ulrich in your June issue. Lars is definitely one of the most innovative drummers in the metal scene today, and he blows away the boring and predictable playing of the drummers in many other "metal" bands. Metallica sets an example for those who play music that comes from deep inside.

I'd also like to compliment you on your great magazine. You keep an open mind—which is unusual.

Carl Moller  
Sterling VA

I want to thank you for your article on Lars Ulrich. Lars has a definite style to his playing and has affected the way I play. One item that I found to be incorrect in the interview, however, was Lars' comment regarding Dave Lombardo, formerly of Slayer. Dave uses double-bass work as much as Lars does—especially on Slayer's latest album. The rest of the article was quite accurate and helpful. Thanks again.

Adam Rostocki  
West Hempstead NY

Thank you very much for the excellent interview with Metallica's Lars Ulrich in the June issue. A feature interview with a power metal drummer of his caliber was long overdue, and—like the majority of your articles—was very informative and interesting. However, the talent in this speedy brand of heavy metal drumming doesn't end there. There are many more, such as Slayer's Dave Lombardo and Anthrax's Charlie Benante, whose power and technique are an inspiration to all of us thrashing drummers everywhere.

All in all, you put out a very fine magazine. In a sea of media-controlled music lit-

erature, it is nice to see a magazine that gives the "little guys" exposure along with the "big guys."

Dave Penna  
Valley Stream NY

## ONE READER'S PERSPECTIVE

Since first subscribing to *Modern Drummer* nine years ago, I have read about a number of controversial issues, the most recent of which seems to center on the so-called electronic revolution and its adverse effect on the drumming profession. I would like to put this issue into its proper perspective.

Electronic drums, and in particular computerized drum machines, are a logical consequence of today's pop music trends—especially the disco craze of the late '70s. Pop and rock music, in general, are characterized by an almost total lack of dynamics and by a high degree of repetition—in particular, the ostinato dance rhythms of the drums. (This is not inherently bad, but is a practical consequence of the origin and function of rock and modern pop from dance music. You and your readers will realize that there are notable exceptions to this rather gross generalization.) Anyone who listens to a variety of music on the car stereo will note that classical and some jazz will get drowned out by car noise during quiet passages (i.e., adagio movements or bass solos) but that this will not happen with rock.

With the advent of 48-track recording studios, it is now possible to correct and to remove most of the human elements (except for that of the sound engineer) created by the musicians actually playing the music in the studio. In addition, the music

industry is geared towards the manufacture of a (by and large) uniform sound in its efforts to sell the maximum number of units (i.e., records).

Acoustic drums are difficult to record, take a long time to set up and EQ, and are limited by the drummer's ability to play. Modern computer technology, on the other hand, is capable of sampling any desired sound and reproducing it at any pop tempo or rhythm—all in perfect time. This saves space, time, and money—all of which makes economic sense. It also allows non-drumming composers to record rhythm tracks without having to use drummers.

I believe it is this philosophy that has resulted in the proliferation of electronic drums. While this has appeared alarming to some of the readers and name drummers whose opinions have been expressed in the pages of *MD*, it is not clear that it will necessarily be detrimental. Pop drummers such as Stewart Copeland, Terry Bozzio, and Bill Bruford have managed to maintain their individuality in an electronic context. Jazz drummers such as Marvin "Smitty" Smith and Peter Erskine are also capable of maintaining their originality in today's musical environment.

The drummers who will be most intimidated will be those who allow their individual creative talent to be subjugated to the needs of recording companies who are more interested in selling units than in making good music. Musicians should be more concerned with changing this attitude than with the inherent good or evil of new instruments.

Janok Bhattacharya  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

## NIGHT AFTER NIGHT

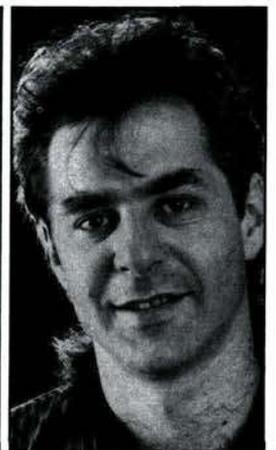
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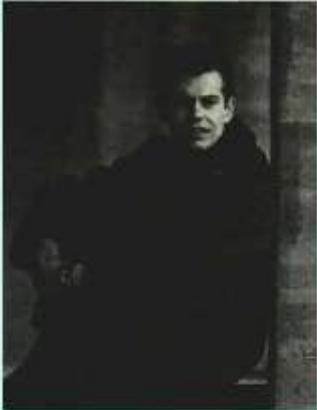
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Crowded House's first self-titled album has been doing incredibly well, and drummer **Paul Hester**, the eternal jokester, says, "It's great. It means we're all going to be employed for a while"—and working hard. Except for the month of May, Crowded House has been on the road since the beginning of the year.

"On the promotional tours, I just stood out with a snare drum, a mounted rack tom, and a splash cymbal. We did that for quite a while. We would just throw parties in each town and invite all these people from the industry. It worked out so well. We actually started singing really well with each other, because we could hear each other really clearly. So we decided to incorporate that acoustic thing into our set. We have a little period at the beginning, middle, or at the finish where we just play like that and the crew will bring out a little snare drum, which I play with a pair of brushes. You can be quite dynamic with such a set. You can be really, really quiet, or you can really motor along. It's quite easy to be dramatic with it. It doesn't seem limiting at all, and it's not frustrating.

It's not like I want to play huge drum fills all the time. It's really good for the songs. It's just a different sort of approach. Standing is really different, but it's good to get up and dance around."

And where did he learn to use brushes? "My mum used to play the drums," he says in his Australian accent. "She used to back up guys with just a snare drum and brushes, sort of like a jazzer, and she used to have a snare drum, cymbals, and hi-hats at home with brushes. She'd always hang around on the weekends playing drums to her favorite jazz records, and I would tap along with her, which is how I got into playing drums."

Paul says his role with Crowded House is to sort out the feel of the song. "My role has a lot to do with the dynamics of the song. I'm

pretty involved in the early stages. That's where I play a big part in the arrangement and how the song is going to go. When Neil [Finn] and I demoed the songs early on, we went into the studio and put all the tracks down with just drums and guitar. It was quite easy to get a feel that way, without the bass, keyboards, or anything. Then we worked everything out in preproduction. For this first album, we had a good four weeks full of rehearsals with the band before we went in to record. When we went in to do the album, we knew what the arrangements were going to be. We were just basically looking for the best performance of each song." The band will be recording its second album at the end of the year.

—Robyn Flans

Having a hit record is very demanding, says Poison's **Rikki Rockett**. "We leave the gig right after the show. We usually get into the next city about 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, and I'll sleep until about 11:30 or 12:00. I'll take a shower, and start doing phone interviews, go to a radio station, or make an in-store appearance. Then we'll go to the gig at 5:30, do soundcheck, get ready, play the show, and do the same thing over again. It's hard, but I'm not complaining. This is what I've always wanted."

As for musical demands, Rikki says, "I make my own requirements concerning how physically demanding it will be. I've always admired drummers who were show drum-

mers. I stand up a lot throughout the set and do as much choreography with the rest of the band as I can. I'm sort of the Sheila E. of hard rock. I like to be as visible as possible. I don't have a lot of cymbals in front of me, and I can hit better when they're off to the side, anyway. I sit very high, and I like to feel that I'm very much a part of the band. In rock 'n' roll, when you play live, the audience likes to see what you're hitting and what you're doing. If the people don't know where the sounds are coming from, it really confuses them. There are a heck of a lot of physical demands that I've put on myself. I could sit back and let Bobby, Bret, and C.C. do what they do, and our band would probably still be big

because they raise so much hell that they would cover for a drummer who didn't do anything. But I think it's important to give that extra plus and make it all that much better. It's such a visual band and there's a lot of image, so I want to be a little bit different."

Image can sometimes get in the way of being taken seriously, admits Rikki. "It was that way at first. It seems that I spent the first half of the year defending my band and what I do, but now the music is speaking for itself. If we were just a bunch of hype and makeup, I don't think we'd have a platinum record. You can't fake it when you go on that stage, and don't have pyrotechnics and all the lights and sound you want,



which you can't have when you're an opening band. You pretty much have to raise as much hell as you can and drive it down their throats."

—Robyn Flans

**Jimmy DeGrasso** is very happy in his new band, Y & T. DeGrasso hails from southeast Pennsylvania where he still lives, despite playing with a California band. This guy gets around. He moved to London while playing with Ozzy Osbourne's band, and he lived

in Ireland and toured Europe with the Irish band Mama's Boys. He's played most of the clubs in the New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania area and spent time living in Los Angeles learning the tools of his trade. That is a lot of experience for someone who is only

23 years old!

Jimmy got his first drumset at the age of two and a half and started lessons at five. He was playing with a jazz combo by the time he was six. It was while in London after leaving Osbourne that DeGrasso got the gig subbing for the ailing

drummer in Mama's Boys. Upon returning to the States, he joined Talas, an East Coast rock/jazz fusion combo. Unfortunately, after only a couple of months, the group's management and record deal fell apart. That's when he heard of the opening in Y & T

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and flew out to Oakland. After a cattle-call-style audition, he got the job.

"Talas was great," he says. "We had structures to songs, but there were places where there was room for everyone to do his own thing. There was only one guitar, one bass, and a front man. We used to work out a lot of licks together in unison. It would be maybe just

an off-time thing on the guitar and the bass doing a hammer-on lick. I'd just do a double bass drum lick with that. There was a lot of room to play.

"In this band, we've got two guitars, so I can't be doing a million things. First and foremost is to keep the band together. This is more of a classic-type rock band. It's a nice medium. I do keep a lot of

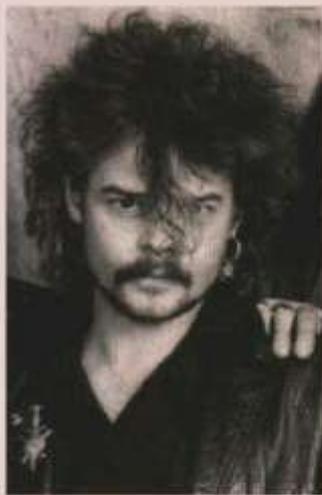
time, but then there are places where I have a lot of room to do whatever I feel like doing at the time."

He's also had the opportunity to participate in the writing of the new album. "It's a great situation," he enthuses. "I can't say enough about it. We like to have fun, but everyone is very business-minded—very professional—which is

what I like. I'm a no-nonsense person. I like to get things done.

"This album was almost two years in the making. It was time to put out a really strong album. We're on Geffen Records now, and everything's new. It's great. It's like a fresh start for everybody."

—Susan Alexander



If you're a Motorhead fan, you might recall a recent *Update* on Pete Gill. Well, Pete split the band (amicably, we're informed) and prodigal skinbasher **Philthy "Animal" Taylor** has returned! Philthy was Motorhead's original drummer, and he exited the group a few years back because of a desire to explore other

musical formats. During that interim, the "Animal" played with artists such as Frankie Miller and bassist Pete Way. But soon after he left Motorhead, he realized that he had made a mistake. "I played with a bunch of great artists," he reflects, "but now I'm back where I really belong."

Gill departed the group during the shooting of the film *Eat The Rich*, which stars Motorhead's frontman, Lemmy, and features the entire band in a cameo performance. The band had always kept in touch with Taylor, so he was first choice as Gill's replacement. While he was away, Motorhead's lineup changed from a three piece to a four piece, but have things changed for Taylor, drumming-wise, since his leave? "I haven't really changed much," he states. "During the three years I was away, I played different styles of music, which I quite enjoyed. But since returning to Motorhead, I've realized that

this is the only drumming I enjoy on all levels. I can hit everything at once, as many times as I want and as fast as I possibly can, and it all fits in."

That assessment may imply that Taylor's drumming is merely an exercise in wild abandon, but in fact, the opposite is true. Although Philthy's unbridled style may come naturally to him, his intensity and rapid-fire attack helped to innovate heavy metal drumming. "Mmmm, I don't know about that," he muses. "A lot of people have told me that they've been listening to us for years and that I'm a hero and all that, and I think, 'Me a hero? I'm just an ordinary geezer.' But I guess we must have influenced some people. I know Lars Ulrich has been a fan since he was 13. He's a great drummer, so it's quite a compliment to have been cited as an influence, but I still can't quite come to terms with all of that."

Another fact that Philthy

can't come to terms with is Motorhead's connection to heavy metal. "This phrase 'heavy metal' came out after we started," he explains.

"When we started, Motorhead was a 'hard rock' or a 'heavy rock' band. Now you've got thrash metal, speed metal, black metal . . . I don't really know what to make of all of this. Outside of performing with Motorhead, I don't listen to much of it. I'd rather listen to Kate Bush, ZZ Top, Peter Gabriel, Run-DMC—anything as long as it's good music."

With Motorhead being a four piece these days, Taylor will have a new challenge when the band goes back into the studio for its next album. In the meantime, there's the upcoming *Eat The Rich* flick to look forward to and the constant touring. "This band is going to go on forever," adds Philthy, "and the only way I'll leave again is if I'm fired or if I die."

—Teri Saccone

**Jeremy Driesen** has been touring for the past year with Gary U.S. Bonds, in addition to playing shows with other artists on the '50s/'60s revival circuit, such as Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Frankie Avalon, The Drifters, and Leslie Gore. **Louis Molino III** is currently recording and touring with Marc Jordan. Lou is also going to be recording on Trevor Rabin's upcoming solo project and plans to tour in support of that album. **Jim Keltner** and **Nick Mason** on the new Pink Floyd LP. Keltner is also working on Ry Cooder's latest offering. **Rick Marotta** has been recording with Marilyn Martin and Lee Greenwood.

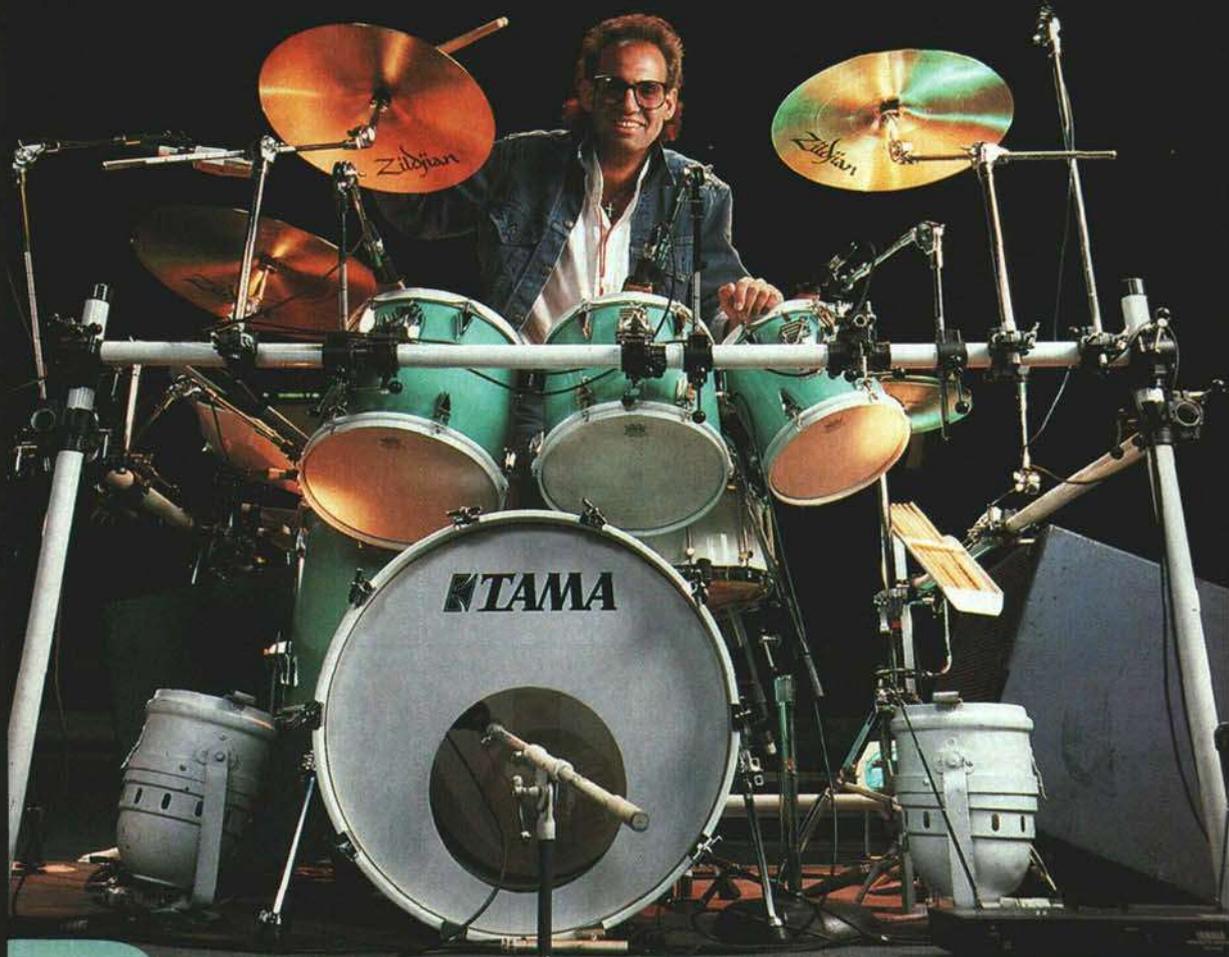
**Buddy Williams** on Janis Siegel's second solo album. Recently, **Gordon Gale** was on tour with Peter Schless. He also did a concert with David Pomeranz, worked on Danny Wilde's upcoming project, did a walk-on in *Murder She Wrote*, and can be seen in Bonnie Bramlett's compilation video. **Roger Earl** is in the studio with Foghat. **Chuck Bonfante** has been working with Popzarocca, as well as touring with Joe Lynn Turner. **Billy Amendola** has been in the studio with True Blue. **Abbey Rader** has been touring with the Gunter Hampel Big Band, his own band, Abbey Rader's Right Time, and the Mal

Waldron Quartet. **Terry Jenkins** touring with the James Last Orchestra. **Craig Krampf** has been working with Heidi Berg, Scarlett 'n Black, Gene Miller, and Warren Zevon, as well as playing on Steve Cropper's contribution to the film-score for *Sweet Little Rock 'n' Roller*. **Jim Blair** has been doing scattered dates with Howard Hewitt, as well as El Chicano. This summer he can be seen touring with the Williams Bros. **Eddie Bayers** has been in the studio with Alabama, Charlie Pride, Terri Gibbs, Dan Seals, and Michael Johnson. **Carl L. Allen** has been working with the Terrence Blanchard/Donald

Harrison Quintet. **Jeff Porcaro** has been lending his drumming talents to Boz Scaggs, Roger Hodgson, Belinda Carlisle, and the new Toto project that's in the works. **Andy Newmark** recently in the studio with Ian Gillian and Roger Glover. Sting recently recorded with the Gil Evans Orchestra, with **Danny Gottlieb** and **Kenwood Dennard** on drums and percussion. Congratulations to **Peter Erskine** on the birth of his daughter. **Albert Bouchard** touring with Blue Oyster Cult. Look for new album, *Imaginos*, soon.

—Robyn Flans

# REPORTING FROM THE ROAD: LIBERTY DEVITTO ON GRANSTAR



Gary Clark

**B**efore deciding to offer Granstar drums to the public as a part of our normal line, we wanted to put them to the test. A roadtest . . . with 100 shows in the States behind him, and Australia, Japan, Europe and the Soviet Union still to go, we checked in with Liberty De Vitto of the Billy Joel Band to see how he and his new Granstars were doing.

- Tama: So what's the word Lib? Everything O.K.?
- Liberty: Well, I'm not sure about myself, but the Granstars are doing great!
- Tama: Hang in there. Only 3 more continents to go. How are the drums sounding?
- Liberty: Incredible! And the finish still looks terrific, especially considering everything they've been through. Set up for Gary (Clark) this time around has been much easier because of things like the new adjustable spur, the one touch tom mounts, and of course, the Power Tower system we've been using.
- Tama: How about Gary? (drum tech for Liberty and others)
- Gary: In a nutshell, Tama drums have always been easy to deal with on the road. They're able to stand up to the toughest touring schedule, and they always sound great! The new Granstar line is no exception. Good job guys!



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# ASK A PRO

## GREGG BISSONETTE



Photo by Rick Malkin

Q. I know that you studied music formally at a major university. Could you please tell me what you studied there—in addition to your study of drums—that benefited your musical career? Do you feel that it was to your advantage to attend college, and if so, why?

Kurtis Lawrence  
Plano TX

A. Besides just studying drumset at North Texas State, I found several other courses to be very helpful. All Music Education majors have to minor in keyboards, and that really helps in songwriting—along with theory and ear-training courses. The emphasis placed on Music History

helped me in gaining a wider appreciation of styles—from Gregorian chants to 12-tone-row compositions. All percussion majors also have to concentrate on four-mallet marimba playing, timpani, vibes, and Latin percussion. Plus, North Texas State has a great symphony orchestra, a wind ensemble, ten big bands, tons of small-group and combo classes, and a "kick-you-in-the-butt" drum corps.

I went to NTS to get a Music Education degree, so I was required to take nonmusical courses such as Educational Psychology, Child Psychology, and classes on how to develop course outlines and curriculums for percussion classes. These courses really helped me gain a strong focus on being an educator. This was tremendously beneficial to me personally, because I love giving clinics and teaching. Other nonmusical courses, like English, were important, too. If you can't write a coherent paragraph, how can you expect to be able to apply for a teaching position, or even for a decent playing gig? The college experience is important simply in terms of increasing your general breadth and background as an educated person.

## DANNY SERAPHINE

Q. I must say that your drumming has been a tremendous influence on me in all the many years you have been playing with Chicago. My question is: What kind of a setup did you use to record *Chicago 18*? The sounds that were recorded are simply fantastic! Also, what kind of sticks, heads, cymbals, etc., do you use?

Norm Sheehan  
Oak Forest IL

A. I hope this doesn't disillusion you regarding my playing, but I programmed everything on *Chicago 18*. However, it was my intention to make it sound like me, and believe me, it wasn't easy. It's a compliment that you thought it was the real thing.

Unfortunately, at the time we were recording *18*, most record producers were into drum machines. They were hooked on that mechanical feel and the perfect time that machines give them. So I decided that, rather than have some keyboard player do the programming (keyboard players have already put the art form back five years), I'd go out and learn how to program drum machines and sequencers the way I'd play the part. Eventually that led me to MIDI drums, but that's for another interview.

To answer your question in detail, all the sounds you heard were sampled sounds that I sampled along with our engineer, Humberto Gatica. The snare drums included Yamaha 5" and 7" Recording Series snares and an old, thin Ludwig snare; the kick drums were also from Yamaha's Recording Series. We also sampled a variety of percussion instruments. For tom sounds, I mostly used the Roland DDR30. I used an E-mu SP-12 drum machine to store the majority of the drum sounds. I also used a Simmons MTM MIDI interface to turn my pads to MIDI drums. This enabled me to play everything on the pads as if they were drums. Additional sounds I used included assorted Latin and exotic percussion sounds from an Emulator 2, a Yamaha RX21, and a Roland 747. Again, I triggered these from my pads via the MTM. I used a Linn 9000 rack-mounted sequencer to drive everything.

As far as sticks go, I use my own stick made for me by Pro-Mark. I've always used Zildjian cymbals. I'm currently using a 20" medium ride, a 17" thin crash, an 18" thin crash, and 14" hi-hats—all in the Platinum series. I use Remo Ambassador coated heads on all my drums.

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# IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. Who can I contact that is interested in promoting new or undiscovered talent on a professional basis? I've been a drummer for 25 of my 33 years. I have a natural gift and would love to use it to its fullest. I'm into jazz, rock, fusion, shows, Top-40, funk, etc. My influences include Louis Bellson, Billy Cobham, Tommy Aldridge, Neil Peart, and Max Roach, just to name a few. I'm living in an isolated area with only a few musicians, but I wish to pursue my art seriously and professionally. I have some road experience, and I've been active as a player since the age of 12! I have some tapes of my work, but I don't know where to send them or who to contact.

D.S.

Salem NJ

A. As much as we might like to be, MD is not—and cannot be—an employment agency or referral service. However, we have run some informative articles on the subjects of seeking employment, advancing your career, making major career decisions, relocating for the purpose of improving your career chances, etc. You should refer to the MD Ten-Year Index contained in the December, 1986 issue for a complete listing, but we can offer a few suggestions to get you started.

Club Scene: March '84, "Between Engagements"; April '84, "The Resume"; and July '84, "Greener Pastures" (all by Rick Van Horn).

Concepts: August '85, "Drumming And The Big Break" and October '85, "Drumming And The Big Move" (both by Roy Burns).

Taking Care Of Business: September '84, "Your First Big Break" (by Sandy Gennaro) and September and October '86, "A Guide To Full-Time Employment (Parts 1 and 2)" (by Michael Stevens).

Q. I have a Ludwig *Supra-Phonic* snare drum. I am continually having the problem of my top head coming loose several times during a performance. I have tried *Lug-Locks* and still find myself tightening the head every ten songs. Due to this problem, I have to replace heads frequently. What can I do to correct this annoying situation?

M.B.

Marissa IL

A. In order to solve any problem, you have to isolate the cause. Snare batter heads can lose tension for a variety of reasons; your immediate task is to determine the reason your heads are doing so. Start by evaluating how hard you are hitting the head. You don't mention the type of playing you do, but if your head is going loose within ten songs and Lug Locks are not helping, it sounds as if you're hitting the drum extremely hard. If so, you're going to have to expect a certain amount of loosening of the head as a natural course of events. With extra-heavy impact on the drum, something has to give somewhere.

Assuming that your head is loosening more than should be expected, no matter how hard you're playing, you then need to look for a mechanical problem. Is the head only loosening in the area of one lug? (This frequently occurs opposite the lug nearest which rimshots are most often played.) There may be a problem with that particular lug or with the lug bolt. Threads can become worn, causing a loss of "grip" between the lug bolt and the lug. Vibrations from playing can then cause the lug bolt to rotate and loosen. The easiest way to determine if the lug is the problem is to turn the drum around and play near a different lug. If that lug doesn't go loose, there is likely a wear problem with the original, offending lug or lug bolt. Hopefully, it will be the bolt, since it is easily replaced. Replace the bolt, and see if the condition improves. If not, replace the lug as well.

If the head loosens up opposite any lug—no matter how you position the drum—then there are two possibilities: Either all the lug threads are worn, or the problem doesn't lie with the drum at all. Start by assuming the latter, since your course of action will be much less expensive. Instead of, or in addition to, Lug Locks, try applying some Loc-Tite to the lugs the next time you change heads. We've mentioned this product often in MD; it's a compound specifically designed to hold threaded connections together tightly. Be sure to use the semi-permanent version. (There is a permanent version that is virtually an epoxy-like cement). Otherwise, you'll have great difficulty the next time you want to change a head.

If all efforts to maintain head tension fail, it's possible that the lugs are all worn and need replacing. This is a drastic—and expensive—step, and you might want to talk it over with a qualified drum-repair technician, or perhaps with a technician at Ludwig, before you take it.

Q. I use Pro-Mark drumsticks, because I'm very satisfied with the quality and variety of sizes that are available. Last December, I ordered a product catalog that had 767s available with a nylon tip. The dealer from whom I buy sticks has a different catalog, without this particular model. Whose is right?

A.W.

High Point NC

A. According to Pat Brown, National Sales Manager for Pro-Mark, the 767 model is currently available and in stock with nylon tips. Pat suggests you have your dealer contact him personally to confirm this and to place an order for you. If you have any further questions about the availability of any Pro-Mark product, you can contact the company directly at 10706 Craighead Drive, Houston, TX 77025.



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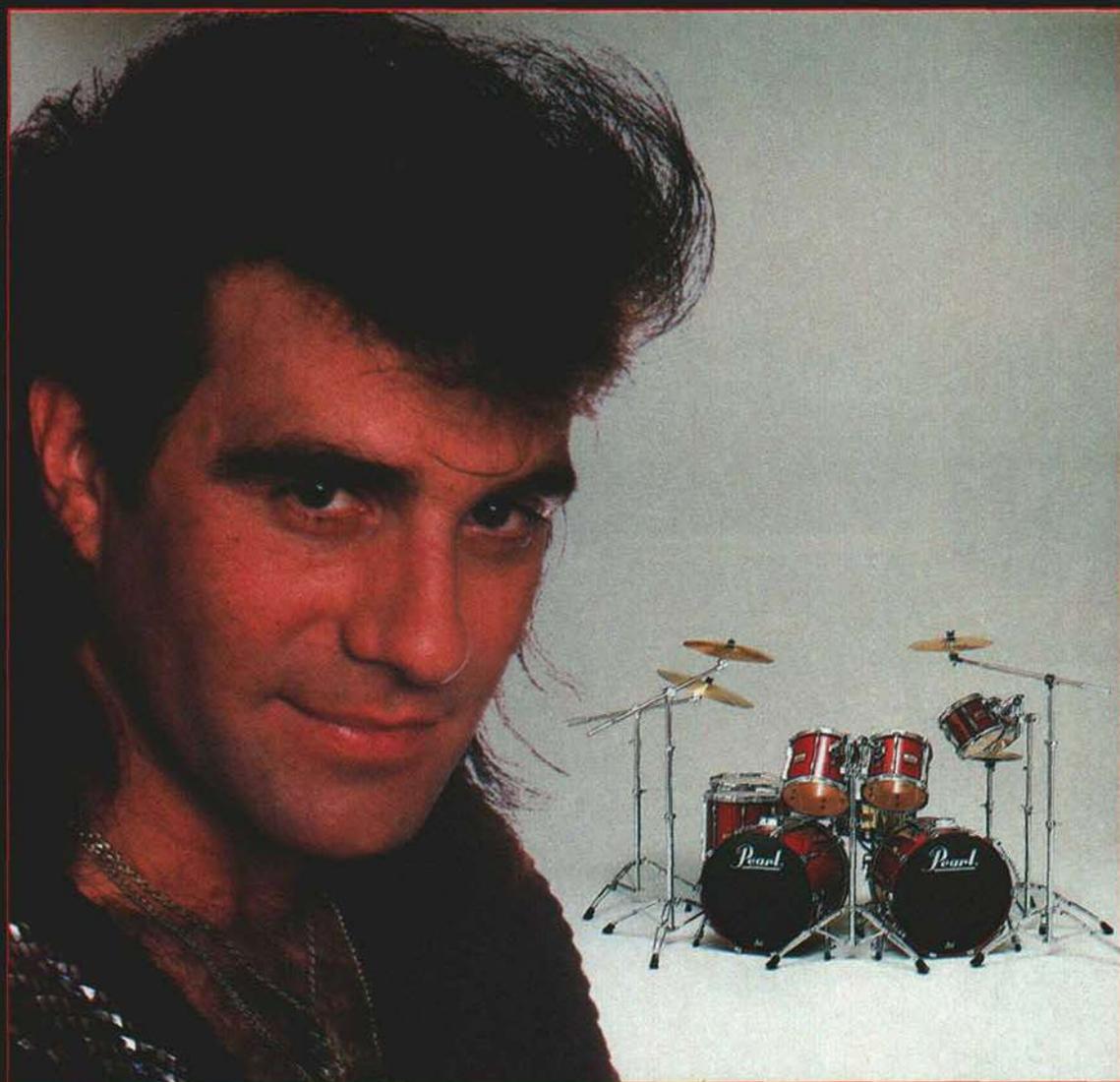
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Photo by Mark Weiss



Tico Torres of Bon Jovi and Pearl

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# rick marotta

by Robyn Flans

***R**ICK Marotta told me a story I have to share: His old friend, actor James Woods, told Rick that he wanted him to play the small role of "Wilson" who Woods kills in his next movie, Blood On The Moon. Woods had Rick meet with director James Harris, who is, Coincidentally, a drummer. After talking for two minutes about the part, they spent the next 30 boring the casting director with drum talk. But midway through the meeting, Woods stuck his head into the room and asked Harris, "Isn't he perfect? There's nothing I want to do more than to blow this guy away . . . and I want real bullets "*

Photo by Leslie Burke



# arotta



Boy, could I relate! By the time Rick told me that story, he had succeeded in driving me crazy. I say that with the utmost affection; I'm fond of him, as Woods obviously is. But when you're around Rick Marotta, he demands your full attention—so much so that you pull your hair out. And what's almost more aggravating is that, while you're going bald, he actually becomes more and more likable. Probably it's the warmth with which he drives you crazy, his slight eccentricity, and his sense of the absurd that makes him so endearing. But saying that he's intense is indeed an understatement.

He did not want to do another interview. I explained to him that he simply had to: He owed it to himself and to his fans. Then I was reduced to begging. When he finally agreed, I thought the hard part was over. Little did I know that, once he consented, he would become obsessed with making it a true reflection of himself—something he had never found in the other interviews he had done and had stopped doing interviews for precisely that reason. Yeah, it was okay to talk about his work with Linda Ronstadt, James Taylor, Warren Zevon, J.D. Souther, Jackson Browne, Carly Simon, and Steely Dan, but only if his sense of humor was prevalent. What he didn't trust was the fact that there was no getting around that. True, sometimes his deadpan delivery, the sparkle in his eyes, or just the vigor with which he relates a story is hard to translate to paper, but any way you look at it, Rick Marotta is a very funny guy.

In fact, he made me laugh when, after spending unprecedented days interviewing him, and still more hours assuring him it was terrific, he said, "Thate it. We have to do it over again." When I reminded him that he hadn't even seen it yet—that it was his active imagination working overtime—I convinced him to withhold judgment until he actually read it. I had to let him look at it before sending it to Modern Drummer, and for the week he had it, I shook. What if he really did hate it and wanted to start over?



Photo by Rick Gould

Well, his first words were, "It's okay." I waited for more. But it was an hour before he finally admitted to me that he actually liked it, and in that very long hour, I confess, I knew exactly what James Woods meant.

**RF:** Let's start at the beginning.

**RM:** In high school, I was a dancer. My mother and father were dancers before I was born. Then my dad left the business, but he still would teach. They had a TV show for a while. My sister was a great dancer, and we did stuff on the show. My friends all had bands, and they used to drag me to the gigs so I would dance. I would get into these contests with David Spinozza and this other guy, Wayne Cilento. We would go back and forth winning these contests. It was the only way to talk to girls. They definitely wouldn't have had anything to do with us otherwise. Spinozza, besides being a great dancer, was an unbelievable guitar player. He was very successful, very early. He had a band and he said, "You know, if you played drums, you'd be great, and if you'd play drums, I'd hire you." I didn't know if he was serious or not, so I went to Alabama to college.

**RF:** Why Alabama?

**RM:** I still don't know the reason. I wasn't academically motivated at all when I was young. I didn't know what I wanted to do, and my parents wanted me to go to college. They wanted me to be anything other than a musician.

**RF:** Your brother Jerry said that you really got a lot of resistance from your parents and paved the way for him.

**RM:** Here's what happened: I went away to college for a year, and then I came back. I was just coming into my own as far as identity was concerned, or I thought I was. I wasn't really. I was a liberal arts major, and I had no idea what that was. There were certain things I enjoyed, but nothing for the future. So I was home that summer, and this friend of mine—who was the drummer in Spinozza's band—was going into the army. I suggested that he leave his drums with me and I'd give them back to him when he came back. He said fine. So I dragged this old blue-sparkle set of Gretsch drums over to my parent's house and up to the attic. There was an old hi-fi, so I started blasting Young Rascals records and playing the drums upstairs. I used to hear screaming from downstairs, "Stop that racket!"

**RF:** Why the Young Rascals?

**"I REALLY BELIEVE THAT  
YOU HAVE TO HAVE A SENSE  
OF HUMOR ABOUT  
THIS STUFF."**

**RM:** They had the number-one record that week. It was good, too, because Dino Danelli, at that time, was this incredible drummer with chops who could throw sticks farther than anybody and catch them behind his back. I went with Andy Newmark to see Dino whenever the Rascals played. So I started doing that in the attic, and two weeks later, my friend's band was playing at the Canada Lounge. I went in and begged them to let me sit in. They were all real good friends and good musicians. They said, "Okay, come on up." The tune was "Mustang Sally"—the Wilson Pickett tune. I ran up on stage and sat down to adjust the snare drum as they were about to count it off. As I was adjusting the snare drum—I'll never forget this—I was so excited that it flew out of the snare stand, spun around three or four times in the air like a pancake, and landed right back in the snare stand upside down, just as they got to the downbeat of the tune. Of course, we didn't start, and they almost said, "Get out of here." But then we played, and every one of them was completely amazed that I had made it through the tune. Two months later, I was the drummer in that band.

**RF:** So what did you learn during those two months?

**RM:** The rest of the tunes they played. I really knew all the tunes, because I had been dancing and hanging out with these guys all the time. With the ones that were hard, I got the records and practiced them at home—no reading or anything, just playing to the records. At that time, there were great things to play: James Brown, Wilson Pickett, Joe Tex, the Rascals—a lot of great things to learn from. That was my initial introduction to music. I was oblivious to everything else that was going on around me. I was still going to school, but I enrolled in a community college in New York. I was also working at a job, and rehearsing and playing on weekends with these guys.

**RF:** Learning to play in two months, you must have really gotten into working with the drums. That's amazing.

**RM:** I didn't think it was amazing. I mean, I wasn't a genius in two months, but I started playing, and immediately they said I could be in the band. In six months, Dave Spinozza was trying to get me on recording sessions in New York. It was that fast. What happened was, because I hadn't played before or taken any lessons, I developed my own style by playing to records and adding my own personality.

**RF:** What do you think that style is?

**RM:** Simple. It was really obvious that I was just a simple player and a groove player—time and groove. Instantly, I had good time; it's a natural thing in my family. That's what started my whole career: my approach to time.

**RF:** What do you mean by your approach to time?

**RM:** It's where I put the backbeat, the way I played time, and my fills. I played real different fills than anyone else.

**RF:** How so?

**RM:** I don't know. I used to want to make every note count, so that meant I couldn't play a lot of notes. I never was able to play

a lot of notes. It just never interested me. I used to look at guys like Billy Cobham or

Andy Newmark when I was really, really young, and I'd say, "Wow, I could never play all those notes." Meanwhile, I realized when I was playing that, between my hands and my feet, I couldn't play another note; it wouldn't make any sense. And that's where the style developed, really.

**RF:** Another word you said was "personality." Do you think that's included in style?

**RM:** Definitely. You see drummers who have a sense of humor, and they play with a sense of humor. I think I have a really good sense of humor, and I play with a sense of humor. I'm serious about it when I play, and I used to get *too* serious about it, but I really believe that you have to have a sense of humor about this stuff and play it with a sense of humor.

**RF:** So two months after you began to play, you had this gig. What happened next?

**RM:** A slow deterioration of the rest of my life. Andy Newmark and I became roommates, and we were very close friends. He was like family. We lived in a dump called the Bevin Hotel in Larchmont, New York. It doesn't exist anymore. They condemned it and leveled it. It was run by this crazy old woman who actually liked us. Andy and I

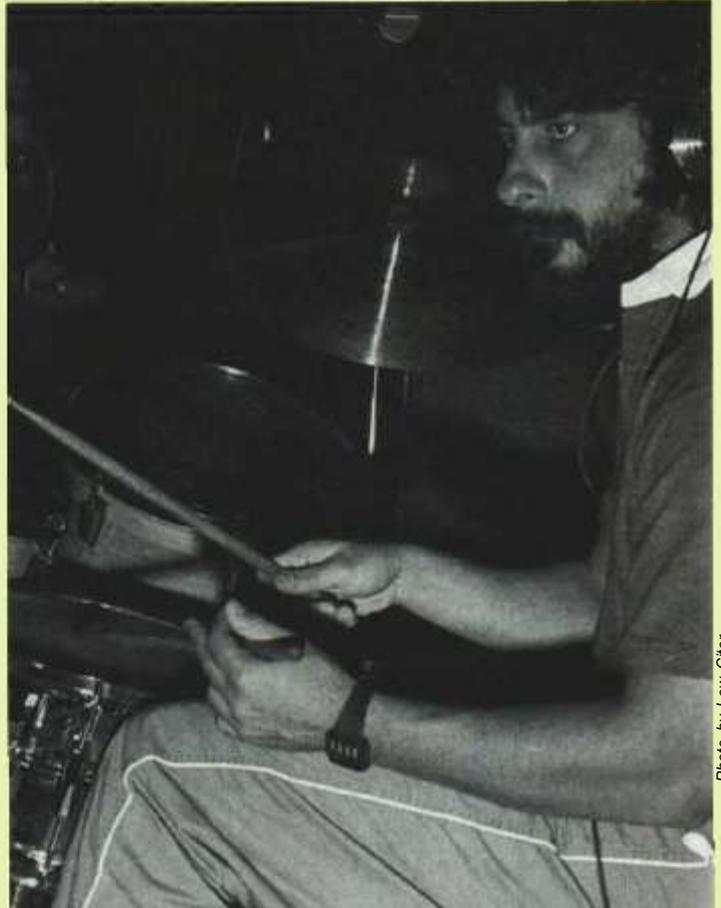


Photo by Lew Cifer



had adjoining rooms. My rent was about \$30 a week. I was doing gigs on the weekends for very little money, just eking out an existence, and I remember saying to myself, "This is the life. I'm going to do this for the rest of my life." I remember making that decision at the Bevin Hotel. And I was unbelievably unhappy. I was lonely, I was completely disoriented, and I felt ostracized, but I thought, "This is art."

**RF:** What was it about that life that appealed to you?

**RM:** The music. It wasn't a social thing, because I had no social life. It was strictly the music. I played the worst places in the world, and did the worst gigs in the world, and made the least amount of money of any human being alive. We used to go up there and not make a dollar the whole night. We'd work for the door, and we had a 12-piece band. Spinozza was the only guy making money. He was doing studio stuff, so he didn't take any of the door money. He was the youngest guy in the band, and he was the front guy: the bandleader, the guitar player, he played keyboards, trumpet, he sang. The guy was unbelievably multi-talented. The rest of us split the money, and when we started making a lot of bread, we were going home with \$20 a night. I was as happy as a pig in shit.

**RF:** So your parents were still not happy.

**RM:** There came a time when they said, "If you want to do this, maybe you shouldn't come around here anymore," so for two years, I didn't even see or speak to them. But I always felt a little out of place.

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

**RM:** In high school, I had a lot of friends hanging out at the house a lot, but I didn't really relate. There were four kids in the family. Everybody needed a lot of attention, but there's just so much attention that can go around with four kids in an Italian family—four lunatics. When we moved back to New York, while my parents looked for a house, the four kids lived in one room. I remember in that situation developing a real need for space, which is still with me. When my parents got the house, I immediately claimed the attic. I loved it up there. I did everything up there, and no one came up there.

**RF:** I've always had an image of you as a fairly reclusive adult, also. There seems to be a part of you that is unapproachable. You are intimidating to people.

**RM:** Yes, that's true. I've gone through a lot of therapy because of things like that, and I have found it to be very helpful. I was a very late bloomer, in everything. I started playing the drums when I was 19 years old and didn't decide what I wanted to do until I was 30-something years old. One of the banes of my existence is the fact that I'm so reclusive.

**RF:** Are you as unapproachable as you seem?

**RM:** Not at all. My rep is real different than what I am, and I'm so tired of trying to live the rep down. I've gone through the whole alcoholism, drug addiction thing, and that made me pretty unap-

proachable. It was, "Stay away from me because this is my world." But that wasn't my true reality. I'm an amazing pussycat. I do have a hard time dealing with people who are real insensitive. But when people recognize me and come up to talk to me, it doesn't bother me at all. "Are you Rick Marotta? God, I've been a fan of yours for a long time." Of course I love that, and I'm flattered by it every time it happens. But when people ask the same, incredibly inane questions over and over, it gets to me. The worst question in the world is when people ask, "What's Stevie Nicks really like? What's Donald Fagen really like?" That's not my business. My gig is to play. Those people have their own lives, I have my own life, and we like it that way. I try to be as polite as I can, but if they persist, I get angry. It put me off doing interviews, also. But I don't think I'm unapproachable. I'm not a political person at all, probably to my disadvantage. The friends I hang out with in the business are people who are genuinely my friends, and rarely do we talk about business. But the only time I hear from certain people is for a job. I don't feel I've done that to anybody, and I don't like it when people do it to me. I'm very honest and to the point, and people say I'm intimidating.

**RF:** Without the political know-how, how do you make it in this business?

**RM:** I've been very, very lucky. I must say that, as much of a loner as I am, I wouldn't fare well without my dear friends, and they're mostly in New York. I keep a home in New York, and I try to get back there and

**"THERE'S A COMBINATION OF THE WAY YOU PLAY THE DRUMS AND THE WAY YOU TUNE THE DRUMS THAT MAKES THE SOUND."**

visit. I'm still real close to Dave Spinozza, Hugh McCracken, Don Grolnick, and Tony Levin.

**RF:** How did you get your first session?

**RM:** Dave. We were playing around, and Dave was doing a lot of R&B dates in New York. He was only 19 at the time. The guys who were playing drums on all the dates at that time were Bernard Purdie, Jimmy Johnson, and a couple of other guys. They were all black, and one of the major arrangers at the time was a guy named Horace Ott. David was saying to everybody, "Listen, I've got this drummer . . ." He said that at every date he went to. They said, "White kid, 19—sorry, no way."

I can't remember the name of the artist or the producer, but I finally did an outside recording session. I had done an album with David and another album with a group called Giant that David and I were in, but this was my first *session*. After playing, I asked Dave if it was okay, and he said it was great. There was an R&B station in New York, WLIB, which was the only station I listened to, and a week later, I heard the tune! I listened from morning until I passed out, waiting for them to play it. It was the pick hit of the week one week.

**RF:** How did that make you feel?

**RM:** I thought I was hurled into stardom. You couldn't talk to me. That was the beginning of the end for me. Seriously, though, that gave me confidence. I did a couple more like that with David, and David was working on this guy, Horace Ott. I remember this because it was so intimidating to me. Horace was this trained, great musician who used Chuck Rainey, Cornell Dupree, Eric Gale, Ralph MacDonald, Richard Tee, Bernard Purdie, Jerry Jermott, and that was it. Spinozza had so much confidence in me, though, and one day, he said to Horace, "This guy plays as well as anyone you know." Horace, on a dare, hired me. He said, "I don't believe you, but I'm hiring this idiot. If he ruins the date, it's on your head." So I went in there under those circumstances, and Spinozza was walking around like a peacock because he wasn't worried at all. I was scared to death. It was all the cats, Horace Ott, and charts, and I wasn't a reader. To make a long story short,

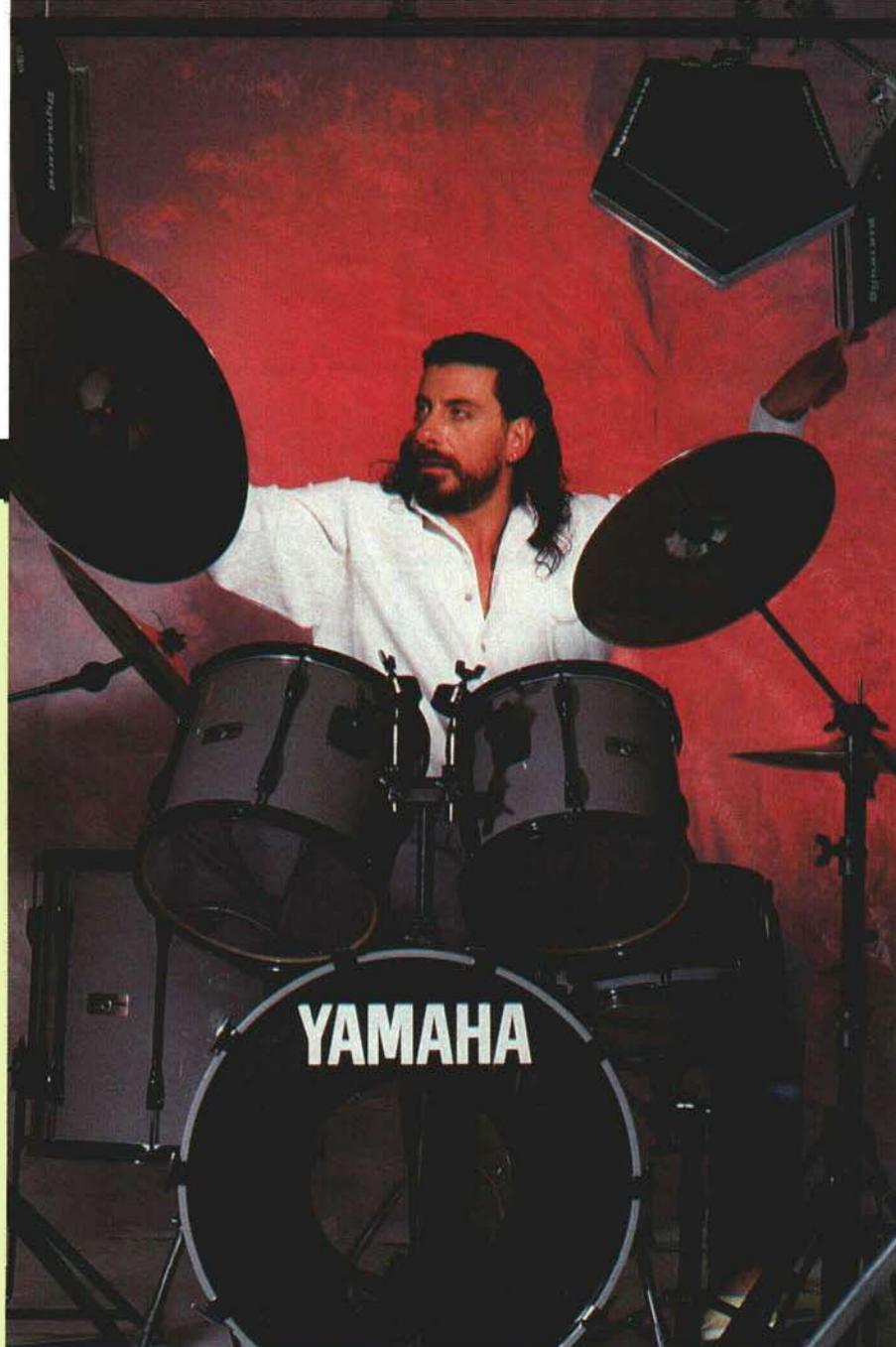


Photo by Leslie Burke

I went in on this date, subbing for Bernard Purdie. I don't remember what we did, but I do remember the situation. I just went in there and burned. I didn't talk to anybody, and Spinozza, who knew everybody, was prancing around. He's got more personality than any five people you know. Horace Ott came in, and he was completely unfriendly. He didn't want to know me at all, and he wanted me to fail. When the date was over, he walked over to Spinozza and said, "I never, ever, before this day, would have believed that this would happen in my lifetime; that I would see someone play like a black man."

I did more sessions with him after that, although not a whole lot. The business at that time, as it is now also, was a bit racist. I never cared about it one way or another; I went to school in Alabama, marched in Alabama in the '60s, and got my ass kicked in Alabama. That kind of stuff is bullshit to me. I got accepted right away in that area, though, and Ralph MacDonald immediately called me. I had done sessions with Ralph. I was in a group called Brethren, and Ralph played percussion on our album.

Ralph called me one day from Virginia and said, "Do you have your trap case with you?" "Yeah." "Go to the airport, get on the first flight to Virginia, take a cab to the Hampton Coliseum, and we'll meet you there." Ralph had been trying to get me the Roberta Flack gig for a long time, and something happened to the drummer. I got down there and wheeled my trap case in. Roberta Flack was on stage, and the place was full. There had to be 15,000 to 20,000 people there. I had never met the woman before, and she was on stage, playing. Ralph was motioning for me to get up there. I walked on stage while she was playing, and I set up my hi-hat, one cymbal, and a snare drum. There were two tom-toms and a bass drum on stage. I set up my hardware, my stool, and my bass

*continued on page 48*



# CHALLENGES

# Gary Burke

by  
Jeff  
Potter

"**A** PPLAUSE!" demands the flashing sign in RCA's studio A. Gary Burke is sitting behind his kit in a drum booth, noodling with the button that is activating the urgent signal. No, he's not looking for a standing ovation. "They jerry-rigged this wire up for me so that I could get their attention in the control room," he explains. Gary is in the middle of a session for Joe Jackson's latest album of orchestral compositions, *Will Power*. Squeezed within the walls of a portable drum booth set in the rear of the studio, Gary can barely be seen through the meager windows. Surrounding the booth is a 50-piece orchestra. Buried behind these obstacles, Gary couldn't get the attention of Joe Jackson and the engineers in the control room even if he were to execute a triple back flip.

Like the "Applause!" sign on the wall, the interior of studio A reflects a grand bit of history from the days when recording studios sported more wood than carpeting and depended principally on the real sound of the room structure itself. Large enough for a Wagner session—or even a basketball game—the spacious studio features a high movable ceiling and movable walls. Modern recording techniques and the high cost of Manhattan real estate have doomed this kind of studio to virtual extinction. In keeping with Jackson's search for the natural, live approach to recording, studio A was a wise choice. Unfortunately, such a setting doesn't make things easy for a drummer.

It is several takes into the session, and the same tricky passage has been repeatedly tripping up the ensemble. The fast-flying passage requires super rhythmic precision between the orchestra and drumset figures. Gary looks at Jackson's drum chart, which has been scored note-for-note, drum-by-drum. "It looks like one of the independence exercises that you see in method books," he chuckles. Although Gary has been nailing the part quite consistently, the complex physical and acoustical setup of the session presents some problems that make tight ensemble execution of the music extra difficult. Isolated in the booth, Gary hears only a limited amount of acoustic sound from the room, and the sound that *does* come through is delayed due to studio A's vast size. Only part of the orchestra is fed through Gary's headphone mix. Most of the orchestra, however, do not have headphones at all, so they hear Gary's drums with a slight delay. And the clincher is that a sequenced synthesizer line runs through the piece that only the headphone-bearing members of the orchestra can hear. With all of these obstacles, success depends on a collaborative effort between the session's conductor, George Manahan, the orchestra's collective studio instincts, and a drummer who can lead them through

the treacherous straits. In short, the situation at hand could cause premature grey for quite a few drummers.

No need to jerry-rig a "Panic!" sign, though. With some of the high-pressure experiences Gary has tucked under his belt, he can afford to keep cool even in this claustrophobic booth—at least psychologically. He has been put on the cooker by Joe before with the recording of their live-to-digital 2-track album, *Big World*, and has also survived the pandemonium of Bob Dylan's traveling music event, *The Rolling Thunder Revue*.

Inside the control room, Jackson consults with the two-man engineer team that is collaborating especially for *Will Power*. Engineer Michael Frondelli, who has worked on previous Jackson albums, is present to ensure that a modern sound is captured; of special concern is the drum sound. The other half of the team, Paul Goodman, is present to lend his expertise in recording strings and large orchestras. He is also experienced with the acoustic personality of studio A. Jackson punches the talk-back mic', and his soft voice is piped into the studio. "We'll do it again, please. The woodwinds need to be a little tighter on that passage."

Gary swivels around on his stool and emphasizes, "We tried this cut about a year ago, and the whole session had to be scrapped! At that time, it was orchestrated in an even more complex manner, and the way the orchestra was situated made it acoustically even more difficult. Every time this section came up, there was a train wreck. Joe has re-orchestrated the section since then." Gary waits for the cue for another take. Just outside his booth, percussionists Sue Evans and David Friedman are standing by, mallets raised and ready. Manahan lifts his baton, strokes downward, and Gary opens with a dramatic clang on his *Rude* cymbal bell combined with a booming floor-tom hit that demonstrates the strong sound he can pull from a low, wrist-powered stroke. The moderato opening flows by without a hitch, but the tricky passage is approaching and Gary's eye is zeroed on Manahan's baton. The downbeat hits, and Gary attacks the passage with cracking rimshots that speak with a funky phrasing from his vintage *Black Beauty* snare. On the last bars of the passage, Gary executes the tom figures with rapidly shifting dynamics, propelling the orchestra forward with commanding urgency. When the piece comes to a close, there is a long, long silence in expectation of the verdict. "I think we can go home now," says Jackson. The "Applause!" sign lights up.

Joe Jackson has proven from album to album that he is not content to rely on formula, and this session pushes his risk taking even further. *Will Power* is comprised entirely of symphonic compositions. An orchestral, nonvocal record is daring, to say the



Photo by Robert Herman

least. Gary sees Jackson's unpredictable demands on the drummer as a welcome challenge. "The drum part for *Will Power* sounded a lot better than I thought it would when I saw it on paper," he says. "When I first saw it, I couldn't see any phrasing within it. As the night wore on, the musicality started to jump out from it, and a certain phrasing developed. I had never seen or played anything like that before. It's not written the way that I would normally play. Also, the physical movements involved were very awkward and not what I would naturally lean towards. It was a session that made me draw upon my conservatory background more than any previous ones.

"In the time that I have played with Joe, I have gotten to stretch out in more ways and have had more of a test of my abilities than with anybody else—especially in this *Will Power* recording. Up until then, playing with Joe didn't involve heavy reading. We had charts for some of the numbers on *Body And Soul*, but it wasn't a situation in which we had to do or die that night." Gary feels that the last two albums he recorded with Jackson—*Body And Soul*



Photo by Robert Herman

and *Big World*—inevitably prepared him for the new challenges of *Will Power*. "Joe definitely has a master plan that he wants to accomplish, and musically, it is all a logical flow," he says. "Some of the pieces from *Body And Soul* that rarely got air play in this country—in particular 'Loisaida' and 'The Verdict'—were totally orchestrated right down to the note-for-note drum parts. It wasn't just typical groove and horn arrangements. The drums were scored in an orchestral manner, because Joe wanted the ensemble sound. As a drummer, you know from looking at a part whether a composer really knows what he's writing for the drumset. And on those charts, there weren't any excess notes. Joe also knows when to let it fly: On other parts in the chart, he would indicate something such as 'improvise in triplets,' but when he wanted a specific thing, he would write it in a way that was playable. Well, almost playable," he laughs, remembering last night's *Will Power* session. "Even those parts are playable, however, because Joe plays drums himself. As a matter of fact, I have a demo of *Body And Soul* on which he played the drums. He comes from that perspective. Because of this kind of writing, you can tell in retrospect that he was thinking about the ideas that manifested themselves in *Will Power* as far back as *Body And Soul*. At the time of recording *Body And Soul*, nobody knew for sure what he was thinking about."

More than any other musical experience, the recording of Jackson's *Big World* in January 1986 gave Gary the mental toughness that made any later gigs seem easy. Once again, Jackson was opting for a risky situation by using a live digital 2-track format—a rare situation for today's rock/pop recordings. The 2-track format not only disallows the possibility of any overdubbing, but also cancels the options for post-mixing. In this situation, the four band members, as well as the engineer and producer, are out there naked.

"It was more than being under a microscope," says Gary. "It was like being under a laser! No one knew if it could be pulled off. It was a real gamble." Now that the chips have been cashed in, it's evident that the gamble paid off. *Big World* is an exciting and versatile three-sided album that faithfully presents a band that breathes together musically. The sparseness of instrumentation—often only three instruments playing when Jackson is not on piano—and lack of overdub layering proved to be the virtue of the album rather than a hindrance. The inflection, rhythmic pocket, and taste of the mature players shine through in even greater clarity due to the bare-to-the-bones format. And Jackson's gutsy, to-the-point vocal delivery sounds more at home in the context of the firm, unfrilled backing.

"Doing the *Big World* album was the toughest recording situation I have ever been in. In theory, the idea was, 'Let's capture a live situation' and I presume, 'Let's capture some of the musical innocence of this situation.' It was actually halfway between a studio and a live situation, because there was an audience there who was told to be quiet. They were there as witnesses to the music. The only thing that really stayed in the back of my head during the recording was to never let up. I always had to remember that. I could never know which take they would decide to keep. In the studio, you can control a lot of what goes down. A player can 'sabotage' tracks. If you know you don't want it recorded, you can just do something crazy to stop it from rolling. In that way, musicians can dominate a studio session to a large degree. But in a situation like *Big World*, you have no control. The only thing you have control over is whether you are playing as well as you can at all times, and that wears you out. In the studio, you don't always play as well as you can because you develop a sixth sense for knowing which tracks are being taken and which are not. There is a certain safety-valve mentality in that situation, whereas there was none at all with *Big World*.

"When I first heard the album, I remember thinking, 'I know I played better on some of the other takes.' For every track you hear on *Big World*, there are another six to 12 takes sitting on a shelf. It is a huge decision to pick one take. There are priorities above any one person's playing, obviously. It's the total effect. One of the most successful cuts on that record is 'Shanghai Sky,' because it

continued on page 74

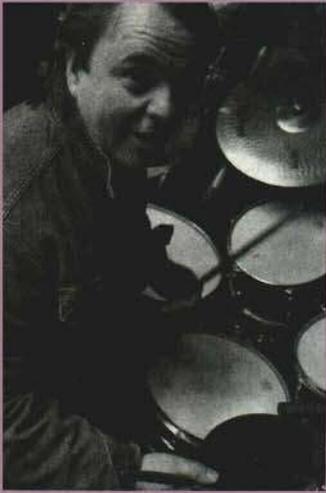


Photo by Robert Herman

# The Will Power Charts

by Gary Burke

Here are a few samples of the actual charts that Joe Jackson wrote out for the *Will Power* album. The first one is from the title track and shows the "independence exercise" technique that was required. I ended up phrasing this section with a funk-type feel.

This next example is from "Symphony In One Movement." Measure E 66 shows the notation indicating improvisation using a triplet format.

The final example is from "No Pasaran." If you listen to the record at this section, you might wonder how it could ever be written out. Well, here's how!

**I**T is every young musician's dream come true: You are 17 years old, you leave school, and within three months, you join a top band that has a record at number three in the charts. Four years later, you have enough experience and credibility in the music industry to get a record contract for your own jazz group, while still remaining a member of the chart-topping band.

All this has actually happened to someone within the last four years. His name is Steve White; the band he joined is *The Style Council*; the band he formed is *The Jazz Renegades*. But dreams don't come true, in reality, just because someone waves a magic wand. The nearest things to magic wands in Steve's career have been his drumsticks, and the person waving them has been Steve himself. Everything that he has achieved has been the result of the most single-minded dedication and commitment. If it goes through your mind

same time. We had to audition. The way the thing was presented to us was that this was for the best young musicians in London, who, on Saturday mornings, would get extra study with the top professionals in an environment that would stretch them. There was the opportunity to play in classical orchestras, concert bands, and generally, to meet and play with other musicians. It sounded great, but I remember being disappointed immediately. We were due to learn piano—which is something that every musician ought to have a knowledge of—but I could barely read drum music at the time. I was stuck in a class with four kids whose average age was about nine and who were geniuses on the piano. They were doing Mozart pieces, and I was struggling with "Chopsticks." I gave that part of it up; I used to walk on Battersea Bridge during the piano lessons.

It's a pity, but I think it was a silly way to run things. However, I did have some good

we would arrive at his house at 2:00 in the morning—we were only 14 or 15 at the time—and Gary would say, "Okay, let's practice for a couple of hours." His mother, who was a wonderful lady, would say, "Here are some cheese and onion sandwiches to keep you going." So we'd sit there and tap away. I'd stay and sleep on the floor, and when we woke up, we'd have a cup of coffee and then go straight back to the drums.

Gary and I were full of energy and enthusiasm. Gary was into Billy Cobham, and I was into Buddy Rich. We were both into Santana. We used to listen to each other's records, and share ideas. But I think we were resented by the establishment who took the attitude that you weren't there to enjoy yourself; you were there to learn the instrument. That is not the right approach with kids. I think this is reflected in the fact that, as far as I know, of all the people there, Gary and I are the

# STEVE WHITE DRUMMING

that Steve got the place in *The Style Council* because his face fit, forget it! I'm not suggesting that there is anything wrong with Steve's face, but it is in the strength of his playing that his success lies. Any myths about image outweighing talent in the pop world are dispelled by his drumming and his musicianship. The question, "What ought I to do to succeed in the music business?" is answered, quite clearly, by Steve as he tells his own story.

**SG:** Can we start by talking about your musical beginnings?

**SW:** When I was about 13, I started going to a place in London called The Centre For Young Musicians. There were a few other people from my school who started at the

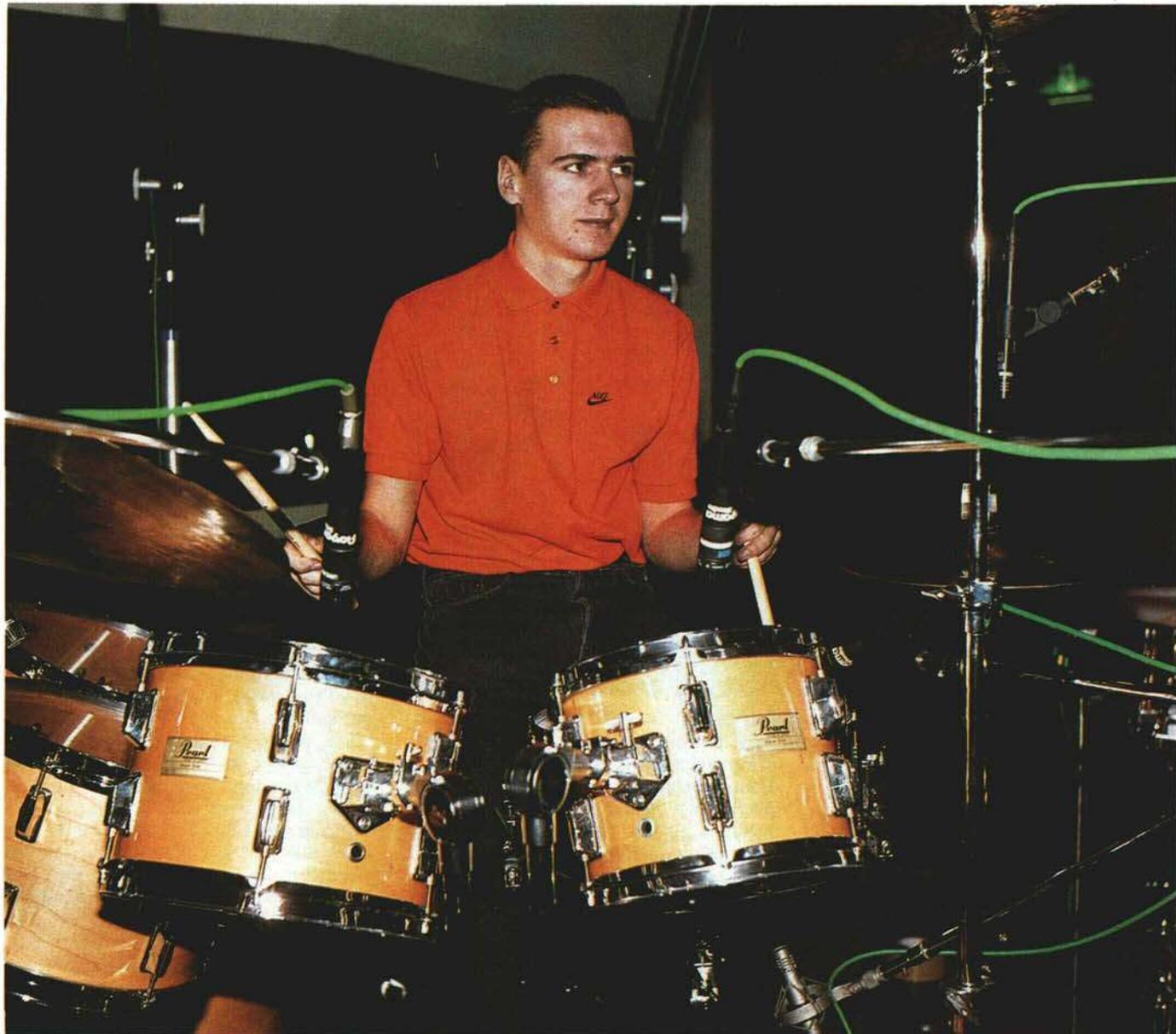
experiences. A snare drum teacher named Mike Skinner helped me a lot. But the greatest thing that happened to me there was that I made friends with Gary Wallis, who is now with Nik Kershaw. My first memory of Gary was when he was about 12, knocking hell out of the drums in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. It was a rehearsal of the school's band arrangement. Gary has always been a total Billy Cobham freak, and it was like [sings] "Jesus Christ" [mimes a fast 32nd-note run around the kit]. I thought, "Yeah, he's my sort of player!" Once we got talking, we found that we did have quite a lot in common.

I gained a lot of strength from Gary, and I hope vice versa. There were times when

only two professionals—certainly in the rock and jazz field. It has always been a problem with education in England that jazz and rock are not *real* music. Playing the drums is, in my opinion, one of the most *brilliant* things anyone can do. For that attitude to be discouraged is totally wrong.

**SG:** Did you get any drumkit training, or was it all classical percussion?

**SW:** I was always a kit drummer, but as far as the training schedule went, you would have a piano lesson, a theory lesson, an ensemble class—in which I was usually given the triangle—and after that, if you were lucky, you'd get ten minutes on the drumkit. It was almost, "Oh, do we *have*



# WITH STYLE

to get the drums out?" But at that age, I was prepared to try anything. I just wanted to play. Gary Wallis was the same. When we went to The London Schools Symphony Orchestra and everything would be set up, the first thing we'd do would be to go in and bang everything in sight: the gong, the cymbals, everything—"crash, crash, bang." But, of course, that's *not* what you do in that situation.

**SG:** You said you did an audition to be accepted for The Centre For Young Musicians. What sort of training did you have prior to that?

**SW:** There was a drum teacher who used to come to my school. His name was George Scott. He was 66 or 67 when I was 13, but

he was an incredible drummer, a great communicator, and a really good teacher. He got me started and made me aware of people like Gene Krupa, Louie Bellson, and so on. But when he retired, I had a really *awful* experience. After this amazing voyage of discovery through "Sing, Sing, Sing" to Buddy Rich, I was suddenly presented with this young guy of about 25. He was an ex-policeman who had decided to get back into drumming. Somehow he had managed to become qualified to teach kids in London schools, but all he used to go on about was how many blacks he'd beaten up. He used to spin fantasies. He'd talk about the Brixton riots, and if he was to be believed, he had caused the problem and

by Simon Goodwin

solved it all in one day, all on his own. There was no way that I wanted to go to a drum lesson and hear him talking about that. He told me when I was 13 that I would never make it as a drummer. I just wonder how many people he *did* manage to put off. My younger brother is a drummer now. I'm teaching him myself. He has learned more in three months than I learned in two years with the musical "establishment."

**SG:** What about your transition from student to professional?

**SW:** When I was 14, I used to think that I was the best in the school. Then my dad

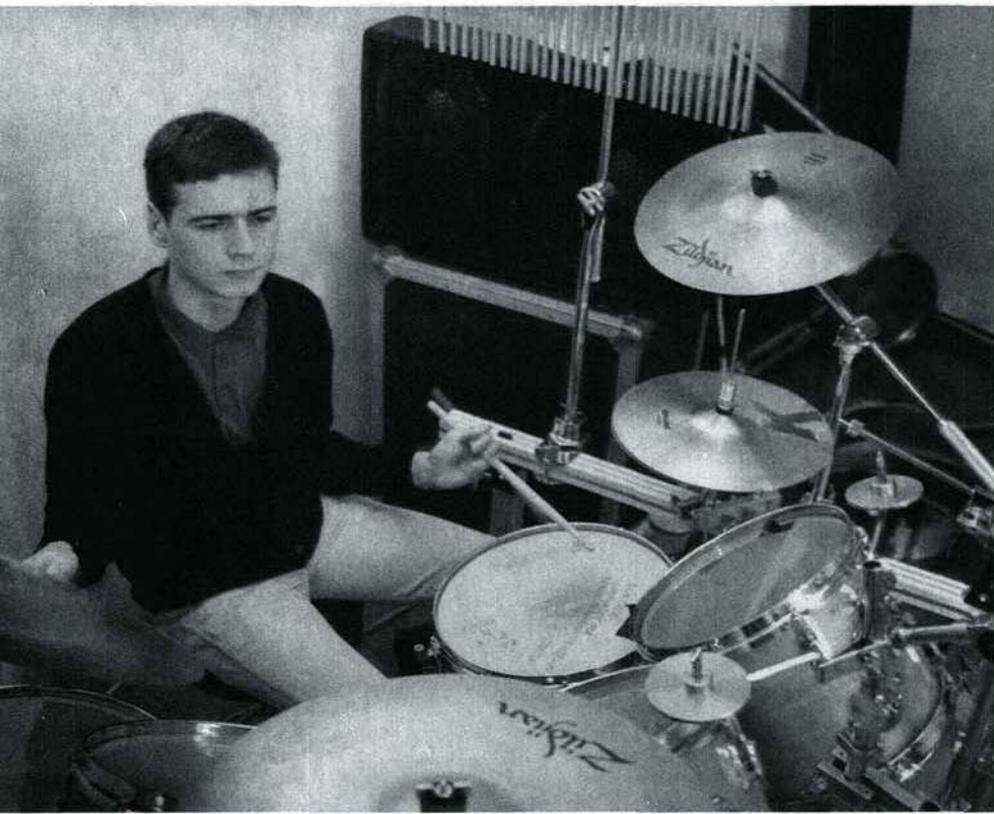


Photo courtesy of Ziljijien

took me to see Louie Bellson at Ronnie Scott's club. I sat through both sets, and I *could not* believe what I was seeing. It was one of those really special moments in a player's career. It was *discovery*. After seeing Louie for the first time, I just went crazy. Schoolwork, social life—everything went out of the window. I was just not interested in anything but drums. I wanted a technique like Louie Bellson's. I used to sit for hours, with a practice pad, working on my snare drum technique. I used to get up at 6:30, do two hours of practice before going to school, then practice during the lunch break, and after school, I would run home to practice from 4:00 till 10:00 at night.

By the time I was 15, I was getting calls to do club gigs. I did Labour Clubs, Liberal Clubs, Conservative Clubs—the sort of things that so many British drummers come up doing. I was playing top-40 material, dance stuff—a bit of everything. At that time, my dad used to drive me around. Both my parents were incredibly supportive. I think that having that solid family background enabled me to go out and challenge the whole pop scene, and get in with such a big band at an early age.

At 16, I decided that I had to go back to drum teachers, but now I wanted to go to the people who I thought would do the best for me. Two things that I wanted most were originality and technique. After seeing Louie Bellson, I wanted that sort of technique, but even then, I wanted to play like Steve White. For the technique side of things, I wanted to go to a Scottish pipe-band drummer, and if that person played

jazz as well, it would be an added bonus. That person was Bobby Orr; his snare drum technique is phenomenal. I went to Bobby for a year or two. I watched him playing in a theater pit, to find out how to handle a pit job. I've always had a great admiration for pipe-band drummers, and I like to think some of Bobby's skill rubbed off on me.

For originality, I wanted to go to Bill Bruford. I didn't want to play like Bill Bruford, but I wanted to have what he has. Whether you love him or hate him, Bill Bruford has stamped his mark on drumming. When you hear anything with him on it, you know who's playing drums. *That was what I wanted from Bill Bruford.* Everybody told me that there was no way I was going to get in touch with him, but I phoned his record company and said that I wanted to speak to Bill Bruford. They took my number and said that they would pass it on. My mum said, "That's it. You won't hear any more." Now Bill is probably going to hate me for saying this, because he might get dozens of phone calls, but the next morning the phone rang and it was Bill Bruford. I told him a bit about myself and that I didn't want drum lessons in the sense of learning more paradiddles, but I wanted to get together and talk about drumming. He said yes, so off we went in my dad's van, down to Bill's home in Surrey. While my dad sat in the kitchen drinking coffee, Bill and I went into his incredible drum room where he had his Tama kit set up and gold records on the walls from Yes and King Crimson. We just talked for hours. I learned so much from Bill. Obvi-

ously, he was a busy man, so I didn't go to him regularly every week, but when he was free and I could get down there, I did.

**SG:** What sort of things did you learn from him?

**SW:** Well, at that time, I knew what I wanted, but I didn't *understand* what I wanted. He was the first person to make me understand feel and give me an awareness of this through listening to other players. The way he did this was really simple. He put on two records: Andy Newmark with Sly & The Family Stone—the *Fresh* album—and some Tony Williams. He said to me [*pats the table*], "That's feel!" He explained how Tony Williams plays in waves and expresses himself on the drums. These were things that I couldn't have put into words, but Bill was doing it for me. My playing really began to mature after that. I got into Tony Williams and Art Blakey. I got into Andy Newmark, and through him, I got into people like Bernard Purdie. I was beginning to understand the great *feel* drummers. One of my favorites has been Al Jackson, because nobody plays a feel like he did. It was just so right.

**SG:** Didn't Bill get you a scholarship with P.I.T. in America?

**SW:** Yes. Originally, I had ideas of trying to go to Berklee. I was writing off to various colleges, but when I went to a careers officer and said that I wanted to go to a music college in America, he said, "No way. Why don't you become a policeman?" So perhaps that earlier teacher's influence *had* rubbed off a little bit! Anyway, Bill told me that he had recommended me to P.I.T., and that they had offered a scholarship. The tuition would be paid for, but I would have to get the money together to get there and to live out there. I needed about 7,000 pounds because you can't just arrive in America with no money and hope to get a job. My parents and I tried everything. They were prepared to get a bank loan. We approached every grant-giving body in the country. I even went to my local Member of Parliament. Rejected—we just could not raise enough money, and I had to give up the scholarship. It completely gutted me; it really did! It was at that point that I decided to turn professional. I walked out of school, and within ten days, I landed a gig with Difford and Tilbrook.

**SG:** How did that happen?

**SW:** It was through Gary Wallis. Gary joined a band called The Truth and left this position vacant. I spoke with the musical director, and found myself rehearsing with Glen Tilbrook and Chris Difford from Squeeze. It was a musical based on their album *Labelled With Love*. It wasn't until halfway through the run that I mentioned to Glen that I was only 17, which surprised him. It was great. There was Geoff Castle, a very well-respected player, on keyboards, and there I was, with my little black Pearl kit, playing Squeeze's music.

**"WITH THE STATE OF THE MUSIC BUSINESS TODAY, ANY DRUMMER WHO THINKS THAT HE OR SHE CAN GET AWAY IN THE OLD ROCK 'N' ROLL TRADITION OF SEX, DRUGS, AND BOOZE IS AN ABSOLUTE FOOL."**

We were at the Albany Theatre in Deptford, and there was hope for a transfer to The West End at the end of the run, but it didn't happen. So once again I was looking for a job.

I had been doing some auditions, but it was actually only about a week after the Squeeze gig finished that the phone rang and a guy on the other end said, "There's a band on Polydor who is looking for a drummer. Can you play a bit of jazz?" I asked who the band was, and he said, "It's The Style Council." I said, "Do you mean *The Style Council*?" They were at number three in the charts with "Speak Like A Child" at that time. Well, instead of waiting to be asked to come for an audition, I got on the next train and turned up in the office of the guy who had called me. It was Denis Mundy, who, as it turns out, has played a very important part in my career. He confirmed that it was true and asked me to meet the band the following day.

**SG:** Did you feel intimidated at this stage? Paul Weller was already a big name.

**SW:** Paul's success had been absolutely astronomical. When the Jam split up, they had rereleased all the singles, and every one had gone back into the charts. It was one of the most lamented bands of the late '70s and early '80s. But funnily enough, I wasn't frightened about meeting Paul. At the time, the person I was most impressed with was Mick Talbot, the keyboard player. I had seen him working with a band called The Bureau, who had a bit of success around the time of the "two-tone" soul revival. They had had a drummer called Stoker, who also worked with General Public. He was one of the most original rock drummers I had seen, and it was because of him that I began checking out more rock drummers. But I was also impressed by this really big guy playing the Hammond organ. The sound of the Hammond has always been one of the most unique musical sounds ever made.

So I went into the rehearsal room, and there was Mick's Hammond with "The Bureau" painted on the front and a small drumkit. Paul had already booked a session drummer to play with them at a benefit gig the following weekend, but I said to him, "Look, I spent my last couple of quid getting here. Can't you at least hear me?" He said, "Okay, can you play a jazz

solo?" So I got behind the drums and really gave it what for! I did a bad impression of Elvin Jones for a few minutes. After that he said, "Right. Well, I've got to go now, but we're doing a live radio broadcast tomorrow. If you want to do it, be at the Maida Vale Studios at 10:00 A.M." That was it. He left. I was a bit stunned, looking around saying to myself, "Where's he going?" But then the tour manager came up and said, "Looks like you impressed him."

The following day, it turned out that we were doing *The Kid Jensen Show*—a live session of four songs. I got there very early, set the drums up, cleaned them, and tuned them. Then Paul walked in, told me how the songs went, and we did them. It was the first time the band played a song called "Paris Match." We also did "Headstart For Happiness" and "Mix Up." They have all gone down as some of the best songs The Style Council has done, and this was the first time that The Style Council came together as a group.

**SG:** Did you begin to feel like a star?

**SW:** It's easy to say, but I was never really into the idea of being in a famous pop group. I was 17 when I first joined Paul, and seeing the hysteria that sometimes surrounded him used to frighten me, because it seemed so unnatural. From that time, any hidden ambitions I might have had to be a superstar adored by thousands of schoolgirls disappeared. Now, Paul is a very unassuming guy, but his biggest enemy in Britain is the press. They accuse him of being "the most miserable man in rock." They say he's arrogant and aloof, but he isn't! I've never seen him react badly when someone shoved a napkin under his nose while he was eating. He never refuses to give autographs. He'll always go out of his way to be kind to people, but he still gets knocked. That whole scene doesn't appeal to me.

When I started working with The Style Council, they didn't intend to have a regular drummer. The idea was that they would get people in as they needed them. I decided to work really hard and practice, so that they wouldn't want anybody else. So although I wasn't officially a member of The Style Council, when I wasn't working with them, I was practicing eight hours a day, so that another drummer wouldn't come along and take my job. At that time, the band started to develop well musically, because there were no pretensions: no star trips, no drinking or drugs. At 17, I was in a position to learn about touring; we went to America and Japan, as well as going to Europe and doing gigs in Britain. I also learned about recording and studios. I got

*continued on page 88*

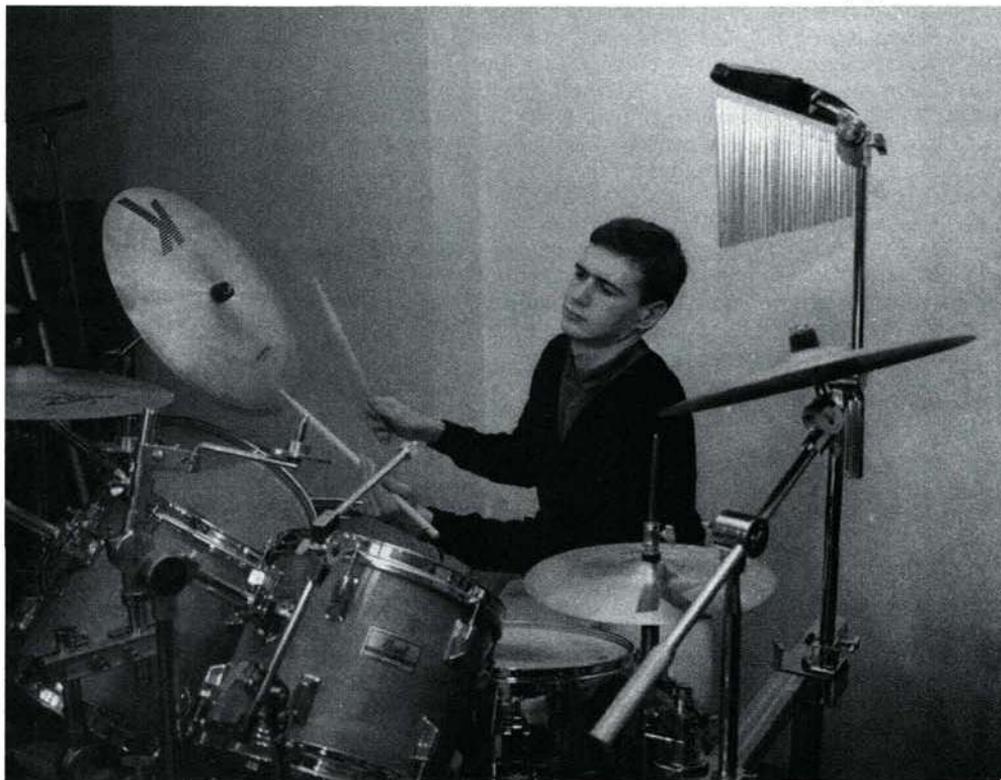


Photo courtesy of Ziljjan

# Reminiscing With W

## A Revealing Look Back On Nearly Eight Decades Of Drumming - From The Eyes Of a Man Who Has Practically Seen It All

**PS:** How did your father and his brother Theobald begin in the drum business?

**WFL:** Well, they were both professional drummers in and around Chicago. Since drumming entailed irregular hours, they'd have time off during the day until the first show started in the evening. Rather than remain idle, they started a drum shop in 1909 called Ludwig & Ludwig. They catered to the professional drummer. They had some exclusive lines, including Leedy drums and sound effects. Sound effects were big in those days to accompany vaudeville acts and supply sounds for the silent movies.

In the first Ludwig & Ludwig catalog, there's a picture of a machine shop. I always suspected it was someone else's shop—possibly my father's brother-in-law, Robert Danly. But the Ludwig brothers were saying to the trade that they knew what drummers wanted because they were in the same profession.

The business failed in one year, since neither William nor Theobald had any business sense. They let their receivables exceed their cash flow, and it was only the intervention of father's sister, Elizabeth, that saved the company. Elizabeth was a skilled secretary and credit manager.

**PS:** What sort of fellow was your father? Could you talk about him a little?

**WFL:** He was a great family man. He met and married my mother while they were both members of the Chicago Opera Company. Dad was first percussionist, and my mother sang soprano in the opera chorus. We were a very musical family.

My father was a very early riser, always raring to go to the drum plant on Chicago's North Side. On many Sunday afternoons, I'd find him at the dining room table with the great rudimental drummers of the mid-'20s: Frank Fancher, national champion drummer and teacher, and the great Gus Moeller. The Moeller book evolved from those Sunday sessions. My father would go down to the factory six days a week. They worked on Saturdays in those days. They also had a tannery, so he was learning the calfskin trade as well.

**PS:** Wasn't that the heyday of Ludwig—the '20s?

**WFL:** Well, the business prospered at 1611 North Lincoln Street in Chicago through the '20s. This was the day of the flapper, the Charleston, mini-skirts, bootleg gin, gangsters, and the like.

All the movies were silent. The band, or at least the piano player and drummer, supplied the music and sound effects to whatever film was being shown. They would have four or five vaudeville acts: jugglers, tap dancers, comedians, singers, and so forth. But vaudeville gave way during 1927 to '29 when sound pictures burst on the scene. Gradually, the need for live music ceased. By 1929, the drum companies were really up against it. It was lean pickin's from 1927 to 1935. The whole industry had been hung up on performing with silent films.

**PS:** The drummer's function in those days was basically that of attendant music and accompaniment.

**WFL:** Right. Large theaters like the Chi-

cago, Oriental, State, and Lake Theatre in Chicago, the Palace in New York, and the Palladium in Los Angeles all had almost full symphony orchestras in the pit, which would rise up on a hydraulic platform to play the overture. They'd play "Merry Wives Of Windsor," "William Tell," and other popular music of the day. I suspect this was the transition from live performance on the stage to total film performance.

**PS:** Wasn't there an ownership change of Ludwig & Ludwig somewhere along the line?

**WFL:** In 1929, my father approached the Conn Corporation to determine whether they wanted to buy Ludwig & Ludwig. Orders had been slow for two years. The peak had been passed in 1926 when sales were \$1,000,000—the company's best year. Financial warning signs were everywhere throughout 1928. In the spring of '29, there was a real danger the company would fail, even though it had cut its staff from 350 employees to less than 100. It was in this atmosphere that my father went to Charles Boyer, executive vice president of the C.G. Conn Corporation in Elkhart, Indiana.

Conn did express an interest, even though the company had bought the Leedy Drum Company, which made the same things as Ludwig & Ludwig, the year before. They were the two big competitors of the era. In 1929, my father signed a sales agreement, and Conn took over Ludwig & Ludwig.

**PS:** Was Leedy the only other competitor?

**WFL:** Mainly. Leedy was similar to Ludwig & Ludwig and began as a small shop in Indianapolis. The main theater of the 1890s was also located there, and the drummer for the theater was a man named U.G. Leedy. He had started a drum shop in 1895 for similar reasons that the Ludwig brothers did: to occupy his time when he wasn't playing. He started by making sound effects to sell in his shop. There was a tremendous market for cuckoo calls, crow calls, duck quacks, rooster crows, bird whistles, and the like. I believe Leedy actually started his business with sleigh bells and tambourines. Then Leedy got into pedals and snare drums, which were laminated wood.

**"WHENEVER ONE OF THE DRUMHEAD COMPANIES HAD HIDE FOR HEADS, THEY'D CALL ME AND BUD [SLINGERLAND]. WHOEVER COULD GET IN THE CAR FIRST AND RACE OVER WOULD WIN FIRST CHOICE OF THE PILE OF HEADS THAT WERE AVAILABLE!"**

# William F. Ludwig, Jr.

by Paul Schmidt

When William and Theobald decided to open their drum shop in 1909, my father applied to U.G. Leedy to be the sole distributor for Leedy sound effects and snare drums in Chicago. The Ludwig brothers were appointed Leedy dealers.

**PS:** In the earlier catalogs, there were a lot of sound effects offered. Did Ludwig & Ludwig make them, or were they purchased from Leedy?

**WFL:** Ludwig first bought them from Leedy. But in those days, everything went by rail; shipping was slow. My father was always determined to stand on his own two feet, so he started with a cowbell, and later a tambourine and a woodblock. With those three sound effects and a pedal, he started to become more of a manufacturer than a distributor. He never said, in all the years we worked together, that he made the first bass drum pedal. But he always claimed that he made the first *practical* pedal.

**PS:** I also noticed there were many items in the early catalogs that might have been imported: things like Chinese tom-toms with tacked on heads. Was that the case?

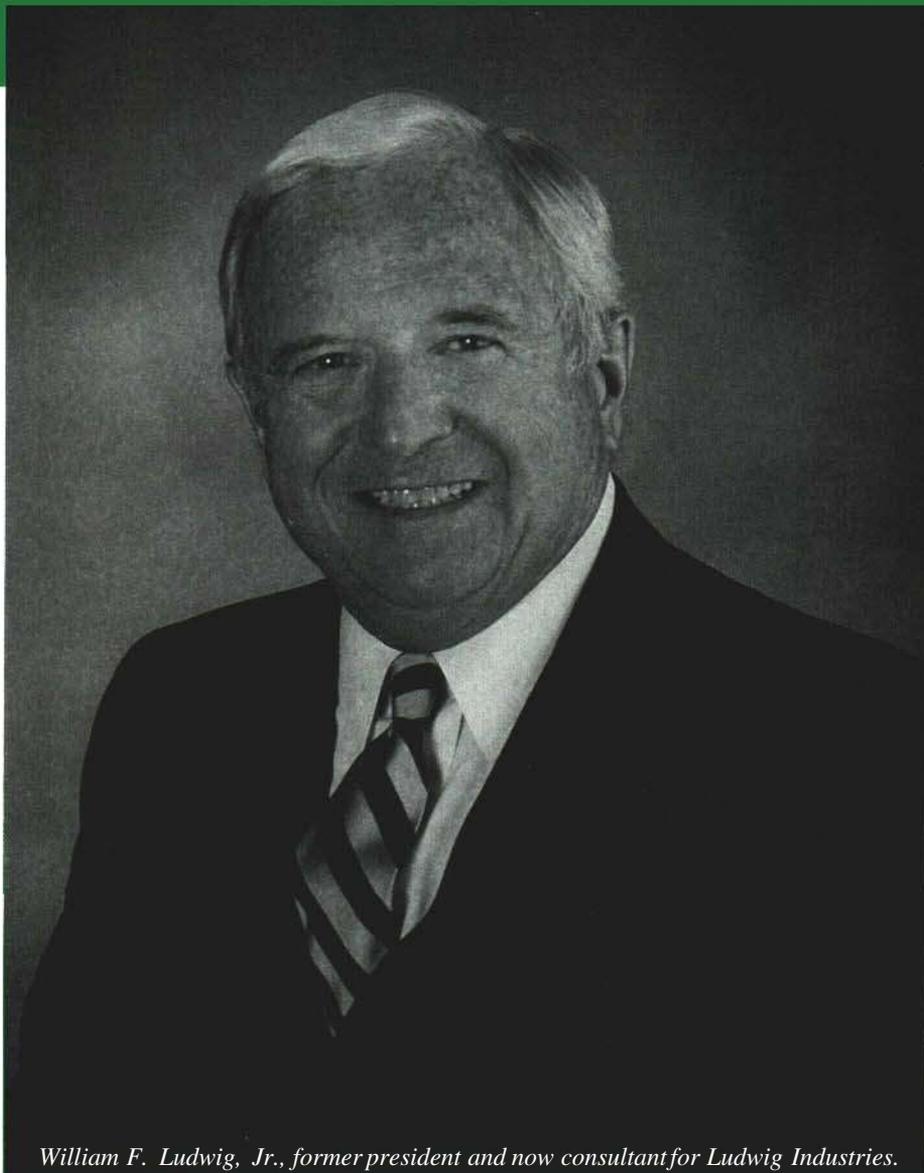
**WFL:** Yes. I think we were buying them up until the war.

**PS:** Was it the same situation when toms with tunable top heads and tacked bottom heads became available?

**WFL:** Those drums were first manufactured by either Ludwig & Ludwig or Leedy. I think it was in the '30s. It was left to Slingerland to put the tunable feature on both sides of a tom-tom in answer to a request by Gene Krupa.

**PS:** Years ago, there was a large bass drum, snare drum, tacked tom heads, dozens of effects, timpani, mallet instruments, and cymbals. But the jazz drummer appeared to have a much leaner set, not unlike what Krupa played. How did that happen?

**WFL:** Well, the first bass drums were 30" in diameter. Some were even larger, and they weren't muffled in any way. The drummer also had a snare drum. It was a combination of a snare drummer and a bass drummer in one musician. The cymbal was added later. It attached to the side of the bass drum with a steel holder that held it in a vertical position. It was struck by a beater that was part of the pedal, and



*William F. Ludwig, Jr., former president and now consultant for Ludwig Industries.*

it would hit the cymbal at the same time the felt beater hit the bass drum. Prior to this, all three instruments were played by separate people. These jobs were combined for economical reasons, as well as the lack of space in the vaudeville pits for all the drummers.

All the tom-toms were Chinese. They were used for Oriental effects, belly dancing, and often in burlesque. The Oriental tom-tom was a mood instrument. It was also used to imitate Indian tom-toms.

**PS:** The early catalogs depict pages of trap racks and effects.

**WFL:** In some of the old catalogs, you can see scenes of a drummer at a railroad station, standing in the rain with his trunk filled with his snare drum and sound effects. These were trunks with a curved lid for strength and room for extra packing. You'd open the trunk, and there would be a huge tray with the little sound effects. Underneath the tray were vertical partitions for the snare drum, toms, stands, and maybe even a xylophone. It was common for one drummer to trade sound effects with another drummer on the road.

**PS:** When did the sound effects fall out of



A typical 1917 theater outfit used during the silent movie and live vaudeville era.

favor? Those early shots of Gene Krupa were nothing like Roy Knapp's setup with WLS radio in Chicago.

**WFL:** They were two different types of drummers for different types of work. Roy played in the studio. He had to imitate sounds to create a mood for radio listeners. Krupa was playing for the stage and ballrooms. He stripped away all of the effects, except for the cowbell. He was the first one

I ever saw with a stripped-down set in concert at the Congress Hotel in 1935. Columbia records sent out invitations to the trade. Being as we were involved, my father took me down on a Sunday afternoon for the very first concert of the Benny Goodman band with Krupa, Lionel Hampton, and Teddy Wilson. Gene did a long tom-tom solo on "Sing, Sing, Sing" on the first of the 16" floor toms he got

Jack Powell, "the highest paid drummer of the '20s and '30s," on the cover of an old, Ludwig Drummer.



**"YOU COULD USE EXOTIC WOODS, BUT THEY'D BE VERY COSTLY AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT DIFFERENCE IT WOULD MAKE IN THE SOUND."**

H.H. Slingerland to build. It didn't have a tacked head on the bottom, and it was on a stand. They took the band on the road, and it changed everything overnight. The trend became a streamlined set with four drums, cymbals, a cowbell, and no sound effects. This, along with sound pictures, made effects almost obsolete. You couldn't give them away.

**PS:** The catalogs of the '30s had pages of Ludwig star users. One of the earliest, and most lauded, was Jack Powell. Who was he?

**WFL:** Jack Powell had a blackface act at a time when minstrel shows were popular. He had a one-man vaudeville act that brought him on stage in a chef's costume and blackface. Underneath the costume, he wore a curved steel plate that matched the front of his body contour, because when he was introduced, he'd come running out to a chord from the orchestra, and bellyslike to a drumset on the stage. He'd make it just in time to hit the bass drum with a stick to end the chord. Then he'd instantly start to play with both sticks on the bass drum head and the hoops, and then roll over and get to his knees while playing a street beat. He'd play around the bass drum, then the snare drum, and standing up with one foot on the pedal, he'd perform drum licks lifting his sticks very high. He would imitate a chef carving up a roast by rubbing the sticks together as if they were a knife and fork. Then he'd start a long roll. He'd continue until he closed the roll, and would bring it down to *pianissimo* and play around the edge of the snare drum. Then he'd roll around the hoop onto the floor, across the stage and up the curtain, always rolling and clicking his sticks and occasionally going into a street beat. He would reach down and roll on the bass player's head in the orchestra pit, and even on the string bass if he could reach it. The crowd loved it. This sounds corny to us, but those audiences weren't used to TV. He'd then come back to the set, drumming on the floor as he walked, and end up with a similar routine on the cymbals. The act would last about 15 minutes. He did that act for 40 years, from Australia to the Antarctic, and during the War for the USO shows. I think he was the most traveled drummer in history. He went everywhere, and he'd send us postcards. So we featured him in *The Ludwig Drummer* for years and years. That's why he appears so prominently.

He stayed at our house a lot when he was in Chicago, and we often went backstage. He was a wonderful fellow. He lived into his 80's, and was still performing for various charities and worldwide for the USO.

**PS:** How did artist relations actually begin? Were the drummers playing Ludwig and you'd contact them, or were they playing some other brand and you'd go to show your line—or both?

**WFL:** Both. My father would often take us

**DRUMMERS WOULD ASK, 'WHY DON'T YOU MAKE...?' WELL, SOMEBODY WOULD DO IT, AND IF IT WASN'T US, IT WAS A SCRAMBLE TO CATCH UP."**



*A vintage 1910 snare drum shows the first throw-off strainer. Separate tension posts were joined by a tube in the following year, a design that would remain popular for the next 30 years.*

on a Sunday afternoon, after dinner, to one of the Chicago theaters. After the show, we'd go backstage. If the drummer in the pit was using a Leedy drumset, my father would automatically ask him why he wasn't using Ludwig, or he would invite the drummers out to the factory. Drummers always came out, because they were interested in seeing the factory and seeing

the tools of their trade being manufactured. Many came out to get advertising to help their careers.

My father was always courteous to everyone. Having Ludwig drums up on the stage with Paul Whiteman or Fred Waring was good exposure. We wanted that exposure, and we were even willing to trade drums if the drummer was using another

brand, all to gain that exposure.

**PS:** Didn't you have some things that other drum companies didn't offer, like the metal snare drum and the throw-off strainer?

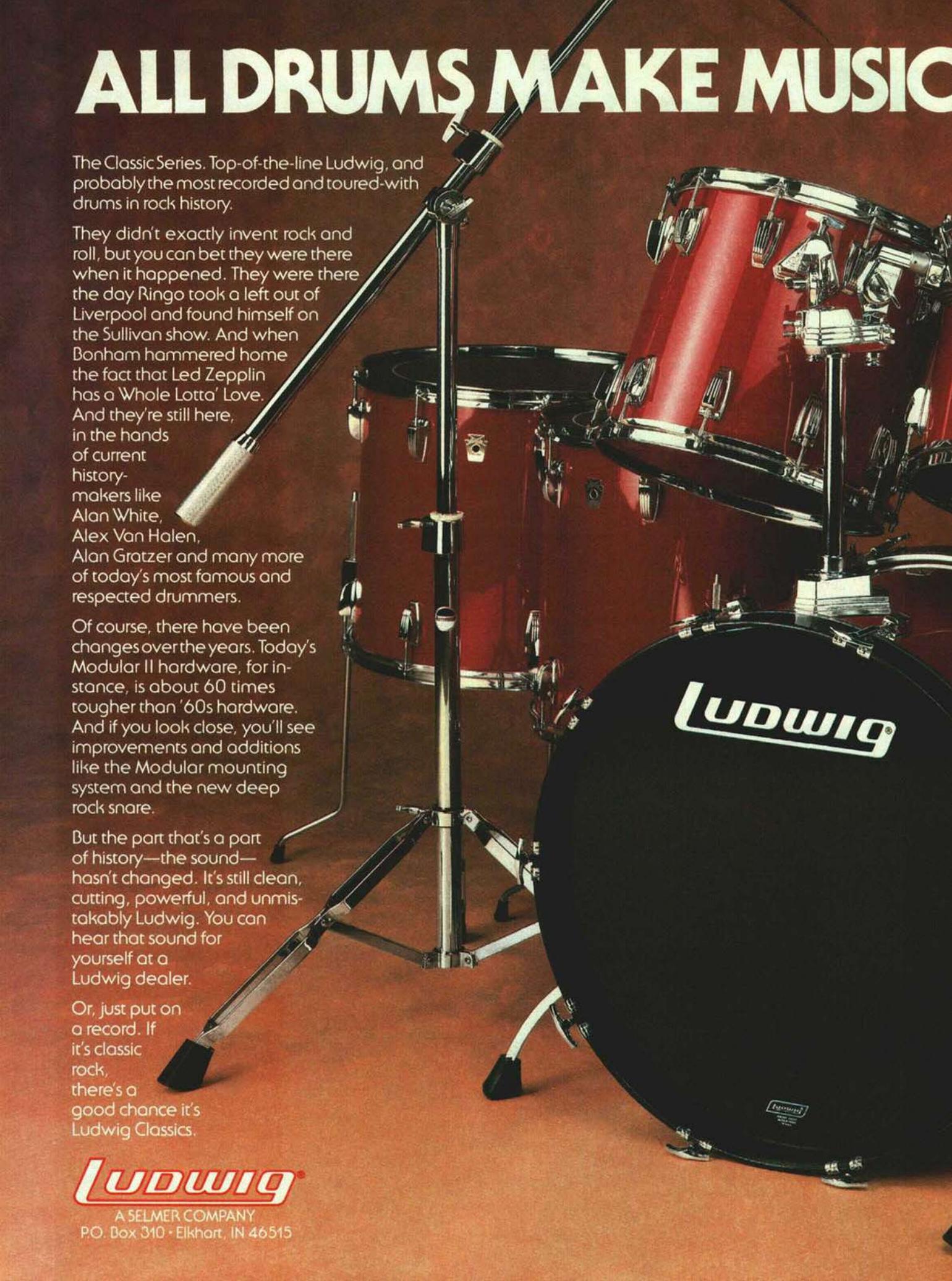
**WFL:** Sure. The early strainers were thumb-screw adjusted bolts to loosen and tighten the snares. The first throw-off I

*continued on page 96*

*Bill Ludwig and daughter Brooke present a 14kt gold snare drum to Ringo Starr at a 1964 Beatles press conference in Chicago.*



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by Brooke Sheffield Comer



Photo by Bob Leaf

## The Smithereens' Dennis Diken

more on a passion for many kinds of music and a solid technical expertise. "Since a lot of studio musicians played on early '60s records, I didn't even know the names of many of the drummers I loved at the time. But I knew they had a great feel, plus imagination and heart, which I think gets lost in some of today's technology." According to Diken, when electronic and computerized drums began to replace session players, "the sound of records began to change. Live drums had a lot to do with the lasting charm of many classics."

Diken's belief that the drum is the pulse and feel of a song was a strong factor in his self-devised curriculum, and another testimonial to the rock-steady beat that he admired in the '60s and carried over into the '80s. "If you listen to some of those old records, you'll hear a difference. A lot of the top session drummers were cutting nonstop, doing a variety of work from jingles to record dates. But they never lost their bright approach in the constant work load. They'd keep the beat real steady. Then when it came time for a fill, it would come out of nowhere." That's what Diken feels gives albums by the Beach Boys, Lesley Gore, and the Four Seasons "that true flavor." Diken elaborates, "It's nothing technically fancy, but it showed me that a great fill can really kick you."

In order to round out his spectrum of sounds and styles, Diken developed an ear for different regional drummers. He didn't know Buddy Harman's name, but he knew that the Everly Brothers had a session drummer with a great Nashville sound. "The interesting thing about a lot of the players I was listening to and learning from was that their roots were anything but homogeneous. Their roots weren't *in* rock 'n' roll; they were *creating* rock 'n' roll. Many were coming from jazz, which gave them a totally different vantage point—not to mention some tasty licks." Diken advises young drummers today to listen to and learn from different genres, "to have a better chance of maintaining a fresh approach to any type of music."

Once he got his chops up, Diken became an astute listener/imitator, able to remember a fill or an approach to a crash so that

he could eventually incorporate it into his own style. "I've borrowed from so many players," he notes. "Dennis Wilson didn't play on all the Beach Boys albums, but he was an exciting drummer and a big influence on me. I also utilized Charlie Watts' sense of simplicity and feel. I learned from him that a well-placed shot on the snare is worth all the technique in the world." Kenny Jones also receives honorable mention in the Diken Hall of Fame. "Kenny [during his time with Small Faces] was the perfect middle ground, to me, between the simplicity and feel of Ringo and the wildness of Keith Moon. He had Keith's flash when he needed it, but he also had Ringo's ability to keep it steady and simple. I've been able to learn from that balance."

One reason why the Smithereens' sound is so alluring—yet rhythmically distinct from their more electronically inclined chart-mates—comes from the brash, hard-yet-steady beat that Diken pumps into his four-piece Black Diamond Pearl Slingerland set. "I liked the way Greg Errico from Sly & the Family Stone sounded, so I borrowed from him. I've copped from practically everyone I've heard. You can duplicate what you hear more easily when you're young. If you keep on listening, you can only evolve further." Diken took his own advice. "The most important element in my playing has been my ability to broaden my scope, and stay open to different ideas and styles. If you listen and enjoy as much as possible, you'll profit in the long run. You never know when you'll be called upon to think in a certain situation or to draw from something that's been stored in your memory. Without consciously copping a specific style, you can recall that style and use it to expand an original idea."

A suburban New Jersey town within easy commuting distance from New York City seems the ideal place for any young musician to grow up in—with so much style and technique on display in city clubs. But Diken discovered that those experiences are costly and exclude minors. "Underage people can still listen to records and watch videos," he points out. "Even though a Max Roach instructional

Other drummers claim roots in jazz, soul, and perhaps blues. The Smithereens' Dennis Diken cites at least that many influences and more. Diken is a protege of '60s rock 'n' roll. One of the first disciples of that decade, he cultivated his own style—unhindered by formal lessons—exclusively from the records and radio he heard as a child. "I never felt the need to study with someone when I was younger," Diken admits.

But untutored doesn't necessarily mean untaught. Although Diken didn't even know the names of many of his early idols, that didn't stop him from picking up tips from those anonymous session greats. In fact, it worked to his advantage. Rather than emulating a given artist, he put all his attention into sound and style. Rock was such a fusion of genres 25 years ago—being a new medium itself—that Diken's attention span was put to task. As a result, he broadened his repertoire extensively by paying homage to musicians from diverse backgrounds.

Before Diken had a secondhand Ludwig kit to bang on, he was already building his chops. "My mother tells me that, even as a baby, I wanted to pound on my crib," he recalls. "Then it was *Lincoln Logs* on coffee cans." Real sticks replaced *the Logs* when Diken turned five. "They were only toy sticks, but that didn't matter to me. I was already inspired."

Compared to the slick electronics and MTV "cheekbone appeal" associated with today's artists, Diken's '60s idols relied

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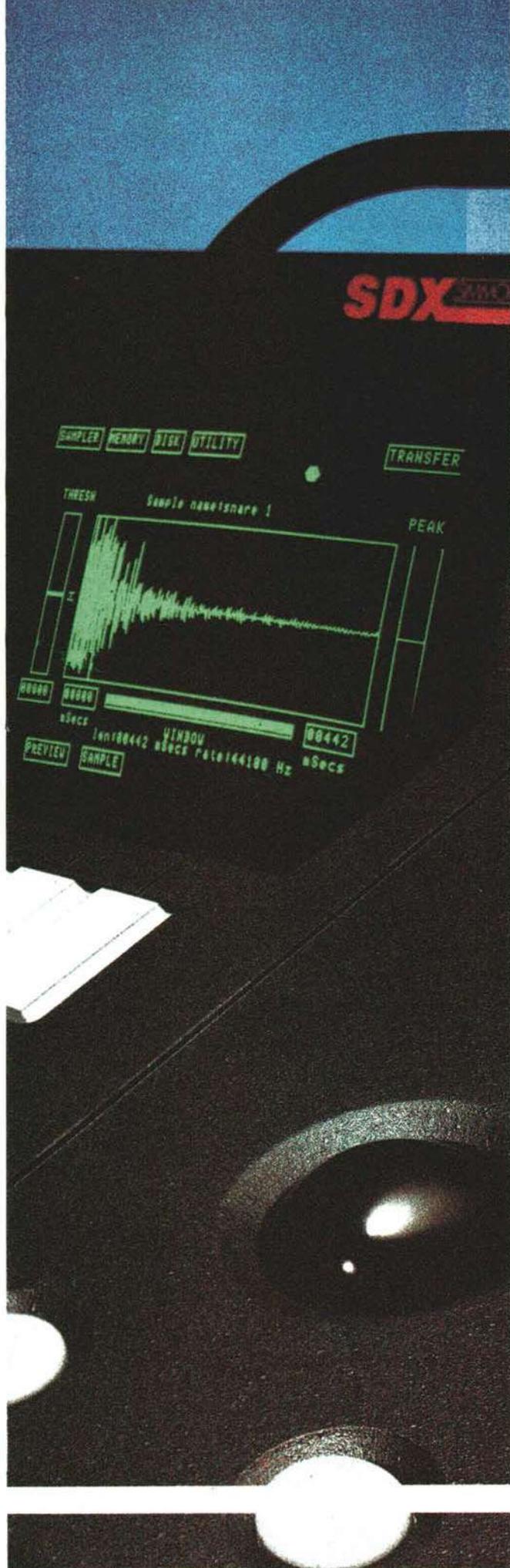
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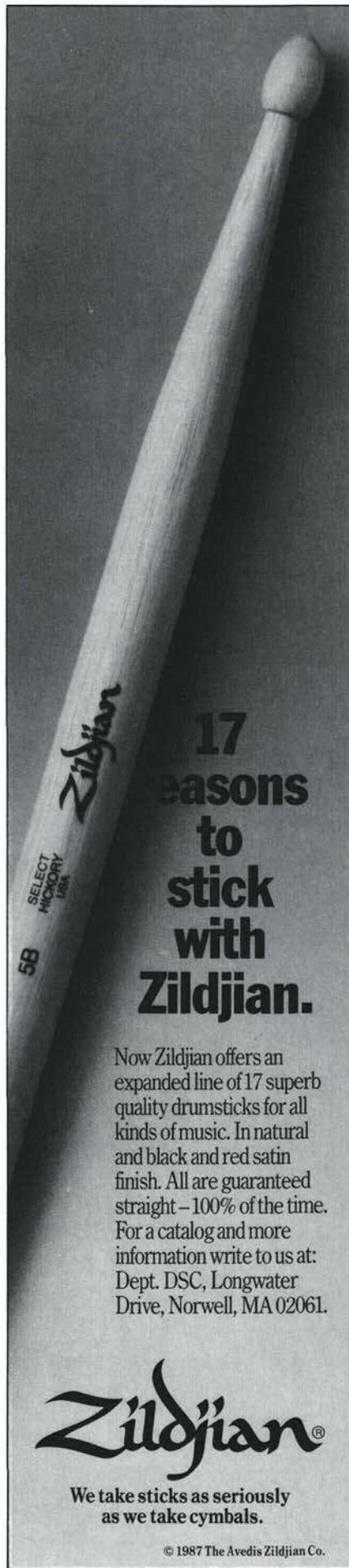
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video isn't the same thing as going out and meeting the man, it's helpful."

Distanced from the New York scene, young Diken found incentive from the praise of his older brother's friends and in the gradual mastery of style that he achieved during jams with his record collection. Because a desire to *play*—rather than to perform on stage—guided Diken's steady technical progress, he didn't hurry to form a group. Neither did he try to rush into the session circuit. Instant stardom wasn't a goal. "A lot of people approach the music industry for the wrong reasons—for money, or women, or drugs." Diken finds those unrealistic motivations. "We play because we like it, not as an excuse to get drunk every night. It takes a lot of endurance to travel and work weird hours. But it's wonderful to meet people you've never met before who know your name and like your music. I'm always flattered when someone comes up to me after a gig and asks for advice."

Session work would have been impeded anyway. Diken doesn't read music. "It never occurred to me to study music theory, beyond a basic course in school." With the Smithereens, he simply learns his part by ear when lead singer/songwriter Pat DiNizio brings in a rough track. "If I have an idea for a fill or a setup, I can create my own parts. We work as a democracy. Everyone contributes ideas, and if they work, we'll use them." Most of the Smithereens grew up together, "so there isn't a lot of pettiness. Band egotism just isn't present, and we have few flare-ups. It makes working more fun, and it's helped us achieve our goals faster." Diken even does some recording projects outside the group—enjoying the creative challenge of different situations—and that's fine with the rest of the act.

The flexible "mindframe" that helped Diken succeed in a highly competitive career—without greed or egomania—is an attitude tonic that he prescribes to aspiring colleagues. "Closed-mindedness is a dead end," he warns. "Take things as they come. Murphy's law is real. Anything can and will go wrong when you least expect it. Take your work seriously, but have as many laughs as possible. If you don't enjoy what you're doing, you shouldn't be doing it."

Maintaining a positive attitude sounds easy for Diken. When Enigma released *Especially For You*, "Blood And Roses" cracked the charts and turned the Smithereens' career into an upward spiral that got them on the Lou Reed tour. But the band has had its share of hard times, too. When

the Smithereens officially formed in 1980, New York's club scene was inundated with derivative, unmelodic renditions of post-punk material. It was hardly the fertile signing grounds it had been when Patti Smith and The Talking Heads gained renown, virtually being signed straight out of CBGB's. In the years spent pushing independently produced singles to attract label attention, Diken and company practiced the power of positive thinking. "You do have some ability to predetermine your outcome," the drummer insists. "If you have a poor attitude, you're working against yourself." It's not easy to keep the faith in an industry where stress and uncertainty are rampant. "Roll with the punches," Diken suggests.

Even during his self-taught "lessons," Diken's belief in himself allowed him to become his own critic. When he lined up his impressive "turntable faculty" to learn from, he never forgot the most important source of his skills: himself. He taped himself, using a reel-to-reel recorder, and gave himself feedback. After all, he couldn't expect Keith Moon to come bursting out of the stereo screaming "*Harder on the crash, Dennis!*" "It takes a certain ability and attitude to accept criticism from yourself, but that can become a great tool," he stresses. "Technical prowess is important, but you can't grow and develop without self-objectivity. If you can't keep an open outlook when you listen to yourself, as well as to others, you might as well stay in the basement."

Every young drummer has to overcome bad habits. Among the most common, Diken finds, is the tendency to overplay. "When you're young, you want to show your stuff. Drummers—myself included—will take any opportunity to do a big fill or play something fancy. But when you get into a more professional situation, supporting other musicians, you learn to tone it down and play solid and steady. Then when you do a fill, it can come out of nowhere and just twist everybody's head." Even though "toning down" can bring one down a notch, Diken's sure it's part of the maturing process. "Most kids grow into it if they want to play professionally. You realize, eventually, that you aren't the only player on stage." Speed isn't everything it's built up to be either, he notes. "It does take a certain amount of ability to play a real fast double-stroke roll or an around-the-kit fill, but speed for speed's sake is basically regarded as an attribute only by nonmusicians."

If Diken's notion of attitude sounds idealistic, he balances it out. Equipment-wise,

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he's a pragmatist. He prefers older drums and knows exactly why. "There's a special quality that I don't find in new equipment," he explains. "Older drums have an enhanced character." He liked the new Sonor five-piece kit that he used to cut *Especially For You* at the Record Plant, but outside of the studio, he's happiest with his four-piece Slingerland. "You can do anything with a four-piece that you can do with a five-piece, except extended rolls," he explains, "and working with fewer pieces forces you to become more reliant on your own creativity."

In keeping with his idea of simplicity, Diken's own setup is far from complicated. "I use a pair of hi-hat cymbals, two crashes, and one ride—all Zildjians. Because I'm hitting real heavy with the Smitherreens, I need a lot of body from the crashes, so I lean toward bigger sizes. Other than that, everything I have is pretty basic." Diken's theory of "basics" even extends to economy. Rather than fork out for an expensive kit, he researched the classifieds to find his '64 Slingerland for only a few hundred dollars. "It was in mint condition, having only been used by an old man who played at weddings." He's replaced one of the floor toms with a 16" Ludwig, and he uses a '70s vintage Ludwig metal snare, but other than that, he's kept the kit intact.

Buddy Rich used to say, when asked how he tuned his toms, "What tuning? I just tighten them up." Diken follows suit. "I like to get an even tone," he explains, "because I play with heads on both sides of the drum for fuller resonance." He chose to use dual heads (by Remo) after finding that, with only one head, the tone died away too quickly for his taste. "I like the natural ring to emanate from my drums. I've been able to evoke a very specific response from them that works just perfectly. The snare has to have just the right ring and tightness. When there's not too much over-ring, I have a good time."

Diken is convinced that human beings—with their capacity for error, imagination, and instinct—make better music than do machines. Though he respects technology's ability to turn out gear that can enhance the human touch, he points to records made ten to 20 years ago, before technology began to replace live drummers. "There was more of a happy feel, as

opposed to today, when a lot of the beat is regimented with click tracks and machines. You could feel the bounce of big, live drums back then. It's a special ingredient that listeners enjoy and that sells records."

Clicks and Linns have hardly sent record sales into a downspin. But they have, according to Diken, lessened the potential for excitement—for the magic quality that makes a record endure and become legendary. "It isn't that technology hasn't been helpful. Certain electronic devices and machines have been valuable," he notes. But his preference for the human touch prevails, and in an era of gadgetry, he's selected an eclectic coterie of contemporary human favorites. "Bill Bateman from the Blasters is one of the most electrifying drummers I've ever heard; his intensity and spirit make your jaw drop. I also like Howard Ferguson from Barrence Whitfield & the Savages, who's fun to watch and swings like crazy." Because Diken's learning has always been inspired by inspired players, he states that "monotonous rhythm does nothing for me at all."

Since his days as an audience-based inspiration seeker, Diken has not only had the opportunity to become inspired, but he's become an inspiration himself, with his own fans summing up his style. "I hate to get into terminology, and I don't like to put tags on music," he warns, "but people say I'm a pretty rock-solid drummer. That's probably because the Smitherreens approach the term 'rock 'n' roll' from the purest sense—a real raw, gut feeling. We play hard-edged music with very melodic songs. Music today is getting away from songs, and focusing on riffs or raps. I'm not sure those songs will endure as long as something constructed on lyrics and melody."

When time allows, Diken is always receptive to his fans. "I'm flattered that they regard me as an inspiration, and I'll talk to them after a gig whenever I can." Years ago Diken wrote his idol, Hal Blaine, a fan letter. Blaine responded, and the two began a correspondence that culminated in a recent meeting at a Smitherreens gig in Arizona. "Until Hal and I began to communicate, I had no idea how many great records he'd played on," Diken admits. "His mastery of so many genres gave him a tremendous expertise. I

learned the value of listening and absorbing as much as I could, when I realized he'd started out playing jazz in the big band era and achieved diverse accomplishments in jingles, scoring, and record dates."

Just because *he* didn't take formal lessons doesn't mean Diken advocates a similar route to his young followers. "I never want to give the impression that lessons aren't important. But I do feel it can be dangerous to go *strictly* by the book. If your method is to go by the book, however, fine. Take that knowledge and branch out. Learn some different things, too. Always delve into your own creativity. Listen, duplicate, and embellish your work." Even "Do-It-Yourself-Diken" admits he'd attend a master class, given the time and a favorite master. "Usually master class teachers are the drummers who've set a lot of standards, so you can get a lot out of the experience. Any serious players, especially young ones, ought to jump at the opportunity to attend a class like that."

Learning without lessons may not be for everybody. Diken simply has a rare ability to use his mind, his music, and his drums as if they were MIDIed to a mainframe. This enables him to do exercises before he learns the technical name for them. "I was doing paradiddles before I knew the right term for them, and I still don't know the proper names for a lot of what I do today. Maybe I should," he adds. But he *can* play drums while singing lead or background vocals—no easy feat. "I've been doing it all along," he admits. "It just came as naturally as breathing."

Diken does seem to have been blessed by the drum god with natural rhythmic instinct, discipline, and built-in critical faculties. But he's aware of the rough roads ahead. "This business is transient, and it takes patience, will, and passion to remain a pro. But I believe that, if you stick with it long enough and have talent and determination, you can get what you want." A lot of people want it overnight, but Diken's hip to that fallacy. "Even when you do get a break, it may fall out from under you the next day." What's the solution? How does a young drummer ride out tough times on the way up? "Take things as they come," the Smitherreen advises. "Enjoy everything. Have a lot of laughs."

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**Applied Magic**



Ralph Pace with Joe Morello (seated).

Set-The-Pace pedal practice pads are the result of one individual's love of drumming: Ralph Pace. MD readers should be aware of this man's products: Set-The-Pace pads have been advertised in MD since the first issue. These ads normally show an endorser on a set of Ralph Pace's pads, and the list of these players is impressive. Such names as Mel Lewis, Butch Miles, Carmine Appice, James Stroud, and Joe Morello have all appeared in these ads. Obviously, Ralph Pace must be doing something right.

To simply label Ralph Pace as a practice-pad drumset manufacturer would be missing the point. Ralph's career in music can serve as an inspiration to many. He began his career with an interest in performing, which is something he continues to do even to this day (at the age of 62). Besides performing, Ralph has had a very successful career as a drum instructor, and his interest in giving pointers to young, beginning drummers is something he still enjoys. Some of Ralph's former students have become very successful musicians, including Andy Newmark.

Another of Ralph's accomplishments is his drum-book writing. Ralph has had a large number of drum books published, including the book that many drum authorities consider a classic, *Variations Of Drumming*. Most people would have been satisfied to succeed in one area of the music business, but Ralph Pace has succeeded in many.

**WFM:** How long has the Set-The-Pace pad company been in business?

**RP:** Oh, I would say over 30 years.

**WFM:** What made you decide to start the company?

**RP:** Well, back when I started drumming, I had a very inexpensive set of drums. I used to practice in my parents' basement,

# Ralph Pace

and the noise was just too much for them. So I started experimenting with a few ideas. Eventually, I developed a combination snare and bass drum practice pad, with the two units mounted on one base-board.

**WFM:** Back at that time, were there other practice-pad companies that made a complete kit?

**RP:** There was a practice-pad kit that came out about the same time as mine, but I beat the manufacturer on the patent date. The idea of a combination unit had never been used before that time. Basically, my first design of a base with attaching components is very similar to my pads today. The design has held up.

**WFM:** So your practice-pad kits have been on the market longer than anybody else's.

**RP:** Absolutely. The pad I was referring to that came out about the same time as mine was called the FIPS pad and was made by Frank Ippolito. It was on the market for a short time, I believe. Since then, Remo and Calato have come out with their own designs.

**WFM:** What are some of the differences between your practice-pad sets and others available today?

**RP:** First of all, the other kits available are all commercially manufactured, with metal, plastic, and rubber. They're very lightweight and are louder than my pads. My kits are made out of the finest poplar lumber and pure gum rubber. This makes them very solid. Also, they are quiet and have a very good feel. I think another important item is that my pads are larger than others available. I offer kits that have the same sizes as real drums. This makes them more realistic to play.

**WFM:** Do you handle all of the construction of the kits yourself?

**RP:** Right now, yes. I did have a man working with me at one time though.

**WFM:** How many different models do you make?

**RP:** I offer 45 different models.

**WFM:** Forty-five models is a large amount. How can you offer so many?

**RP:** Well, everything is interchangeable. The basic design of the unit involves component parts that attach to the base.

With all of the different sizes and base combinations, it works out to be 45 models.

**WFM:** Since you do all of the construction yourself, can you custom make any special requests from people?

**RP:** With 45 different models to choose from, I think there is a model to suit just about anybody.

**WFM:** How long does it take you to put a kit together?

**RP:** The actual assembly doesn't take long at all. There are many different jobs that I have to do before assembling the units. For instance, I'll spend one day cementing the rubber to the wood. Now, I don't mean for one individual order; I'm talking in quantity. So I just finish the different components and store them on shelves in bins. As I get orders, I just assemble the requested components into the completed unit.

**WFM:** How long does it normally take for someone to receive an order once it's been placed?

**RP:** Generally, the customer gets it within a week. I try to insist on payment by money order. That way, I avoid problems with personal checks. Usually, I can get an order out the same day I receive it.

**WFM:** Do you have any particular model that is very popular?

**RP:** Well, the model number 5 *Pro Standard* is the most popular, especially with music stores.

**WFM:** Do you sell a lot to music stores?

**RP:** Actually, I sell more directly to customers. When I started this idea, I never intended it to be a huge-quantity item. I didn't want it to be a big business. I've kept it at a certain level, so that I can still enjoy the work and take pride in the finished product. I only wanted it to be a small part of my life and career.

**WFM:** I read in your catalog that the pads have a lifetime guarantee. What exactly does that mean?

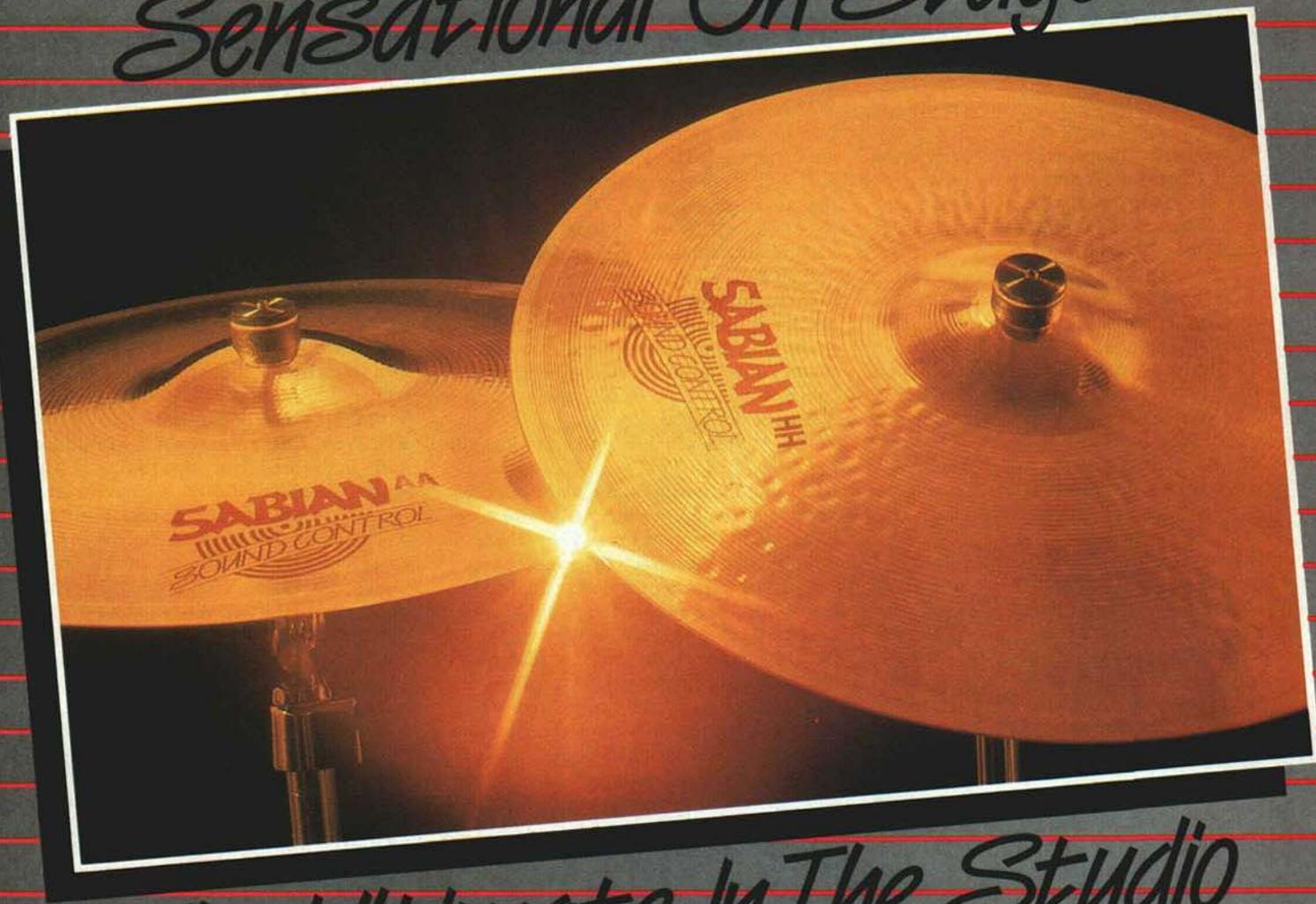
**RP:** It means that everything is more or less replaceable. Actually, the pads are so well made that I've never had any customer problems with things wearing out.

**WFM:** You have advertised in *Modern Drummer* for many years.

**RP:** Since issue one.

# SOUND CONTROL

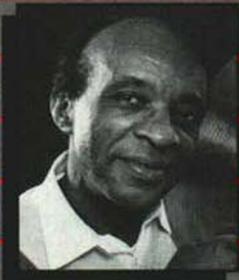
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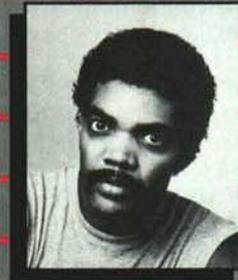
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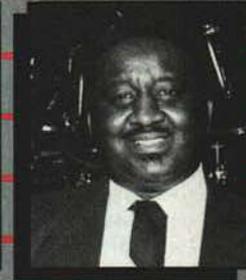
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**WFM:** I went back and looked at your different ads, and it seems that your whole idea is to show some player endorsing your kit.

**RP:** Honestly, the main reason for this type of ad was to give the consumer an idea of the size of the kit. Also, the endorsers give more credibility to the product.

**WFM:** How many players endorse your kit?

**RP:** About 25.

**WFM:** Do they give you suggestions on ways to improve the kit?

**RP:** Actually, they have been pretty satisfied with the kits. Years ago, however, Joe Morello made a few suggestions as to the thicknesses of the rubber on the pads. He suggested that the rubber on the snare drum pad be a bit thicker than on the tom pads because of the feel differences between actual snare drums and toms. I thought that made sense, so I do that now.

**WFM:** Since your kits are made of wood and involve a bit more handcraftsmanship than your competitors' kits, are your kits more expensive?

**RP:** Actually, mine are less expensive. If you compare one of my kits with someone else's with the same setup, you'll find mine to be less expensive.

**WFM:** The last time you and I spoke, I mentioned that I attended the University Of Miami and that we had a few of your kits down there to practice on. You mentioned that had something to do with Joe Morello. Tell me about that.

**RP:** Well years ago, Joe used to be the most popular clinician in the country. He was going down to Miami for a clinic, and he requested that I send 30 kits down there for it. He used the kits so that he could demonstrate something and still be able to talk while playing, and other people could play without disrupting the clinic. My pads are great for teachers.

**WFM:** I would like to talk about the different drum books you have written. Before you entered the practice-pad drumset business, you were a successful drum-book author. What made you decide to write your first book, *Variations Of Drumming*?

**RP:** Well, I was going through the Krupa book, and I noticed a certain page that was pretty tough for me to read. I wanted more of that same kind of reading. I sat down and started writing, and before I knew it, I had a complete book.

**WFM:** *Variations Of Drumming* is considered to be almost a classic drum book. What do you think makes the book so outstanding?

**RP:** Quantity, number one. There's so much on each page, and it has a basic theme that helps tie the whole concept together. There are a lot of different ways to work on the different exercises in the book, so that helps keep it challenging and interesting.

**WFM:** I noticed in a lot of your books that you just don't write out page after page of

exercises. You include a good deal of text to explain your concepts.

**RP:** That's right. I wanted to be sure that what I was trying to say was getting across to the student. I think it is much more motivating for a student to know why he or she is practicing something. The clearer the concept, the better.

**WFM:** How many books have you written in total?

**RP:** I have written 13.

**WFM:** With all of these different books, how do you come up with all of the different ideas needed to write so much?

**RP:** Well, I come up with ideas by noticing that some things haven't been covered. A lot of times, I'll see an idea that I think isn't really explained thoroughly enough, and so I develop it. I also modernize certain things. For example, I took the old *Three Camps* solo from basic rudimental drumming and modified it. I changed the theme. This would alter the variations that followed, and that would end up being another example to practice.

**WFM:** Which of your books are you the happiest with?

**RP:** I like *Variations* and *Cymbal Coordination* the best. In *Cymbal Coordination*, I have eight different brush beats that can be applied to the book's original concept.

*Cymbal Coordination* was supposed to be a book used before the Chapin book, because so many players were having trouble just jumping right into that material. I started with a simpler ride-cymbal pattern and incorporated the snare drum part more slowly than the Chapin book. I was happy with the way it came out.

**WFM:** Are you still writing?

**RP:** No. I'm busy enough with the practice-pad kits.

**WFM:** Tell me about your teaching career. When did you start teaching?

**RP:** I started when I got out of the service, which was when I was 21.

**WFM:** I assume you were playing and teaching about the same time.

**RP:** That's right. I was club dating. I've always been a club-date drummer, working with small bands.

**WFM:** What type of early training *did* you have?

**RP:** I was mostly self-taught. It took me a long time to learn how to read that way. I more or less learned on the job.

**WFM:** Getting back to your teaching career, do you prefer teaching younger or more experienced students?

**RP:** I think I enjoy teaching beginners more than professionals. It's more rewarding for me to see a beginner develop. Also, I would have problems with older players. They would tend to be unreliable about showing up, paying on time, and those types of things. I didn't have those types of difficulties with beginners.

With younger students, a teacher does have to be patient. I never found that to be much of a problem. Beginners tried to

learn and their questions were almost always sincere. Also, beginners were more reliable when it came to paying for lessons and showing up. Their parents would pay promptly, and they would drive their kids to the lessons. So teaching beginners does have its advantages.

**WFM:** What sorts of problems do you run into with beginners?

**RP:** When I say beginners, I mean students who are young and still in school. The problems arise when summer comes around and they get involved in other things. They have sports activities and part-time jobs, which get in the way of lessons. So that can be a problem.

**WFM:** Do you find that motivation can be a problem?

**RP:** Sometimes, but in general, beginners who are taking lessons have a real interest in the drums and want to be at lessons. There are always a few who need to be more motivated, but it's not a big problem.

**WFM:** Do you still play dates?

**RP:** Well, I'm semiretired. I still do club dates in the area from time to time. I work with some older fellows. We have a country-club/wedding-type band. The band works through an office that books the dates and pays us at the end of the month, taking out taxes. That's what I've been doing since I started. When I first went into the army, I was playing in club bands. All of the top professionals were playing all the military big-band gigs. I was very young and inexperienced at that point, and I wasn't good enough to get in the big bands. I do enjoy working with the small bands though.

Most of my time now is spent with the practice-pad sets. I enjoy the work, and I take a lot of pride in my invention. I am a slave to my invention, only because I take the time and effort to hand make each part.

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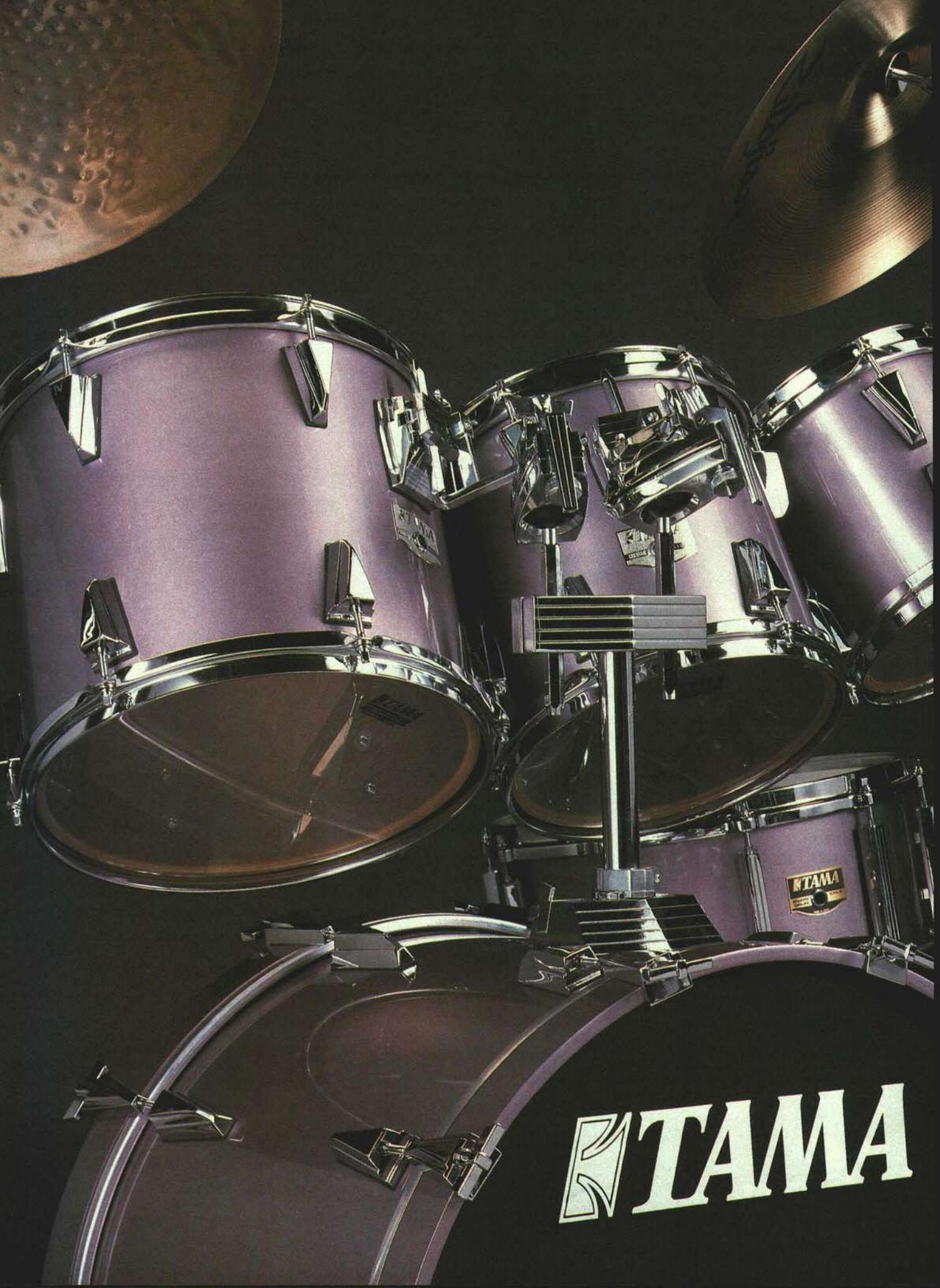
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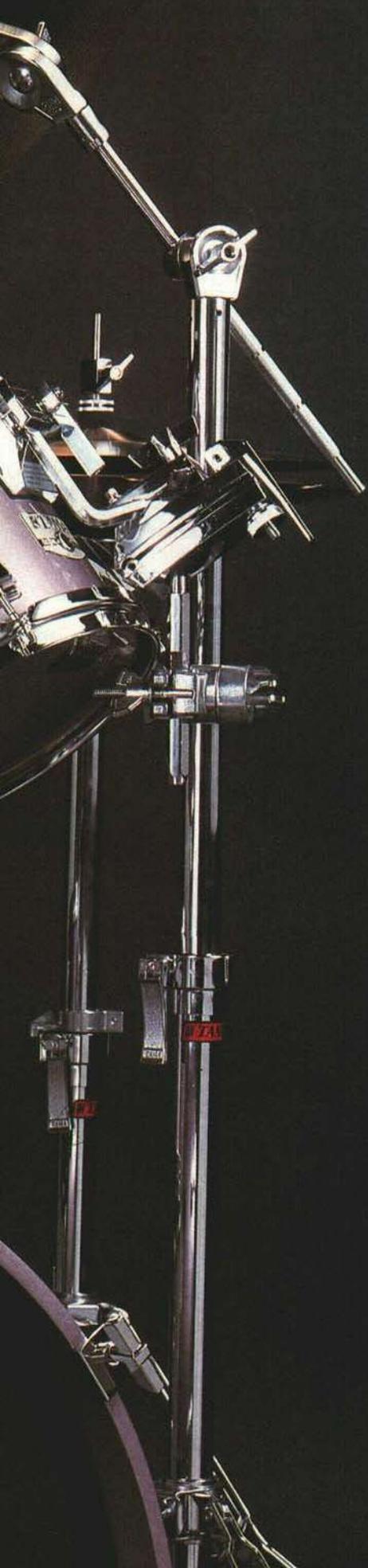


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# CRESTAR



Photo by Rick Gould

**Marotta** continued from page 21

pedal during one tune. It was the fastest I've ever set up in my life. She started counting off songs, and Ralph just said, "Play." Eric Gale and Ralph were standing around me, telling me what was happening next. It was not like Roberta's music wailed away; it was what we called "whisper jet," at the time, where it just moved. I had heard Roberta's albums before, so I played quietly. When we were in the hot seat, we used to call it "fearless feel." The whole band was black. We walked off stage, and Roberta called me into her dressing room. I never forget these things. She said to me, "I'm going to tell

you something. I want you to play in my band. I am hiring you, and by doing that, I'm putting a black man out of work." I felt terrible. She said, "But Eric Gale and Richard Tee said that they would pay your salary for me to hire you." At that time, they really controlled Roberta's band. The band was Richard Tee, Eric Gale, Ralph MacDonald, Jerry Jermott, and Cornell Dupree. They were the hottest studio guys around. For two and a half years, I played with that band, which changed only once when Chuck Rainey came in and Jerry Jermott left.

**RF:** What happened with the studio work?

**RM:** Sessions in New York were all done

with this band, so she worked around our schedule. It was pretty much out on weekends, and every once in a while, we'd do a couple of weeks at a time. That's why it lasted two and a half years. And we did lots of sessions.

**RF:** Where did you learn how to read?

**RM:** I learned how to read in recording studios. It was really being in the hot seat, and it caused a lot of anxiety and ulcers. I'll never forget being on this session with 60 pieces, and in two or three days, we had to do an entire Hugo Montenegro album [*Mammy Blue*]. Of course, David Spinozza got me on the sessions. Every single note was written, and this completely legitimate guy came in from Los Angeles to do this album with the hottest band in town. Everybody was playing at the same time, every note was written out, and I was fumbling like you wouldn't believe. I was so nervous that the first thing I looked at was this 8th note tied to a quarter kind of figure at the end of a bar. We were about to count off the tune, and I leaned over to Spinozza and said, "David, you've got to help me. How do you play this figure?" He looked at it and said, "Rick, that's my only hang-up; that's the one figure I don't know how to play."

They counted it off and there I was. Of course I played it real wrong. I knew how to play the figure, but I was just so nervous. The whole rhythm section was hysterical. They stopped the whole session—60 pieces—and Hugo Montenegro was incredibly sweet. I looked like I was about to break into tears, and he came over and said, "Look, don't worry about it. Just play what you feel. I know all about you, and I hired you because of your feel. Don't worry, we'll get through it." Then we just whizzed through the next three days, even though every once in a while it would take me an extra take.

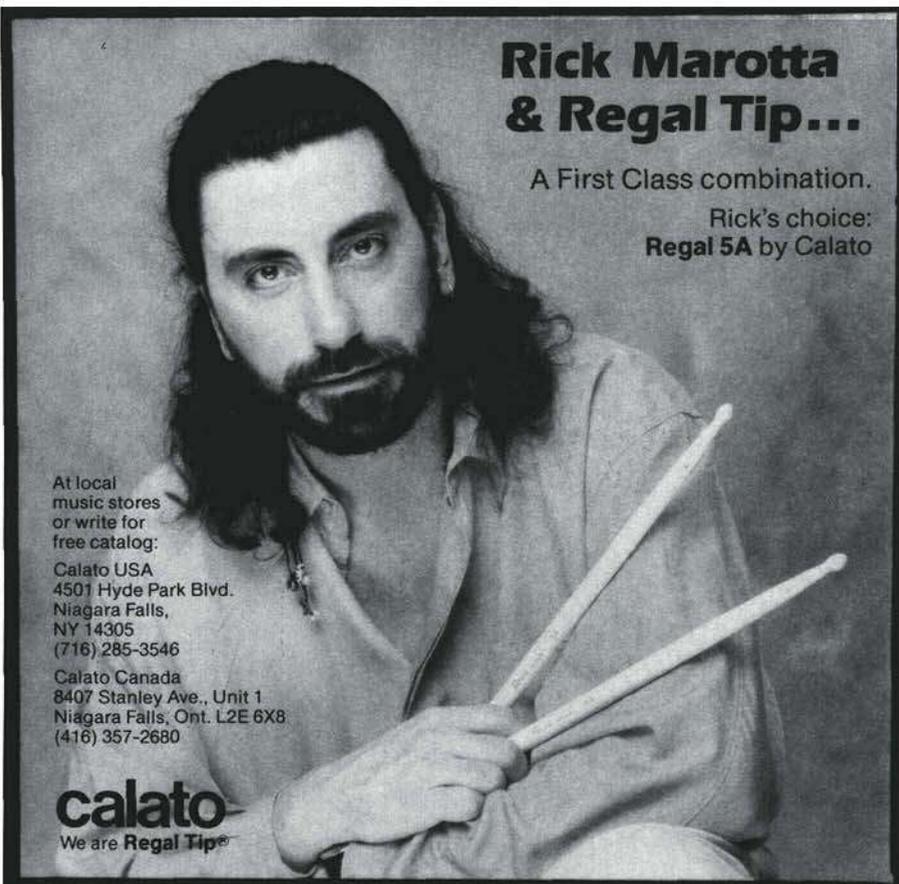
**RF:** Did you practice reading?

**RM:** I did, actually. I was doing sessions in New York, and obviously I wasn't a great reader. People liked playing with me, though, so they'd give me little hints. One bass player, Russell George, came in one day with a Bugs Bower bass book called *Rhythms*. He said, "Rick, take this book home, read it, and practice with it a little each day." I wasn't very disciplined. I practiced a lot at my parents' early on, but once I started working, there was no time to practice. I had to learn in the recording studio. That was my school. Russell said, "Don't worry about going up and down the staff; just worry about playing the rhythms." Sure enough, the more I progressed in the book, the better I became as a reader.

**RF:** What did you know about the studio?

**RM:** Nothing. I got forced into being a session guy. It was good money, and it was prestige. Everybody wanted to be a studio musician.

**RF:** Usually, musicians slug away in bands



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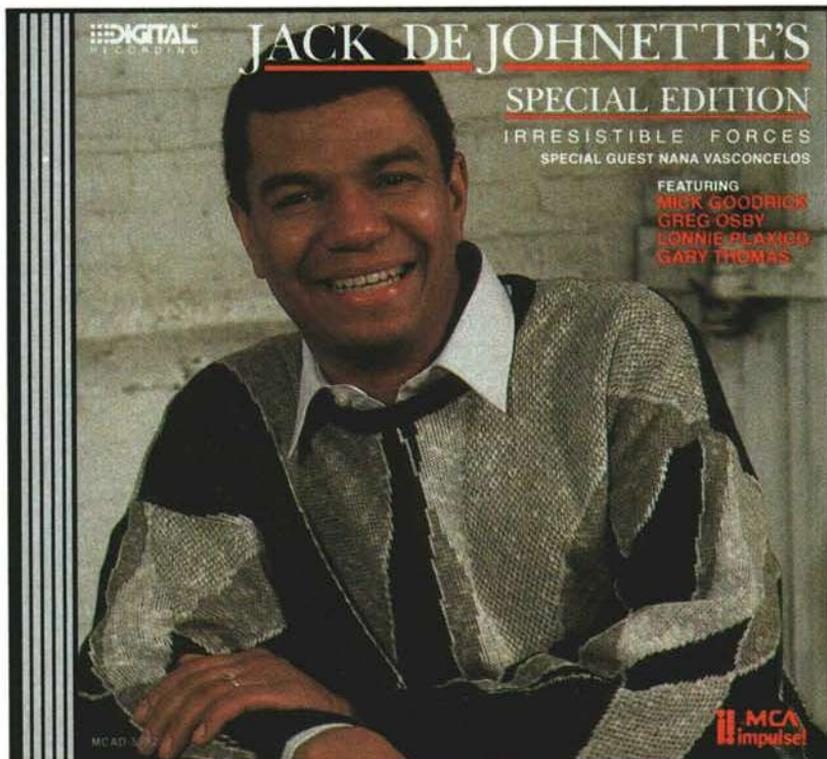
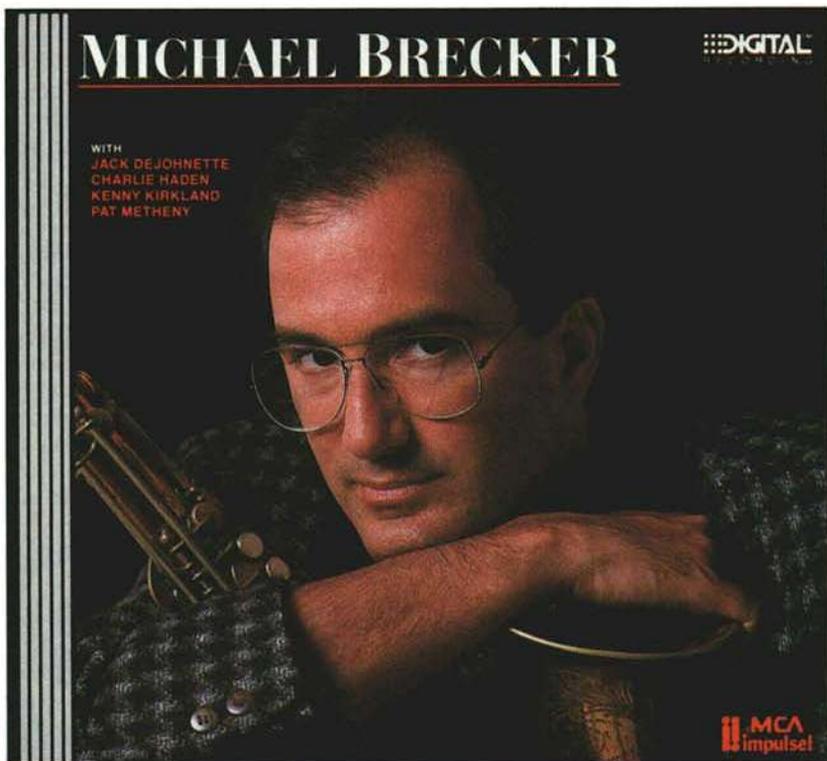
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before that can ever happen.

**RM:** I was slugging away, but I didn't pay the kind of dues other people paid.

**RF:** What did you learn about studio technique?

**RM:** It was a sound.

**RF:** That has always been your strong point. Tell me about your drum sound.

**RM:** I had a problem in the studios. During the early days, right when I started to get hot, people would sometimes say, "Rick Marotta is hard to work with; Rick Marotta is a pain in the ass." When I would work with producers and engineers who didn't know what they were doing, it drove me nuts. There's a combination of the way you play the drums and the way you tune the drums that makes the sound.

**RF:** Can you describe your tuning?

**RM:** Tuning the drums is a combination of the heads you use, the size of the drums, and how you tune them. The heads I use are all clear, except on the snare drum. They're all *Ambassadors*, except on the 8" and 10" drums, which I rarely use these days. I use them sometimes on sessions, but not live. On Stevie's tour last year, I used electronics instead. I tune the drums by putting the bottom heads on, making them not too tight and not too loose, and then I put the top heads on. I don't tighten all the screws with exactly the same tension. The lugs closer to me are tighter than the lugs further from me. I get a ring. The drumhead ripples out, and there's a lot of

tone. I also use Regal Tip wood-tipped sticks. I've used a lot of different sticks, and the drum sounds different with different sticks. With a softer wood, I don't get the same feel out of the stick, and the sound of the snare drum and cymbals is different. For years, I used the Regal Tip 5A, and then I tried some other sticks because Calato wasn't making the same stick anymore. Finally, they started sending me great sticks. That really does help.

I use Yamaha 9000 series drums, and I'm happy with them. Recently, I was in Japan checking out the new drum systems they have. They put me in a room with five drumsets—three Yamaha sets and two sets from other companies. One of the Yamaha sets was a *Recording Series*, and one was a power series. They also have another deeper drum that isn't coming out in the United States, and it shouldn't. My feeling is that too much depth on a drum loses a lot of tone. Although, on the Stevie Nicks tour, I used a deeper-shelled drum, and I have to say that these drums sounded unbelievable. Gary Grimm, my drum tech, and I worked on them a little, and they sounded amazing.

**RF:** We've been talking about your drum sound, but personality and style have to be pretty important, since in New York, you were playing rented drums.

**RM:** That was what would drive me crazy. I remember snare drum heads that were black from being played so much. I was

such a bad boy; I used to call Carroll Sound up and be completely irreverent. I would say, "Here's a record that is going to sell two million copies, and you have this piece of shit that you're charging people for." But do you know what was really weird in New York? They were so backwards there that, when I would say, "I could have my drums sent here," a lot of people would say, "We don't want to pay cartage." Yet, they would pay rental. They were spending \$100,000 on an album, and they'd have these shit rental drums. I ended up refusing to use them. I was very busy, so I got very cocky and just said no. Steve Gadd and I were very, very close friends, and we were in cahoots. We wouldn't do the dates. Then we got Mike Mainieri's son Freddy to do our cartage. I gave Freddy my van to use, and we set him up. It was great, except it just didn't work with him. But then Artie Smith started doing it.

**RF:** During the L.A. studio drummers roundtable a few years ago, you said that sometimes it wasn't even the drums that made you crazy, but all the different rooms.

**RM:** Sometimes you play in three rooms in a day.

**RF:** What's different, and how do you compensate for that?

**RM:** You tend to feel like you're constantly in the hot seat. You go from one room to the next, setting up the room, set-

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ting up the drums, and setting up the board.

**RF:** Re-tuning ....

**RM:** Not so much re-tuning as readjusting—sometimes slight re-tuning for different projects. Mostly you just tweak the snare drum and adjust the padding in the bass drum. When you have a 22" bass drum, there's only a little bit of room for pitch. The bigger the drum, the lower it gets. Then it starts getting papery high. You readjust to each of these rooms, and then you readjust behind the board. Then you're dealing with the producer and the engineer. That used to drive me crazy, because there are so many egos involved, including my own. I really know how drums are supposed to sound, and I'll do dates where they'll really sound bad.

**RF:** You were arguing with engineers and producers, yet they called you all the time. Wasn't that a contradiction?

**RM:** It was—to say the least—a contradiction. It made my life miserable, and because it made my life miserable, I made other people's lives miserable. But it worked. So many times people said, "That is the most amazing drum sound." It just worked; that's why they called. If it hadn't sounded great, they wouldn't have called. Producers and engineers loved to take credit for stuff like that, but I didn't care. There were a lot of people who wouldn't use me because it just got too crazy.

The musicians who were real demand-

ing, knew what they wanted, and always would experiment, even if they did it laughingly, were Donald Fagen and Walter Becker of Steely Dan. I would get my drum sound, and those guys would go crazy. They would say, "This is the worst sounding thing." We would go back and forth. I remember one time Donald, Walter, and Elliot Scheiner came up to me, laughing. They said, "Rick, when you hit your bass drum, the toms ring louder than the bass drum does."

**RF:** What was your response?

**RM:** "Trust me." So we would always compromise. Those guys were so good, and the records sounded so good. I would

add a little bit of padding to the snare drum or the toms only if there was so much ring that it bled into everything. I used to give engineers and producers nightmares. I would hit my bass drum, and the tom-toms would ring. My contention was that, when you got drum sounds like that, you did indeed hear the ring from the drums, but when you played the track, that tone would get lost in the tone of the other instruments. Not only that, but it would add body to it. Do you know how much flak I took because of that? I fought tooth and nail with engineers time after time after time. I still feel that that tone is part of the sound of the record. It becomes a

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**RF:** How do you make a snare drum trashy?

**RM:** I tune it loose, and the snares are loose. It just rings, rattles, and crashes. There was another thing I did a long, long time ago. Guitarists were dangling a Sony ECM-50 mic' inside their acoustic guitars, and they were combining that mic' with the external microphone. I glued a small piece of foam and an ECM-50 to the inside of the drum. All of a sudden, people were saying, "Can you bring that trashy snare drum?" It was just the combination of the inside mic' and the external mic'. It's still

in there; I used it on Stevie's tour. A lot of times, we use it as a trigger. I've always been into the sound of the drums. I didn't care what it was; if it sounded great, I would use it, whether it was electronic or acoustic.

**RF:** You must have made Fagen and Becker crazy with their thing of everything being perfect.

**RM:** Everybody made everybody else crazy.

**RF:** That's what people say about working with Steely Dan anyway.

**RM:** Not anymore. I love working with them, especially now. Last year, I worked on Fagen's solo album, which didn't come out because Steely Dan is thinking about

getting back together. I worked on four tracks at Jeff Porcaro's house, and Donald has a new way of recording, which is great.

**RF:** Do you remember how you did "Time Out Of Mind" and "Hey Nineteen"?

**RM:** When we did those tunes from the *Gaucho* album, we went in—just Donald and I and a click track—and it worked. The first thing I ever did for them was a long time ago, and the whole band was in the room. They would cut six different bands for one song.

**RF:** That's lunacy.

**RM:** It sure worked for them because they made the best records I ever heard at that time. They were great guys to work with, but they would make the band crazy. And they'd make themselves crazy, too. Donald Fagen is one of the funniest guys in the world to work with. He'll concentrate for six or seven hours, and then he's gone. There are so many funny stories, but you probably had to be there.

**RF:** Tell me about "Peg."

**RM:** "Peg" was one of the great tracks of all time. They had cut that track with a bunch of people. I walked in, and it was just Chuck Rainey and I. We had done stuff with them before and we knew what to expect, so we just started playing. Chuck and I had played together so much that we got into a groove. I don't remember everything about it exactly, but I remember I was very sick, and Don Grolnick had to take me to the hospital in the middle of the night during a rainstorm to get a shot. Anyway, once Chuck and I started playing, you could have hung your coat up on the groove.

**RF:** Was there another drummer on the track when you came in?

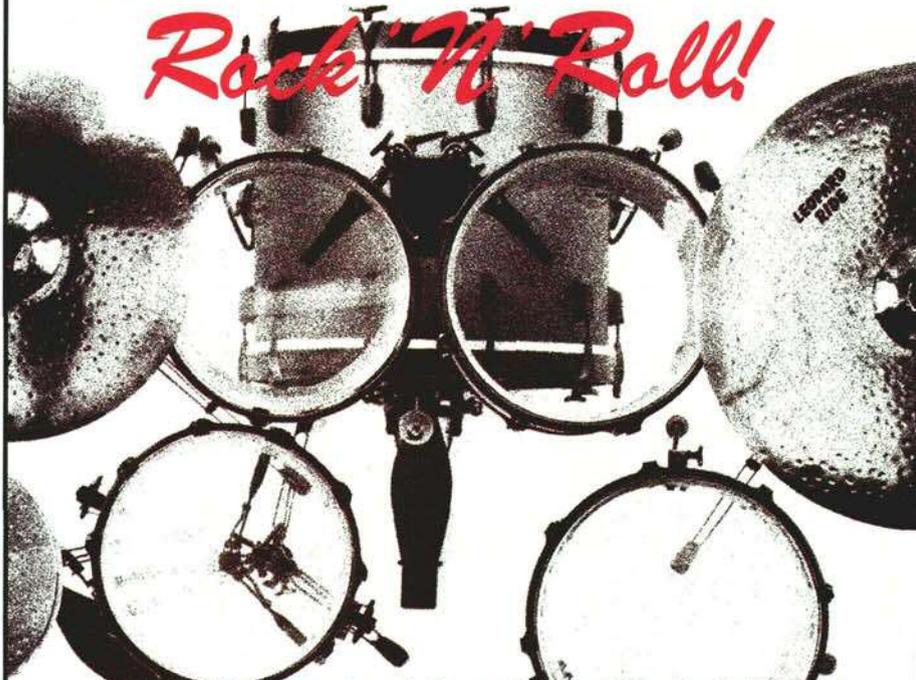
**RM:** They never played us the tracks. Donald would sit down at the piano, and sing and play. When that guy plays and sings, it dictates what's going to happen. They don't walk around saying, "Play this note, that note, and this feel, and play this with the snare drum." Walter is always hovering around somewhere saying, "That's great! Do that. Yes." If you do something they like, they'll say, "Do that." Chuck and I just happened to fall into this amazing groove, and we started doing takes.

**RF:** You said it was easier working with Fagen recently.

**RM:** When I work with Donald, he just plays and sings, and I play with him—no bass, nothing. He puts the bass on afterwards. He'll either show it to me on paper, or he'll play it, or sometimes he'll play just the left hand and Greg Phillinganes will play the right-hand part. I have to say a lot of people don't like to do these things the way I do them. My taste is different from other people's tastes. I know where my groove is going to be. If you want the time and the feel to happen, I can do it alone. If I play and then the bass player puts himself on top, it works. It will never not work.

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**RF:** But it doesn't matter one way or the other to you?

**RM:** Don't get me wrong: I like it a lot of times when the bass is there, but if it's just a straight-ahead groove thing where there's not a lot of interaction, I don't mind doing it alone. On "Peg," that thing was so much Chuck and I that you couldn't take one away without losing the other. That was the basis for the whole tune. He and I did little nuance things on there. What kills me is that Walter called me up and said, "Man, the difference between the verse and chorus is that you opened your hi-hat about a billionth of an inch every couple of beats." He called to ask me if I did it on purpose. It was just for a little lift. I really am proud of that record. A lot of times when people see me, they'll say, "Rick Marotta: 'Peg.'" Porcaro gave me the best compliment I ever got. He told me that he made a loop of "Peg" and rode around in his car listening to the groove for hours. Then Larry Carlton wrote "Room 335," a track on his solo album that was an exact ripoff of it—

every note and every instrument. I didn't play on it; Jeff did, and he copped the part perfectly. When we do it live, Larry will say, "This is a tune I stole from Steely Dan." He didn't actually steal it; he called Donald and asked if they'd mind if he used the changes. It's a real compliment to them, and it's a compliment to me, too.

**RF:** When did you move to L.A.?

**RM:** About four years ago, although I'd been coming out here for years. I was doing albums with Linda Ronstadt, Jackson Browne, and Warren Zevon while I stayed at the Chateau Marmont.

**RF:** How did you get into the L.A. contingency—the "California sound"—when you were back east?

**RM:** I played with James Taylor starting in 1974, and a couple of years later, they were looking to put a band together for Linda Ronstadt. James was managed by Peter Asher and so was Linda. I had met Linda because she opened for James, and we were friends. Linda came to town with a bass player, Kenny Edwards, and they came in to play with me and Don Grolnick. It was just instant. It was happening.

**RF:** What was happening about it?

**RM:** Everything. We all got along real well, and so we did the *Simple Dreams* album and tour. While I was in California doing that album, every day somebody else would come in. J.D. Souther would come in, so we'd do J.D. Souther. Jackson Browne would come in, so I'd be doing Jackson's album. Warren Zevon was com-

ing around, too, and that was instant chemistry. I ended up coproducing one of Warren's albums, *Bad Luck Streak In Dancing School*, and I did several albums with him. He's one of the major talents, I think, and I get so distressed when guys like him aren't mega-stars.

**RF:** So what provoked the move?

**RM:** I was doing a lot of work in New York, and I had gotten very stale. I was unhappy in my personal life, and I was unhappy with my existence in New York.

**RF:** What do you mean by stale? Does that happen when you take everything that comes along and you burn out?

**RM:** I was never like that, but I was getting a lot of jingles, which I love doing now, but at that time, I was too crazy. I didn't know what I wanted to do, musically. I wanted to go out and do concerts, I wanted to do major stuff, and I wanted chicks all over the place. Everything was so strict in the jingle and record stuff in New York that I decided to try something else. I love going back to New York, and I miss my friends and the players, but I came out here to suss out what I wanted to do.

During the first or second week out here, Larry Carlton tracked me down to ask me if I wanted to do some gigs. I started playing with Larry at the Baked Potato, which got me playing in town. I was as happy as I could be. I was stretching out and really doing stuff I wasn't doing a lot of in New York. The great thing about working with Larry is that—whether it's the Baked Potato or the Forum, a jazz festival or a little dumpy club—every gig is the same to him. You play to get off, and if you take chances and mess up, he never minds. If there is an amazing mistake, he'll laugh it off. He'll turn around and say, "Geez, that was amazingly terrible." You can try anything. I remember one night. I hadn't played bebop in a long time, and I'm not a bebop drummer. He turned around and said, "Fours." Before I could say, "Larry, I don't think I ..." he started counting off as fast as my hands would go. We made so many mistakes, but he surprised everybody, and it was great. So that's what was happening with Larry, and that started to make me feel good.

**RF:** I was surprised when I realized you were with Carlton. For some reason, it didn't seem to be a natural combination.

**RM:** I wonder why.

**RF:** I guess your whole groove thing ...

**RM:** Larry has an amazing sense of groove on stage—his time! Here are the guys I've got to name: David Spinozza, Hugh McCracken, Richard Tee, Eric Gale, Ralph MacDonald. Those guys wrote the book on time. I'm very, very jaded. I've always said that I've played with the best guitar players on the planet earth. Larry is unbelievable, and when he plays, his sense of time, tone, and pitch is ridiculous. He really likes the stuff to groove. That's very important to him. Soloing and being real



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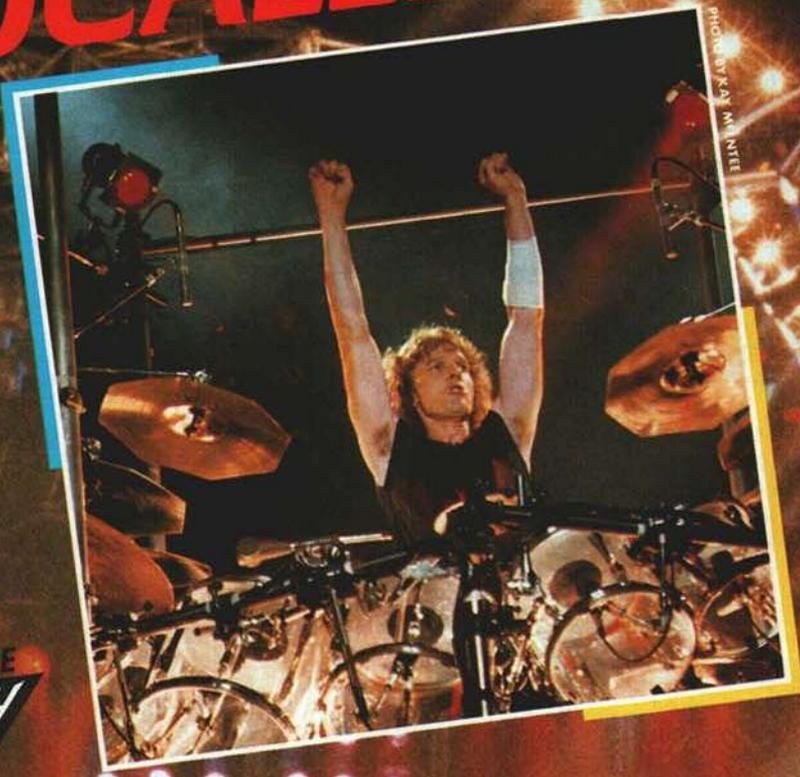
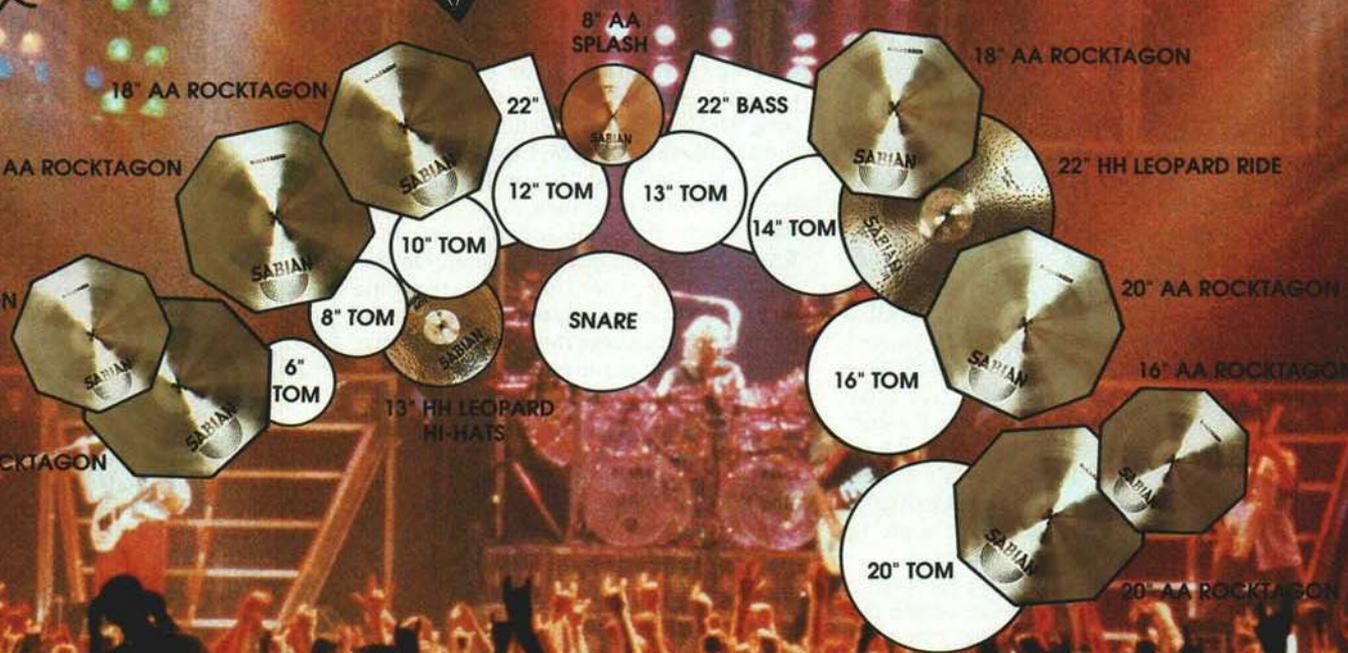


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busy is not important to Larry at all. Groove is the most important thing, which is what Mike Fischer and I are back there for.

**RF:** Speaking of players you've worked with, you did an album where you did double drums with Gadd.

**RM:** We've done it a lot. It was always really great. He and I did a couple of Carly Simon records and a couple John Tropea albums together. We did some live gigs, too, with double drums. We did a tour with Yoko Ono, which was where a sense of humor was really important. That was '71 or '72, and it was one of the worst musical experiences of my life. I remember Mike and Randy Brecker not being able to play because they were laughing so hard. Literally, parts would go by. The only guy who really tried to stay serious was Don Grolnick, because Don never fools around on stage. Dave Spinozza put the band together, and then decided not to go.

**RF:** When you and Gadd worked together, what roles did you assume with one another?

**RM:** Immediately we fell into the perfect thing. One of us would always be looking at the other one, and very rarely did egos get involved. Once in a while we would yell at each other, but very rarely. When you have two drummers like that, one plays something and the other will find something to play around it. Once in a while, we both tried to play backbeats at the same time, and other times, we each just tried to play around what the other guy was playing. Whatever it was, it would smoke.

He used to come around to my first sessions in New York. There's a lick he's gotten credit for developing because he played it on so many records, and we laugh about it all the time. I was playing this hi-hat/snare drum/bass drum thing where I'd be playing just a simple figure, and then all of a sudden, it would become very complicated. It was kind of a paradiddle with accents. Chuck Rainey said, "There's that Steve Gadd thing you're copping." I said, "Steve got that from me. I did it on a Jerry LaCroix album." Rainey didn't believe me, and I went crazy. It had been written in all these magazines that Steve came up with it, so I told Rainey to ask Steve. I saw Chuck a week later, and he said, "I really didn't believe what you were telling me, but I asked Steve and he said, 'Oh yeah, that's true.'" Steve doesn't need to take credit for everything! He's so great.

**RF:** People have mentioned that Jerry LaCroix album [*Second Coming*] to me as being astounding.

**RM:** It was amazing. I have to admit that I felt possessed on that record. Jerry LaCroix was the original singer in Edgar Winter's White Trash Band, and I was the original drummer. White Trash was in Chicago, and Jerry and his drummer, Bobby Ramirez, were in a bar. There was a fight, and Bobby got killed. When Jerry

decided to do his solo album, he dedicated it to Bobby and put his picture on the front with a lion. When I was doing the album, I felt like Bobby was there. It was a very strange thing, but it became a very creative thing.

**RF:** On Carlton's current album, he thanks you on the back for keeping it an acoustic album.

**RM:** When we went in to do that album, Larry was a bit insecure about doing an all-acoustic album. On the first tune, Larry said, "Let me try my electric on this." I ran over and said, "Larry, listen, let's just cut these things acoustically." He looked up and said, "Really? Okay." And he did it. It was really different for Larry, and he felt a little insecure about it. We've just completed the second acoustic album. It sounds amazing. Now he's hooked up electronics in his acoustic and electric guitars, so he can trigger either a sampler or some other synths.

**RF:** We talked about how your drum sound is so much a part of your sound, so the next logical question is how does electronics mess with that?

**RM:** It doesn't. I have never felt intimidated by the electronics at all. A lot of people complain about it, but I feel real comfortable combining all of those things and almost always have. When electronic drums first came out, it was the Syndrums, and Jeff Porcaro and I had the first two prototypes. They were short-lived, but they opened the door for everything. I remember Jeff used them on Carly Simon's song "Nobody Does It Better," and I used them at the same time on Linda Ronstadt's "Blue Bayou" and "Poor Pitiful Me." It's gone so far since then.

**RF:** Does it affect your sound?

**RM:** I think it enhances the sound. On Stevie Nicks' last tour, I used the electronic drums. I had a special stand built with the electronic pads above my head. I've always had a problem getting my regular kit and the electronic drums set up, so with Stevie, I cut down to just two rack toms, a floor tom, a snare drum, a bass drum, and over my head, I had these electronic pads. On Larry's tour, right at the very beginning, I put these earthquake sensors on all my drums and had those trigger my electronic drums.

The guy who does the best acoustic/electronic drum stuff and who actually invented a whole new approach to it is my brother Jerry. He did this on the Peter Gabriel albums and the stuff he did in England. People had no idea what was going on in those records. I didn't know what was going on. I went to the Gabriel concert and watched Jerry. He had set up all the electronic patterns himself, and then he set up his drum pattern, which he developed around the electronic patterns. You couldn't tell what was electronic or acoustic. You couldn't tell anything.

**RF:** What do you think about the fact that

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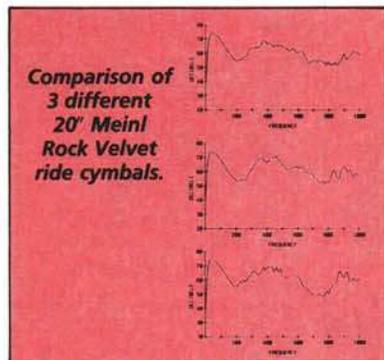


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your brother feels you play rings around him?

**RM:** I think that he just says that—really. I don't know why he would say anything like that, to really be honest with you.

**RF:** He thinks that you're the most incredible drummer to walk the earth, and much better than he is.

**RM:** Well, a lot of other people *don't* think that, so it's just Jerry's opinion. I'm flattered by that, but I don't really take it seriously. I feel the same way about Jerry's playing. He's a real inventive player. To me, flash and all that stuff don't mean anything. I admire it for five minutes, but I can listen to an inventive player over and over again, like Jim Keltner, Steve Gadd, Jeff Porcaro, and Jerry. There are others, too, but the ones who really, really impress me the most on any instrument are players who are inventive, like Michael Brecker or David Sanborn on saxophone. Sanborn completely set a whole different standard on playing the alto. I can say that because I know Sanborn from when I played on his first album many years ago, when nobody could figure out what instrument he was playing. Inventive players impress me, and Jerry's right at the top of that list. When people were throwing drum machines out of the window, Jerry would take his drum machine completely apart, pull the chips out, stick his glasses on, and crawl into the thing to try to screw with the sounds. We've all got our fortes.

**RF:** Can you recall other particular sessions that were either difficult, challenging, or fun?

**RM:** There were a lot. A lot of times, Jackson Browne sessions would make me crazy. They were hard.

**RF:** Why?

**RM:** Because they were easy, but everybody records differently. Every musician who has worked with Steely Dan has commented on how it takes forever. I'm the biggest complainer about sessions taking forever, but with Steely Dan, I never felt that. Maybe it was the music, or maybe it was Donald singing every time we did a take. When Fagen is singing and you're playing, it's not like work. I used to love working with Jackson, because I loved his music. The hardest thing about Jackson was the fact that he would go into a studio and say to himself, "It's going to take a week to get this one song." There was one track he did on one of his albums that was 130-some-odd takes.

**RF:** Were you doing that?

**RM:** No, thank God. I wouldn't have lasted the first 37. Now it's gotten to where Jackson and I can be friends, but we can't work together. We scream at each other. One time on one of his albums, I had been up for a couple of days, and I was a lunatic at that time. I walked in and said to Jackson, "I'm really tired. I'm going in the back, and I'm going to go to sleep. Wake me when you guys learn the song." He

taught the rest of the band this song, and then I came out and we played it twice. I stood up and said, "That's as good as it's going to get. I'm going back to sleep." We were such good friends that Jackson just looked at me in total disbelief and said, "Okay." He tried to re-cut that song I don't know how many times. He just couldn't believe that a second take was that good. He left that one on the album, and it was a single called "Boulevard." Instead of all the energy being drained from it, it's just a straight-ahead, plowing rock 'n' roll killer. I thought it was great. He re-cut a lot of the others with Russell [Kunkel], who was going to go on the road with him and rightly so. There was about a minute and a half where I was going to tour with Jackson, but I wasn't able to. I wish I had, in retrospect, because playing live with Jackson is a different experience. That's when Jackson really shines.

Another of the hard ones was Paul Simon at times. He could be very difficult. He's changed a lot. I've seen him a couple of times in the last year, and his latest album is unbelievably great. But when we would work together in the old days, right after Artie and he split, he was so serious. He never cracked a smile. It was a life-and-death situation. I thought he was insensitive. It was like a music factory, and that really intimidated me. It ended up that he kept a lot of the things I did with him.

I remember that I did an entire Roxy Music album in one day. Then I barely got credit on it because of all the weirdness that went down. I think it was *Manifesto*, where they did all the tracks and then hired me for one day to come in. This was after I produced this Brian Ferry album, which I lost control of three-quarters of the way through.

**RF:** What happened?

**RM:** It just got completely out of hand. Now we're friends and we can look back and laugh, but it made me really crawl into a shell production-wise after that, because it was so hard dealing with all of the personalities involved. I wasn't good at it. It really was something I've had to develop with a lot of therapy and by working on it.

**RF:** Half of producing is dealing with personalities.

**RM:** It really is. It's something I didn't accept. To me, if we were in there to do a record, personalities didn't enter into it. We did the record. I didn't want to babysit. Well, you babysit every artist you work with. I had to be babysat. Hopefully, I've learned that. At that time, there was a lot of over-imbibing as well, and it was really tough on us. In the end, it was a total fiasco. There are five producer's names on that record.

**RF:** In the roundtable, you said that most of the magic moments you could think of involved other players, like the first time you heard "Rosanna" with Jeff Porcaro.

**RM:** The first time I heard Peter Gabriel's

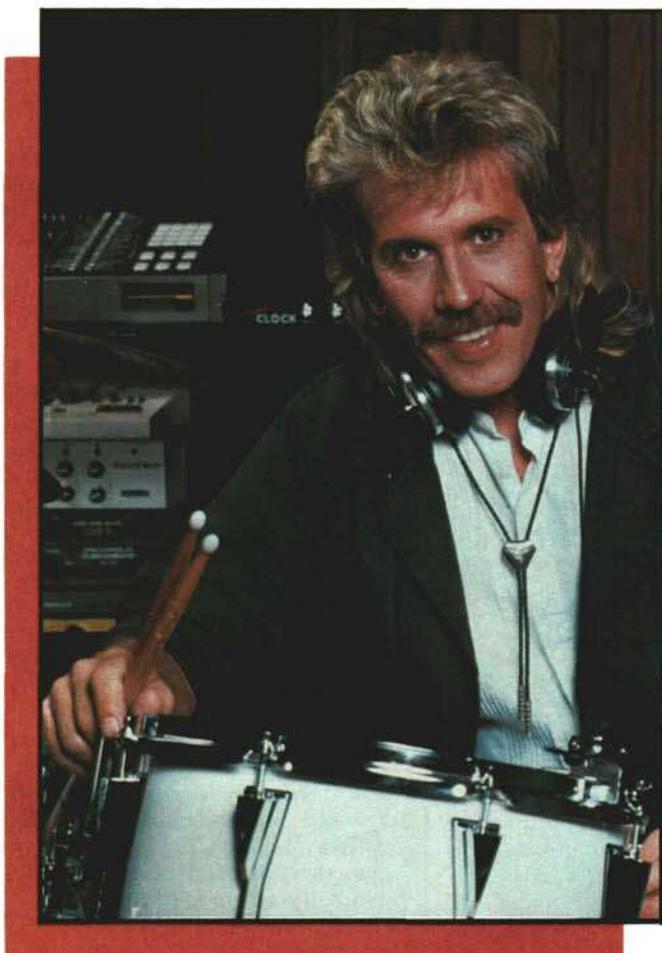
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album, I was speechless, as I was the first time I saw the Peter Gabriel show at the Greek Theatre. It was the most amazing show I've ever seen. After the first drum fill that Jerry played, the entire audience stood up, except for me. I couldn't even get up. At that time, everything was new to me. Other moments like that include listening to Ry Cooder records with Keltner on them.

**RF:** What about magic moments for you recording, where something might have come together magically?

**RM:** Oddly enough, those are very hard for me to remember. Warren Zevon records—we would do tracks that were

magic. Outtakes of Steely Dan tracks are amazing. J.D. Souther's record *You're Only Lonely* with Sanborn, Waddy Wachtel, Kenny Edwards, and, I think, Don Grolnick when we were doing Ronstadt's tour—I can't believe some of the magic that never got onto that record. J.D. is another one like Jackson who loses the reality of the record from overdoing it. I'm not being critical; I'm just stating a fact of what they do. I still have cassettes of some of the stuff that didn't make J.D.'s record. When we were in L.A., we were doing Linda's concerts at the Universal Amphitheatre, and we'd go from there to the studio with Jackson or J.D. I can remember being

in there all night long into the next afternoon, and then going back on stage at the Amphitheatre. Then when we would go to New York to do concerts at Radio City Music Hall, J.D. would fly to New York, and we'd go into the studio after the show. There was a lot of that kind of thing. We flew back to do J.D.'s album in the middle of producing another album. Stupid stuff—that's the kind of thing I want to avoid.

**RF:** I was going to ask you about pitfalls.

**RM:** You get hung up wanting to do everybody's record, wanting to do every tune that's on the radio, and wanting to make all the money there is. And it's guaranteed that you'll get screwed. You don't make the money, because doing people's records is not going to make you rich. You're going to spend all that money or lose all that money on wine, women, or drugs. After you stop all those things, you start therapy. Now I'm really content. I don't worry about not doing people's records for the most part. I'd rather concentrate now on producing and writing, and I would like to compose film scores. But I have to play, which is why I do Larry's gig. I lose money every time I go out with Larry, but the music is really good, and it's a very creative situation. He really takes concerts the way I think people should take concerts. There are never any rules.

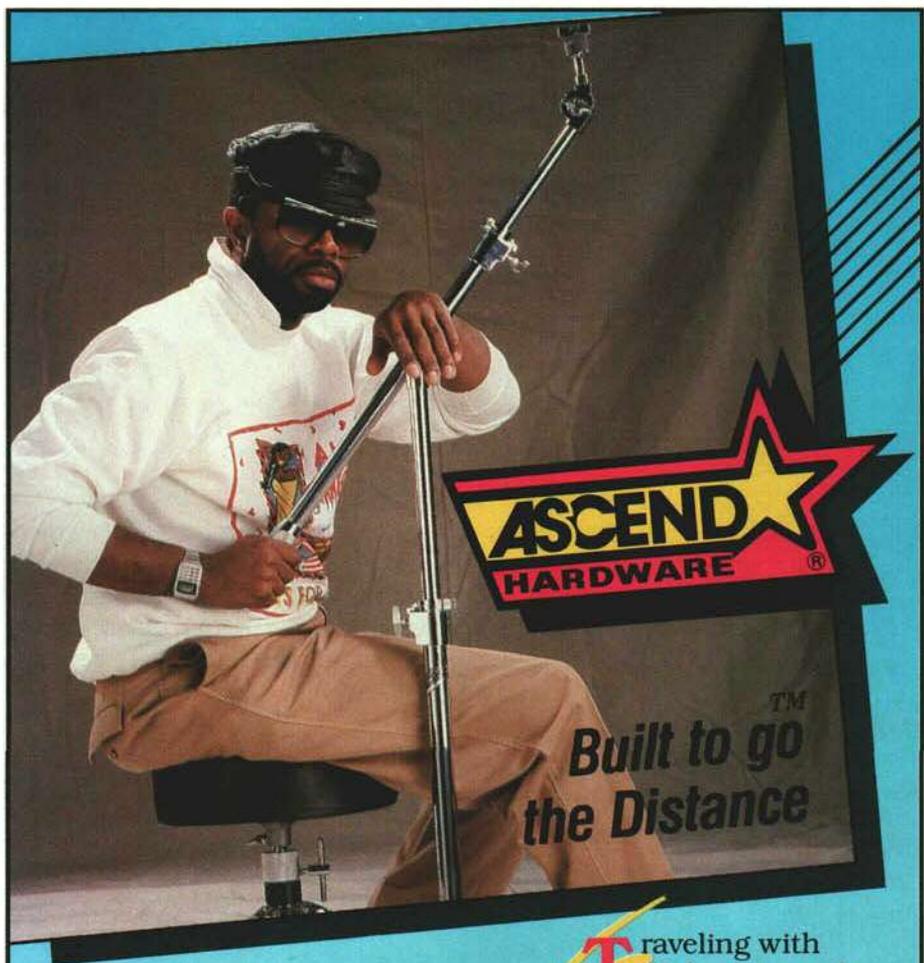
A lot of drummers will say I'm jaded and crazy, but going on the road and doing albums in a recording studio from morning to night is just not a fulfilling existence musically or socially. Right now, I feel good. I'm doing four albums within this three-month period plus Larry's gigs, and I have a lot of time to myself. Last year, I spent three-quarters of the year on the road. I don't want to do that either.

**RF:** How was it playing with Stevie Nicks?

**RM:** It was fun. It was rock 'n' roll—a lot of 8th notes—but it was fun. Waddy Wachtel was the bandleader, and the band was real good. Stevie put herself into the Betty Ford clinic right at the end of the tour, and I'm anxious to go on stage with her again, because when she's feeling really good, she's a dynamo. She was inspiring. Sometimes I'd get a little bored just playing those 8th notes, but when she was on, she was on. We'd do 14-minute "White Wing Dove" things.

**RF:** Do you feel good having been through it and that it's over?

**RM:** I love that it's over. Sometimes I miss some of the fun times, but it's unbelievably painful—physically, mentally, and emotionally. I'm so glad it's over. I'm real healthy these days, and I'm very content. A lot of people are a lot straighter these days, if not totally straight, and it's not boring. There's a lot more joking going on. We used to call cocaine "no laughing matter" because of the way people would get real serious when they would do it. I bought myself a juicer, joined a gym, and I'm living happily ever after.



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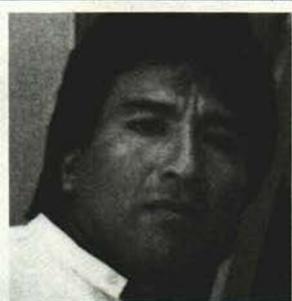
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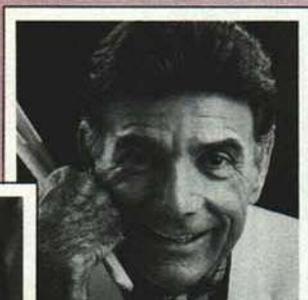


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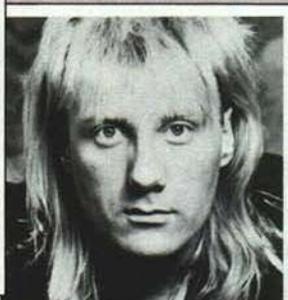
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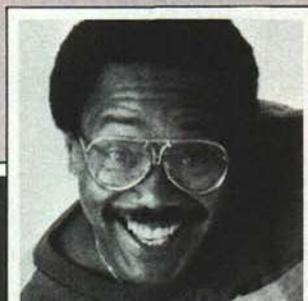
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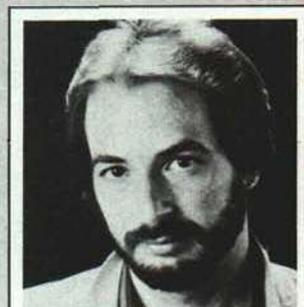
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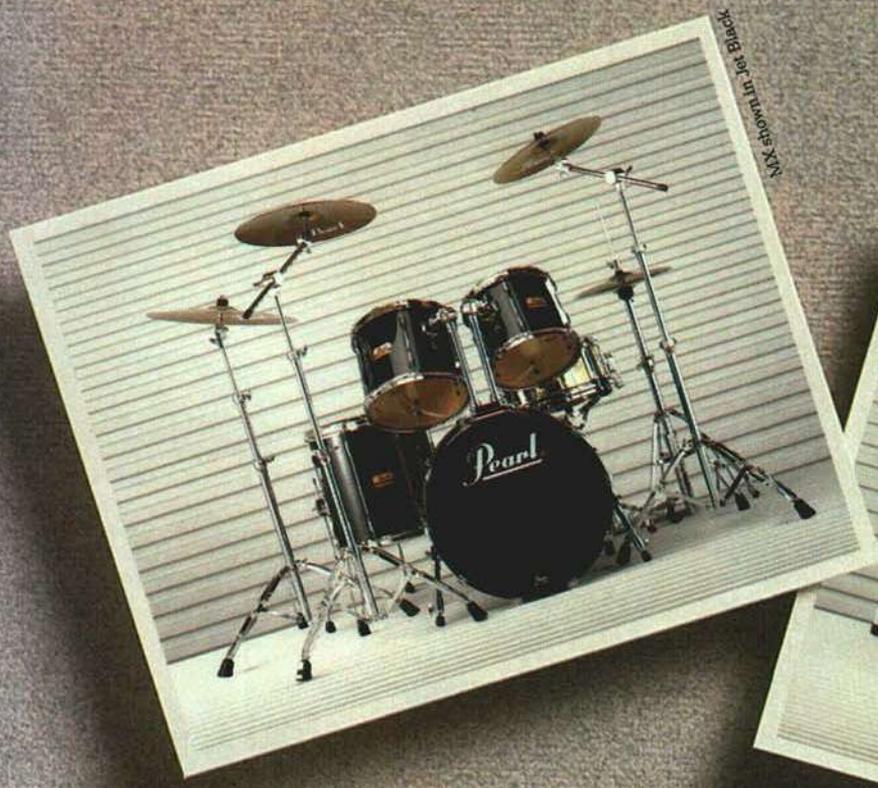


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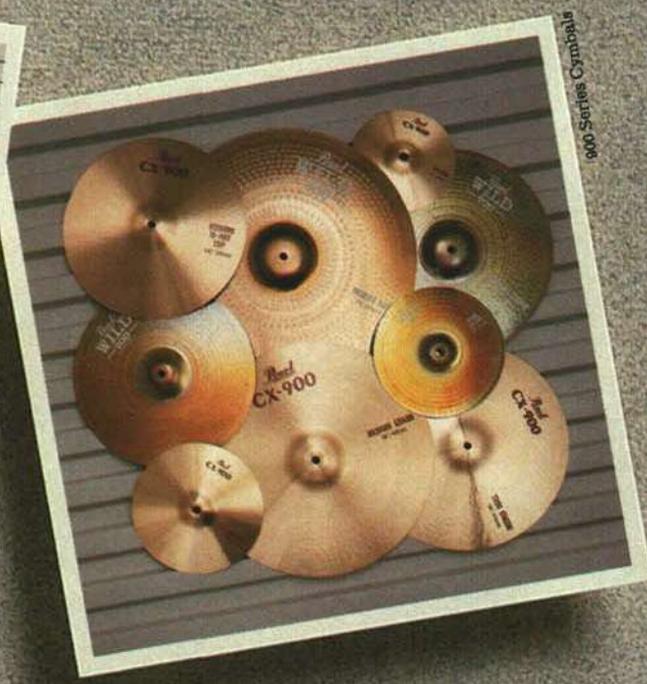
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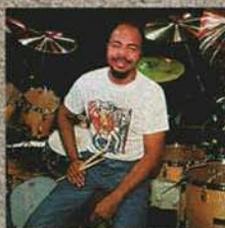
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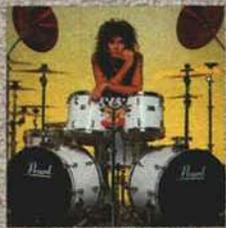
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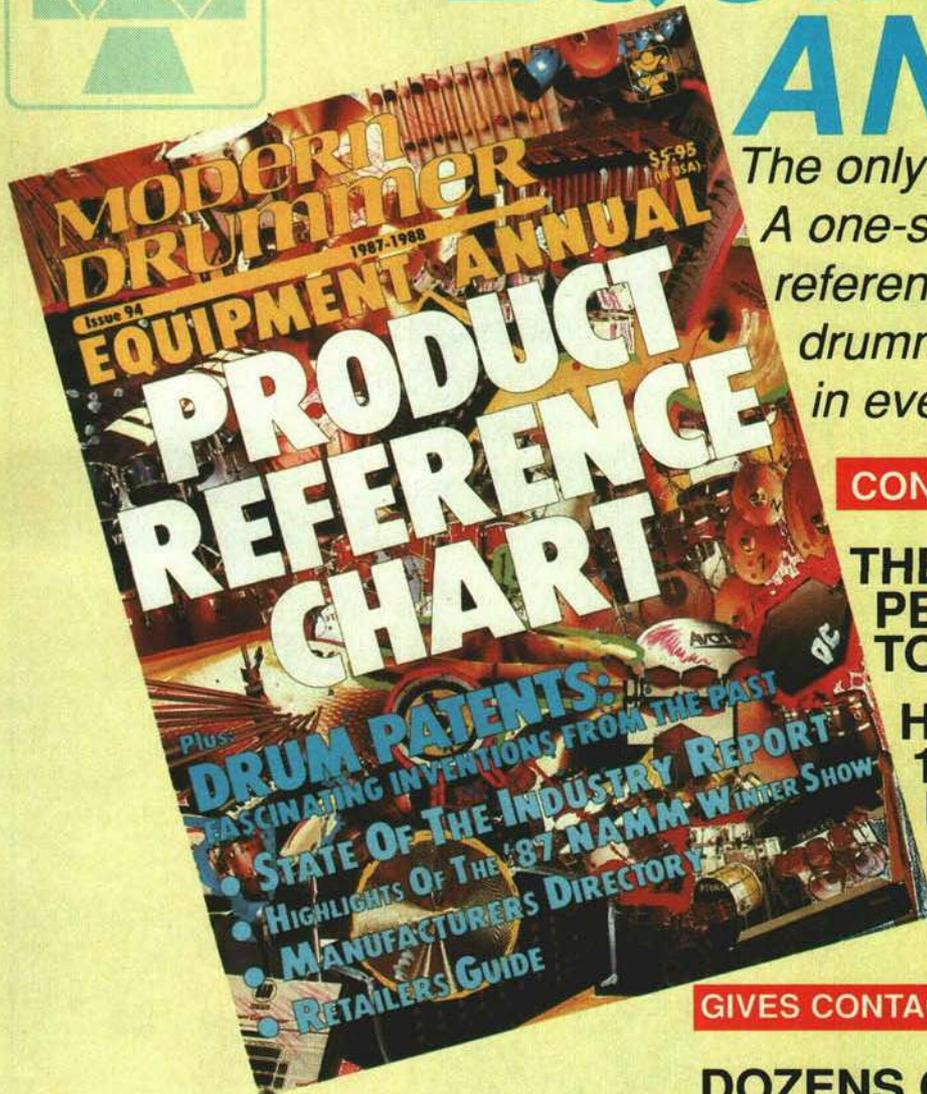
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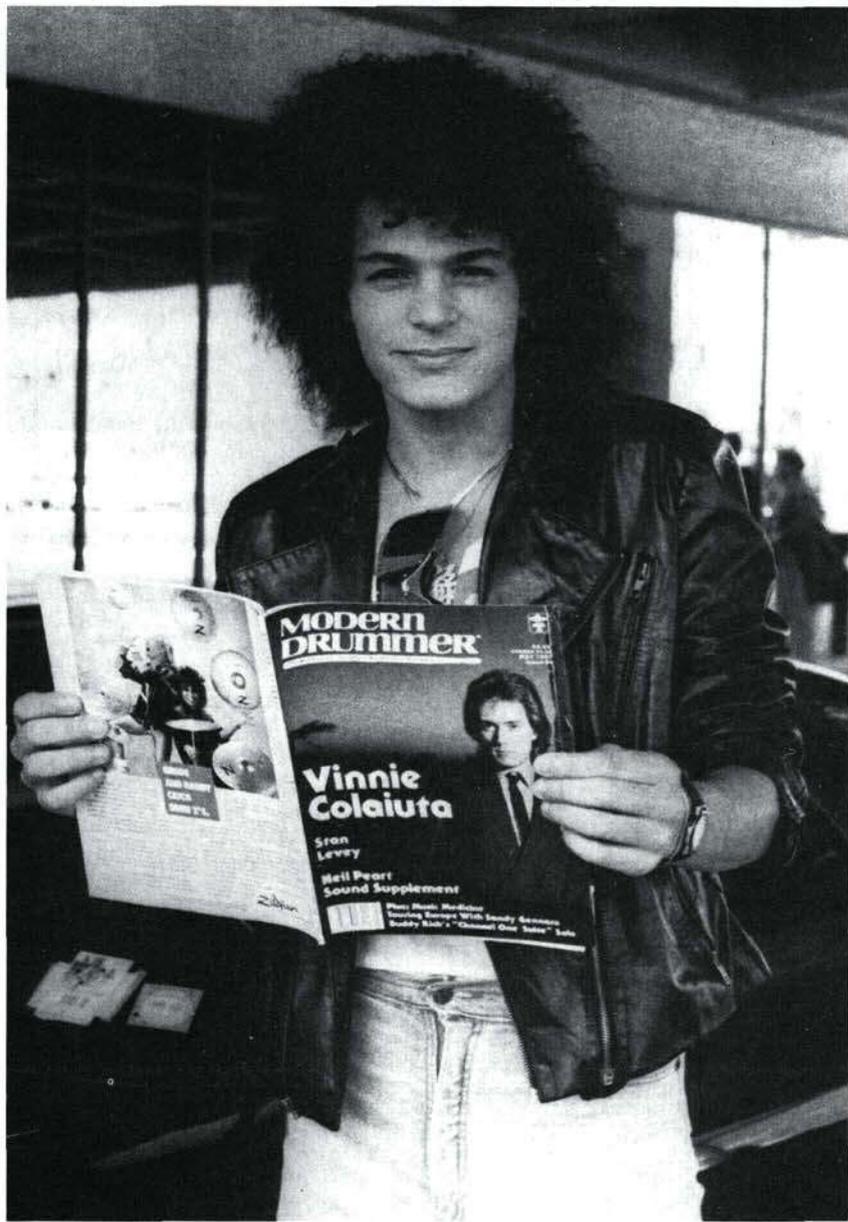


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# The Ride

Recently, I was listening to music in a crowded Manhattan jazz club, and I found myself watching the audience a good portion of that time. What I saw in each and every face of the crowd was enlightening and reaffirming. I sensed that, to each listener, the performance brought great pleasure, a sense of adventure, and in addition to stimulating each person's own wealth of memories and emotions, the musical performance brought everyone in the room *together* for that moment. Such is the power and magic of art.

For me, as well as many thousands of others, jazz is the most generous of musics. First of all, good jazz *feels* good. Second, the music invites—indeed, demands—improvisation, and so brings out the individuality of the musician. There is exhilaration in hearing and watching a jazz musician successfully explore the outer bounds of the envelope (to borrow the expression from *The Right Stuff*). *Jazz's form*, as well as *its forum*, has always been of a more open nature than that of other musics. The musician *and* the listener can join in on the fun.

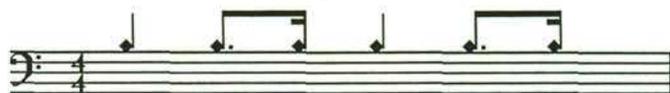
The interplay, teamwork, and individualism on the bandstand that were responsible for so many happy faces and tapping toes that evening got me to thinking, like I usually do, about what it is that makes this music so special and what part the drummer has in it. The answer is, in one word: plenty! Thus, I continue an odyssey, and explore and share on these pages of *Modern Drummer* some how-to's and why's of jazz drumming techniques.

For the music to sound and feel good to the audience, it certainly has to feel good to the musicians playing it. And that is the number-one priority among musicians when assessing a drummer: "Hey, it feels really good," or "It swings" (which are the same thing). The quality in your playing that other musicians will be looking for is the way the beat lays or feels—not, for example, how fast your right foot is. By satisfying this criterion, you will find yourself being able to play with better and better musicians. That, in turn, will give you more and more playing opportunities and the chance to grow.

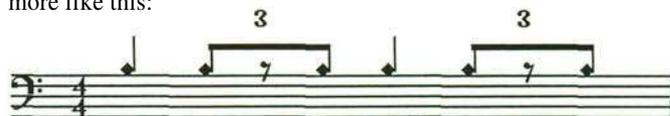
I begin this discussion of time playing with the ride cymbal and the quarter-note pulse. The quarter-note pulse is the primary rhythmic factor in contemporary music (whether it be jazz, rock, funk, or pop music). The 8th and 16th notes, or subdivisions of the bar, determine the feel of the music, e.g., "swung" 8th notes as compared to "straight" 8th notes. In jazz, the 8th notes are generally swung. Two swung 8th notes resemble the first and third beats of an 8th-note triplet.



Traditionally, the jazz cymbal pattern has been notated:



It's not played quite that way, however. The ride-cymbal pattern is more like this:



Written notation is only an approximation of the actual placement of the swung 8th note. A ride-cymbal pattern may be phrased any way you hear it; the bottom line is that it has to sound and feel good. Consistency and clarity are of great importance. The other musicians you're playing with, as well as your audience, must be able to clearly hear and feel the pulse of your time and your subdivisions.

As a starting point, do not accent the beats 2 and 4 on the ride cymbal. By way of example, think of a walking 4/4 bass line:

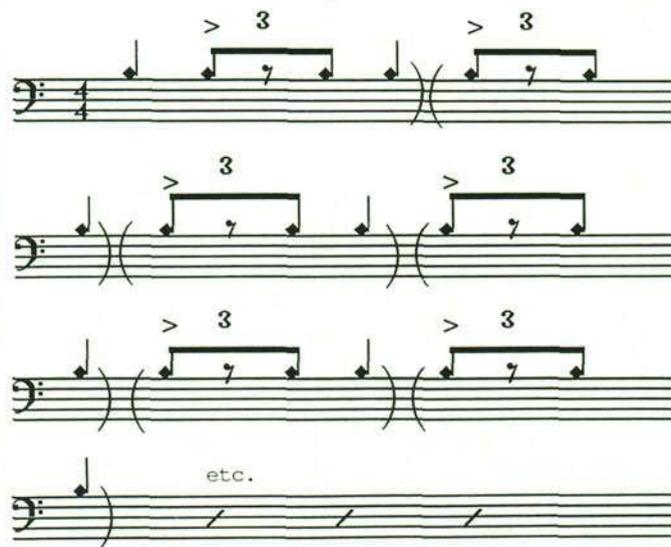


The bass does not accent on 2, 4, or any one beat of the bar. Each quarter-note pulse is as important as the next—driving and moving forward. This applies to any tempo of 4/4.

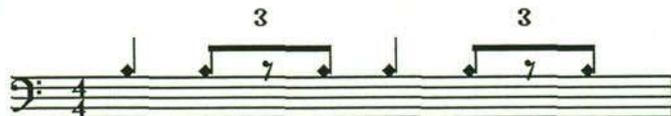
The ride cymbal should be thought of in the same context as the bass:



Even though we have all been taught to accent the 2 and 4 of the ride-cymbal pattern, my reasons for advising another look at that maxim are as follows: Accenting the beats 2 and 4 usually results in the drummer physically (and thus, sonically) breaking up the bar of 4/4 into two halves. And then, instead of a *bonafide* quarter-note pulse, we hear instead a three-note phrase:

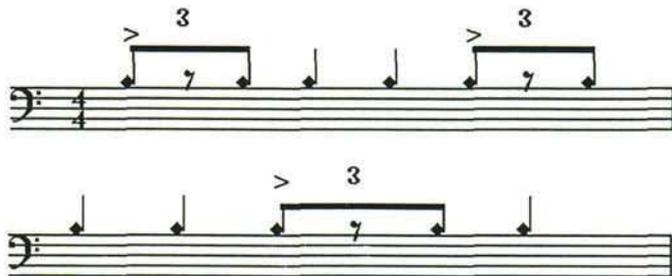


This three-note phrase can negatively manifest itself when the drummer attempts to "dance" with, or change up, the cymbal beat from the basic:



# Cymbal

such as:



The detrimental aspect of this is that the clarity of the quarter-note pulse is gone—not only to the other musicians and listeners, but internally (for the drummer) as well. My experience has shown me that, by developing the inner sense of time with full consideration of the quarter-note pulse (coordinated with the physical act of playing the ride cymbal), the drummer builds and strengthens his or her understanding and feel for the *motion* of the music.

Keep in mind that Art Blakey has made a lot of great music while accenting the beats 2 and 4 on the ride cymbal (although most of that accenting on 2 and 4 does come from the hi-hat. In fact, a strong 2 and 4 on the hi-hat provides much of the "push" in jazz timekeeping.) Elvin Jones swings harder than anybody, and he's accenting the "and" of 2 and 4. Both of these drumming masters play it the way they hear it, but at the same time, I strongly sense that these gentlemen are fully conscious of the role of the quarter-note pulse. Consider my advice as counsel for training, but play it like you hear it. Some ride cymbal beats are "8th-notey," like the way Billy Higgins plays, while others are more "16th-notey," *a la* Harold Jones (Count Basie). Elvin's ride cymbal beat has a rolling, triplet feel. Think of time playing (i.e., the ride cymbal) as not only the motor, but also the golden thread that weaves through and connects the music.

Practice playing a "driving" quarter-note pulse on the ride cymbal, with the hi-hat playing on beats 2 and 4.



Now, let's add the swung 8th-note syncopation to the quarter note. How you phrase the swung 8th note is your drumming signature.



Adding the swung 8th notes to the quarter notes will change the arm motion slightly. Think of the swung 8th note as a pickup to the next quarter note, in that the downward arm motion for the quarter notes on beats 1 and 3 is part of the same downward arm motion for the swung offbeat 8th note. Don't move so much of the entire arm to play the syncopation. Use more of the wrist and fingers. The weight and velocity of the quarter-note pulse will thus not be affected. Keep in mind the consistency of rebound and sound. I get a consistent rebound of close to one inch off the cymbal or what-

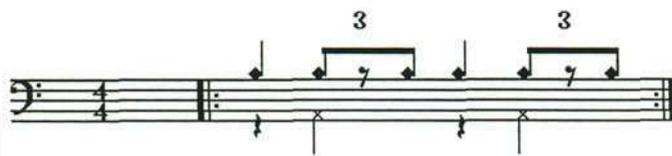
by Peter Erskine



Photo by Rick Malkin

ever part of the drumkit I'm playing. Each stroke originates from the same place.

Play the following ride-cymbal pattern with hi-hat on 2 and 4 at a slow to moderate tempo, e.g., mm = 80, and work it up to mm = 176.



I will discuss fast and slow tempos in a future issue.

In the next issue, I'll discuss independence. Meanwhile, your assignment is to listen to the ride-cymbal playing of Philly Joe Jones, Art Blakey, Max Roach, Jo Jones, Buddy Rich, Roy Haynes, Joe Chambers, Elvin Jones, Billy Higgins, Tony Williams, and Jack DeJohnette (among others) to get an idea of what I've attempted to describe.

*Special thanks to 21st Century Publications for allowing me to draw material from my book, Drum Concepts And Techniques.*

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# Subbing A Broadway

You're putting away mallets after hours of concentration, proud of your performance, and the biggest compliment you can get from one of the regulars is, "Gee ... I didn't know you were back there."

This article is based on ten years of subbing shows for some of the finest percussionists in the New York area (Ben Herman, *A Chorus Line*; Danny Druckman, *Barnum*; Norm Freeman, *On Your Toes*; Jim Saporito, *La Cage aux Folles*; Gene Roma, *Jerry's Girls*; and Rick Kivnick, *Mystery Of Edwin Drood*). When I was lucky enough to have my own shows, I ended up being a sub on the other percussion and drumset books (*Pirates Of Penzance*, Bill Moersch and Bill Ruyle; *Tap Dance Kid*, Mike Berkowitz and Marty Fischer).

A Broadway percussion "chair" is usually a circle of instruments (with you at the center) squeezed in at one end of the pit. While "reading the dots," you must drop four mallets on the vibes silently, grab a hammer, turn, hit a chime (with your back to the conductor), and reach for a tambourine. Uh-oh, watch out for that overhang! You *earn* those doubles, believe me. And subbing means you do it with no rehearsal!

An historic event took place in 1981. The "sub clause" was negotiated into our "contract" (the collective bargaining agreement between the Musician's Union Local 802 and the League of Broadway Producers). In short, after a show opens and has 24 performances (three weeks), 13-week periods begin. During each period, the regular player can take off up to 50% of the time, as long as an approved sub is available. (There are certain restrictions.) Before this language was made part of the contract, work situations ranged from where players were absent more than present to shows where contractors discouraged substitution. Can you think of another gig where you could send in a sub half of the time? I can't.

There are many free-lancers in town, and we all have different styles. However, I would say that we agree on the "Five Don'ts":

1. *Don't* pester the players who have the gigs. Let them know you're available, and if the timing is right, you'll get called.

2. *Don't* accept a call for a show unless you have time to prepare for it.

3. Some players suffering from "Broadway Burnout" (*never* the percussionists) may not be performing at their best level.

*Don't* let their attitude be contagious.

4. *Don't* embellish (unless you are playing a rhythm or time feel). Most conductors want to hear the written parts. If they want creativity from you, they will ask for it.

5. *Don't* be late. With several convenient subway stations in the theater district, along with buses, commuter trains, and abundant (albeit expensive) parking lots, contractors tend to be unsympathetic.

Okay, the phone rings, and a percussionist invites me to "look at the book" to prepare for a coming sub date. I try to make an appointment to "watch" in the near future (tonight?), and ask about the dress code for the orchestra. Mercifully, the trend has shifted from tuxedos or dark suits to white or black shirts and dark pants. Some productions even costume the orchestra (*Pirates, Barnum*), and the players receive additional money. It adds up.

In order to "watch," I meet the regular player at the stage door and am walked through the backstage area, where I try not to trip over scenery. I make it a habit to learn the name of the stage door person at this point. Next, I meet the contractor and/or house contractor (personnel manager), and fill out a W-4 form for withholding tax and a Local 802 Work Dues form. (The Union gets 3% of scale, which will be deducted from my check.) I also try to get introduced to the conductor. If the player I'm to sub for stashes equipment in a locker between shows, I get the combination or find out who has an extra key.

Once in the pit, the most crucial thing to remember is that mic's are on. Save informal chatter for the band room. Before the show begins, you might want to set up a *Walkman*—not that I would, of course. Technically, tape recorders are forbidden in the pit (but then, so are *Watchman* TVs at Series time). If I *were* going to tape, however, I would spend that first "watching" getting a rehearsal cassette of every musical number from start to finish. This runs about 75 to 100 minutes in a "normal" show of two or three hours. That's a lot of music, but I wouldn't worry because the regular player could tell me when to turn it on or off. You might also want to have a pad and pencil to sketch a diagram of the percussion setup for future reference.

Earplugs come in handy when they shove me in somewhere (i.e., next to a tam-tam). I take my cue when some regulars

start ripping up toilet paper and stuffing wads in their ears.

After the performance has begun, I begin making mental notes of the things I'll need to know when I actually play the show:

Act I. What happens just before the downbeat? Each Broadway conductor has a "unique" style (thank God), and a flick of the wrist can signal a *fortissimo* timpani roll. And how much does the band follow the drummer to keep time and change tempi?

Intermission. Most backstage areas have soda/candy machines, and there is usually a coffeemaker with a kitty.

Act II. A reflective time, when I ask myself questions like, "Where am I going to get a set of marching men or a wind machine to practice with?" I will be setting up a near-identical "pit" in my studio, but there are still some things I don't have.

After the show, perhaps the regular player and I will go out for a beverage, over which we could discuss a debut. Then, the charts—if the player doesn't have a loaning copy, it means picking up the book between shows. More often than not, making a copy is a good idea (and forbidden, too). There are usually "extra" books that should be looked at. In "Segue" numbers, the players work out page turns in alternating books that allow for the fewest turns. The working out of these routines is nicknamed "choreography."

Page-turn choreography should not be confused with "choreography" as it applies to the Broadway contract, when the player is visible and involved in "stage business." (This used to be called "sttick.") In *Pirates*, this involved slamming a bass drum hard enough to startle the Major General's daughters. When scolded, the drummer held up the page of music. The late Bill Elliot kept this in for Bill Ruyle. It always got a laugh and was worth a few bucks.

I like to go over the book(s) at a desk before practicing the parts. Music for shows is generally in good condition, but sometimes . . . oy yai! It's easier to pencil in markings (and erase incorrect ones) when you're not leaning over a xylophone. There are several terms and symbols used on Broadway show charts:

Circling means the part is tacet.

*Segue* or *attacca* means the next number begins right away.

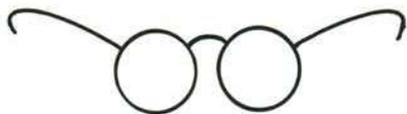
V. S. at the bottom of a page means you've

by Larry Spivack

# Show

got an entrance near the top of the next page.

Eyeglasses overlooking a section:



mean that you'd better watch the conductor.

*Vamp* means repeat until cued (usually the next downbeat).

Cuts are marked:



Before subbing for the first time on a given show, find out how early it is cool to warm up. Several productions don't want you playing in the pit after "half-hour," when the "house is open." Believe it or not, in *A Chorus Line*, they want the audience to be surprised at hearing the band. C'mon . . . .

Of course, just as you are ready to try the crash cymbals, they will be doing a soundcheck or ensemble rehearsal. I bring along mallets with soft plastic balls (or wrap rubber tubes around my regular sticks) to work out mallet passages silently. If a mic' is worn, I practice moving around without getting tangled in the cord.

But no matter how much you prepare, how supportive the musicians are, or how long you have been playing, there is nothing like that first downbeat—or what follows. For example, during a xylophone solo in the opening number of *Pirates*, I looked up briefly and noticed that Kevin Kline was jumping over my head. Oh well, if he could clear Bill Moersch . . . .

Acoustically, the sound will be very different from what you expected to hear. I noticed this in *Jerry's Girls* after firing the starter's pistol. It took several seconds for my ears to get back to normal.

Even when you get used to a show, there are surprises. (That's why they call it live entertainment.) During a matinee of *On Your Toes*, I was chilling out during a long passage of dialogue. Suddenly, Natalia

Makarova's shoe—usually kicked into the wings—landed on the temple blocks, knocking them onto the vibraphone behind me. I jumped! Another memorable moment occurred in *Pirates* when Treat Williams' sword spun downstage, lodging itself in the cymbal and mic' stands inches from my face. I got a hand when I gave the sword back.

According to contract terms, a sub must be approved by the conductor before being hired again. I think of it as getting paid to take an audition. It helps if you remember the line from *42nd Street*: "Don't worry, kid, they really *wanna* like ya." Once approved, you might be called either weeks in advance or at the last minute. I'm lucky enough to live in the Broadway area, and when I say *last minute* . . . .

What's the hardest thing about subbing? The second show. It's easy to get a false sense of relaxation and not concentrate as hard. On the other hand, subbing has several advantages:

1. It is virtually schlepp-free. Some players even leave a complete set of mallets.

2. Once you learn the show, the scale per hour is pretty good.

3. You may be called when they send a tour out.

4. You can earn vacation pay.

5. You're entitled to union health benefits.

6. You're eligible to play Broadway Show League softball in Central Park (optional).

7. The level of musicianship is high. (You're playing next to excellent drummers.)

8. When a show closes, you're just losing one account instead of a steady employer.

9. You get to "hang" afterwards, when all the cats who have shows rag on their steady gigs.

10. (This is the one I enjoy the most, even though I know it sounds corny as hell.) You get to be a part of a live production that involves dozens of professionals: actors, dancers, stagehands, lighting crews, sound crews, wardrobe and wig personnel, publicists, and directors. When a show works, it feels good to be a part of it.

*Larry Spivack is a free-lance percussionist and composer living in New York City. Several of his works have been published and recorded by the Lang Percussion Company.*

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# Child

As a direct means of self-expression, drums are an ideal first instrument—often the precursor of expertise on another instrument and always the precursor of an enhanced musical appreciation. But teaching children is a different ball game from the approach that works with adult students. Lacking the physical stamina and attention span of their elders, children require a special curriculum that will cultivate enthusiasm.

Some of the most effective kids' teachers are parent-pros, such as Alex Acuna, Mike Balter, Steve Smith, and Chester Thompson. Obviously, their children have more access to equipment and information than their peers. But Brad Flickinger and Jeremy Driesen of New York's Drummers Collective have come up with some innovative teaching methods that instruct by inspiring kids, rather than harnessing them to a rigid discipline program.

Practice equipment isn't necessarily a deterrent for the truly inspired young drummer, though having a kit at home is a big help. There are common alternatives to investing in a set for a beginner, notably a snare drum on a stand. And there are uncommon alternatives. Peter Erskine's father created a kit for his four-year-old out of an old Chinese tom, with thumb-tacks that held the head onto the shell. But now that Remo's *Junior Pro PTS* kit is available, there's a chance for children to get the full drumming experience on their own terms. "Why spend \$200 on a snare and stand, when you can have a four-piece outfit for the same price?" says Flickinger, who recommends the gear to parents of his more adept young pupils.

Mike Balter, house drummer at Chicago's Shubert Theatre and president of Mike Balter Mallets, noticed his son Jacob emulating his stick action and put the youngster behind a *PTS* kit. "Having a set right there, proportioned to the right scale for Jacob's size, gives him a big-shot feeling," says Balter. That feeling gives Jacob the confidence to experiment and progress while having fun, which is his father's goal.

Rather than enforce a rigid training schedule, Balter prefers that drums remain recreational for his eight-year-old. "I don't want Jacob to think of drumming as

work. He gets enough pressure from peers and schoolwork. I want him to use drums as a release." That's why Balter keeps lessons down to about 20 minutes a stretch, integrating drum technique into a general music appreciation. "I don't stress technique much, because I'm not a believer in any one specific style. I'm more interested in giving Jacob an understanding of style."



*Chicago show drummer Mike Balter guides eight-year-old son, Jacob.*

While Jacob Balter pounds out the drum parts to his favorite tunes (he likes '50s and '60s music, as opposed to '80s, which is more complex), he's learning where the breaks occur. "He'll have his radio on, and I'll ask, 'What's the beat? What's the time signature?' And he'll know if it's a '50s beat or a Beatles beat. I'd rather see him listen to something and identify it than just teach him to hold the sticks or play a paradiddle. I question whether a child his age could have the insight to take a paradiddle and apply it to a particular pattern. A child who's taught to play a paradiddle at five might not be as naturally stimulated by what's around him. If he doesn't see the application of the paradiddle for himself, where's the fun in it?"

That's why Balter limits his input to correcting bad habits. "If I see Jacob doing something that could cause trouble later, like holding his sticks incorrectly or keeping his arms way too high, I'll help him."

Technique takes second place to understanding in Balter's lesson plan. "Duke Ellington once said that true musicians should be able to play everything they can read and write everything they can play. I

want Jacob to be able to read what he's playing, but I'm not concerned with writing yet. I'm letting him develop his knowledge first and his hands later." And that's fine with Jacob, who practices about five times a week. But even with his own kit set up in the playroom, he's not planning a pro career yet. "That's fine with me," says Balter. "Whatever he becomes, he'll have a better appreciation of music and be a better listener as a result of his drumming background."

It's no wonder Ian Smith, now five, picked up his first sticks at only one and a half. He'd seen his father Steve play every day. And though Steve himself didn't start to play until age nine, he was so impressed by the options the *PTS* kit gave young drummers that he set one up in Ian's bedroom not long after the youngster learned to walk.

"It makes a lot of sense for children to start playing on a scaled-down, professional kit," says Smith. "Parents are convinced to invest in a snare and cymbal for their kids, because they're reluctant to make a financial commitment in an interest that might not pan out. They come to my drum clinics and tell me they just spent \$200 on a snare drum. And that's a shame, since they could have spent the same amount and wound up with a kit, which is a much more comprehensive learning device."



*Five-year-old Ian Smith demonstrates his drumming skill for his dad, Steve Smith.*

Until Ian's a little older, Smith is content to hold off on real lessons, while his son discovers rhythm for himself. Though the

# Drummers

two do jam together, "at this point, Ian hasn't focused specifically on drums. He plays a small guitar [a gift from Neil Schon], synths, and video games." It's Elizabeth, Ian's one-and-a-half-year-old sister, who shows more drum aptitude. "Even when she was less than a year old, she'd gravitate toward drums; she couldn't stay away from my sticks. I'll start working with her before long."

Watching their father work in his home studio with a variety of percussion pros who form Vital Information gives Ian and Elizabeth plenty of insight into the world of pro drumming. "They know that drums are work, not something you just have fun with," says Smith.

Drummer Alex Acuna believes that children hear music in the womb. Every child isn't born with equal musical gifts, but Acuna believes that early rhythmic training helps children build skills that supplement whatever natural gift each child does instinctively possess. "Rhythm and harmony are vital parts of music," says Acuna, "and you need both to become a good musician and a good drummer. You can't become a good drummer unless you're also a good musician." That's why he's starting five-year-old Danny off on basic rhythm patterns. "I tell him to imitate me," says Acuna, who's met with varied degrees of success. He himself favors a matched grip, "but Danny holds the sticks the way he wants. It's not perfect, but it's comfortable for him."

The difference between age five and six is a crucial one. Acuna's six-year-old daughter, Redina, plays drums and piano, practicing every day before school. But Acuna and his opera-singer wife are still preparing Danny. "I don't want to force too much discipline at an early age, even though he's been asking for lessons. Danny's too young right now and a little wild. He needs to gain physical strength for the drums."

Danny's *PTS* kit has given him a sense of rhythm that he couldn't get on his father's larger set. "The smaller-sized drums are a good thing," says Acuna. "When my friends come over and play, Danny can play right along with us. He imitates well, and he has a good ear, which is important for a drummer. But I want

him to do other things besides play drums. He may have a gift for music, but I want him to be a normal kid first and a drummer second. I can't even say for sure if Danny will have a career in music."

Chester Thompson could put himself out of a gig if he isn't careful. Only seven years old, Akil Thompson already has the chops to become Genesis' new drummer. When Thompson put his one-and-a-half-year-old behind his Pearl kit years ago, Akil began to bang away and never stopped. "His first time on the drums, he showed such authority that I got him his own kit. Then I'd play simple rhythms, and he'd copy them. When he was two and a half, I taught him to do crossovers around the toms, and after a few months, he had it down naturally. He took it from there by himself. He had the discipline to hear a song on the radio and copy the drum part." That's how Akil became probably the youngest and most proficient owner of Pearl's child-size pro kit, though he's recently upgraded to a custom Gretsch and shows a preference for Simmons, too.



*Akil Thompson, seven-year-old son of drummer Chester Thompson, works out in his own homepractice studio.*

Thompson claims that he hasn't actually taught Akil much at all. "He does more sophisticated things than I would ever expect from a child his age, and it seems so natural for him. I stay out of his way most of the time and only correct him if he's doing something counterproductive."

Not only does Akil have his own musical opinions, but he has enough imagination to make the learning process with his father work both ways. "At that age, they have great imagination. He's got such a firm foundation at the drumset, and he's

perfectly coordinated, so when imagination kicks in, he comes up with some amazing stuff. He could easily play in a rock band now; he's only limited by physical strength. But his right foot is incredibly fast."

Akil had his kit set up in his father's studio until the two drummers began to compete for practice time. Now the younger Thompson is ensconced in his own practice room, with a tape recorder to do overdubs. There, he's able to synthesize the styles of drummers he loves into his own unique rhythmic patterns. Of course, he's at an advantage in that area over most kids. Backstage with Phil Collins, he's got plenty of opportunity to pick up new ideas from his *second* favorite drummer.

With Phil Collins as an accessible idol and Chester Thompson as a live-in teacher, what more could a young drummer want? "He wants two bass drums," says his father. And he'll get them. Thompson uses two and knows it can be a difficult transition later on if you don't start out with two. Still, Thompson isn't adamant about Akil becoming a pro. He knows that his son's exposure to drums provides coordination and influences additional music training. Akil's moving swiftly along in a Yamaha course and participates in family jam sessions that include his vocalist mother and the local church choir. "But I don't push him," says Thompson. "It works against you to make children sit too long. All I can do is wait and watch him. He can be an accountant when he grows up; that's his business."

When Flickinger and Driesen coach their young students at Drummers Collective, they incorporate many of the strategies imparted by their parent-pro colleagues. Though age, they both agree, should not be a criterion in learning the drums, most children under four aren't ready for out-of-the-home training. And even the four- to eight-year-olds require special motivation. Flickinger doesn't mind working with kids who've had no previous experience. In fact, he prefers children who are completely new to the instrument. "I find that, when children are allowed to play with records without training, they pick up bad habits that are hard

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to break. It's better to learn a good technique from the beginning, starting with stick training."

Most of the children Flickinger teaches in his half-hour group lessons (and a half hour is stretching it for the very young ones) are too used to an instant payoff. "They want immediate gratification, so I give them a simple rock beat—something they can feel good about and have fun with. But they can't do that at home on a snare drum. That's why child-size drumkits are a good idea. The snare is too dry to give the satisfaction they need to continue. They're just not going to hang out unless they feel a sense of accomplishment."

Driesen agrees that kids of the computer age want fast results. "They see Neil Peart on MTV, and drums look like a neat instrument. I'm the one who has to break it to them and say, 'Sorry kid, I'm not an automatic teller machine at the bank; you can't just press buttons and be able to play like Neil.'"

Children too young to read respond to pictures Driesen creates for them. "When I figured out that reading was going to be a drawback, I came up with a picture of a basketball to connote the bounce roll and a bee to imply the buzz roll." Games, rather than more traditional guidance, are the goals that help relieve Driesen's classes of any "schooltime" monotony. "I can't say, 'Let's learn this today' and stick with it," he explains. "These kids are too young for strict concentration. When I want to accomplish a technique, I come up with things that are significant and helpful, but *also fun*. We do *Simon Says* on the drums. The kids close their eyes, and I play a pattern. They have to figure out in what order I hit the drums and come back with it. That's ear training they can relate to. I'll put on a record, and get the kids to clap to the beat or just hit one stick along to a record. You'd be surprised at how hard it is for eight-year-olds to play in time to a record. They haven't begun to think about timing yet. The ones who have are usually kids of pro musicians or kids with a stronger acumen for it." Perhaps, Driesen suggests, "kids just haven't been dancing in nightclubs long enough to get a sense of beat!"

The relevance of formal lessons for children under age nine or ten is still an issue parents and pros debate. Physical ability and coordination are rarely commensurate with a young child's desire to play the music he or she sees on TV. But since strength and discipline come in time, perhaps the best idea is to foster the natural interest most children have in making music while motor skills develop. And that seems to be the consensus here—to instruct children to regard the instrument as a pleasurable means of communication and self-expression—a game that need never end.

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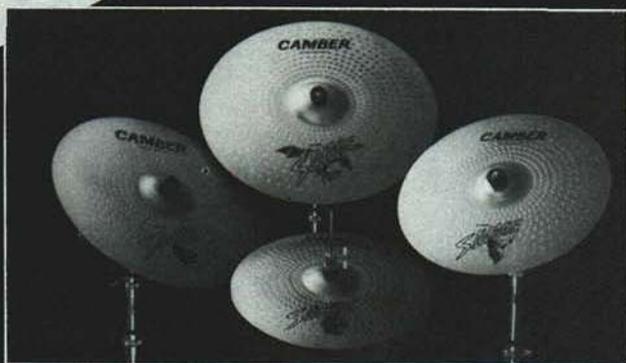
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*Burke continued from page 24*

has one of the most beautifully recorded acoustic pianos going in the commercial world. Joe was able to put takes on the record that pretty much worked on everybody's level. I know that Rick [Ford, bass] and Vinnie [Zummo, guitar] also felt certain that they didn't play their best on some takes that ended up on the album. All of us have our own priorities, but the only one that counts is Joe's. So sometimes you have to swallow that for the good of the whole.

"We also had to deal with the situation of a mobile recording

truck outside. On 2-track digital, there's only one pass and that's it; there is no going out and fixing it. So essentially, out in the truck, we had an additional two performers: the engineer, Mike Frondelli, and the producer, David Kershenbaum. We had done a number of club dates ahead of time that they had recorded on 24-track, so that they could practice pre-setting effects. But when it came down to the real thing, Joe did not want a 24-track machine in the truck, and he went out there to make sure that there was no multi-track backup going on at all. He wanted us to be 'performing without a net.' I will never forget when David and Michael emerged from the truck after the first show and came into the theater, [laughs] Sweat was pouring from their faces, and they looked like they had seen a ghost. They realized that, like the band, they too were in a performance situation and were obviously not used to it. They were scared. In theory, we played five shows and recorded them. In practice, we also recorded a couple of rehearsals in a show format. One of those tracks, 'Man In The Street,' ended up on the album. Also, when we got down to the wire, we realized that some things were not coming together. So, between shows while the audience was not in the hall, we ran through a couple of numbers and recorded them. I don't know why, but the one tune we weren't getting at all, in Joe's estimation, was 'Hometown,' which is a fairly simple folksy tune.

"I still don't know if I can listen to the album with fresh ears. I'm still gun-shy about it. When we did TV shows in Europe and other places, a lot of lip-synching was required, and it was absolutely impossible. We would play a tune like 'Soul Kiss,' and it was so hard to recreate because the tune has so many nuances. The times I actually would hear the recorded music were on TV dates like these and occasionally on the radio. As we approached the end of the tour and I was gradually hearing the cuts, I felt good about the whole project as an accomplishment.

"Going back into the studio after having done *Big World* made other sessions seem like a peanut gallery. On the tour following the *Big World* recording, I discovered the real icing on the cake from that whole experience: Playing live suddenly seemed easier. Doing that whole tour, I felt all that pressure was off my back, and we got to do a very long show with sparse instrumentation. The material *lent* itself to live playing. In essence, it *worked*. It wasn't like doing something that is heavily produced in the studio, and then going on the road and having to compromise on the material when playing it live. What we played on the record, we also played live."

The night after the *Will Power* session, Gary is playing a gig at Nirvana, a 17th-floor club that overlooks Times Square. The date is a showcase for Doc Roc, a singer/guitarist Gary is producing. Two other musicians associated with Jackson—saxist Tony Aiello and bassist Graham Maby—are also on the bandstand. Each tune reveals that big pocket the Maby-Burke brothers have boiling. Watching Gary play is a lesson in the yin-yang of intense drive/relaxation. He disregards arm flash and any flailing that might lead his musical center astray. As he carves out his crystalline, uncluttered pocket grooves, his face and eyes are focused like those of a diamond cutter creating a facet: intense but steady, steady, steady.

"When I studied at Potsdam, Sandy Feldstein taught me how to displace tension in the body," he explains. "When you're playing drums—especially in endurance situations of length or volume—it's important not to cramp up. He taught me to take the tension from my limbs and throw it into the stomach or solar plexus. I use it all the time. It was especially helpful on the *Big World* tour. Those concerts were about two-and-a-half hours long, playing straight through with either a trio or quartet in big places. Being out on the road for a while, the fatigue starts setting in. You don't always get the sleep you should or eat the way you should, and these things start nibbling away at a drummer. You start getting aches and pains, and the stage volume in big places takes its toll. You need to become aware of how much fuel is in the tank and pace yourself from the beginning of the show. I used to walk on stage, and the first tune we would play would be 'One More Time.' On the first part of the tour, I would start that number thinking, 'Oh yeah, let's go,' and *hit* those drums. But six or seven songs

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later, my butt would be dragging on the floor, and I'd be thinking, 'Gee, only 20 more tunes to play!' [laughs] A drummer really has to be conscious of that. You might sacrifice a little in flamboyance or emotional exuberance, but it helps you make it to the end of the show. And of course, the last two or three numbers in an encore situation need to be no-holds-barred—and you're beat at that point. Often, the other guys in the band don't understand this; they may not even be sweating. They start getting into it physically at that point, whereas the drummer has been doing it from song one. Yet, they *do* expect you to go over the top on that last leg, so you have to have something left at that point. The displacement of tension in the body is also very much a state of mind. There are times while I am playing when I actually *think* about relaxation. In a high-power situation, my wrists and forearms tend to buckle up, so I just think it away and throw the tension into a stationary part of my body."

Dealing well with pressure seems to be a general trait of Gary's personality. His relaxed manner, sharp deadpan humor, and serene eyes reflect a man who is not easily thrown off balance. Born April 9, 1948 in the smoky industrial town of Troy, New York, Gary was inspired to play drums just before entering his teen years. "My mother made me take piano, because she said I first had to learn a 'musical instrument' before I could take drums," Gary laughs. Despite the faux pas, his mother's advice was based in the wisdom of foresight that only mothers have. "That actually turned out to be a hip thing," Gary confirms, "because I have fallen back on that a lot—not as much on the piano as an instrument but on the whole tonal perspective. It probably affects my drumming even more than I realize."

Charles Riley was Gary's first drum teacher. He was a colorful character who came from the older breed of entertainers nurtured in vaudeville houses. "He used to play in accompaniment to silent movies," explains Gary. "So he came from a whole different place than a lot of teachers do. Stylistically, his playing came more from the old buzz-roll school of timekeeping, as opposed to the ride-cymbal style. He taught me the beauty of a clean roll and also about 'creative faking,' as opposed to blundering through something. It taught me how to think on my feet while playing. So it was a very unorthodox start. We had lessons on our shoes—playing on our rubber heels. There weren't any drumpads, since we would just meet in a room somewhere."

Although Gary later graduated from rubber-heel workouts to formal training at top conservatories, the initial influence of Riley's get-your-feet-wet musical philosophy is the foundation of the personalized sound that speaks from Gary's drums. "Studying with Charles Riley was a real low-overhead situation, but it was great because it only dealt with what was important. Any set work I picked up at that time was done on my own. His theory was to give you 'legit' technique and basic rudiments, and then if you had a set of ears, he would kick you out of the nest and there you'd go! That's a sign of a really good teacher. I still hold to that today. I get very nervous about the idea of institutionalized training—for drummers especially. I'm not really speaking about percussion, because that is orchestrally based. But drumset playing is like the last frontier—along with electric guitar and a few other instruments—in the sense that almost every drummer has his or her own sound because the nature of what a set drummer does is so self-taught. A lot of your personality is inevitably mixed in with your playing—which is critical. They teach jazz in schools, and to me, it's a sign of the death knoll when that starts happening. There are places where they give clinics in rock 'n' roll, and that's almost impossible. The only way you can learn is to go out, do it, and sometimes fall on your face. When you learn from a book, you turn off part of yourself. It *can* be done, of course. A drummer can come away from a book with the ability to sit behind a set of drums, but the *instincts* haven't necessarily been turned on."

After eight months, Gary was "kicked out" from Riley's nest, flapping and struggling to earn his wings. "Once I started learning, I ate it up totally and couldn't get enough of it. I was desperate to learn as much as I could about drums and percussion." While

playing with rock and Dixieland bands through his high school years and taking summer-session theory courses, Gary combed the Troy record stores for discs by his favorite drummers, including Art Blakey, Grady Tate, Zutty Singleton, and Sid Catlett. "Rock is what I heard all the time, so that's what I ended up playing with my friends. Any other influences were things that I sought after in record stores. I always loved Dixieland, and I leaned more towards the down-home players. Heavy technique has never interested me, because it just never *moved* me. I have been involved in periods of heavy technique study. When I went out at night to my gigs, I would try to apply the technique I had learned, but if it didn't make sense in context of what I liked to do, then out it went. I am attracted to simplistic playing. Early rock 'n' roll, such as Little Richard and Elvis, was simple backbeat material, but it still swung. I listened to a lot of Dixieland, and I also remember seeing Louie Armstrong play once. That was a very emotional experience, because he was incredibly charismatic. I used to love listening to Barrett Deems and Zutty Singleton play with Louis. As time went on, I became interested in more contemporary New Orleans players like the Neville Brothers. My interests led to a logical crossover into listening to master time players like Art Blakey. Even in the throes of his hottest Jazz Messenger groups, Blakey would be stamping out the time while still managing to play in a very loose way. I gravitated towards that. In other words, if I had to pick between listening to Buddy Rich or Gene Krupa, I would listen to Krupa. I have always loved the record *Burnin' Beat* with Krupa and Rich. They both had their own sounds. Now, there is a perfect example of two totally different personalities singing through their drums."

If Gary didn't get his feet wet enough playing with bands then, he certainly got them soaked to the bone at his music school auditions. The Crane School of Music in Potsdam, New York, was holding auditions in Albany, and Gary drove out to face the jury in the hopes of being accepted and earning a music education degree. But first he had to confront his fears of the formal auditions. "I

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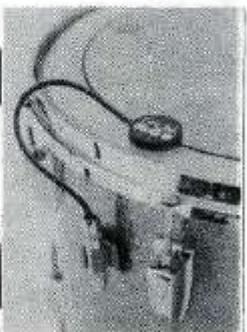
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was totally terrified, because I had to compete against people from the public school systems who had gone through all of those All-County and All-State competitions, and were pretty hardened pros by the time they got to a college audition. But all I had ever done was play in my band. At these auditions, you had to sing and sight-read, and I had *no* idea of what that was about. The only advice that was given to me was, 'When you audition, just sing as loud as you can, play as loud as you can, and just go through it with an air of confidence.' I was also told, 'Don't worry about mistakes; if you're going to make one, make the biggest one you possibly can.' That's exactly what I did. And the people I auditioned for were amazed that I could just come out and do these things without being shy about it. I didn't know what I was doing; it was just the way I went about it. Anyway, I was accepted! I was totally stunned."

At the Crane School, Gary studied with Sandy Feldstein and then with Jim Petercsak, a teacher known for his rigorous technique training. "During his lessons, my hands would be cherry red. He has phenomenal technique. To this day, I can't play as fast as I did in sessions with him. He could work you into a state of playing in which you would sit there amazed at yourself." After earning his music education degree, Gary taught in the public school system and also pursued private studies at the Eastman School of Music, including timpani lessons with John Beck. He carried his timpani, mallets, and percussion studies further by moving to New York and enrolling in the Manhattan School of Music. While studying there with Paul Price and also playing with the professional unit of the Manhattan Percussion Ensemble, Gary became involved with the budding Soho scene, later to be tagged "minimalism." Finding himself in the center of the scene, Gary began performing with the most seminal composer of that period, Steve Reich. Gary performed on the first recording of Reich's composition *Drumming* and toured throughout the East with Reich on what he calls "the art-museum circuit."

"Talk about being out of work," he laughs, "try playing *that* kind of music for a living. Those were really lean times." Reich's writing featured repetitive, metronomic rhythmic patterns that locked his musicians into air-tight trance-grooves. "Playing that music often had a hypnotizing effect on the players," he remembers. Reich's music realized the beauty of a seemingly perpetual motion in rhythm—the buoyancy a beat can create—and this carried over into Gary's rock concept. "I would rather go for the dramatic sound from a drum rather than an array of pyrotechnics. I appreciate groove. For a while, I worked with the bass player Gordon Edwards, and he's a real time machine. One day, we were just talking and he said, 'A player shouldn't have to fill every time the phrase turns around; if it's going real well, don't mess it up.' Just let it ride. That can be a very hypnotic thing, and that's an element a lot of players miss out on. When you hit that moment with the band, it's like levitation."

Living in a Greenwich Village loft opened up other playing possibilities in Gary's post-Reich years. The loft became a regular weekly jamming spot for Village musicians. While jamming and playing dues-paying gigs in New York rock clubs, Gary became increasingly active with the rock and folk-rock scene. A chance right place/right time meeting led to his name being passed on to the king of that scene. "I was working a club called Trudy Heller's. It was just another hole. I was playing gigs around town during that period getting \$50 a night. The gig was over, and it was about 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning on a summer night. I was just sitting on the steps killing time, when Sue Evans walked by. At that time, she lived right up the block. I had seen her play a couple weeks before at the Vanguard. We got to talking. After that, I had her sub for me on some theater jobs, and eventually, she turned the Rolling Thunder tour on to me. It was just from sitting on a corner—like Lana Turner at Schwabb's drug store."

Other musicians had passed Gary's name on to Dylan, but Sue Evans' recommendation clinched his shot at joining that famous mobile rock circus of the '70s. The communal tour was already in progress when Gary jumped aboard. The second half of the jour-

ney climaxed in spring 1976 and yielded the live album *Hard Rain*. "It was a carnival atmosphere. Some people, like Joni Mitchell, just passed through, and we did a couple concerts with her. Some people were picked up along the way. Allen Ginsburg was just always 'there' with his whole gang. And then there was the tour herbologist, tour astrologist, and so forth. I swear! People would just show up and say, 'Do you want your astrological chart done?' They would be taken aboard, and given hotel rooms and airplane tickets.

"As loose as it was, it had been an ongoing thing by the time I joined, so I was the new kid on the block. There were 60 to 100 people at any time traveling with us, so you didn't really stand out too much. You could show up on stage and someone would say, 'Oh! Look who's here!' And people were sitting in all the time. We went to Florida and did about three days of nonstop—well, I won't call them 'rehearsals'—it was more a situation of just playing. We played with Joan Baez, Bobby Neuwirth, Kinky Friedman, Roger McGuinn, and several others. Then all the musicians in The Band did their own numbers, and so did T-Bone Burnett and Mick Ronson. We played from about 3:00 in the afternoon until 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning for four or five days at a very old Republican-type hotel in Florida. The older people staying there didn't quite know what to make of this invasion of their hotel. It was absolutely mind boggling for me to step into this situation cold. I didn't know what the hell was going on. The whole intense experience was like a coda to the '60s.

"On stage, the interesting thing about Dylan is that he is one of the few people who is as close to a true jazz artist mentality as any of the people I've ever worked with—including jazz musicians, believe it or not. I mean that in the sense that he constantly performs on the edge. He is *very* spontaneous and is not afraid to totally dump arrangements in mid-tune. In terms of taking control on stage, the next guy who comes anywhere near to that kind of spontaneity is Joe Jackson.

"When I went to see the film *The Last Waltz*, I noticed something very funny. Dylan walked out on stage to play with The Band. They played a tune and came to the last chord, but Dylan was still strumming. He turned around and I could see that he mouthed 'seventh chord.' He was trying to get them to go to the dominant seventh and go into another tune. Right then, Levon Helm's eyes popped out of his head. And he's a guy who has worked with Dylan for years! Levon knew what was coming—that he *didn't* know what was coming! [laughs] Obviously, they had rearranged a couple of tunes, and Dylan was totally dumping it right on the spot! Here they were with a big orchestra, it was being filmed, and they might as well have been shoveling money into the furnace. When I saw that, I just laughed and laughed. It was such a sense of relief knowing that I wasn't the only person who had gone through that. Being on stage with Dylan was always like walking on eggshells. Musically, that made for a tremendous experience."

Several Rolling Thunder bandmates tapped Gary's talents for their own recording/touring ventures. While on tour with the revue, he recorded an album in Austin with Kinky Friedman (*Lasso From El Paso*, 1976, Epic). Later, he toured the U.S. and Canada with violinist Scarlet Rivera, and then played on her first album (*Scarlet Rivera*, 1978, Warner Bros.) and on cuts of her second (*Scarlet Fever*, 1978, Warner Bros.).

After Rolling Thunder subsided, Gary free-lanced in New York doing jingles, clubs, Radio City shows, and occasional album dates. In 1979-80, he took to the road with Garland Jeffries for a tour of Europe, the U.S., and Canada. He also recorded cuts with Jeffries for the movie and soundtrack album *Times Square* (1980, RSO). The following year, he played a stint with the Mamas & Papas reunion tour.

Since joining Jackson in the fall of 1983, Gary has recorded three superb albums: *Body And Soul* (1984, A&M), *Big World* (1986, A&M), and *Will Power* (1987, A&M). Each disc is an unconventional undertaking in its own way. When planning the rerecording of *Body And Soul*, the most high-tech studios in New York were available to Jackson. Instead, in his search for natural-

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istic recording, he chose the 23rd Street Masonic temple! "*Body And Soul* was originally planned to be recorded the way we did *Big World*," says Gary. "Joe was going to do it 2-track digital, but it ended up being 32-track digital because, when we tried to record in the Masonic temple, the sound turned out to be totally out of control. The decay time was huge. It reminded me of the record Paul Horn did at the Taj Mahal. There was some overdubbing, but a lot of the takes we did were live. Everything bled, and we even used monitors—no headphones. On one tune, 'Heart Of Ice,' I did use headphones when I had to redo the entire drum track. That was really tough to play."

Considering Jackson's intense interest in purity of sound, it is only natural that Gary is his choice of drummer. The visceral, immediate voice of a well-played drum has always been the inspiration for Gary's approach. "As a boy, I used to go to small county fairs that included minstrel-like R&B musical revues," he remembers. "The groups were usually black, and the drummer would have just a snare drum and bass drum. And I remember that, when a drummer hit a rimshot, it hit me right in the chest and really stirred an interest in me. That fascinated me a lot more than the flash did."

Gary has a great sound—a sound that is his own. It's not from a six-foot rack of outboard gear or custom-worked drums. It is simply the sound from a well-tuned drum and a stroke that pulls emotion from the skins. In fact, whether live or in the studio, Gary's toms and snare are played wide open, without a stitch of dampening. In a live situation, many sound engineers would be resistant to the idea of unadorned drums. It's almost a taboo to some. "I spent a long time learning how to tune drums. And I have a lot of timpani background, which helps in terms of developing a sympathy with how a head resonates. So engineers are usually very enthusiastic in that they are dealing with someone who knows how to make a drum speak, as opposed to just hitting it. If I do encounter resistance from engineers, I can usually win them over by explaining the concept behind the way I play in terms of my sound. My sound is

not accidental. I've also gotten into many debates with engineers—more so in the studio. Live, engineers tend to be much more flexible because they are performance oriented. The last two engineers we had on the road, Al Tucker and Ed Wynn, were real pros. They totally got into what I was doing, and then they began to magnify it—bringing out the strong points of the sound, such as the big tom sound that naturally comes from the way I play.

"I am now working with people who know my sound. But for years and years, I did run into engineers who had a preconceived idea of what a good sound is. They might have had an idea of what *one* good sound is, but any engineer who wants you to go just with that one sound is limited. I have found that the better the engineers you work with are, the more open-minded they are. And they are aware of the fact that, if you record something and it sounds good at first, it will end up as a great drum sound as opposed to depending on processing a sound to make it better. If you give them the real goods right at the beginning, the whole is uplifted right from the start. It also makes the engineer's job easier in the long run. Even though I played wide open on the *Will Power* session, Michael Frondelli didn't use any gates at all. The bass drum had only a little bit of blanket touching the skin. Michael placed the bass drum mic' a little distance from the front of the drum and put a ring of foam rubber extending off from the bass so that he wouldn't have to gate it. He was trying to capture a sound that had matured as opposed to what you hear when you put your ear next to a drum. That's the way that I found my drums record the best—going for the mature rather than the close sound. The overhead mic's play an important role in this kind of miking. What you *don't* get with this method is lots of separation. It's a more blended sound. But then I do the mixing—as a *player*. This whole miking and playing approach can work very well with the right people, and it can be a disaster with the wrong people."

Gary's indifference to rock-hype and flash is reflected in his choice of equipment. He has a penchant for older drums and small setups. His 1972 Gretsch set is comprised of a 22" bass and toms sized 8x12, 9x13 (sometimes alternated with a 10x14) and 16x16. His favorite snares are vintage gems, including the Leedy *Black Beauty* that he used on *Will Power* and the brass *Super Ludwig* circa 1930 that he played on *Body And Soul*. Paiste cymbals top off his kit. "I use the same set on the road that I use in the studio. I originally wanted to go out on the road with Joe using an even smaller setup—using only one rack tom. When I was with Scarlet Rivera, I used a double bass drumkit with four racks, two floors, and a gong. I find that whatever is in front of you directly affects the way you play physically. The physical sensation of how I play is very important to me. When using a single rack tom, there is a certain movement—or dance, if you will—that you develop between the drums. With every additional drum, it changes. My ideal situation—one rack—is the most fun for me because it forces me to imply melody and tonal variation.

"I played with an extremely minimal setup a long time ago with a guy named Franklin Micare. I worked steady with him in a bar using only snare drum and hi-hat. The other instruments in the band were bass guitar and an amplified acoustic guitar. Franklin sat on a stool that had a wire wrapped around a rung, and he would tap it with his foot, keeping time with it as his 'hi-hat.' It was really interesting, because we would play four sets like this and we had to rock! It was a perfect example of creating a set of conditions and forcing yourself to create within that. It made me become very musical on the snare drum: using sounds close to the rim, and then halfway into the head, differentiating between the quality of sound in short versus long rimshots, using cross-stick, combinations of brushes and sticks, or hands. In a situation that intimate, you can also get into dampening techniques. Another technique I used was switching the snare half off so that, when I hit it with my hand, the snares bounced, making a rapid repeat sound. Varieties of pressure on the hi-hat also came through in that situation: different sounds and pitches—almost a scale! I loved that gig, and someday, I hope to do that kind of playing on a record.

"My old Gretsch set has a great sound. The drums are tuned to

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what I consider to be the optimum resonance for each particular drum. Again, this comes from timpani experience. If you hit quarter notes on a pedal timpani and gradually raise the pedal from the bottom to the top of the drum's register, there will be two or three notes that will naturally jump out. These are what I consider the optimum notes for the size of the drum, the head, and other variables that must be taken into consideration. I don't tune to pitches, or try to tune scales or chords between the drums. If I want to change the pitch, I will change the *size* of the drum and try to go for the optimum note that will sing out. The only thing that I never change is the pitch of the bottom heads. In fact, the bottom heads themselves are the ones that originally came with the drums. Everything is in relationship to the bottom heads. The feel plays a role in my tuning, too. I tend to go for the top head tuned just under the bottom. That gives a shock-absorber sensation. When the top head is too tight, it's jarring to me."

With Jackson, Gary rarely uses electronic drums or drum machines. In concert, the band previously played Jackson's hit "Steppin' Out" with a drum machine *a la* the original single but found that the predetermined tempo sometimes forced them into a trap. "We would come to that point in the show, and the machine tempo would not always feel right according to the moment. A concert has so much to do with how the music is going and how the crowd is reacting on that particular night. An appropriate tempo should be determined by the moment," he contends. The band now performs "Steppin' Out" in a very slow tempo with an airy, impressionistic, bluesy feel that could possibly be a reaction to their previous machine-dictated experience. When high-tech electronics *are* appropriate, however, Gary makes wise use of them, such as on the several *Equalizer* television soundtracks he performed on this year.

Later in the same week of the *Will Power* session, Gary is at Bearsville studios in Woodstock, New York, a cozy country facility nestled worlds away from RCA studios. The session in progress is the tune "Wild Abandon," a track on Marshall Crenshaw's fourth album. Instead of being cooped up in a cramped booth this time, the drums have free reign on the open floor. In a switch from the norm, the other musicians—Marshall and bassist Graham Maby—are the ones confined to booths, while Gary and fellow drummer Robert Crenshaw are both sitting behind their sets in the main room gearing up for a double-drum track. No "Applause!" sign needed here.

Producer/engineer Don Dixon is shooting for a natural, wide-open room sound that is wisely appropriate for Gary's and Robert's playing. "This miking setup could be written about in *Ancient Drummer* magazine," Dixon jokes. "The number of mic's I'm using for two drummers, which is seven, is half the number I usually use for just one drummer," he explains. Dixon's instinct proves right, and as the two drummers begin grooving together on a stomping shuffle during mic' check, it's obvious that they are already having a ball. Smiles break out among the band, and there is no doubt that a little magic is brewing in the air. "It reminds me of the old Sandy Nelson records," Marshall laughs. The two drummers continue, and now the shuffle is irresistibly infectious. The two begin embellishing and then trading fours, while Dixon leans back in his producer's seat, bobs his head in time, and lets the boys get a good sweat going. Little do the drummers realize it, but Dixon is already letting the tape roll. Breaking the hypnotic joy of the drums would be counterproductive at this point, so as the tape rolls, Marshall counts right into the tune. The magic holds on, and it sounds as if the band is capturing the fun innocence of garage band moments.

At the final cymbal crash, Marshall announces, "As far as I'm concerned, that's it. We've got it!" Everyone laughs. For the sake of having options, Dixon recommends one more take. The time is still clicking in the musicians' heads, hands, and hearts. So to avoid disrupting the flow, they jump right back into another rocking take, and it's party time all over again. After the last chord fades, Dixon presses the talk-back mic'. "I guess we just can't get a bad take on this," he says. The band walks into the control room

and devours homemade chocolate chip cookies while listening to the playback and nodding in approval. Everyone comments in amazement that there is not a flam to be heard between the two drummers' backbeats.

Although it would seem that the heady technical passages of *Will Power* and the good-time shuffle of "Wild Abandon" are worlds apart, they are not all that different to Gary. To him, the common goal is finding that one natural spark: keeping the boyhood memory of the minstrel's rimshot alive. "There are lots of things that can take away spontaneity," he says. "Reading music is one of them, and recording is another. But you have to step outside of yourself. It seems that you spend half your life trying to recreate those moments—those times when your playing was not thought out and you were so totally inside the moment."

With Jackson, Gary's challenge is always how to recreate those moments within ever-changing circumstances. As of now, Jackson is talking of taking *Will Power's* music on an international tour of major cities with two synthesizers, drums, and hired orchestras. In this circumstance, on a live stage with one old Gretsch set surrounded by banks of sequencers and a sea of strings, finding the natural spark will prove to be yet another new challenge. But even when surrounded by the "bigness" of it all, Gary will surely find a way to "step outside" himself. Listening to Gary back at his apartment talking about his children confirms where this drummer's musical priorities will always remain firmly rooted: "The youngest of my three daughters is a two-and-a-half-year old named Deana. Her two older twin sisters play violin. So I bought Deana a cheap little mandolin from Brazil. She sticks the mandolin under her chin when her sisters practice and plucks away at whatever comes to mind. So I was thinking of picking up a mini-size violin for her. People have asked me, 'Don't you want to give her lessons?' because there is a Suzuki class going on up where I live. But I don't know if I can do it." Gary pauses and then with a satisfied smile concludes, "Nothing against Suzuki, but there's a certain *abandon* in what she does that I don't want to squash." 

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# Roy Haynes: "Snap Crackle"

MUSIC KEY

Adc  
Tennis

T	•
S.D.	•
F	•
B.D.	•

This month's *Drum Soloist* features Roy Haynes on an album of his called *Out Of The Afternoon* (Impulse Records, A-23). On "Snap Crackle," Roy plays a 36-bar solo, incorporating a lot of syncopated figures. His excellent use of phrasing is also apparent in this solo.

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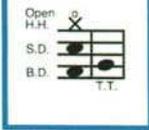
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# Recreating Beats

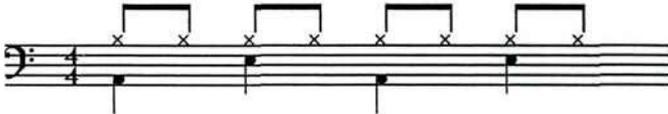
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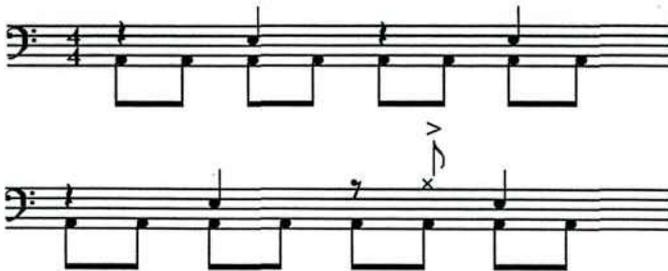
How many variations of a basic rock beat can one come up with? This is constantly a challenge for me with John Cougar Mellencamp records. I'm always trying to come up with a new drum part for his music, and the more albums I record with him, the bigger the challenge gets. Each song will dictate an obvious beat. However, I don't always use it. When I

first hear a song, I try to come up with at least three different beats that could possibly work in the song. If I can, or if it suits the song, I'll use the beat that is the most unique.

For example, when we first started arranging the song "Crumblin' Down," I played a basic rock beat:



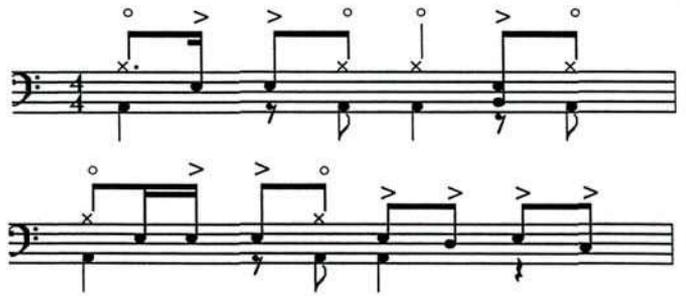
It felt great, but I had already used that beat before on several of John's songs. We were looking for something different. I ended up creating a beat based on the repeating 8th-note figure that John was playing on guitar:



I had never played constant 8th notes with the bass drum on one of John's songs, so this was a new and different beat for his music. In this particular situation, John's guitar inspired me to create a unique beat. Unfortunately, I can't always depend on being inspired this way. John usually likes the beat of a song to be established first, so I decided that I had to be better prepared for these situations.

When we were putting together the *Scarecrow* album, I devised a method to help give me more ideas for beats. This idea was inspired by John. He had the band learn and rehearse 100 songs from the '60s and '70s, so that we could really get into those styles of rock. Many of the songs he picked had great beats that I never would have thought about playing in a John Cougar Mellencamp song. We rehearsed songs recorded by Young Rascals, Supremes, Jacksons, Four Tops, Temptations, Mitch Ryder, Syndicate Of Sound, Zombies, Four Seasons, Beach Boys, Sly Stone, Beatles, Cream, Mamas & Papas, Creedence Clearwater, Hollies, Stones, and Neil Diamond, to name just a few. While we were working on these different tunes, I kept notebooks and transcriptions of these songs to use for reference. It worked great! I was able to refer to these transcriptions for ideas for John's songs. Here are a few examples of how all of this worked for me.

We recorded a song called "Laugh And A Tear," which had this two-measure drum break:

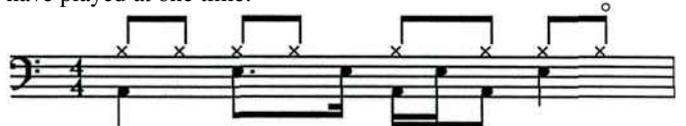


This beat was inspired by the verse beats from a Four Seasons song called "Rag Doll," which looks like this:

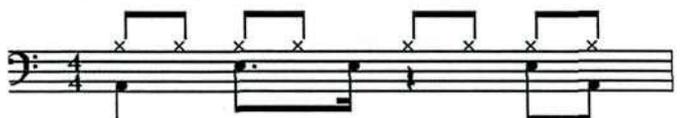


It's obvious that I added more notes and sounds to the "Rag Doll" beat, but it inspired me nevertheless.

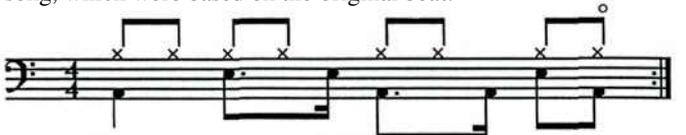
One Friday afternoon, we were banging our heads together trying to pick a cool beat for a song called "Justice And Independence." I was daydreaming about something, when John suddenly shouted at me, "What's that beat you're playing?" I was so lost in my own world that I wasn't even aware I was playing the drums. I had been quietly tapping out a silly little beat that all drummers have played at one time:



We also had been rehearsing an old Creedence Clearwater song called "Down On The Corner," which had a similar beat. John really dug the beat and the feel that it had with the song. I wasn't convinced, so I went home and played the beat over and over again, experimenting with the hi-hat, snare, and bass drum, until I had a vocabulary of musical ideas. I worked on the basic beat and the ideas for that beat until they all grooved together. The intro of the song was a simplified version of the basic beat:



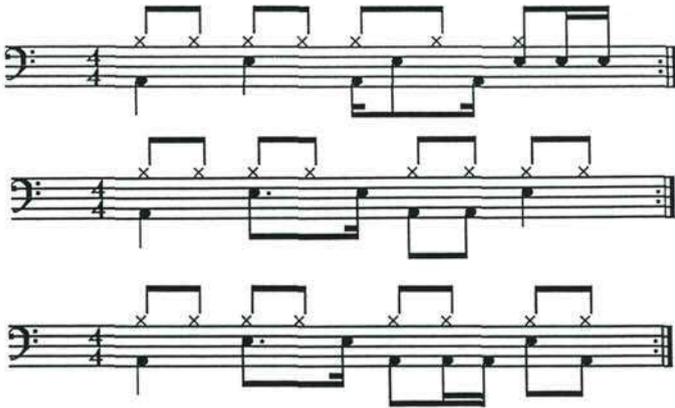
Here are some other examples of the variations that I used in the song, which were based on the original beat:



by Kenny Aronoff



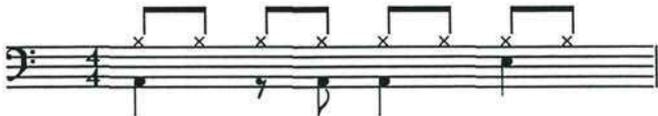
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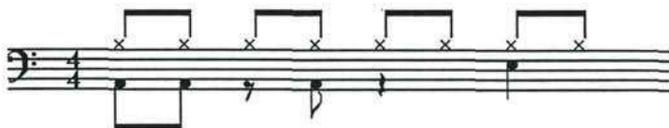
The bottom line here is that I got many ideas for the song from a very simple beat that's been played many times before by many drummers. This beat inspired me to create my own ideas for "Justice And Independence."

While we were rehearsing the old songs, I particularly enjoyed playing the parts from the Young Rascals songs. Dino Danelli was one of my earliest influences, and he inspired me as a young drummer. We recorded a song on the *Scarecrow* album called "Rumbleseat," which was inspired by a Young Rascals song, "Love Is A Beautiful Thing." During the first section of the verses in "Rumbleseat," I played a beat that was similar to what Dino had played. In "Love Is A Beautiful Thing," he left the snare drum out on beat 2. I did the same thing, except that I changed the bass drum part to fit the song better.

"Rumbleseat"



"Love Is A Beautiful Thing"



You can see the similarities, but they still sound different.

Dino's use of his "splashy" ride cymbal inspired me to use more ride cymbal on the *Scarecrow* album. On previous John Cougar Mellencamp recordings, I tried to avoid using the ride cymbal. This was a new texture for the album.

I had never approached a record in this manner before. It was a valuable experience, and it gave me a useful idea. You can't always remember every beat that you've heard on records or the radio, but by keeping a record of these beats, you can refer back to them anytime. Use these beats as inspiration for coming up with patterns of your own.



Bill Ludwig, Jr.

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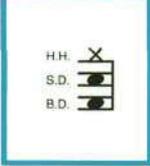
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# Heavy Rock Fr

**MUSIC KEY**



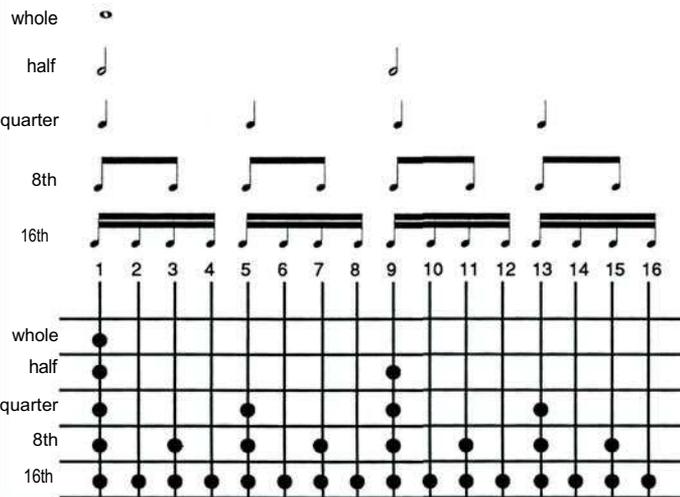
Sshh! don't tell anyone, but a drum machine can actually produce heavy rock! Okay, so perhaps it doesn't look the part, but lurking beneath that unassuming plastic exterior is a demon drummer just waiting to cut loose. This article aims to give your drum machine some exercise.

Heavy rock, metal, or whatever you want to call it relies to a large extent for its effectiveness on power. The majority of rhythms in this style are constructed from four evenly spaced quarter notes. This is often known as "straight fours." Kit drummers usually play these either on a slightly opened hi-hat or on the ride cymbal to help fill out the spaces between the beats. Unfortunately, it's in this area that most drum machines come unstuck. The crisp click of a digital drum machine's hi-hat sample is far too weak. There are several ways to overcome this, and readers with cheaper, non-digital machines will be pleased to know that their hardware is best suited to the task. The rather mushy "noise" that masquerades as a cymbal sound on these machines is ideal for "heavy" programming since it produces a much thicker sound. My old Roland TR808 was persuaded to rock with the best of them by programming both an open hi-hat *and* a ride cymbal sound onto each of the four beats in the bar.

If you've got a digital machine, the open hi-hat will probably be a bit too authentic to work quite as effectively. However, you can console yourself with the fact that this won't be quite as apparent when combined with the fuzz guitars and the screams! It's up to you to decide what sounds best, given the equipment that you have available.

Although this article is designed primarily with the drum programmer in mind, it can be very instructive for the kit drummer, too. To facilitate this "universal appeal," I've decided to provide each of my example patterns in two different formats: one using standard musical notation, and the other in a generic "grid" similar to that used by many drum machines and computers.

To help you understand how these grids and the musical examples fit together, the following diagram shows exactly how each note value relates to a grid pattern.



The grid patterns may, at first, look complicated but are really quite simple and applicable to *any* programmable drum machine. Down the side of each print out, you'll see some of the following abbreviations of drumkit components:

Open H.H. = open hi-hat

Ride = ride cymbal

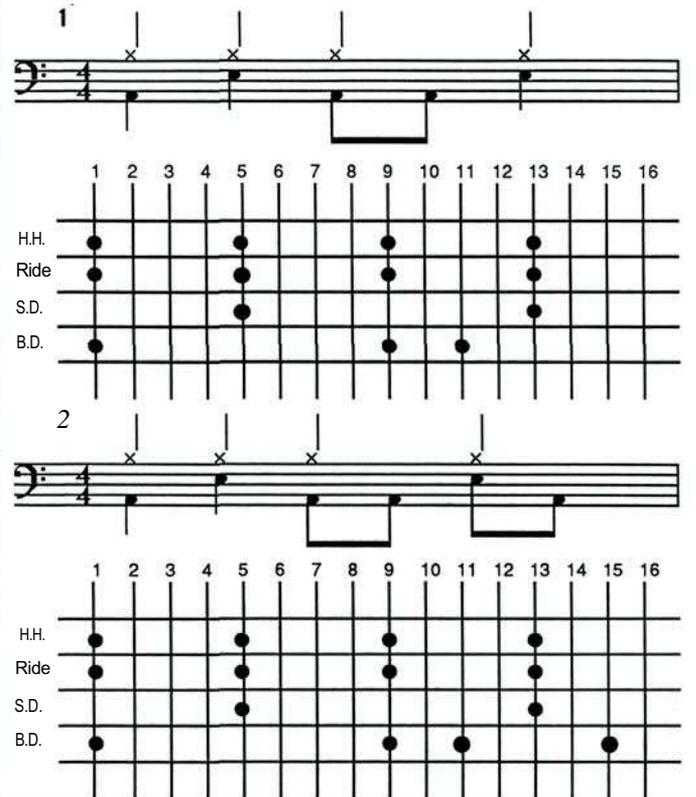
S.D. = snare drum

B.D. = bass drum

Each component has its own horizontal row, usually consisting of four (quarter-note quantize), eight (8th-note quantize), 12 (8th-note triplet quantize), or 16 (16th-note quantize) divisions. (I've shown 16th-note quantizing here.) Each diagram constitutes one bar.

In future articles, I hope to show the novice programmers among you how to convert a piece of standard notation into a "language" that your machine can understand. But for now, I suggest that you rely on the printouts, simply by setting the quantize on your particular machine to that required by the pattern and setting your machine (via its own dedicated user manual) to accept "step-time" input. It's then simply a matter of programming the given sound into the correct sections of the bar.

My first few patterns are quite straightforward. The bass and snare drum content is identical to many other simple 8th-note patterns. If you're feeling ambitious (and can already read standard musical notation), set up your machine to accept "real-time" input, and enter these first four patterns by tapping the pads like a "real" drummer.



# om Light Plastic

3

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

H.H.  
Ride  
S.D.  
B.D.

4

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

H.H.  
Ride  
S.D.  
B.D.

If you get stuck, there's always "step-time" input, using my special printouts. However, you'll find these articles much more educational if you *are* able to use "real-time" machine input. As well as gaining a better understanding of the mechanics of each rhythm, you will be able to enter information into your machine much more quickly.

My next two patterns follow the same overall form. The hi-hat and snare drum elements remain unchanged. It's only the bass drum that alters. Placing two 8th-note beats on the bass drum at the start of the bar gives more drive to the rhythm. A great deal of heavy rock relies on complex bass drum figures to power things along. Listening to a few records will admirably demonstrate this. Here are the two patterns I've just mentioned.

5

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

H.H.  
Ride  
S.D.  
B.D.

6

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

H.H.  
Ride  
S.D.  
B.D.

The "four quarter-note" cymbal rhythm is used in my next examples. This time, the bass drum is played in a "swingy" style. This is a commonly encountered figure that takes up a quarter of a bar. It's built from a dotted-8th note, followed by a 16th note. The theory behind this is that an 8th note is worth  $1/8$  of the bar. The dot after it extends its value by half ( $1/8 + 1/16$ ). The 16th note that follows is worth  $1/16$  of a bar. If we sum these components ( $1/8 + 1/16 + 1/16$ ), we get one quarter (of the bar).

Again, try to input in "real-time," if possible. Having done this, select a different memory location, and program the same pattern in "step-time." Having done this, compare the two. If both sound the same, your "real-time" programming is correct. If they don't, then try again. Here are your first two "heavy swing" rhythms:

7

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

H.H.  
Ride  
S.D.  
B.D.

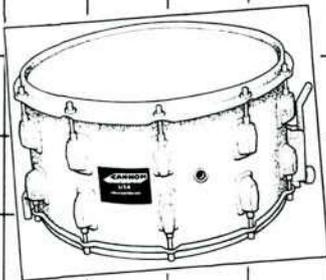
8

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

H.H.  
Ride  
S.D.  
B.D.

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These are similar to patterns 1 and 2, apart from the fact that I've included the swing element on the bass drum. If those earlier patterns are still residing in your machine, switch between them and patterns 7 and 8. You will then clearly perceive what a difference this swing makes.

Patterns 9 and 10 are swing conversions of patterns 3 and 4, respectively. I think you'll be surprised at how different they sound. Once again, try the comparison test that I outlined above.

9

10

I'll leave you with two further "swing" rhythms. These patterns are littered with bass drums, but the snare drum remains in its usual place on beats 2 and 4, and the hi-hat retains its regular four quarter-note pulses.

11

12

Try chaining some of these patterns together in "song mode" on your machine. You could add some 16th-note fills and produce some of your own complete rhythm tracks for later use.

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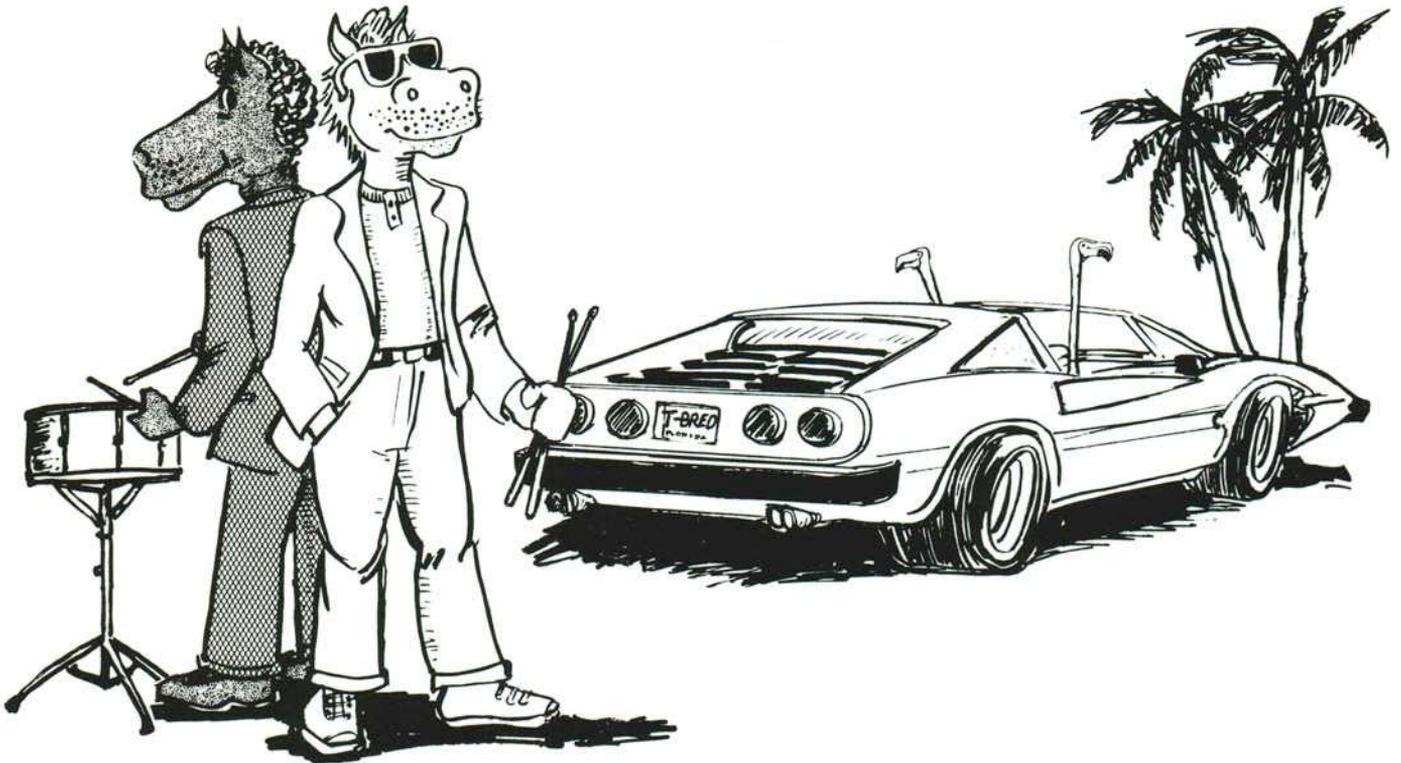
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an education from Paul and Mick. They almost took me on as their younger brother. The tour manager and everybody were all looking after me to make sure that I didn't go wandering off into seedy areas of Hamburg or somewhere like that. Because I had gotten rid of all the illusions about stardom, the *only* thing I wanted to do was to play drums as well as I possibly could for The Style Council. We recorded the *A Paris* album, which featured "Long Hot Summer," which I think is one of the best soul numbers in recent years. That whole EP was very French; it captured the spirit of the summer of '84. By that time, I had become pretty much a fixture. I was practicing so hard that there was no way they were going to get rid of me, anyway [laughs].

**SG:** Was this practice to keep you generally in shape, or did you have weaknesses that you needed to work on?

**SW:** Yes, bass drum technique. I had always been very much into snare drum technique—listening to people like Louie Bellson, Buddy Rich, and Bobby Orr—and I had rather neglected my bass drum technique. As any drummer knows, when you are living and practicing in an ordinary house, it's the bass drum that causes the most aggravation to other people. So I never used to practice bass drum. When I did my first gigs with The Style Council, it felt as if my legs were about to fall off, because I just wasn't used to playing at that volume for so long. I had touched on this with Bill Bruford; he told me that my bass drum technique was my weakest point and that was what I should work on. With The Style Council, and the influence of Paul and Mick, I was being turned on to soul music—the simplicity of Al Jackson's playing and the beauty of Bernard Purdie's playing. That was when my approach to practice changed. Instead of trying to play as fast as I could—I could already play singles, doubles, and triple paradiddles at ridiculous speeds—I wanted to bring it back to basics and play slow funk feels. I would play them for hours and hours, just concentrating on accents and dynamics. That's what I was doing mostly, but I was still keeping up my jazz studies—the Jim Chapin book and things like that.

It's funny, but whenever I get a good review—if somebody says that I'm a great drummer—it embarrasses me, because I don't think I'm worthy of it. That makes me practice more. Now that my career has taken off quite nicely, and I'm playing with The Style Council and with my own band, I still practice as much as I can. I want to

play drums all the time. I think that, as I have matured, I have put more thought and application into my practicing and my playing.

**SG:** It's a very interesting point that you joined a top band at 17, but realized that you had to continue to develop. Some people might have decided that they had arrived.

**SW:** Well, the second year that I was with The Style Council was pretty much taken up with touring, and that did wonders for my playing. Any drummer will tell you that you come back from a tour a totally different player. We recorded an LP, *Cafe Blue*, which was fairly experimental. A lot of the tracks were recorded without any rehearsal, very much like a jazz album. Then in '84, we recorded *Our Favourite Shop*. Maybe I'm biased, but I think that is one of the best pop/soul albums of the '80s. The approach to this was quite different. The melodies, the lyrics, and the arrangements were all thought out very carefully. Paul decided that it would be a different concept from the previous LP, which was spontaneous. We were going to *work* on this one. There were a lot of different styles. One of my favorite tracks is "All Gone Away," on which there is no drums; Gary Wallis and I are on acoustic guitar and percussion. Then there's a slow 16th-note-groove feel on "Home-breakers," and the uptempo, frenzied, Keith Moon-style drumming on "Walls Came Tumbling Down." The whole theme of the album was politically hard hitting. It was just before the miner's strike, there was political unrest in Britain, and the effects of Thatcher's policies were beginning to bite. It was a depressing time, but I think the album comments perfectly on Britain in 1984. I'm proud of it. But to come back to your point, with all this going on, I was being stretched. I *had* to keep developing; I couldn't stand still.

**SG:** Are you keen on fitness?

**SW:** Definitely, yes. It was after recording *Our Favourite Shop* that we went to Australia and Japan. While we were in Japan, I became ill, and it made me realize that, physically, I just wasn't up to scratch. From that time, I began to develop fitness in my drumming, very seriously. I took up martial arts, and over the last couple of years, it has become nearly as important to me as drumming. There are many similarities. My Kung Fu teacher's instructions to me could also come from a good drum teacher: relaxation, awareness, commitment, dedication, application, and thought. I've learned so much about

drumming from the martial arts. I've gotten over the cavalier attitude that I used to have, where I'd do anything; I'd go on stage and go completely berserk for an hour. At 21, I'm entering a different phase of my career. I'm becoming more aware of music. I'm listening more and hearing more, and the ideas that were first nurtured with Bill are *really* beginning to take shape. I'm practicing more than ever now, but I'm concentrating on things like posture and relaxation as well. You can go on playing forever, as long as you are relaxed. You've only got to look at Art Blakey and those kinds of drummers. They are so relaxed. Any young player who is having problems should ask the question, "Am I tense?"

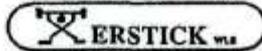
**SG:** But the *physical* intensity required to play jazz in the style of the people you have just mentioned is much less than for, say, heavy metal.

**SW:** I'd agree, but one of the loudest drummers that I've ever heard is Tony Williams, and he always looks so relaxed. It isn't how hard you hit something. If you hit it correctly, that's what counts. Tenseness in drumming is something that has to be eliminated. Even if you are playing the loudest type of rock 'n' roll, if you develop correctly, tenseness should never come into it—*intensity* yes, but not tenseness. I'm reaching a point in my drumming where when I go onto that stage, I leave everything else behind. I want to empty my mind and become absorbed in the music. Intensity doesn't come from physical strength, but the physical strength must be there, too. These days, a drummer is expected to be an athlete as well. Tommy Campbell is a good example. I've seen him with Sonny Rollins and with Tania Maria. Tommy plays so athletically that he looks like a basketball player. With the state of the music business today—tours are getting longer, PAs are getting louder—*any* drummer who thinks that he or she can get away in the old rock 'n' roll tradition of sex, drugs, and booze is an absolute fool. So many young drummers are turning on to what is required to be a top-class player in this back-biting, hungry scene.

Somebody who, for me, personifies everything that a young player ought to aim to be is Dave Weckl. You only have to look at the guy: he's a brilliant sight-reader, he pays attention to his appearance, and he's pleasant to talk to. He has got all the qualities that people are going to want to deal with—not just the things that other drummers are going to be impressed by. Bass players, musical directors—peo-



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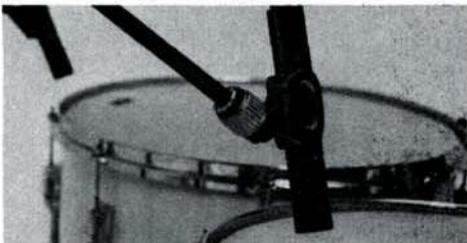
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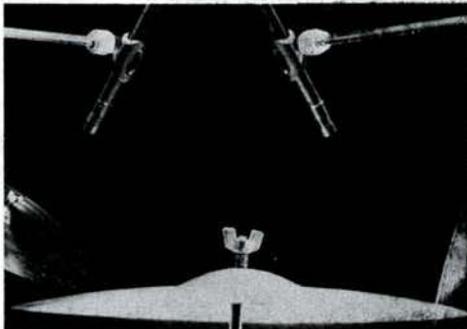
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ple who hire and fire—are going to be impressed. People can pick and choose these days, and you need to be much more than just the person who can go to an audition and play great stuff for 20 minutes. A friend of mine, Colin Schofield of Zildjian, was doing some drum clinics in Japan with Dave Weckl, and I was lucky enough to be able to spend some time with him. Behind that set of drums, he is unbelievable. I could see his mind working creatively. Unlike so many drum clinicians I've seen, Dave was playing *music*, rather than showing us how fast he could play. He was relaxed, but he had total concentration on what he was doing. It was one of the most exciting things I have ever seen—Dave Weckl in Tokyo, just playing drums.

**SG:** Coming back to you, you have worked with Gil Evans on a film score, haven't you?

**SW:** Yes, but it was one number, "Ever Had It Blue?" for the soundtrack of the film *Absolute Beginners*. It was a Latin-oriented tune by Paul Weller, with a brilliant jazz arrangement by Gil Evans, which we recorded with an 18-piece horn section. We knew the book and we had a very good idea how the film ought to turn out, but as it happened, the film turned out very differently, and The Style Council's record probably sounds out of place. I think that is because the film was wrong, not the number. I know that sounds arrogant, but having known the book and known what Paul was thinking when he wrote the song, I think that that was more of a true representation of what *Absolute Beginners* was about than a lot of the other stuff on the soundtrack.

**SG:** Talking of films, what about The Style Council's own film, *Jerusalem*?

**SW:** Paul is uncompromising; he takes his music very seriously. I think that this film is a representation of the way the band stood in 1986. The issues raised are close to our hearts, from a political standpoint. I know that not everybody would agree with them, but Paul wanted to stand up and stake a claim for what The Style Council is all about. There are four songs in the film, and the story is that The Style Council is put on trial for being the best pop band in the world. We wanted to make it typically English. We weren't going to put American license plates on the cars just so that MTV would pick it up. We wanted to stamp our own identity on it. The story is, of course, meant to be humorous. The best pop group in the world—people shouldn't take *that* part seriously.

**SG:** You mentioned MTV. I believe that your video of "Call Me" has received some exposure from MTV?

**SW:** That song was released as an A side in America in late '86, but in Britain it was, sadly, wasted as a B side. It was knocked out in a day, because we don't like to mess about when we get into the studio. We don't spend three days trying to get a snare drum sound; it's more important to get the

feel right. Anyway, "Call Me" developed as we performed it live on tour. It really took shape as a great song. There was talk of American artists covering it, but it was the live version, which we recorded at Wembley, which came out as the single in the States. I've heard from Colin at Zildjian that MTV has been playing it a lot. It's really good, because what you're seeing on TV is a live performance; there's no gimmickry or video tricks. What's there is what went onto the record, and that's the moment. I think that it's an achievement to get something like that accepted these days. Normally, everything is so heavily produced that you wouldn't expect to compete.

**SG:** Can we talk about The Jazz Renegades?

**SW:** The other members of The Style Council are quite a bit older than I am. The band has become more of an institution than falling into the usual rock 'n' roll routine of album, tour, album, tour, but I still want to get out and play live. I don't get many calls to do sessions anyway. Maybe people don't like my playing, or maybe it's just because I am normally too busy to become heavily involved in that scene. So last year I went out and played a few odd gigs, during the course of which I met a sax player named Alan Barnes. There was a musical chemistry between us that was too good to just let go of after a couple of gigs. There is a real rapport between my drumming and his sax playing. We formed The Jazz Renegades and did some gigs in England, which were very well received, and then an offer came along for us to go to Tokyo to open a club and record an album. Towards the end of '86, I realized that with the way The Style Council was going I would have the freedom to pursue The Jazz Renegades project. At that stage, I involved Denis Mundy—the manager who originally got me into The Style Council.

In Britain, at the moment, it seems that things have done an about turn, and jazz is becoming successful again. Young people, undaunted by the rather staid, self-defeating image that jazz has had in the past, are coming to our gigs and enjoying themselves. They don't know that British jazz fans are supposed to sit at the back of the hall with half a pint of beer and say that Charlie Parker could have done it better. These kids are coming along, and they're getting up and dancing. Some of the more dedicated people in the music industry have realized that pop music in Britain is at such a low ebb that we are looking for something like another "punk" to happen—something that's going to explode the scene wide open and wipe away some of the rubbish that is selling phenomenal numbers of records. There is an air of change, and I like to think that The Jazz Renegades are part of that. We play a dance-oriented form of jazz.

**SG:** It wasn't quite what I was expecting. The Hammond organ and ride cymbal

sounds, which you use so much of, give a strong '60s feel.

**SW:** It's a long-term project. I don't see it happening in three weeks. We're drawing on *all* our influences. We need to be careful; we're introducing jazz to a young audience. A whole generation has passed since the jazz heyday of the '50s. As I have said, I love the sound of a Hammond organ, and I actually don't think that something like a *DX7* would cut it with the sort of music we're playing. But that isn't to say that we don't intend to progress and introduce more up-to-date technology into our playing. This will come as the band develops and as the audiences develop. The ultimate aim is to take our influences and bring them up-to-date.

**SG:** Okay, standard question: your equipment?

**SW:** I've been using Pearl drums and Zildjian cymbals virtually since I started. I got my first Pearl kit, which was a wood and fiberglass one, while I was still at school, and that was the one I recorded the first Style Council album on. I've now passed it on to my brother, having had it revamped with all the latest hardware, and it's still an incredible set of drums. I've never wanted to play anything except Pearl drums. Since joining The Style Council, I have only used another kit on a gig once. I won't say what it was, but I hated it. We were in Italy at the time, and the equipment was being supplied. I was lucky enough to get an endorsement deal from Pearl in Japan, and I have found that Pearl's interest in drummers, both in Japan and Britain, has been really encouraging.

On the subject of endorsements, I will not endorse anything that I don't totally believe in and don't use. For instance, I'll only put my name to *Drum X* advertisements, as opposed to *Syncussion*, which is the later, more expensive model. I prefer the *Drum X*, and I think it would be unfair to tell young players that I use something that I don't—and by implication be recommending that they spend money on a more expensive item. I feel a responsibility for anything that I say.

I've got a Pearl *DLX* kit, which Russel, my drum roadie, calls "The Monster Kit." It's an armory of equipment that goes out on the road, and we select the "weapons" according to the environment in which we are playing. Different drums react differently in different acoustics, particularly snare drums. The usual setup is a 22" bass drum with 8", 10", 12", 13", 14", and 15" toms, all fitted with RIMS. I also have a 20" bass drum that is mounted to be played like a tom-tom. The snare drums I have to choose from are a Pearl 6 1/2" free-floating copper shell, a Pearl 8" maple, a Pearl 6 1/2" fiberglass, a Ludwig 400, and a Ludwig 402. I've mentioned the *Drum X*, and I also use the Pearl rack-mounting system. The *DLX* is not the top-of-the-range kit, but it is the most hard-wearing. My kit has been around the world twice, and I find

that with the RIMS system, I couldn't get a better kit.

I've also got a studio kit, which is the top-of-the-range *GLX Super Pro*. The sizes are a 20" or 18" bass drum, and 10", 12", 13", and 14" toms. For a long time, I was using clear *Ambassador* heads, on both sides on bass drums and toms, but recently, I've started using similar ones made by Pearl, which I'm very satisfied with. For perfect sound and good durability, they are great. I'm not particularly fussy about sticks really. Anything like a British *C* or an American *5A* suits me. At the moment, I'm using some Pearl 5Gs.

I am fussy about cymbals, though. I've been working with the same set for the last few years, occasionally adding or subtracting according to requirements. Any new cymbal I get has to fit in with the existing ones. Things do go occasionally, like Rock Crashes can get a bit clanky after being used on the road for a year or so. My basic setup is a 22" *Brilliant Earth Ride*—which has got to be one of the heaviest cymbals Zildjian has ever made, with a fantastic bell sound—20", 18", and 16" Rock Crashes, a 12" splash, and a 20" *China Boy* low. The hi-hats are a 13" K top with a 13" Z bottom. In the studio, I tend to use all K's: a 22" Heavy Ride, a 20" *Flat Top*, 16" and 18" *Brilliant* crashes, and 13" *Brilliant* hi-hats. I've got a collection of ancient and varied K's, which I only use for special things because they could be rather fragile. The cymbals I use for live work are always

on the heavy side. Some of the material that The Style Council does is quite gentle, and I am sometimes asked why I don't use lighter cymbals, but I find that, by hitting them more gently, I can get the sounds I want.

**SG:** Why do you use A's live, but K's for recording?

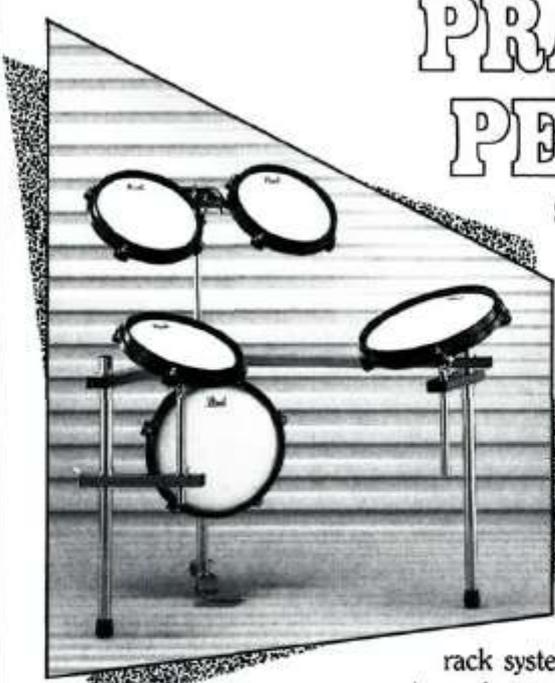
**SW:** I prefer the warmer sound of the K's. With my style of playing, they blend in nicely with the sound of the recording. A's are much brighter and are ideal for live playing, but I sometimes find them a bit too sharp in the studio. It's very much a personal thing though. I still love the sound of A's on other people's records.

**SG:** There's no doubt that you have put a lot of work into your career, but do you think that luck has played a part as well?

**SW:** Yes, I've been lucky. I was able to get together with people like Bill Bruford and Bobby Orr. When I was 17, I got just the right breaks. I played on Live Aid when I was 20, and I've had number-one hits in different countries with The Style Council. It's been such a fulfilling first few years of my career, that it just fires me with enthusiasm for the next 25 or 30 years. It's *brilliant!* What more could someone ask for? I've just done this having worked with the right people—kind people with no ego problems. For me, it's given me confidence and experience. It's been a great start. Let's hope that the rest of my career is as good.



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by Rod Morgenstein

# Styles Are Related: Part 2



Photo by Lissa Wales

**MUSIC KEY**

HH	X
SD	■
BD	□

Last month, we saw how several different drumming styles are linked by a common bond—the traditional jazz ride pattern. Let's take this pattern and "straighten it out." Instead of playing it with a triplet or swing feel, play it straight.

Triplet/Swing Feel

Straight Feel

It's interesting to note that, although the traditional jazz ride pattern is played with a triplet feel, it becomes difficult to maintain at faster tempos, and actually is played and sounds "straighter."

1a at a very fast tempo would sound more like this:

This straightened out ride pattern works well in several different drumming styles. Example 2 has the bass drum playing on 1 and 3 and the snare on 2 and 4. This comes in handy for uptempo country and bluegrass music.

The following three examples have the ride pattern written with 8ths and 16ths, as opposed to quarter notes and 8th notes. This has no effect on the sound or feel. It is merely another way to write the same thing.

Example 3 has a fusion flavor to it characterized by the repeating figure in the bass drum part.

Using this same bass drum pattern, fill in the 16th-note holes with the snare drum (while still playing the same ride pattern) and the beat takes on a Latin/fusion feel.

If we keep the ride pattern and the snare pattern identical to Example 4 and change the bass drum part to the classic samba ostinato, the result is a Latin/samba.

The samba bass drum pattern will work wonders for your foot. In fact, it can be a tremendous help in playing those infamous John Bonham 16th-note triplet licks. This, to me, is a perfect example of how two radically different drumming styles "cross paths" and can help each other.

This last example takes the snare pattern from Examples 4 and 5, and couples it with quarter notes on the hi-hat, while the bass drum fills in some of the holes. The result is a funk feel.

This month's and last month's columns focused on the fact that drumming styles that may appear worlds apart actually have common bonds. As we progressed from one style to the next, we saw elements in common, such as the traditional jazz ride pattern and the 2 and 4 snare backbeat. So, the next time you get called for the ultimate fuse-funk-reg-jazz-blues-lat-shuff-rock-grass gig, don't forget—hey—no problem!



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by Clifford J. Sherry, Ph.D.

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Next, you must determine what your rights are and how to implement them. The Uniform Commercial Code covers outright sales and sales with time payments. The status of leases and leases with the option to buy are less clear and would probably have to be settled in court. The Code provides the buyer with two forms of protection: *express* and *implied* warranties. An *express* warranty is created when one or more of the following is a factor in the buying decision: an affirmation of a fact or promise about the product; a sample or model of the product; a description of the product (as in a catalog or brochure); and/or a demonstration of the product. You must distinguish between these items and statements of the seller's opinion or sales "puffery." For example, sellers who state, "This is the best percussion pad available," are probably stating their opinion. On the other hand, if they state, "This percussion pad can . . ." and then list a series of functions, they are probably creating an express warranty that the pad can perform those functions. If it does not, they may be guilty of a breach of warranty. It is not necessary to mention the words "warranty" or "guarantee" to create an express warranty. It is unlikely that the purchase of a "major" item, like a percussion pad, etc., could take place without the creation of one or more express warranties. But even if this occurs, you can still have protection in the form of *implied* warranties.

There are two forms of implied warranties: merchantability and suitability for a particular purpose. Merchantability means that an item must be fit for the ordinary purpose for which it was intended. It must be adequately labeled and conform

to the label, as well as to any descriptions in the sales contract. For this reason, it is vital that the sales contract describe the item as accurately as possible. If you are concerned about some specific feature, be sure that that function is mentioned in the sales contract. When you talk with salespeople, be sure to tell them exactly what you want, how much you can afford to pay, etc. Then, allow them to suggest a particular model and/or brand. When they do, they are warranting that that particular product will be suited for that particular purpose. This is the reason that you should spend some time thinking about what you want your equipment to do before you actually start shopping.

That was the good news—now for the bad. The Uniform Commercial Code allows sellers to disclaim any and all warranties. (Most courts have not allowed complete disclaimers.) The disclaimer must be conspicuous and as unambiguous as possible. In other words, a disclaimer cannot be written on a tag that is hidden inside a drum. Generally, the disclaimer will contain phrases like: "There are no warranties, express or implied, associated with this contract" or "There are no warranties that extend beyond the description herein." If you are purchasing new drums, you should be especially cautious of any sellers who try to include phrases like "As is" or "With all faults." They are trying to disclaim the warranty of merchantability. This probably means that a seller knows something that you do not but probably should. (If you are purchasing used equipment, you may not be able to avoid this.) If the seller insists, you might think very carefully about your potential purchase.

It is vital that you understand any and all written material that accompanies a sale. This is especially true of any warranties and/or disclaimers. Know exactly what the conditions and limits are, because you may have to live with them. But even if the seller has an effective disclaimer, you may still be able to recover under common law. The two major theories of common law that apply are *misrepresentation* and *negligence*.

Misrepresentation occurs if a seller makes statements of material fact about an item that prove false. These statements are similar to those that would create an express warranty. If misrepresentation occurs (and this must generally be determined in a court of law), then the parties' assent to the contract is invalid, and therefore, the contract, with all of its provi-

sions, never existed. Generally, this means that the parties are returned to the "status quo"—that is, to the state they were in before the invalid contract. What usually happens is that the seller gets the merchandise back and you get your money back.

Negligence is the term over which most issues involving service are disputed. For example, suppose an instrument repair person claims to be an expert. If that person's conduct falls below that of a reasonable and prudent professional with appropriate skill and knowledge, he or she may be guilty of substandard performance. This generally means that he or she is guilty of negligence. But be careful. If you have your repairs done by friends, students, or part-time repair persons, you may not be able to recover under a claim of negligence.

If the item you've purchased does not work as expected (or at all) and the seller cannot or will not make it right and/or will not take it back and return your money, what should you do? If all else fails, consider suing. First, check with your local

## Why Warranties?

Many buyers misunderstand the purpose of a written warranty. Warranties are designed to limit the liability of the seller with respect to some specific piece of equipment. If you sign the warranty card or sales contract, you are agreeing to those limitations. Legitimate sellers are generally not concerned about repairing or replacing faulty equipment. They are concerned about consequential damages that "flow" from equipment failure. For example, suppose you have a recording session set up, and suddenly a specific piece of equipment, such as an amplifier, fails. The cost of the amplifier may be a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. But suppose also that you have hundreds of thousands of dollars tied up in talent for that session. The seller might be liable for the losses that you incurred. You can see why a seller wants to limit consequential damages. They may be ten, a hundred, or even thousands of times the actual cost of the equipment that failed.

The benefit to the buyer is that a written warranty is theoretically easier to enforce than an open-ended, unwritten one. A written warranty implies that the company in question will work within the limits of the warranty without having to resort to litigation.

small claims court to determine if the purchase price of your item is less than the maximum amount within the jurisdiction of the court. If it is, or if you are willing to accept the maximum, consider filing there. You will probably not need an attorney to represent you, and you will probably get on the docket within a reasonable length of time. However, if the purchase price exceeds this amount, consider filing in a superior court. In this case, it is probably wise to have an attorney represent you.

If you go to court, prove your case, and win a judgment in your favor, what can you expect? At the very least, you will get your money back. You will have to return the item in good order—that is, with all instruction manuals, cartons, labels, etc. You may also be awarded attorney's fees and, possibly, court costs.

Whenever you make a major purchase, be careful. Be sure you know what you want and that you get what you bargained for. Read and understand any and all paperwork (sales contracts, warranties, etc.) *before* you sign anything. If you do not understand something, be sure to have it explained to your satisfaction. Such precautions *before* a purchase should prevent dissatisfaction afterwards. However, if despite your precautions, you still do not think that you got what you bargained for, pursue the matter!



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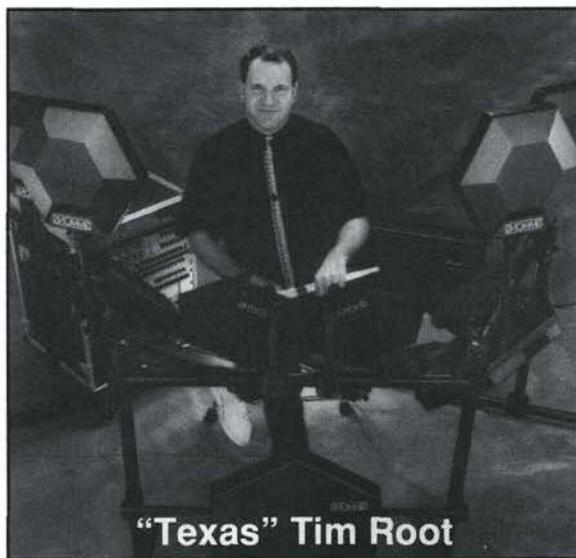
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September 29, 1987  
Guitar Centre, Sherman Oaks, CA

know of was designed by my father, with the help of Robert Danly, in 1910. That type of strainer was an invention of gigantic importance. It was the first mechanical method of releasing the snares when you wanted to play a tom-tom effect. Before the Ludwig & Ludwig throw-off strainer, your only option was to reach down and pull the snares away from the head and jam a drumstick between snares and head, or take the time to loosen the thumb screw that released the snares. That didn't work very well for fast changes. Plus, by pulling the snares away from the head, you only had one hand left to play, and it was awfully hard on the snares, which were

gut. The strainer was a tremendous advance.

**PS:** Were drum companies made popular by their location: Gretsch in New York; Ludwig, Leedy, and Slingerland in the Midwest?

**WFL:** Well, your seat of power was near the plant. The popularity was regional. Slingerland, Ludwig, and Leedy always battled it out in the Midwest. We had the advantage, because we were near the stockyards where the largest kill of cattle occurred daily. We had the opportunity to get select hides for drumheads. That's why we were better off than other companies.

But it was always a race with Bud

Slingerland to see who could get to the tannery first every morning to get the pick of the hides. Many times, I'd walk out and see Bud sitting in the waiting room, and I'd say, "You're next." The next week he'd get the first choice, and he'd say the same thing to me. We were competitors going back to 1934. We battled it out with Slingerland for sales, and for the purchase of lumber, hickory for sticks, and calfskin drumheads for almost 40 years. Whenever one of the drumhead companies, like White Eagle Rawhide or American Rawhide in Chicago, had hides for heads, they'd call me and Bud. Whoever could get in the car first and race over would win first choice of the pile of heads that were available!

**PS:** Could we talk about calfskin heads for a moment?

**WFL:** The best heads came from a yearling—an animal a year old or less. Anything older would be too thin; it just wouldn't respond. The kill was performed each day at the stockyards in Chicago. We had brokers at Swift's and Armour's slaughterhouses, and they would call us when they had one or two thousand skins for our man to go down and look at. We took care of those brokers at Christmas time, believe me—and so did Slingerland!

On snare drums, in order for the snare head to really vibrate, the head had to be as thin as tissue paper. Those heads came from unborn calves and were called "slunk skins." They were always plentiful and were used for snare drum heads, as well as ladies gloves.

**PS:** The snares were gut on all of the early drums. When did they start using wire snares?

**WFL:** During the "flapper era" of the '20s, there was a need for a softer touch with the dance orchestra. Drummers began playing with lighter sticks. Gut snares don't respond to a light touch or to light sticks, but wire snares do.

Apparently, a fellow named James invented the first coiled wire snares, because that type of snare was always referred to as "James" snares. I don't know anything about the gentleman. I've never known anybody who did.

**PS:** Could you talk a bit about the evolution of rims?

**WFL:** At the turn of the century, the hoop was made of flat wire steel. It was cut off to a prescribed length, cold-rolled in three rollers, and then welded. The weld was ground off, and then it was polished and plated. There was no flange. The catalogs of the early and mid-'20s start to show L-shaped single-flanged hoops. The tension was maintained with hooks. The double-flanged hoop arrived in the early '30s.

In the summer of '38, our engineer, Cecil Strupe, came to me with a hoop I'd never seen before. Strupe had taken pliers and bent the top edge over into a third flange. He handed me the hoop and asked

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Ed Shaughnessy, John Guerin, Russ Kunkel
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Carl Palmer, Derek Pellicci, Great Jazz Drummers—Part 1.
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Chet McCracken & Keith Knudsen, Ed Greene.
- #19—OCTOBER 1980  
Louie Bellson, Mick Fleetwood, Roy Haynes.
- #23—MAY 1981  
Jaimoe Johnson-Butch Trucks, Roger Hawkins, Buddy Harman, Paul T. Riddle.
- #30—FEBRUARY 1982  
Philly Joe Jones, Stix Hooper.
- #36—OCTOBER 1982  
Stewart Copeland, Ed Thigpen, Drum Book Reference Guide.
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Jeff Porcaro, Clem Burke, Billy Higgins.
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Earl Palmer, Chad Wackerman, Eli Konikoff.
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Steve Gadd, Myron Grombacher, Drumsticks.
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Airtio, Mark Herndon, Fran Christina.
- #48—OCTOBER 1983  
Alex Van Halen, Phillip Wilson, Frank Beard.
- #49—NOVEMBER 1983  
Phil Collins, Joe LaBarbera, Inside Sabian.
- #50—DECEMBER 1983  
Carl Palmer, Simon Kirke, Guide To Drum Computers.
- #57—JULY 1984  
John Bonham Tribute, Phil Ehart, Inside Simmons
- #58—AUGUST 1984  
Levon Helm, Thommy Price, Bob Moses, Atlantic City.
- #61—NOVEMBER 1984  
Russ Kunkel, Cozy Powell, Horacee Arnold, Focus On Teachers: Part 2.
- #62—DECEMBER 1984  
Terry Bozzio, Omar Hakim, Ian Paice, Inside Calato.
- #63—JANUARY 1985  
Alan White, Shelly Manne, Ollie Brown, Nick Mason.
- #64—FEBRUARY 1985  
Mel Lewis, Mark Brzezicki, Mick Avory, Inside Meinl.
- #65—MARCH 1985  
Roger Taylor (Duran Duran), English Reggae, Jon Von Ohlen, Inside Premier.
- #66—APRIL 1985  
Sly Dunbar, Steve Schaeffer, Chico Hamilton, Getting Your Drum Book Published.
- #67—MAY 1985  
Alan Dawson, Steve Ferrone, David Robinson, D.J. Fontana.
- #68—JUNE 1985  
Steve Jordan, Drum Equipment: A New Look, Mickey Curry, Jerry Allison.
- #69—JULY 1985  
Rod Morgenstein, Kenny Malone, 1985 Readers Poll Winners.
- #70—AUGUST 1985  
Larry Mullen, Jr., George Grantham, Inside Sonor.
- #71—SEPTEMBER 1985  
Jeff Watts, Vinny Appice, George Brown.
- #72—OCTOBER 1985  
Chris Parker, Chris Slade, Drummers in Atlantic City.
- #73—NOVEMBER 1985  
Bernard Purdie, Bobby Chouinard, Ed Soph.
- #74—DECEMBER 1985  
Tony Thompson, Nicko McBrain, Paul Wertico.
- #75—JANUARY 1986  
MD's 10th Anniversary Issue, 1st MD Sound Supplement: Studio Drum Sounds.
- #76—FEBRUARY 1986  
Roy Haynes, A. J. Pero, Jimmie Fadden, David Calarco.
- #77—MARCH 1986  
Jerry Marotta, Marvin Smith, Manny Elias, Buddy Williams.
- #78—APRIL 1986  
Ed Shaughnessy, Don Baldwin, Jerome Cooper, Ray McKinley, Ted McKenna.
- #79—MAY 1986  
Craig Krampf, Terry Williams, Armand Zildjian, Alex Cooper, Bud Harner.
- #80—JUNE 1986  
Kenny Aronoff, Adam Nussbaum, Joe English, Doane Perry, MD Sound Supplement: Focus On Hi-Hat by Peter Erskine.
- #81—JULY 1986  
Billy Cobham, Tico Torres, Jeff Hamilton, Readers Poll Results
- #82—AUGUST 1986  
Steve Smith, Bill Gibson, Joe Franco, Terry Bozzio: Style & Analysis
- #83—SEPTEMBER 1986  
Tommy Lee, Bun E. Carlos, Jerry Carrigan, Ben Riley
- #84—OCTOBER 1986  
Dave Weckl, Bobby Blotzer, Debbi Peterson, Staying In Shape: Part 1
- #85—NOVEMBER 1986  
Joe Morello, David Uosikkinen, Barriemore Barlow, Staying In Shape: Part 2
- #86—DECEMBER 1986  
Simon Phillips, Dave Holland, Industry Insights with Remo Belli, MD 10 yr. Index
- #87—JANUARY 1987  
Greg Bissonette, Gary Husband, Rod Morgenstein Sound Supplement
- #88—FEBRUARY 1987  
Anton Fig, Connie Kay, Jerry Kroon, New York's High School Of The Arts
- #89—MARCH 1987  
Graeme Edge, Joe Smyth, Blues Drummers: Part 2, Inside Pro-Mark
- #90—MAY 1987  
Vinnie Colaiuta, Stan Levey, Music Medicine, Neil Peart Sound Supplement
- #91—JUNE 1987  
J.R. Robinson, Lars Ulrich, Ricky Lawson, Inside P.I.T.

## MODERN PERCUSSIONIST MAGAZINE

- #1 — DECEMBER 1984  
Gary Burton, James Blades, Brazilian Carnival, Marty Hurley
- #2 — MARCH 1985  
Emil Richards, Bobby Hutcherson, Carol Steele, Ralph Hardimon
- #3 — JUNE 1985  
Nexus, Dale Anderson, Fred Sanford, Ray Barretto
- #4 — SEPTEMBER 1985  
Ralph MacDonald, Garfield Cadets, Chris Lamb, Guatemalan Marimbas
- #5 — DECEMBER 1985  
David Friedman, Jimmy Maelen, Karen Ervin Pershing, Jay Wanamaker
- #6 — MARCH 1986  
Star of Indiana, Ray Cooper, Fred Hinger, Earl Hatch
- #7 — JUNE 1986  
Mike Mainieri, Repercussion Unit, Tom Float, Ray Mantilla
- #8 — SEPTEMBER 1986  
Manolo Badrena, Keiko Abe, William Kraft, Ward Durrett
- #9 — DECEMBER 1986  
Dave Samuels, World Drum Festival, Ken Watson, D.C.I. Solo Contest
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if I thought it would have a market. It was as simple as that. That was a truly striking invention.

We were always complaining about how the sticks were always getting chewed up from rimshots. I thought it was a terrific idea right off the bat, so we made up some samples and showed them to guys like Ray Bauduc with the Bob Crosby band. Well, the triple-flanged hoop was quickly adopted. Strupe ordered up rollers, we started making triple-flanged hoops, and it took off! That gave us a terrific edge over all the competition. Leedy never did do it, and it wasn't until much later that Bud Slingerland began rolling his edge in.

**PS:** What about the use of die-cast hoops and regular steel hoops?

**WFL:** Steel hoops are just steel. Die-cast hoops are cast of aluminum. The cast hoops are stronger, heavier, and more expensive than steel. The only purpose of the cast hoops is for resistance against warpage and to resist high tensioning. As the high-tension era engulfed us in the mid-'70s, we went to progressively thicker steel.

Gretsch had cast hoops all along on its outfits. They looked smoother and distributed the tension more evenly than steel. They plate beautifully—far better than steel.

**PS:** Tell me about the conception and evolution of the lug.

**WFL:** The first lug was really the stud on a drum owned by Tom Mills in 1902, a drum my father always admired. My father eventually bought that drum from Tom Mills for \$4.00.

It was just a threaded post attached to the shell, and the rod was threaded into it. The trouble with it was that the post would pull on the shell and warp it. So in the first metal shell my father put together, he had Danly put "backup" plates on the inside of the shell to tie the two posts together. The next year, Danly tied the two posts together with a tube, because the drum with the plates was too heavy. My father was always one for strength and light weight. That became known as the tubular lug, which reigned supreme from 1911 until 1935.

The only reason for the die-cast lugs was that George Way, sales manager for Leedy, wanted to have something different and something that would make it impossible to strip threads. He had hit upon the idea of the cast lug with the swivel-nut inside that was threaded to meet the threads of the rod. The swivel-nut was held in place by a spring. If you tensioned the rod at an angle, you didn't run the danger of stripping the rod as you did with the tubular lug, which was a fixed receiver for the threads. George Way named his lug the *Beavertail* self-aligning lug because it sloped off at the tail end. Ludwig & Ludwig was quick to follow a year or two later with the *Imperial* lug.

The *Imperial* lug had a beautiful design, and it replaced the tubular lug to accommodate the better engineering principle of George Way. First, it only appeared on the snare drum, and then it went step by step through the whole outfit. The design changed a little over the years, but to do so was a huge investment. No one ever manufactured casings except Premier. All the other drum companies found it expedient to present their designs to a casting company and then have a production run of dies. The company would own the dies, but they remained in the possession of the casting company.

**PS:** Where did the idea for ply shells come from?

**WFL:** Plywood is plywood, and I don't know who invented it, but it's well-known that cross-ply strengthen wood panels.

**PS:** How did the standards for sizes come about?

**WFL:** That's a good question. Well, the larger the shell, the more volume and penetration. We owe a lot to our European ancestors. The drums from Europe were around 13" to 15" in diameter and 29" deep, and in the case of the German drums, they were never more than 5" deep. The German Army often "goose stepped" when passing in review, and you couldn't have a great big drum to march that way. This set the pattern for our snare drums. This size drum was easy to carry around, and it sounded good in concert situations. The armies of Europe carried bass drums for centuries. You see them in all of the old prints and etchings, and they couldn't have been much over 36" or they'd have been pretty hard to carry. They couldn't have been much wider than 14", because they were often struck on both sides.

The drummers in Scotland hit the bass drum on both sides and twirled sticks at the same time. So they opted for thinner shells of 8" and 10" width. Drum sizes were settled on according to the need, use, and sound. I really have no idea why the trade settled on 9 x 13 toms. I guess the 16 x 16 tom was settled upon because it was deeper sounding.

**PS:** Didn't bass drum sizes change a lot over the years?

**WFL:** They changed very slowly. Originally, they were 32" for outdoor performance where the volume was needed. As drummers began to play indoors, they found that they didn't need such volume. They started asking for smaller bass drums. And don't forget, they had to carry them on street cars or carriages, because there weren't many automobiles in those days. So they settled on 28" to 30" diameter and a 14" to 16" width. During the Charleston era in the '20s, you'd find a lot of 14x28 bass drums. That size satisfied drummers for many years.

During the bebop era, we went into extremely small sizes—down to 18" diameters. For a while, the 18" and 20" were pop-

ular. Now the swing is back to larger bass drums where volume is desired. The size depends upon the style of music the drums are going to be used for.

**PS:** What about drumsticks?

**WFL:** There were snakewood drumsticks years ago, which were very hard and impractical because they were very brittle. There were other exotic woods, but the favored wood for sticks is, and always has been, second-growth hickory [hickory from a tree that has been harvested once], mostly from Tennessee. This is a tight-grained, strong, white stick that resists warpage to a certain extent and stands up pretty well.

My father was the first one to mass-produce drumsticks in 1916. Before that, sticks were hand-turned. My father assigned the "A" designation for the light sticks. So *1A* was the longest and thinnest; the *2A*, *3A*, and so forth got bigger. He assigned "B" to band, and of course "S" stood for street marching. Danly made the first drumstick lathes, which were semi-automatic. A worker had to insert the dowel and activate a clamp on the stick. A gear would take hold and run a knife the length of the stick.

**PS:** Looking back for a moment, the history of the snare drum goes back to 1910 with the metal drum and the snare strainer. From then on, there were always new innovations in snare drum design. Was Ludwig always working hard on snare drum innovations?

**WFL:** The snare drum is the flagship of any drum manufacturer's line. The first throw-off strainer was a toggle-link affair that's still the basis for the design of present-day throw-offs. The *Pioneer* strainer came next. It was a vertical drop-off running along the side of the shell and was more practical than the toggle link.

The idea behind the *Super-Sensitive* strainer was to permit a drummer to have the snares flush across the head and extended beyond the edge so there'd be no bending around the edge. It also enabled the player to tension each of the snares individually.

The next year they added the wire-wound snares. The wire-wounds were called silk wire snares, and the James snares were coiled wire snares. You could put all three types of snares on the *Super-Sensitive*, which was a big advance. The *Super-Sensitive* was a terrific drum and is still made by us today.

**PS:** Wasn't there a drum called the *Super-Sensitive* that had snares not only on the snare head, but also on the inside of the batter head?

**WFL:** Yes. The second set was added for more snap when using wire brushes. On the inside of the batter head were James wire snares, and the snare side had the conventional set. That design was dropped during the Depression of 1930-36. It was too expensive for the average drummer,

plus the nature of drumming had changed to the swing drum sound where you only needed one set of snares.

The only other innovations on the *Super-Sensitive* were the widening of the snare plate and the butt plate so we could put more snares on. One time Gretsch came out with a set of snares with 42 strands. It was plenty snappy.

**PS:** What were the options regarding wood shells and brass shells?

**WFL:** My father always admired drummer Tom Mills, mentioned earlier. He had played with John Phillip Sousa's third band. My father admired the crispness of the drum that Mills used, and he bought it and duplicated it. Metal snare drums were always crisp and sharp. They were certainly more durable than wood. Today, there's a school that feels the wood drum is warmer in sound. It's all in the ears of the listener.

All of the shells in the early days were brass. Brass is easy to plate, polish, and buff. We changed to bronze about 12 years ago, because we felt the sound was superior to brass. But they have very similar characteristics. Some of our shells are aluminum. When aluminum alloys grew in the industry's favor about 25 years ago, we started to think of a low-end line of drums made of aluminum. Aluminum is malleable, lightweight, and cheaper than brass or bronze.

**PS:** What about the engraving on the old *Black Beauty* snare drums?

**WFL:** The first drums with engraving used the wave engraving pattern. It was later changed to a sunburst style of engraving. It was black nickel-plated and hand-engraved.

It all started in the early '20s. I don't know who thought of it. There was also a gold-plated version of that style. The catalog shows that the wave pattern was changed to the sunburst pattern in 1924.

Another snare drum we offered was the *Classic*, which was a name I thought of when we came out with the die-cast strainer in 1947. I think the most popular snare drum ever produced was the *Supra-Phonic 400*. In fact, I think it's the most popular drum in the world today.

**PS:** What about some of the other snare drum innovations from other drum companies, like the *Radio King* by Slingerland?

**WFL:** It was just a wood-shell drum with a catchy name. In those days, radio was the main form of entertainment, and they claimed the drum was "king of the snare drums." They had a new styling and die-cast lugs. The kids loved it, because they associated it with Gene Krupa. As I recall, it didn't have any of the intricacies of our *Super-Sensitive*. I really think they lucked out with Gene Krupa. He was very famous.

**PS:** Many spoke of the *Radio King's* merits because of the solid maple shell.

**WFL:** It didn't sound any better or worse than a plywood shell. It was heavier, but that's about all. I've seen many drummers pick up a heavy drum and think that, because it's heavy, it's a marvelous drum. Others will pick up a drum, and because it's nice and light, they believe that the drum must be really responsive. We didn't think it was wise to have a solid piece of maple that could split. Slingerland always put the name of a player with a snare drum to lock that drummer in with that snare drum, in the hope that that drummer would become popular. It was just an advertising gimmick.

**PS:** What type of wood did you use for the

wooden shells?

**WFL:** When I came into the business, we were producing three-ply shells. We used two outer panels of mahogany and one inner panel of poplar. The idea behind the three-ply construction was that it would be very strong and crack-proof, but very light. We reinforced the edges with solid maple glue rings, referred to as reinforcement rings. We stayed with mahogany and poplar for a long time. From time to time, we'd use maple as an outer panel, and sometimes birds-eye maple. We were always trying to come up with something different in a comparable price range with our competition. You could use exotic

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woods, but they'd be very costly. And I don't know what difference it would make in the sound. Drum companies mainly used woods that were readily available, economical, and easy to manipulate, sand, fill, and finish.

**PS:** I've seen old Rogers ads that speak of being involved in the drum business since 1840!

**WFL:** That's right. Rogers produced on and off from 1840, starting with drumheads. By the Civil War, the Rogers family was making rope drums for the Union forces to fill a government contract. I suppose the family stopped making those drums in the 1880s and stayed with drumheads. Rogers didn't surface again until the '30s. The company came out with a catalog of drums that were inferior. Rogers never made it, but that company made good drumheads. Rogers drumheads were sought after by drummers everywhere.

The company, however, didn't become successful in drums until Henry Grossman of Grossman Music in Cleveland bought Mr. Rogers out in 1960. Grossman gave the company a tremendous infusion of cash, and hired a marketing manager named Ben Straus. They came up with the *Dyna-Sonic* snare drum with a bracketed set of snares that would press the snares against the head. I believe this idea was taken from a Leedy drum with a similar snare assembly in 1920. But Rogers was successful in obtaining a patent on it. So the *Dyna-Sonic* wasn't born out of the Rogers family, but by the fellows at Leedy.

Grossman built Rogers for five or six years, and then sold the company to CBS at the end of the Beatles boom. CBS ran it, along with all its other acquisitions in the '70s, and then sold it to Bill Schultz of the Fender company. That was a big competitor of ours during the '60s and '70s. Rogers also came out with a fiberglass timpani that gave us a good run for our money. It had a shallow kettle and was good for what college educators called "baroque" performance.

**PS:** Doesn't Gretsch also go back to the 1800s?

**WFL:** Fred Gretsch, Sr., made drums from 1880 through 1900. Gretsch opened an office and warehouse in Chicago. When I entered the business in 1937, it was operated by Bill Gretsch, who died just before World War II. We used to take Gretsch snare drums in the '30s and '40s and examine them in our shop. Gretsch came out with a unique snare drum called the *Billy Gladstone model* in about 1940. You could tension both heads at the same time from the same rod. The drum sold for \$100, which was ridiculous in those days. Our top of the line was \$35.

I remember Phil Grant and Fred Gretsch, Jr., reserving a suite at the Sherman Hotel in 1940, and inviting all the Chicago drummers to see the marvelous *Gladstone* drum. But it never really sold that

well. Billy Gladstone was an inventor and a great drummer. He played all the great shows on the road and knew them so well that he could play the whole show without music. The Gretsch *Gladstone* is a classic, but I haven't seen one in years. I used to have one in my collection, and I sent it to Billy Cobham. But he never got it; it never arrived at his apartment in New York.

**PS:** Were there basic structural differences between Gretsch and Ludwig drums?

**WFL:** Sure. The people at Gretsch had their ideas about plies and finishes, and we had ours. But when the drums were tuned up, you really couldn't tell them apart. We had different features. But Gretsch was a big rival all along.

**PS:** Wasn't Slingerland your primary competitor since its inception?

**WFL:** The Slingerland Drum Company was founded by H.H. Slingerland around 1916. At the beginning, that company wasn't any competition to Ludwig & Ludwig, because at first, Slingerland was a banjo and ukulele manufacturer.

The story I heard from my dad was that H.H. Slingerland had come east from St. Louis and had been in business on the Mississippi riverboats. Mr. Slingerland was not a drummer, but he was a heck of a good businessman. Legend has it that he won a ukulele correspondence course in a card game about the time my father opened the Ludwig & Ludwig shop in the Omaha building—around 1909 or 1910. Mr. Slingerland liked the mail-order business, and in about a year or so, he purchased the factory on West Belden Avenue on Chicago's North Side, which contained a ukulele manufacturing operation. The ukulele course blended beautifully with the manufacturing operation, and sales flourished. To this, H.H. added a banjo line, which led to the founding of a drumhead tannery. By 1916, the Slingerland operation consisted of fretted instruments and a tannery. The banjo and ukulele craze continued, and brought great growth to the Slingerland Banjo Company. It was spurred by stars such as Rudy Vallee on the uke, and Pinketori, with the great Paul Whiteman band of the '20s, on banjo.

About 1927, talking pictures came along, and by 1928, the ukulele and banjo craze was on the wane. So H.H. Slingerland started looking around to other areas for expansion. In August of '29, when my father sold Ludwig & Ludwig to the Conn Corporation, Slingerland heard that a lot of the Ludwig equipment was not going to be taken because the Conn people had bought Leedy two years before. You see, Leedy was older than my father, and his son Hollis had no interest in the business. He sold out to Conn in 1927. When my father sold to Conn in 1929, the company claimed that it didn't have the same cash flow, so he took some Conn stock.

A man named Fred Larson was the controller of the Ludwig office on North Lin-

coln Street. Larson and H.H. Slingerland both lived on the West Side of Chicago, and H.H. Slingerland arranged to pick up Larson every morning and drive him to the Ludwig & Ludwig office. I know this, because my father saw it happening after he sold the company to Conn. Apparently, Fred Larson informed H.H. that the Conn company was planning on moving the works from Chicago to Elkhart, Indiana, and merging it with Leedy in 1930. As a consequence of the move, a lot of the machinery was to be auctioned off from the Ludwig plant because Conn didn't need duplicate bending machines, duplicate sets of dies to stamp out counterhoops, or multiple drill presses. Leedy had those in the Conn building in Elkhart.

In any event, H.H. knew that a lot of the dies, fixtures, and bending machines would be for sale, so he had his agent at the auction and bought it all! He moved it out of the Ludwig plant, two miles north to the Slingerland banjo and ukulele plant. That set him up in the drum business in 1931. It was opportune for him to get into the drum business, because Ludwig & Ludwig then left Chicago as its manufacturing center. By 1933, Slingerland was making drums. In 1936, Sam Roland, the sales manager of Slingerland, brought out a wonderful catalog with a picture of Gene Krupa on the cover.

Gene didn't use temple blocks, Chinese toms, or effects. He had a new kind of tomtom with separate tensioning and tubular lugs. You can see in that picture that those lugs were snare drum lugs adapted to the tomtom. In that catalog, you're looking at drums practically identical to Ludwig drums, but with a different logo.

So how did Slingerland get Krupa? Well, Krupa originally played Ludwig drums when he was in Austin High School. His father had bought them for him at Lyon & Healy Music Company. After the 1935 Congress Hotel performance we spoke of earlier, his father wanted him to have a new set. He called Ludwig & Ludwig's office, but the sales manager turned him down since he didn't have the authority to deal with him. It all had to go through Conn at Elkhart. Krupa's father took the phone book and found Slingerland Banjo & Drum Company. Years ago, Gene told me that he didn't really want to go to a banjo company, but his father talked him into giving it a try. Gene's father called H.H. Slingerland and told him about his son's success, and H.H. sold him a set of white pearl drums—wholesale, direct from the factory.

Well, Gene went straight to the top and had the greatest fame of any drummer in history. He got Slingerland to make tunable toms while we were still making tacked bottom heads. H.H. listened to Gene. Ludwig & Ludwig and Leedy, being a part of a conglomerate, were slower to react. Slingerland soon replaced Ludwig &

Ludwig as the dominant drum manufacturer in Chicago. And Bud Slingerland took over the company upon the death of his father in 1947. Bud Slingerland learned the business fast and was always a very tough competitor.

After the merger with Conn, we had to move to Elkhart, as my father wanted to be in the drum plant. They already had a plant manager named George Way. He had been sales manager for Leedy in Indianapolis. Well, conflict arose between my father and Mr. Way as to which company—Ludwig & Ludwig or Leedy—would receive the best promotion and the most engineering attention. After three and a half years, my father was given a transfer back to Chicago to the sales office of Ludwig & Ludwig. In 1936, he resigned from Conn and bought the building on North Damen Avenue to start up in the drum business all over again. H.H. Slingerland is alleged to have made the prediction that we wouldn't last a year. This became a rallying cry for Dad and me. I left the University of Illinois and my position as solo timpanist with the University of Illinois band. The new company was christened William F. Ludwig Drum Company, but we had to change it because Conn complained we were encroaching on the ownership of the name Ludwig. So we chose W.F.L. Drum Company, our own initials, and thus, the W.F.L. company was born. We could not use the name Ludwig on any of the products. One of my

first tasks was to produce a small timpani brochure featuring our machine-operated timpani. That was followed by our first general drum catalog with Ray Bauduc, featured with The Bob Crosby band, on the cover in 1938. This brought in a flood of business.

**PS:** What did Conn do? I remember seeing logos that read "Leedy & Ludwig."

**WFL:** Conn reacted by cutting prices, especially on timpani, to nip this new threat of W.F.L. Drum Company in the bud. So we battled it out. I went on the road calling on dealers from coast to coast and giving dozens of drum clinics anywhere I could find an audience. At first, orders were small, but then business picked up with the first catalog.

The war threatened in 1940, and gradually, the use of critical material needed for the war effort was curtailed: first aluminum, then brass, and then steel. Our chief engineer designed wooden lugs to preserve our steel allotment for tension rods.

I enlisted in the navy, and Bud Slingerland signed up with the army. This left both the fathers of W.F.L. and Slingerland to cope as best they could through the difficult four-year war period. When the war ended in '45, Bud and I returned to the plants to rebuild our separate businesses. There was a government bid out for 200 sets of pedal timpani, which Bud got, and this started him into the timpani business. That one really hurt me personally. We were always partial to

timpani, as Dad and I were both timpanists. Conn restarted after the war also, and combined Ludwig & Ludwig and Leedy. That's how Leedy & Ludwig came about.

In 1954, rumors swept through the music business that Conn wanted to get out of the drum business, because the company needed capital to expand its electronic organ line. Conn never really had a lot of enthusiasm for the drum business. I called up Bud Slingerland and worked with him for the only time in my life. I suggested we make a common bid for the drum division and split it 50/50. He could have Leedy, and we'd get the Ludwig name back. My father was against it, because it meant an outlay of about \$90,000 for the Ludwig division of Conn. This included all of the old patents, and the old dies, fixtures, and tooling. There were 700 die sets involved. So along with Bud Slingerland, we came up with \$180,000, which is what Conn wanted for the division. We made that deal in May of 1955. Then it was up to Bud and I to divide the Ludwig & Ludwig and Leedy tooling. We argued a lot over whose dies were whose, and it took us 16 weeks. We'd go down to Elkhart on a Tuesday and come back on Thursday. That was the *only* time I ever cooperated with Bud Slingerland on anything.

I asked Bud why he went into the deal. He said he intended to make the Leedy line in the Slingerland factory as a second line. He said, "Well, the way I look at it,



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Slingerland will have the best dealer in town. Then I'll go to the second-best dealer and give him Leedy exclusively. You can have the third dealer in every town!" When he made that statement, I *doubled* my resolve to bury him in the marketplace. Later, my father said it was a good move to buy the name back, because all hell broke loose, and we got orders from all corners of the world. The power of a good name is hard to lose.

The sequel to that story is that Bud Slingerland did put Leedy in a separate catalog, and he did hang Leedy hardware on Slingerland drums. But he never could disguise the fact that the hoops and strainers were Slingerland. It only lasted three years before he dropped the Leedy name.

One of the first things he did was to go to the Midwest Band Clinic Committee. Bud said it wasn't fair to let Ludwig supply all the percussion equipment for the Midwest clinic every year. He talked the committee into dividing this marvelous opportunity with us, whereby one year Slingerland would provide the equipment, the next year Leedy would provide the equipment, and the next year Ludwig would provide it. When I heard about it, I was furious! Fortunately for us, the first Midwest band clinic that Slingerland ever supplied equipment for was his last! He sent down the low end of the Slingerland line: single-tension bass drums, all in small sizes, finished in plain mahogany. After receiving the Slingerland equipment, the fellows at the clinic called me, indicated they were not satisfied, and asked if we could help them out with a separate-tension concert bass drum, a separate-tension *Supra-Phonic* snare drum, good cymbals, and good timpani. I took all that stuff down myself—in a station wagon! For 39 years, we've supplied all the equipment for the Midwest band clinic, and continue to do so to this day. Slingerland dropped the Leedy line the very next year; the name has been dead ever since.

**PS:** Did Ludwig ever have a favored market?

**WFL:** Well, the Slingerland company uncovered Gene Krupa as a budding artist, as I said earlier. When swing exploded, everybody saw Gene Krupa and his Slingerland drums. Customers were literally taking them off the dealers' shelves as fast as they could get them in. I called on dealers repeatedly to sell our drumsets, but the dealers would tell me over and over that all they wanted was the Gene Krupa snare drum and the Gene Krupa drumset. I'd tell them I had Ray Bauduc *Dixieland* drums, and they'd say, "Ray Bauduc, who's he?" Everybody knew Gene. So what was left for us to sell? Since we couldn't sell snare drums or drum outfits, we sold accessories. Then we turned to the school market, and a better thing couldn't have happened. You see, Slingerland was so loaded with orders for Krupa sets that

they were working two shifts in some departments. I'd look through the basement windows of Slingerland when I'd drive downtown, and there they'd be bending shells at 11:00 PM. It put us solidly into the school field, and I started doing clinics. Both my father and I were asked to give clinics for different schools in the '30s, and we did. That got us a firm foothold in the school market, which we haven't relinquished to this day.

**PS:** Buddy Rich was associated with Ludwig during the '40s and '50s, and also as a child in the '20s, billed as "Traps The Drum Wonder." What was that all about?  
**WFL:** My father always told stories about how Buddy Rich and his dad would come to the plant on Lincoln Street while Buddy was on tour with the RKO vaudeville circuit. They played Chicago once a year. His dad would bring him in to have him measured for a new bass drum. In Buddy's act, the curtain would open and he'd be playing furiously, but all the audience would see was this big bass drum. He'd be standing behind the drum in a sailor suit, playing the snare and the bass drum standing up. As he grew year by year, he had to come out to the factory to be measured for next season's bass drum. By the time they got to 40" in diameter, it was the end of the vaudeville era.

Buddy grew up in vaudeville. His parents were a song-and-dance team. I think Buddy learned to tap-dance almost as soon as he could walk. One day, when he was about four years old, a drummer in one of the old theaters told Buddy's dad, "Buddy stands in the pit all through the show watching everything I do. When the last show is over and the lights come up, he stands behind the drums and plays them. It's marvelous!"

I first came across Buddy in 1938 at the Hickory House on 52nd Street in New York, with the Joe Marsala trio. I was amazed at his incredible technique. He was playing a Slingerland set that he'd gotten from a dealer named Bill Mather in New York. Slingerland used Mather as a conduit to line up a lot of drummers to gain prominence and beat Ludwig—and it worked!

Mather took a standard Slingerland set and custom-tooled shell-mount holders for Buddy. After the war, I tried to get Buddy on Ludwig, and I succeeded because I played Buddy against Gene. I told him he'd always be number two with Slingerland as long as they had Krupa. With W.F.L., he'd be number one. I gave him three sets a year and prominent advertising, and I got him away from Slingerland. After I got him, I had great difficulty satisfying his whims and his temperament. He was very difficult to service, though I did so for a lot of years. Then something happened with Krupa, and all of a sudden, Buddy switched back to Slingerland. I outbid Slingerland 15 years later, and Buddy

was back with us.

**PS:** Let's go back for a moment to the design of all those shell-mount holders.

**WFL:** It was just evolution. I think Bill Mather was the first to really use the shell-mount idea. We didn't go to shell-mount holders exclusively until the early '50s. We had to shut down production for days to get the thing rolling. Ever since, drum companies have been struggling valiantly to design holders and mounts that won't slip, rattle, fall, or shake off. Now the holders are immense, and they put a lot of stress on the shell. When the mounts got bigger, we went to thicker shells. We started making 6-ply shells in the mid-'70s. We got out of steam bending and into circular molds.

We always made everything light, because we were thinking of transportation. When the Japanese got into the market in the mid-'60s, they tooled up for heavy-duty stands. It was easier for them since they were just starting out, while we had tooling, parts, and inventory in production. We were loathe to get bigger, because it was so expensive to replace all that. In some respects, we had been slower with heavy-duty hardware. Most of the ideas in equipment came from the outside. Drummers would ask, "Why don't you make . . . ?" Well, somebody would do it, and if it wasn't us, it was a scramble to catch up.

**PS:** Is that what happened when they started producing elongated tom-toms and deeper shell bass drums?

**WFL:** Every drummer is looking to be different. They don't like to be part of a crowd. Drum companies are also looking to be different to take sales from the competition; that's the name of the game. Generally, the manufacturer follows the market, the trend, and the demand.

One of the problems in the drum industry has been the wide range of sizes and colors. That situation reduces the sizes of the runs you can make, because the orders are all over the place. The only time it was really consistent was during the Beatles boom. We had an oyster black four-piece set. We made 100 sets a day for three years, six days a week.

I guess something like that happened at the end of World War II as the government eased up on the metal restrictions and started ordering sets to entertain the troops: all mahogany, single-tension, 28" bass drum, 9x13 tom-tom, 16x16 floor tom, and 5x14 snare. The government ordered thousands of those sets and stamped them all U.S. But aside from those two instances, we've had to create a variety of sizes and finishes. That's very costly, and it's run up the cost of drums today.

**PS:** Do you remember when the first plastic drumhead came into existence?

**WFL:** The first man to show me *Mylar* heads was Joe Grolimand, president of the

Selmer Company in 1956. He started out by ordering some hoops, and he said he was on the threshold of quite an idea. We sent him a batch of hoops. When he sent up the heads mounted on the hoops, we put them on a drum. He had tacked them on the hoops, and they didn't stay on very well, so we decided not to pursue it.

Then we started getting orders for hoops from a man named Evans in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1958. He ordered so many hoops that we finally said we weren't going to send any more until he told us what he was using them for. He wrote back and told us he was using them to mount *Mylar* on hoops. Well, he sent up a batch of heads. We had already seen the ones Grolimand had mounted, and when we put the Evans heads on, they were too thin. We'd hit the heads, and they'd get pits all over them. We were quick to say that it will never last and never catch on, even though we knew that they didn't break easily and they were moisture-proof.

Grolimand got the *Mylar* idea when Dupont called on him to use *Mylar* for clarinet and saxophone pads. Dupont invented *Mylar* at the request of the government during World War II. It was used for movie film to replace celluloid, for mounting in the bombardier's camera to record the results of bomb runs. Well, we started buying rolls of *Mylar*, and we began tacking it on the hoops, but they were pulling off. We tried gluing them with epoxy resin and found it very difficult to handle the resin—very sticky stuff that caused rashes on employee's hands, even though we used gloves. We tried notching the *Mylar* with holes, and it still pulled out.

One day, my father was sitting in his office with a pair of pliers, bending one hoop over another hoop with the *Mylar* in between. He was attempting to bend the outer hoop over the inner hoop. He turned the idea over to our engineers. We tested it and found it was very difficult to pull the *Mylar* out. The engineers developed a system of rolling the outer hoop over the inner hoop and called it clinching.

The younger drummers were the first to accept *Mylar*. We first offered it as an alternative in ordering, but there was a lot of resistance from the old-timers. They thought there was nothing like calfskin. And of course, American Rawhide and White Eagle, the two big calfskin manufacturers in the late '50s, started a vigorous campaign about how there was nothing like calf. We countered it with the waterproof idea, but we still wanted to offer both heads. By the mid-'60s, drummers were ordering more drums with *Mylar* heads than with calf. We dropped the calf completely with the 1968 catalog.

**PS:** Was Ludwig the only drum manufacturer doing anything with heads?

**WFL:** Yes, the only one, and the only one that ever *did* anything with it. Remo was the head company, and we started in at

about the same time. We wanted to be independent. We saw a chance to get out of having to rely on the tanneries. It was a wonderful opportunity. The packing plants where we were getting our calfskins were constantly raising their prices, because they were heavily unionized.

**PS:** Didn't all the other companies have their own logos on the heads?

**WFL:** Slingerland manufactured its own heads after seeing what we were doing. Bud Slingerland ordered his engineer to copy our head mountings. We had taken out a patent right away, but one day, a dealer called me and told me that Slingerland had a head on the market just like ours. I asked him to send me some

samples of the Slingerland heads, and sure enough, it was a copy. I called Bud and said, "You're copying our heads." He said, "So what? Your patent is no good." I told him we were going to have to sue him. He told me to go ahead and that it wouldn't get us anywhere. Well, we got a patent attorney and proceeded to enter suit against Slingerland to stop the company from making that head.

The suit dragged on for 18 months. It was terrible trouble. My father was furious. It so happened that, because the heads were made in Tennessee, we had to sue in the Nashville Federal District Court. The suit came to trial the day after New Year's, 1964, and we were down there and ready.

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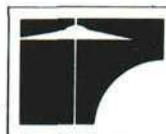
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Bud came up from Florida, where he vacationed during the holidays. He admitted on the stand that he gave our head to his foreman at Shelbyville, and told him to copy it. I thought right there we had it, but his attorneys proved that there was "prior art"; it meant that our idea of clinching the *Mylar* between two hoops in an interlocking relationship had been done before in other fields. And if it had been done in other fields, it was termed "prior art." The judge ruled against us nine months later.

I'll never forget the day my father called me into his office. He said, "Sit down. I have some bad news. I just got word from our attorney that Slingerland won the drumhead case." It had cost us about \$180,000 to prosecute—not to mention a lot of wasted time. All the time, all Bud had to do was offer us a small royalty, and we could have saved the money and strengthened the patent for both of us against the companies from overseas, who eventually flooded the market. That was another reason we didn't get along with Bud Slingerland. My father invented the Ludwig head with a pair of pliers. We never got over that situation with Slingerland; it was a bitter blow.

The next time I saw Bud was at an industry outing. Up at the bar, he said, "How did it feel when you got the news that you lost the drumhead suit?" "Rotten," I said, "just rotten, but we're going to appeal." He said, "Appeal schlamiel! You don't know when you're licked." It was almost at the point of blows! Well, we lost the appeal. And then, as our lawyer handed us another bill, he asked if we wanted to take it to the Supreme Court. We said no. The lawyer suggested we strengthen the patent and get a reissue, and give Slingerland a license with no royalty. That would strengthen the patent for both of us. We agreed to that, and Slingerland agreed to a royalty-free license.

**PS:** Did you notice a different sound with the use of the plastic head?

**WFL:** Sure. It was a completely different sound. It's harsher, more resonant, and more brilliant. A calf head is warmer and responds softer to the sticks, but young drummers today will never know the difference because they'll never find a good calf head. The tanneries quit making calf heads because there were no orders. The American Rawhide Company owners died of a broken heart, I think. They had wonderful equipment for making calfskin heads, and I think they made some of the best. United Rawhide, owned by Steve Polansky on the North Side, is still holding on. But we order about six calfskin heads a month when we used to order \$30,000 worth a month. It's a dead business. When you see those twisted dog bones in the pet section of the grocery store—those are calfskin heads!

**PS:** When did the single-headed drum trend start?

**WFL:** That idea came from timbales. We

put out some sets without lugs on the bottom head, and they were a dismal failure. Drummers want to have the option, even if they store the hoop and head. We found that out after losing a tremendous amount of money promoting single-head outfits. It was quite a flop in the '50s.

**PS:** What about the *Octa-Plus* sets?

**WFL:** For 30 years, drummers played four-piece sets—from Krupa through to the Beatles. With the advent of rock, drummers began asking for another tom-tom. For a while, drummers had to have double tom-tom holders. That was a great step forward. That occurred around the end of the '60s. Then some drummers started adding another floor tom, usually 18", though I saw a lot of drummers using them to lay their sticks and towels on. Gene and Buddy used that double floor tom setup.

The multiple tom-tom sets really started to proliferate in the early '70s. The descending scale became popular, and that's when the drum companies had to hustle to create stands to hold more toms. Again, it was a change in style that made way for innovation. The *Octa-Plus* name came from our marketing department as a clever way to identify a set of nine drums—eight plus one.

**PS:** Has it always been common practice for manufacturers to put their logos on the drumshells and their names on the bass drum heads?

**WFL:** The logo has been around for as long as I can remember, but the logo on the bass drum head is a different story. Back in the early '60s, we used to watch *The Ed Sullivan Show* every Sunday night. One night, in February of 1964, a group called the Beatles appeared. Well, I sat right up and studied what I was seeing. At first, I thought it was a comedy act; they appeared so different. Suddenly, I saw my name on the bass drum!

A few months after that, a man named Ivor Arbiter, who had been selling our product in England in 1960, visited our office. He had a portfolio of pictures of rock groups that were using Ludwig drums and that he thought we should advertise. One of the groups was the Beatles, picturing Ringo Starr with the Ludwig decal on the front head. I stopped at that picture and asked why he put our name on the front head. Arbiter said that Ringo was so proud that he had an imported set from America, especially a famous company like Ludwig, that he insisted on having the Ludwig name painted on the front head. I asked Ivor how that had come about. He told me that one day Ringo came into his shop, before anybody knew him, and said he was the drummer with a group called the Beatles. He told Arbiter that the Beatles had hit it big and that he was looking for a new set. Originally, Ringo had been looking for a Premier set. Well, the salesman had just obtained a Ludwig franchise for all of England and Ireland. He pointed

out the Ludwig set in the window, which surprised Ringo. It happened to be the new Oyster Black Pearl outfit. The new pearl was part of a new batch we got every year to have something new to show at the trade shows. I didn't know what to name it. It looked like the inside of an oyster shell after you eat the oyster, and I like oysters. All I could think of was "oyster pearl," and somebody added the "black," to help identify it. I thought it would only be around for a few years at best, so Oyster Black Pearl it became. That was the set that went to England in that first shipment. Ringo Starr said he'd take it under the condition that the Ludwig name be put on the front head of the bass drum. Ringo told him he wanted everyone to know he had Ludwig.

At the convention that year, after we'd seen our name on Ringo's bass drum on the Sullivan show, Arbiter said he wanted the Ludwig name on all the bass drums in his next order. I told him we couldn't do it; we weren't geared up for it, and besides, it seemed ostentatious. He said he wouldn't give us the order; he had to have the name on the head. He said he'd pay for the decals, so we ordered them and started putting them on the sets for England. From then on, we got orders from all over with requests for the name on the bass drum. Then somebody started to wake up, and we ordered thousands of decals and started putting them on *all* the sets. We were the first company to do so because of Ringo and that dealer.

**PS:** Didn't you meet with Ringo once and give him a drum?

**WFL:** The Beatles came to Chicago in 1964 for a concert at the Amphitheatre. We all thought that we should give some recognition for what Ringo had done for us. We were back ordered 85,000 drums—nine months of work. We didn't need to advertise. We suspended a lot of promotion, and we were making a good profit, which we plowed back into more expansion. The rest of the industry was also benefiting as well, but we had the primary thrust because of Ringo.

Anyway, when we got the news of the Beatles coming to Chicago, I suggested we make up a 5 x 14 *Super-Sensitive* snare drum plated in 14kt gold. It was really expensive, but we did it. On the day we were to present it, I went down with my wife and daughter. We had tickets to a press conference. As we approached the Amphitheatre, I was amazed at the people trudging through the winter weather towards the theater carrying signs with slogans of their enthusiasm for the Beatles. I couldn't believe it! I'd never seen anything like it.

We were ushered up the stairs of the Amphitheatre for the press conference. Suddenly, there was a flurry of excitement and in came the Beatles. Later, we were told we could stand with the Beatles to have our picture taken. They were very

pleasant young fellows. Finally, it was our turn. I said to Ringo, "We made this specially gold-plated drum for you in honor of this occasion." He said, "Oh, that's nice." He held the drum, and they took the pictures. I introduced him to my daughter, who was 16 at the time and absolutely astounded by the event. I don't know if it really struck home with Ringo what this was all about, because the police took the drum away after the photo. The last I saw it, a policeman had it under his arm walking through a door following the Beatles. I imagine it was lost in the shuffle anyway, because the Beatles were so famous that they were being inundated with money and offers. We didn't even get to the concert. We were ushered out of the press conference, and it was a terrible letdown. I didn't pursue it, because Ringo was already so famous that I rather doubt he cared about the manufacturer of his drum. But he still insisted on using Ludwig drums with the name on the front of the head. I still haven't gotten to know him well, though my son says he's a good fellow. That's how the name came to be on the head of the bass drum.

**PS:** I've noticed that, over the years, information about drum products has diminished. They used to talk about construction and other specific details; it was knowledge-oriented advertising. Why has that dwindled?

**WFL:** I don't know. I always wrote a lot of copy for all of my catalogs, and I wrote about 20 of them. There must be a trend away from an excessive amount of copy. I

wonder if today's percussionist wants to read a lot. I don't know. I know that many young people have said they'd fall off to sleep reading our catalog. Sometimes, parents have related how, in the morning when they'd go to wake their children for school, they'd find our catalog half opened next to the bed.

**PS:** What do you consider the highlights of your life in drumming?

**WFL:** Moving to Elkhart in 1932 and being accepted into the Elkhart High School band was a highlight. Elkhart was the band instrument capital of the world. It was quite a thrill to play in that band, go to contests, and study seriously. Another big thrill was winning first place on snare drum at the National Music Contest in the spring of 1933 with the Elkhart band. Two summers at the National Music Camp in 1932 and '33 were highlights.

Later, when I secured the appointment to play timpani with the Chicago Civic Symphony Orchestra, the training orchestra for young people leading to possible appointment with the major symphony orchestras in the country—that was a high point. Playing in the University Of Illinois band under Austin A. Harding was also a high point. The first time I walked through the door of the W.F.L. Drum Company in 1938 as a full-time employee was still another highlight.

**PS:** Might we talk a bit about the sale of Ludwig?

**WFL:** Well, in 1929, forces beyond my father's control led him to the sale of Ludwig & Ludwig to the Conn Corpora-

tion. He felt his interests would best be served by joining them. Fifty-two years later, the Ludwig family was again faced with a decision of a similar magnitude. The forces that were dictating a merger with the Selmer Corporation were fairly identical to the conditions that existed in the late '20s. The electronic drum market was facing us, and as we'd always been an acoustic company, it was obvious that we'd have to expend an enormous amount of money to start such a production. I sold Ludwig Industries to the Selmer Company in November of 1981 with the approval of my family. We've been a division of the Selmer Company in Elkhart, Indiana, for over five years now. Last year, the Selmer Company closed the Chicago operation and moved it to North Carolina to improve efficiency and costs. My son and I remained here in Chicago, in Selmer's artist relations office.

**PS:** Has it been difficult being in your position all those years, with the pressures of running an international corporation?

**WFL:** At times, yes! This is the penalty the individual entrepreneur pays. We had our ups and downs like anybody else. Maggie, my wife of 31 years, has been a constant source of inner strength. And my son, William F. Ludwig III, was always at my side to help out. He literally cut his teeth in the drum business. We attended all the major conventions here and in Europe as a family. But the rewards have been worth it. You just have to hang in there—no matter what!



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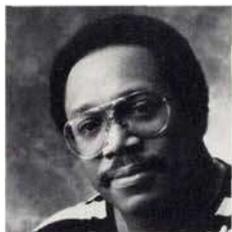
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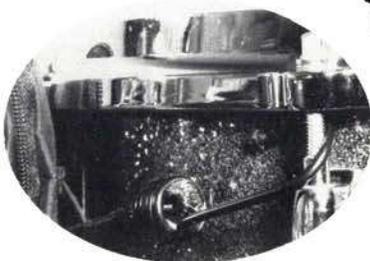
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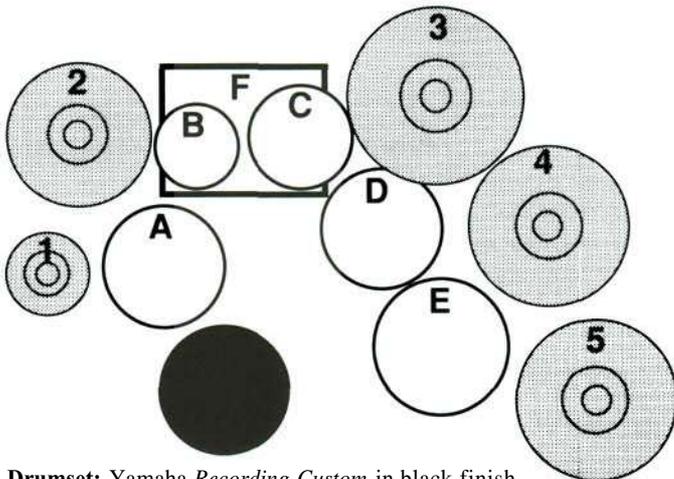


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# SETUP UPDATE

## Mike Clark



**Drumset:** Yamaha Recording Custom in black finish.

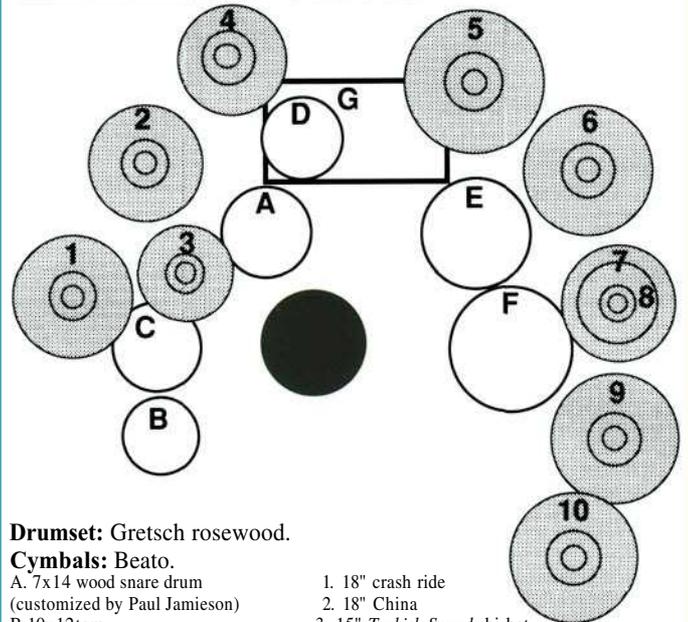
**Cymbals:** Sabian.

- |                        |                                                |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| A. 5 1/2x14 wood snare | 1. 14" HH hi-hats                              |
| B. 8x10 tom            | 2. 18" HH crash                                |
| C. 9x13 tom            | 3. 22" HH medium ride                          |
| D. 14x14 floor tom     | 4. 20" HH medium ride                          |
| E. 16x16 floor tom     | (sometimes alternates with a 22" HH flat ride) |
| F. 14x18 bass drum     | 5. 20" HH Chinese                              |
- (sometimes alternates with a 14x22)

**Hardware:** All Yamaha stands. Gretsch bass drum pedal with felt beaters (sometimes wood).

**Heads:** Remo coated *Ambassadors* on top of snare and on bottoms of toms. *Pinstripes* on top of toms. Clear *Ambassador* on batter side of bass drum, coated *Ambassador* on front.

## Marc Droubay



**Drumset:** Gretsch rosewood.

**Cymbals:** Beato.

- |                               |                                                  |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| A. 7x14 wood snare drum       | 1. 18" crash ride                                |
| (customized by Paul Jamieson) | 2. 18" China                                     |
| B. 10x12tom                   | 3. 15" Turkish Sounds hi-hat                     |
| C. 11x3 tom                   | 4. 20" ride                                      |
| D. 12x15 tom                  | 5. 22" ping ride                                 |
| E. 16x16 floor tom            | 6. 20" ride                                      |
| F. 16x18 floor tom            | 7. 18" crash ride                                |
| G. 14x26 bass drum            | 8. 13" inverted splash (above 18" crash ride #7) |
|                               | 9. 20" China                                     |
|                               | 10. 20" crash ride                               |

**Hardware:** All hardware Gretsch. Drum Workshop 5500 *T-Turbo* hi-hat. Drum Workshop 5000 *Turbo* (single) bass drum pedal with reversible beater.

**Heads:** Canasonic medium (white) on snare. Canasonic thin *PowerPlay* top and bottom (black) on all toms. Canasonic thin *PowerPlay* on front of bass drum (black), with Remo *CS* (with clear spot) on batter side. No muffling on any drums!

**Sticks:** Beato hickory CCC model with wood tip.



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# Showmanship

The dictionary defines "showmanship" as "having a flair for dramatic or visual effectiveness." It defines "show off" as "ostentatious display or exhibitionistic behavior." "Exhibitionism" is defined as "the act or practice of flaunting oneself in order to attract attention."

These three definitions all seem to be emotionally linked to the term *showmanship*. By emotionally linked I mean that everyone seems to feel very strongly about it in either a negative or positive way.

The ultimate showman was undoubtedly Gene Krupa, the first drummer to make a lasting contact with the general public. He was extremely handsome, was fun to watch, and of course, was an exceptional drummer. Harvey Mason once made the comment, "The old masters could hypnotize an audience with their drumming." If this is true—as I believe it is—Gene Krupa was the master hypnotist.

First of all, Gene's solos had a great beat. People could dance to his solos if they cared to. However, most would stop dancing and watch when Gene played a solo. He was a killer with dynamics. With his eyes flashing, he would play a very soft roll—in rhythm, bass drum pulsing, getting softer and softer—and then gradually work his way into a climax of 16th notes with rimshots, cymbals, and tom-toms. People would react with standing, screaming applause.

Gene also had two extremely bright spotlights: one between his hi-hat and small tom, and one between his ride cymbal and floor tom. They were pointed upward in such a way as to not only spotlight Gene, but also to cast this great shadow behind him on the stage curtain. Let me tell you, it was impressive and great fun to see in person.

Other drummers of that era were also great showmen. Buddy Rich was a treat to watch. His dramatic single strokes, played at blazing speed and accentuated by fast double time on the bass drum, would reach any audience. His use of the splash cymbal was visual as well as musical. He was as dynamic (if not more so) as any drummer, even into his late 60's.

Papa Jo Jones (who became famous with Count Basie) was also a joy to watch. He had a smile that could light up an entire room. He could play brushes in any club, and you could hear a pin drop. He could

command your attention without volume. This seems to be somewhat of a lost art today.

Jo had a floor tom by his hi-hat, as well as one in the usual position, and would play crossover patterns between the two. The visual effect was stunning. It also had a great sound and was always played right in time.

The legendary Cozy Cole was another swing-era drummer who was great to watch. He was also an inventive and musical soloist. Tall and handsome, Cozy generated great warmth on stage, and audiences reacted accordingly.

Tommy Dorsey had a revolving drum riser constructed for Louie Bellson, so that people could see Louie's feet as he played (capitalizing on the fact that Louie was the first one to play two bass drums). Always smiling, friendly, and enthusiastic, Louie generates great warmth to an audience and is great fun to watch. He is also a superb drummer.

Lionel Hampton, who played drums before he played the vibes, was the master at twirling, throwing, and catching the drumsticks while playing. He would use six sticks at once: one under his chin, one under each arm, one in the air, and one in each hand. Lionel kept the sticks in constant motion—from hand to arm to chin—like a master juggler. You had to see it to believe it.

Of course, drum showmanship isn't relegated to drummers of the past; it's alive and well, and on stage today. For example, I recently saw Triumph in concert with Gil Moore on drums. Gil designed a special drumset, which is difficult to describe. The shells are clear, with lights running through them. The riser is a huge, mechanically complicated monster with lights above and all around it. The riser moves up and forward, while lights flash through the drumset in wild visual patterns. It is the most incredible visual presentation for a drum solo I have ever seen. It's worth the price of admission just to see and hear Gil.

The popularity and acceptance of showmanship seems to come and go in cycles. In the '40s, it was very popular. In the late '50s and early '60s, jazz musicians often took a dim view of it. Even Dizzy Gillespie, one of the great trumpet players, was criticized for having too much fun on stage and for showing off to the audience. During

this era, musicians became more restrained. The music was softer, and understatement was the rule. Drum solos were often discouraged or frowned upon. "Died-in-the-wool" jazz critics would put down virtually any drum solo. Drummers have always been easy targets for critics, because most critics have never been on stage pumping out the beat and energy for a rock group or a swinging big band. They understand little about drumming. Unfortunately, some drummers—who should know better—criticize other drummers who are "flashy" or have better technique, and as a result receive more attention. (Generally, this criticism stems from jealousy.) They may also criticize drum solos, because they may not be able to play an interesting solo.

An old saying regarding showmanship states that there are two basic ways to do it: "Do something easy and make it look hard, or do something hard and make it look easy." I feel that a lot depends upon your own personality. Drummers who are extroverted tend to be flamboyant, visual, and obvious. More introverted drummers tend to concentrate more on playing difficult patterns and less on displaying their personalities. It doesn't matter which approach you choose—or what combination of the two—as long as it feels right for you. What one person loves another one hates. This is especially true when it comes to the areas of showmanship and personality. Most drummers today are some combination of showman, artist, drummer, musician, actor, composer, entertainer, and musician. (Hey, that sounds pretty good to me.)

One last thought: I can't tell you precisely how to analyze yourself or suggest which route you should take to become successful. However, I can tell you *exactly* how to become a failure: Try to please everyone. Obviously, *no one* can please everyone. So, be yourself! Do what you feel is natural for you. If you have a natural ability to communicate with an audience, by all means do so. If all you want to do is studio work, then begin training yourself to take advantage of the opportunity if and when it presents itself. But by all means, please yourself! And if you *can* combine good playing with showmanship like the players I've mentioned, then *gofor* it!

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# Joe Montineri Custom Snare Drums

I recently spent some time in Connecticut with Joe Montineri to check out the line of snare drums Joe is building. Nine different sizes of snare drums are available, all built of ten-ply pure rock maple wood (no "filler" plies). All the shells are seasoned for at least one year. Aside from the usual 14" diameter drums in 4", 5", 5 1/2", 6", 6 1/2", 7", and 8" depths, Joe is also making a lot of 4 x 12 and 5 x 12 soprano drums. These cannot be termed "piccolo" snares; a true piccolo is 13" in diameter. (No one

seems to make true piccolos nowadays, anyway; the "piccolos" out now are simply squashed 14" drums.)

All of Montineri's snare drums are hand-lacquer-finished, using 18 to 20 coats of nitrocellulose lacquer on the outside. The exterior ply is flame maple, which makes for a truly beautiful instrument once lacquered over. The shell interior is left unfinished, for non-reflective sound purposes. Tube-style brass lugs with two bolts each are used, and are available with chrome, brass, copper, nickel, or blue nickel plating. Matching hoops, rods, and washers with finishes other than chrome are available at an extra charge. All drums are eight-lug, except for the sopranos, which are six-lug. (An eight-lug soprano can be ordered.)

Three choices of bearing edge are available: crisp, general-purpose, or fat. The rounder the edge, the rounder the sound. As the customer, you also have a choice of hoops (pressed or cast), as well as a choice of spring, cable, or gut snares. Finishing is also your choice: Joe offers clear lacquers, one-color tints, sunbursts, solid lacquers, metallics, and centerbursts, as well as "esoteric wraps," such as black or white mother-of-pearl and black/gold glitter. Full dress diamond appliques are another option. Montineri feels that the drum you order is a very personal instrument, which is the reason for all the different choices and options. As a final touch, the customer's initials are engraved in the throwoff's fine-tune knob. There are even more options available (at extra charge), such as special ventholes, radical bearing edge cuts, engraving, and so on. By the way, Joe does everything except shoot the lacquer on the drums!

The throwoff is Montineri-designed. It looks extremely simplistic, but works like a dream. Utilizing a small stick lever, fine-tune knob, and dragnut, the throwoff responds effortlessly. As a result, fine tun-

ing the snare tension is smooth and very accurate. The entire assembly is silent and well-engineered.

I played a few of the soprano drums, with both crisp and general-purpose edges, and I can vouch for their cutting power and clarity of tone. Clear buzz rolls can be done even at the outermost portion of the head, which is merely a result of the drums' inherent sensitivity. The 14" drums have the same good qualities but, of course, at a lower pitch. All the drums speak extremely well. The available combinations of hoops, edges, snares, sizes, and heads will provide a unique sound, good for live playing and recording. Joe's idea to construct quality drums similar to the "old classics" has worked without fault.

I should also mention that Joe has his own special super-strong snare cord with a multi-core. I found the cord to work just great! Aside from being used on all of his drums, it's packaged and sold separately. As a sideline, Joe also creates some pretty neat T-shirts depicting patent blueprints of vintage percussion instruments.

Joe Montineri is extremely knowledgeable about drums and drum sounds, and put plainly, *knows* what he's doing. His background is evidence of this, as he worked in L.A. drum shops, ran a drum rental business there, and was drum technician for Vinnie Colaiuta, James Bradley, Jr., and the *Solid Gold* TV show.

Basic prices range from \$625 to \$750 for the 14" drums, and \$625 to \$650 for the 12" sopranos. It may seem expensive to some, but remember that, instead of getting a mass-production drum, you're buying a handmade, high-quality, personal instrument built to your specs. That in itself more than justifies the cost. Serious players and sound fanatics (like me) should definitely check these drums out! For more information, contact Joe Montineri, P.O. Box 3186, Vernon, CT 06066.



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# Headset

Back in the November 1981 issue of MD, I reviewed what was then the only headset microphone marketed for performing musicians: the Shure *SM-10*. At that time, I stated that the convenience, improved singing and drumming capabilities, and comfort afforded by these units should appeal to every singing drummer. Now, six years later, the proliferation of headset mic's in use by drummers—as well as other musicians—seems to have borne out my prediction. There are now several companies offering headset mic's with a variety of designs, features, and capabilities. This article is my report on a group I tested under actual playing conditions while performing with my band.

## Sound And Performance

In order to save time, let me say that *all* of the microphones I tested featured excellent sound quality. I am by no means an acoustic engineer or sound technician, and so I judge a microphone's sound by what I *hear*, not by spec sheets. (I don't mean to denigrate those specs; if you are concerned with Total Harmonic Distortion Levels, Equivalent Noise Ratios, Operating Voltages, etc., complete information is readily available from each microphone's manufacturer.)

The one specification that did concern me was frequency range, since this determines the overall fidelity of a mic' and also has a great deal to do with feedback sensitivity. The condenser mic's I surveyed were fairly comparable, running in the 60 or 70 Hz to 20,000 Hz range. The AKG *C410* had a bit wider range, extending down to 20 Hz. The Shure *SM10A*, *SM12A*, and Model *512* dynamic mic's did not have quite so wide a frequency range. They held their own in the low frequencies (down to 50 Hz) but extended only to 15,000 Hz at the high end. (This is primarily due to the fact that dynamic mic's are not powered in any way, while condenser mic's use battery or phantom power to help provide greater sensitivity.) There was a noticeable difference in fidelity and clarity between the dynamic and the condenser mic's—especially when it came to sibilant sounds and sharp consonants.

The benefits of a condenser mic's powered signal are a mixed blessing, however. With their extremely wide frequency sensitivity, these mic's can pick up sounds that are well beyond the range of the human voice. Often, such sounds—especially in

the higher frequencies—can cause feedback problems. To solve these problems, efficient equalization is a necessity. The powered input signal can also cause problems if your board doesn't have adequate attenuation controls. It's quite easy to overdrive the preamp stage of a low- to mid-priced P.A. mixer if the incoming mic' signal cannot be reduced to a level that the mixer can handle. When testing all of the mic's in this survey, I used them on actual gigs—first with a low-priced mixing board, and later with an upgraded board that my band fortuitously purchased during my test period. With the earlier board, we had great difficulty getting control over any of the condenser microphones. The board had very minimal attenuation control; consequently, my mic's signal came in too "hot" for my board channel's preamp to handle. Reducing the board's overall input level created problems for the *other* bandmembers' mic's (which were all dynamic mic's). It just wasn't possible to achieve a satisfactory balance between my mic' and those of the rest of the band.

When we employed an upgraded board (in the high-middle price range) with improved attenuation controls and better built-in equalization, the problems were dramatically reduced. An imbalance in signal strength between my mic' (no matter which one I was using) and those of the band still existed, but it could be dealt with much better, ultimately allowing me to use any of the mic's successfully.

The moral of this story is that high-quality, high-performance condenser microphones should probably be used in conjunction with high-performance P.A. equipment in order to get the best results. This is the one area in which Shure's dynamic mic's enjoy a certain advantage: Their narrower frequency range and lower signal strength make them workhorses that can adapt readily to almost any type of P.A. equipment. They are low-impedance, dynamic microphones that perform admirably with low- to mid-price boards (in addition, of course, to higher-priced equipment). This may serve to make them especially appealing to semipro players, or to full-time players in bands with budget sound systems. I had no problems using an *SM12* or *512* with either of the boards employed by my band.

(After I had completed my test, I was informed by a representative of Shure that the company offers a switchable in-line

attenuator for the express purpose of reducing "too-hot" signals from low-impedance mic's [especially condensers]. The *A15AS* in-line attenuator inserts a 15-, 20-, or 25-dB loss into the mic's signal in order to prevent preamp overload in applications—such as the one I've described—where overly strong signals are being applied to a mic' input. This device can work with other brands of microphones besides Shure and might be the answer to the problem I discovered with my band's low- to mid-priced P.A. board.)

## Physical Differences

Comparable sound being the case (with the exceptions I've already discussed), the primary differences between the headset units I tested were physical, and there were a *lot* of differences in that area. As a club drummer working for long periods of time each night, I was very concerned with the comfort of a headset mic': Was it heavy or light . . . how adjustable was it for fit . . . how secure did it feel on my head . . . etc? I was also interested in the convenience factor: How easy was the mic' to connect to a board . . . how was the cabling arranged . . . could I get the unit on and off quickly if necessary . . . etc? I also considered the visual element: Was the headset conspicuous and visually obtrusive, or was it designed to be inconspicuous or easily concealed? These and other details relating to each individual headset are examined below.

## Shure SM10A, SM12A, And 512

In deference to their status as the progenitors of headset microphones for performers, I'm starting with Shure's dynamic headset mic's. This series contains the *SM10A*, *SM12A*, and *Model 512* headsets, all of which use Shure's *R93* mic' cartridge. This means that they all offer the same microphone performance and specs. The differences between models is in headset design and the presence or absence of monitor capability.



# Microphones

The granddaddy of the line is the *SM10A*—a straightforward headset that neither attempts to hide its presence nor to look space-age. The mic' is small, but not subminiature. The boom is a silver metal tube. The "hub" that holds the boom is a cylinder about 1/2" in diameter and 1 1/2" long; it provides complete boom adjustability by means of a user-adjustable ball-and-socket clamp system. The headband is adjustable for fit; the spring-steel arms to which the temple pieces are attached can either extend out of, or disappear into, the black plastic portion that extends over the head. The temple pieces are covered in foam rubber for comfort.

The greatest virtues of the *SM10A* are its flexibility of fit and positioning, and its simplicity. It's a bit heavier than most of the condenser headsets, but not so much as to be uncomfortable; I've been using one of my own regularly since 1981. The mic' is low-impedance, and the headset is fitted with a 5' cable ending in an XLR connector. The *SM10A* lists for \$140.00.



The *SM12A* is identical in all respects to the *SM10A*, except that it also features a single monitor earpiece. This is a tiny, cone-shaped device on the end of a short arm that extends from the same "hub" that holds the mic' boom. The monitor unit fits comfortably into the ear, and can be easily moved in or out for more or less volume. I found it especially handy when used in conjunction with my Gallien-Kreuger monitor amp. I placed the amp on my right side and used the *SM12A*'s monitor earpiece in my left ear. By adjusting the position of the earpiece within my ear, I was able to get a "stereo" effect, with the monitor sound seeming to be directly in the center of my head. And yet, my right ear remained open to hear the rest of the band. I liked this arrangement a lot. The cable for the monitor ends in a male 1/4" phone plug for connection to the P. A. board, but you will probably need an extension cable, as the length supplied with the *SM12A* is around 5'. The unit lists for \$190.00.



The *Model 512* employs a light, plastic headband, and uses foam-covered, over-the-ear earpieces that resemble those of "open-air" stereo earphones. However, only the left earpiece functions as a monitor receiver; the right earpiece is merely for comfort and balance. The "hub" unit holding the mic' boom is designed differently than that of the *SM10A* and *SM12A*, and does not provide as much flexibility of mic' positioning. Mic' and monitor connections are both at the end of a single, fairly heavy cable (whereas the connectors for the *SM10A* and *SM12A* are at the ends of lightweight cables that split up about 18" back along the main cable).

In terms of durability and flexibility, the *512* doesn't measure up to the *SM12A*. I also found that I didn't like having my right ear covered by the "dummy" earpiece; it prevented me from hearing the band or my monitor amp clearly. On the other hand, the *512* is lighter than the *SM12A*, and I found the foam earpieces more comfortable over a long period than the temple pieces on the *SM12A*. Since the microphone and monitor performance are identical between the two units, you might make your choice based on how rough you handle a mic', how important fit and comfort are to you, and what your budget is. The *512* lists for \$122.50.

## Shure SM15



Shure has just recently entered the condenser headset field with its new *SM15*. Aside from the obvious difference of the condenser mic', the headset is fairly simi-

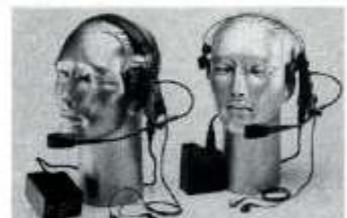
lar in design to the *SM10A*. The headband is a bit different, employing two uncovered spring-steel straps across the wearer's head, instead of a single, plastic-covered one. (As a result, the *SM15* is lighter than the *SM10A*.) The temple pieces are attached to spring-steel arms that can extend out of—or retract into—the headband to provide fit adjustability. The temple pieces themselves have the same shape as those on the *SM10A*, but are covered with "knobby" rubber instead of foam rubber. This covering is a bit more durable and provides better grip in the wearer's hair than does the smooth surface of the foam rubber—yet is still soft and comfortable. The "hub" holding the mic' boom is the same as that on the *SM10A*, and the cartridge is only slightly larger. There is no monitor with this unit.

Mic' performance and fidelity are excellent, as would be expected with a condenser microphone. The mic's frequency range is 50Hz to 15,000 Hz. This is the narrowest range among the condenser mic's I tested, but seemed quite adequate for vocal clarity and tone. This mic' also proved the least sensitive to feedback of any of the condenser mic's I tested, which may be due to its lower high-frequency limit.

The headset requires the use of either a 9-volt battery or phantom power to provide power for the microphone. The mic' connects to a belt-pack in either case; it's just a matter of whether or not you insert a battery or connect it to a phantom power supply.

One thing I appreciated about this headset—along with all of Shure's other models—is that it packed up easily for transport. It isn't massive, yet it seems fairly durable. Its component parts have enough range of movement for the headset to collapse into a fairly flat package, to be placed into a reasonably sized carrying case. List price for the *SM15* is \$275.00.

## TOA HY1/HY2



TOA Electronics has two headset mod-

els: The *HY1* features a narrow, twin-wire headband fitted with a leatherette strap for comfort across the head; the *HY2* uses only the twin wires, spread wider for greater support and designed to be hidden in the user's hair.

Everything about the TOA headset is high-tech. It's the only condenser mic' headset in my test group with a monitor system, which I'll get into a bit later. The mic's frequency range is 70 Hz to 20,000 Hz with the standard *HMV* capsule or 60 Hz to 20,000 Hz with the optional *HFV* capsule (for female or tenor male vocal). A tiny LED on the mic' boom lights up when the mic' is on, allowing the wearer and / or sound mixer to determine visually whether or not the mic' is "live." Power to the mic' may come either from two AA batteries contained in a belt-pack or from an external phantom power supply. There is an optional 15' extension cable available to connect the headset to the belt-pack so that it need not actually be worn on the belt, but may be placed on the floor or in some other convenient position. TOA provides a big, heavy-duty, foam-lined plastic carrying case for the *HY* units, with cutouts to fit all of the components and spaces for additional cables or cartridges.

The monitor system built into the *HY* series is absolutely fabulous. The batteries in the belt-pack power a small built-in monitor amp. This amp allows you to amplify the incoming monitor signal from your P.A. board, along with the output signal of the microphone. A balance-control dial on the belt-pack then allows you to mix how much of your mic's signal you hear versus how much of the P.A. monitor signal. This is a tremendous capability in terms of hearing your own vocal clearly within the overall vocal balance of the band. A master volume control is provided, along with a select switch for stereo or mono monitor input. (The monitor system requires the use of batteries whether or not the microphone is being phantom-powered).

As a cautionary word, I should point out that, if you are using an *HY*-series headset and happen to run your mic' through some sort of on-off switch of your own before going into the board (as I do), you must consciously make sure that your switch is on when you want the mic' to be heard.

This is because the unit's monitor amp will give you the mic's signal even if the board isn't getting it. This could prove awkward when a vocal cue comes along.

All of the things I've mentioned so far are in the *HY* series' favor. On the down side, the headpiece and mic' element are both fairly massive and heavy. I found the *HY1* model I tested difficult to wear—especially when wearing eyeglasses, as I normally do. The headpiece tended to slip, and I could find no way to adjust it for a tighter fit. Between the unit's bulkiness and the slipping problem, the *HY1* felt quite insecure on my head.

Other problems I had with the TOA headset had to do with design elements that I just couldn't understand, in light of all the thought that obviously went into the unit's construction. For example, the monitor controls and cable connections are all on the bottom side of the belt-pack (when worn on a belt with the clip provided). This makes the controls invisible and difficult to use. And if you mount the belt-pack in some other location with the controls up, the connections for the mic' and monitor cables are also up and, thus, get in the way. I would suggest that the controls be placed on top of the unit (when in the normal wearing position) and the cable connections on the bottom, leading down and away from the wearer.

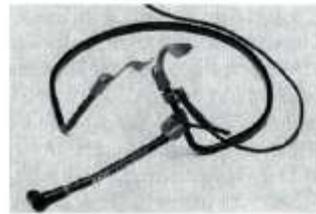
The "cough switch" that turns the mic' on or off is an in-or-out push button located above the left earpiece on the headset itself, rather than on the belt-pack. I found this somewhat awkward to find—much less to use—in a hurry. I also found it embarrassing when I tried to shut the mic' off quickly one night on a gig and hit myself in the head with the drumstick I was holding in my hand.

The most puzzling feature of the *HY1* was the design of the monitor earpieces. Supposedly designed to be in-ear receivers, the *HY1*'s earpieces are small disks—sub-miniature speakers, actually—almost the size of pennies! They are flat and round, rather than cone-shaped to fit comfortably into the opening of the ear. They do provide tremendous monitor sound quality (especially since there is one for each ear), but I found them actually painful to wear. Consequently, I couldn't use them for more than two sets in a row. I believe that

my ears are of about average size, so I don't think my problem would be unique. Yet, there is no way I could "get used to" these earpieces without a long period of serious discomfort culminating in enlarged openings in my ears. Additionally, the earpieces are individual units connected by a tiny cable. While this makes them extremely inconspicuous, it also makes them seem somewhat fragile. I'd worry about yanking the cables apart under normal use.

From a performance standpoint, I'd certainly recommend that you check out the TOA *HY1/HY2* headsets; just be sure to take fit and comfort strongly into consideration when you do. List price for the *HY1* is \$299.50; the *HY2* lists for \$259.50. Optional mic' capsules lists for \$89.50.

#### AKG C410



The AKG *C410* represents a fairly radical design departure, since it doesn't employ the familiar headband-and-earpiece approach of other headset models. Instead, the *C410* is constructed with a design more like that of eyeglasses. Comfortable temple pieces that fit over (and actually rest on) the tops of the ears are connected by a springy plastic tube that goes down and around the back of the wearer's neck, rather than across the top of the head. The curvature and springy nature of this plastic tube tend to keep the temple pieces pressed against the head with just enough firmness to hold the headset in place comfortably and securely. It doesn't take much pressure, because the entire headset unit weighs only 4.6 ounces!

The mic' itself is about the size of the eraser on the end of a pencil. A foam windscreen is provided to prevent vocal "pop," but even with the windscreen in place, the boom and mic' are both quite unobtrusive. The headset is provided with 11 1/2' of cable ending in an XLR connector. AKG also thoughtfully includes a small strain-relief cable clip to attach the mic' cable to the wearer's belt or clothing before running to the board. There is no monitor provision with this unit.

The mic' is not sold with a belt-pack, since it is designed to be phantom-powered. However, AKG does offer an optional battery power pack, as well as two AC power supply models. I tested the *C410* using AKG's *B18* battery pack.

In terms of this unit's performance, I can find little fault with it. The mic' provides excellent sound, and the headset is light and extremely comfortable to wear—even for extended periods of time. (It also creates no problem when worn with eye-

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If you're serious about joining the select group of musicians who make their living playing drums or percussion, the knowledge and experience you need is now available under one roof—at the acclaimed Grove School of Music in Los Angeles. Grove's exceptional Percussion Program is an intensive one-year course of study to give drummers/percussionists an efficient path to artistic and commercial success. Students from more than 30 countries have found the Grove School to be the most *practical* place to launch their music careers. All Grove instructors are working professionals based here in the entertainment capital of the world, where opportunities in the contemporary music scene are at your doorstep.

## Learn from the best.

In the Grove program, you'll learn studio and performance technique from some of

the most respected names in the business. You'll study a variety of styles and drumset applications with Program

Director Peter Donald, and you'll concentrate on rock, funk and fusion with groove master Dave Garibaldi. From the Latin percussion classes of Luis Conte to Dan Greco's studio percussion class, you'll benefit from a teaching staff that's literally played thousands of major gigs in every aspect of the entertainment industry.

## 2. Become a complete musician.

To help you meet the versatility challenge, Grove will work you through more than 20 styles of music. You'll be regularly involved in different ensembles, playing jazz with big bands and small groups, pop and show music with a 30-piece orchestra,

and funk, rock and other styles with small contemporary units. Throughout the program, you'll improve your coordination and develop your sightreading skills. And since the Grove School is one of the premier places in the world to study music theory, you'll finish the program as a *complete* musician with a new freedom in your playing.

## 3. Tour the world of percussion.

Since versatility goes beyond the drumset, Grove will get you comfortable with Afro-Cuban, Brazilian and Caribbean rhythms and the instruments and "toys" that bring them to life. You'll study a broad spectrum of authentic Latin hand percussion, mallets and tuned percussion. And you'll learn their applications for film and television music, records and live performance.



## 4. Conquer drum machines and electronic drums.

Competing as a drummer means staying on the cutting edge of rhythm technology. As an integral part of the Grove program, you'll study drum machine programming with innovator Dave Crigger, as well as



playing and programming electronic percussion. Through hands-on experience with state-of-the-art equipment, you'll also learn how to use these tools to enhance acoustic drums in the studio and on stage.

## 5. Round yourself out with your other talents.

Since Grove offers 11 different full-time programs, students have the unusual opportunity to "minor" in programs such as Songwriting or Vocal Performance. Workshops range from Video Production to Record Production to Keyboard Synthesizers. We'll tailor a complete package to fit your personal goals.

## 6. Get a competitive edge.

The Grove Percussion Program begins each January and July. You may qualify for financial aid. And if you're concerned about getting a college degree, our accredited courses can be part of your B.A. in Commercial Music through our affiliation with Laverne University.

So if you want to make a living playing drums or percussion, we'll send you more information. Just send us the coupon below to see how you can get a competitive edge, or call us at (818) 985-0905.

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I'd also like more information on the other programs I've checked below:

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glasses.) The only problem in the *C410's* design might be that the mic' boom's length is not adjustable. However, the actual placement of the mic' vis-a-vis the user's mouth is pretty flexible, since the "hinge" at the opposite end of the boom from the mic' allows the boom to swing up and down, and also close to or away from the mouth. The "hinge" can also slide up or down vertically an inch or so on the plastic tubing just beneath the earpiece, so a great deal of adjustment range is possible. If the boom were a bit more flexible (it's made of brass tubing and not meant to be bent), I'd have to say that the *C410's* design would be just about flawless. The headset collapses conveniently for travel. Although a soft bag was provided with the model I tested, AKG has informed me that a hard case will be available shortly. The *C410* lists for \$195.00; the *B 18* battery pack I used lists for \$95.00.

### Nady Headmic

Nady offers two professional-quality versions of its *Headmic*: The *HM-1* wireless and the *HM-2* hard-wired model. Since I'd never had the opportunity to try a wireless system, I chose to test the *HM-1* for this article.



The *HM-1* employs a Crown *GLM 200* subminiature condenser mic', which has a frequency range of 60 to 20,000 Hz. (Audio-Technica's *ATM-831s* or other comparable mic's are also available.) This is a top-quality mic' and offers terrific sensitivity. I did find, however, that it was extremely easy to overdrive. (While this is the case with any of the mic's in this survey, I found the *GLM 200* to be more prone to distortion than the others). Many vocalists—myself included—have a tendency to "eat" a microphone, by putting the mic' too close to their mouths when

singing. Dynamic mic's are much more forgiving when it comes to this habit, since their larger diaphragms are less easily overdriven. But condenser mic's—especially subminiature models like the Crown—can be "swamped" *very* easily, and so *must* be used in the proper position relative to the singer's mouth.

The Nady is far and away the lightest of all the headsets I tried; it weighs in at only an ounce and a half! The headband is a plastic-coated, heavy gauge solid copper wire, which the user bends to create a custom fit. A small, plastic, disk-shaped "hub" connects the mic' boom to the headband and is the only real piece of "hardware" on the headset. There are no temple pieces, no swivels, no adjustment devices, etc.—only the wire headband, the hub and the mic' boom (which can also be bent to suit the user). Once the wire headband and the mic' boom are custom-bent for optimum fit and mic' placement, excess wire and excess boom length can be cut off. I found it possible to completely hide the wire headband in my relatively short hair; the only visible portions of the headset were the hub and the mic' boom. And Nady offers the mic' boom in either black or tan to match skin or beard colors for further camouflage.

The only problem with this custom-fit arrangement arose when it was time to pack up: The Nady headset is in no way "collapsible." After custom-bending the wire headband to fit my head, I was loathe to flatten it out again for transport, so I needed a box big enough to contain the headset in its fitted shape. I wound up using a box about 10" x 10" x 10". It seemed ironic that the lightest headset in my survey required the largest box.

It took a bit of time and experimentation to bend the wire headband into just the right shape to feel secure on my head. But once I *found* that shape, the headset was incredibly comfortable to wear; I honestly felt as though there was nothing there at all. I was able to wear the set all night long without the slightest discomfort. Even the connecting cable between the mic' and the belt-pack transmitter is very light and unobtrusive. Nady provides small loops on the rear portion of the headband to keep the cable out of your way. It's really possible to forget that you have the headset on

at all.

The wireless feature of the *HM-1* added to the comfort factor. Of course, I didn't enjoy the freedom to run around the stage that a guitar player or other instrumentalist would have with a wireless setup; I still had to sit in one place all night long. But to have my mic' hooked only to a belt-pack transmitter—as opposed to a long cable ultimately connected to the P.A.—gave me complete flexibility when it came to position on stage. I didn't have to worry about whether my cable was long enough to reach the P.A. board, or whether it was going to get tangled with other cables or the legs of my stands. The wireless setup just seemed to make everything more convenient. The receiver wasn't particularly large (about 10" x 8 1/2" x 2") and could be placed near the P.A. board in any convenient spot.

I noticed absolutely no acoustic difference between the wireless mic's sound and that of a hard-wired mic'; there was no loss of fidelity or power. And I did enjoy the experience (for the very first time in my career) of doing my own soundcheck from out in the room, rather than from in back of the drums. I simply put on the headset mic' and walked to the rear of the club to hear my voice coming out of the main P.A. speakers.

Obviously, from a functional point of view, a wireless setup is not a necessity for a drummer. But keep in mind that Nady also offers the *HM-2* hard-wired version of this same headset. For a combination of comfort, mic' quality, and minimum visibility, it would be hard to beat the Nady *Headmic*. The *HM-1* lists for \$188.00. For use with it, Nady offers three receiver models: the *501*, *601*, and *701*. The *501* would be the most consumer-oriented model at \$650.00, and includes the belt-pack transmitter, antenna, and all necessary components other than the mic' itself. (At the other end of the scale is the *701*—a two-channel system priced around \$2,400.00) The *HM-2 Headmic* lists for \$240.00, and includes Nady's *SB-3X* switchbox (to provide power for the mic') and a 10' cable ending in an XLR plug for direct connection to the P.A. mixer.

For drummers just getting into performing, Nady also offers a budget-priced wireless headset system. It's the *HM-III*, and although I didn't test it, I do want to mention it. The *HM-III* uses a headband identical to that of the *HM-1*, but with a mic' significantly lower in quality than the Crown *GLM 200*. The receiver unit is also a low-cost model. The entire package, with *HM-III Headmic*, *49 R* receiver, belt-pack transmitter, and all other components lists for \$249.00. It isn't pro-quality by any means, but it might be a terrific way to get into singing from behind the kit with the greatest possible comfort at a very reasonable price.

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## NEUHAUSER TAKES NEW POSITION AT PAISTE

Paiste America, Inc. recently announced the appointment of Jeff Neuhauser to the position of Drummer Service/Artist Relations Manager for its U.S. operations. Neuhauser joined the Paiste organization in 1983 as a "Paiste Percussion Specialist," coordinating and teaching percussion seminars throughout the Midwest. In 1984, he became a field representative of the company. A graduate of the Illinois Wesleyan University School of Music, Neuhauser earned a bachelor's degree in music education and a master's degree in percussion performance. According to Greg Perry, Director of Sales and Marketing, "Jeff's broad experience in the music field, including his diversified playing skills, makes him uniquely suited to serve in this new capacity."

## NEW SIMMONS SALES REPS, PRODUCT COMMITTEE, AND CLINIC TOUR



Simmons Electronics USA is pleased to announce the appointments of two new regional sales representatives. Arnie Christensen will now cover the western United States region, while Neal Marten will handle the midwestern region. Christensen, an experienced drummer himself, comes to Simmons from a former position with Europa Technology, where he was involved in the introduction of the Dynacord *ADD-one* electronic kit into the U.S. Marten's professional experience is primarily in retail sales. Both appointments come in conjunction with Simmons' expanded dealer support program, in an effort to provide better and more efficient service to dealers in all areas.

Simmons has also formed a new division, to be designated the N.P.C. (New Products Committee). The goal of this committee will be to provide Simmons Electronics with the input needed to foster products that maintain position on the leading edge of today's percussive technology. The N.P.C. will be made up of a defined group of professional musicians experienced in using the latest technological advances who will liaise with Simmons' Sales and Research and Development staff to lay the groundwork for the manufacture of new products.

Simmons has also announced its 1987 clinic schedule, featuring noted electronic drummer "Texas" Tim Root. Widely recognized for his thorough knowledge of electronic drum programming and playing, Tim is considered one of the expert clinicians in the electronic drumming field. Tim's clinics will encompass all areas of electronic drumming and feature all of Simmons' most recent innovations. For more information on the tour, contact your local Simmons dealer or write to Simmons Electronics USA, 23917 Craftsman Road, Calabasas, CA 91302.

## ISLAND MUSIC TO MANUFACTURE AND DISTRIBUTE NEW ROGERS DRUM LINE

Fender Musical Instruments Corp, has announced the appointment of Island Musical Supplies as the exclusive distributor of Rogers drum products in the United States. In addition to distribution, Island Music will have the sole responsibility for the design, manufacture, and servicing of the new Rogers drum line. completely new Rogers drum line that will be extremely competitive in today's market. This appointment will allow Fender to place more emphasis on electric guitars, amplifiers, and sound-reinforcement products, while still assuring the continuation of the legendary Rogers name in the music business." All inquiries regarding the new Rogers line should be directed to Joe Maino, c/o Island Musical Supplies, 399 Lake Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10303.

In making the announcement, Fender president Bill Schultz stated, "We have the utmost respect for the ability of Island's Joe Maino to develop a

## INFLATABLE DRUMS UPDATE

Mark Meallin, of Melbourne, Australia's Drum City, recently contacted *MD* to say that the response to *MD's* story on the inflatable drumset design he has been "shopping" to manufacturers [*Shop Talk*, January '87] has been overwhelming. "I've had literally thousands of inquiries by phone and by mail, from the U.S., Canada, Holland, Sweden, and all over the world. I'd like to ask all of those people to please forgive

me for not responding to each letter, but the unexpected volume caught me by surprise. As a matter of fact, the drumkit isn't in production yet; I'm still in the process of arranging a manufacturing agreement with a major manufacturer. I'd like to request that all interested parties hold off for just a bit until those arrangements are completed. I'll be pleased to make an announcement in *MD* when that takes place."

## DRUM ALLIANCE TOUR SEEKS SUPPORT

Professional drummer Toni Cannelli, of Sheffield, England, is promoting the concept of a major drum seminar/tour. The idea, according to Cannelli, is to "promote drumming as a skill, sadly neglected since the '60s, in the hope of causing a resurgence of interest by old and new players alike."

Working in association with former Motorhead drummer Pete Gill, Cannelli has already approached many major manufacturers for both artistic and financial support (in terms of

equipment, sponsorship, etc.). At this point, the tour is projected to cover the United Kingdom and Europe, with hopes of continuing into America and overseas. Cannelli is currently seeking public support for this venture, either in terms of sponsorship, participation, or simply statements of interest that can be used to help "drum up" support. Interested parties may contact him at 6 Toyne Street, Crookes, Sheffield S10 1HJ, ENGLAND.

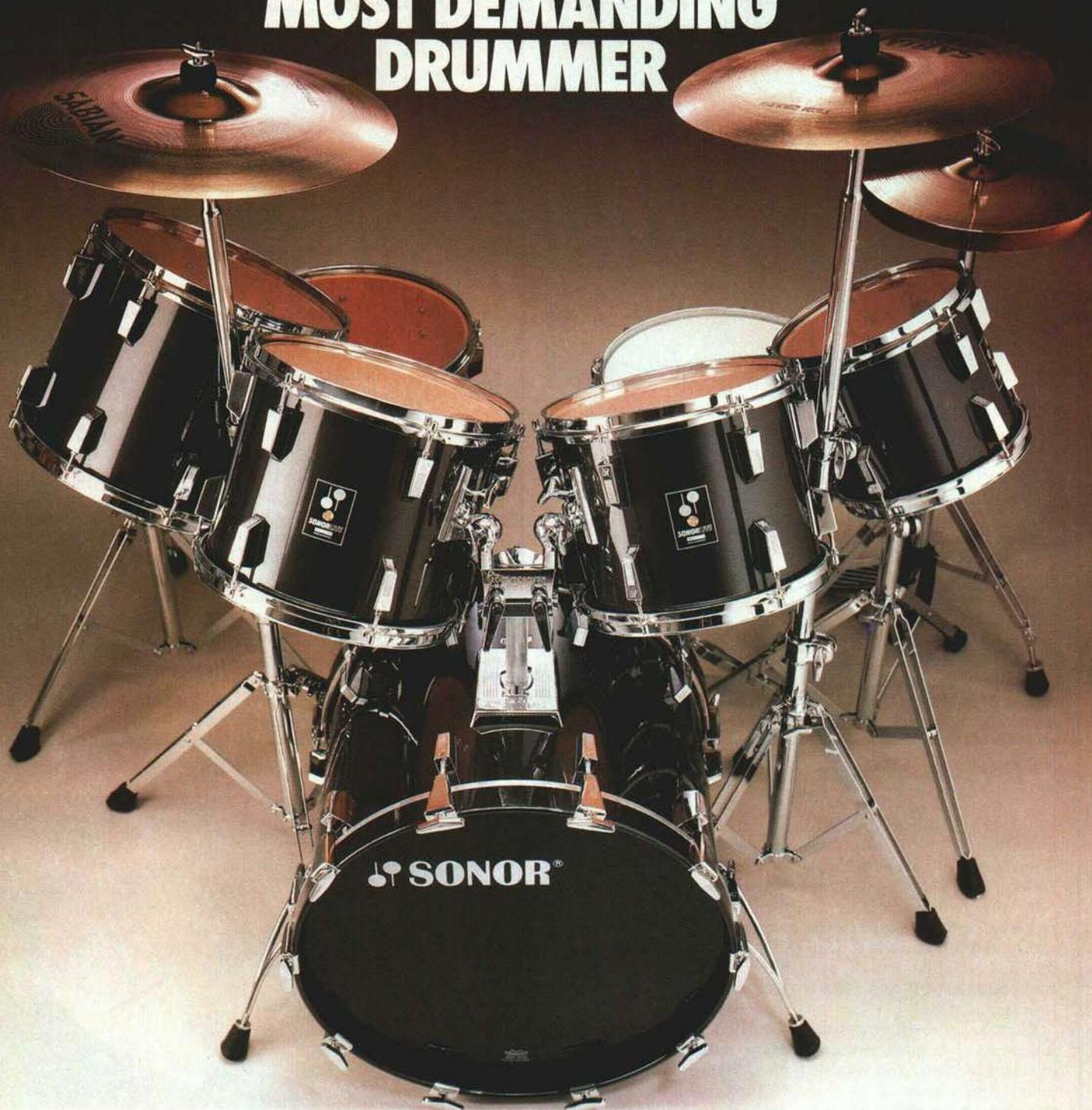
## ATLAS STRESSES CYMBALS

Jim Atlas, president of Atlas Sales, recently informed *MD* that, due to a restructuring of his company (including a separation of the cymbal lines from other musical products), the production and marketing of cymbals for all levels of the market will now be taking first priority. A side benefit of the restructuring, according to Atlas, is that cymbal sales no longer have to help amortize

reduced profits on other instruments. Consequently, a price reduction across the entire cymbal line has been made possible. Said Atlas, "We're ready to get into a full-scale production effort with cymbals that are as good as or better than anybody's in every price range." Atlas Sales offers both hand- and machine-made cymbals manufactured in Italy.



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## PURECUSSION TUNEABLE HEADSET



Pureussion, Inc. has announced the availability of "PEGS." A new drum-tuning system developed exclusively for use with the RIMS *Headset*, PEGS (Pitch Equalizing Group Support) expands the versatility and range of the *Headset* by allowing tension adjustments to be made to pre-tuned (PTS) heads.

With the introduction of PEGS, the *Headset* has become even more adaptable to the diverse needs of working drummers, drum students, and

music educators. A complete, four-piece, PEGS-equipped *Tuneable Headset* includes a bass drum, three tom-toms, two cymbal arms, and all necessary RIMS and mounting hardware. PEGS can also be used as a retrofit upgrade to any existing *Headset*. In addition, individual *Tuneable Headset* drums are available as add-ons to any drumkit or percussion set. For further information, contact Pureussion at 5957 W. 37th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55416, or call (612) 922-9199.

## FORAT 16-BIT SAMPLING DRUM COMPUTER

Forat Electronics recently unveiled its 16-bit sampling drum computer, the *F16*. Using 16-bit digital sampling technology, the *F16* is capable of reproducing any sound with the clarity and brilliance of a compact disk, yielding virtually perfect samples of any audio source.

Each of up to 16 voices has independent tuning, volume, and pan controls, and is available through direct outputs or the stereo mixer. Mic' and line inputs make sampling easy, and editing commands allow trimming and moving samples at will. Sounds are saved on a super-fast, high-capacity floppy disk drive.

The *F16* features an exceptionally large amount of mem-

ory: half a million bytes for each sound. This allows individual samples to be as long as six seconds at full audio bandwidth, or 25 seconds with reduced high-end response. Crash cymbals sampled at 50 KHz play for a full six seconds. The unit can be dynamically triggered using drumpads, pre-recorded drum tracks, or a drum machine's trigger outputs. Trigger response time is 100 microseconds. MIDI in, out, and thru permit easy hookup to any sequencer. The *F16* is designed for both studio and stage use; it's rugged, reliable, and simple to use. For more information, contact Forat Electronics, 11514 Ventura Blvd., Unit 1, Studio City, CA 91604, (818) 763-3007.

## DW DRUMS AVAILABLE WITH FOLEY CUSTOM FINISHES



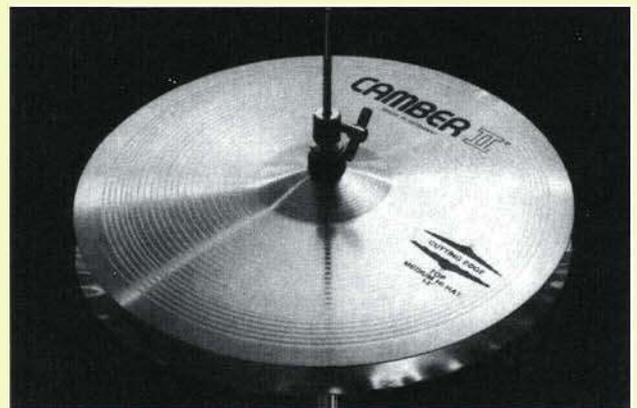
Drum Workshop recently announced that its entire line of DW drums will feature finishes by the drum industry's foremost drum finish artist, Patrick Foley. Although Foley will continue his independent work (responsible for Myron Grombacher's "Camouflage," Jonathan Moffett's "Victory," and Mike Baird's "Journey" kits among others), he will now also be working with Drum Workshop on a full-time basis.

Pat Foley's reputation as the best in the business is well deserved," commented DW president, Don Lombardi. "Pat is now completely in charge of our drum finishing department. With Pat joining

John Good [head of DW's production team], we are even better able to offer a truly unique acoustic instrument that looks and sounds great."

DW drums are currently available in either "Classic" (maple, cherry, walnut, black, and white), "Collector's" (sunburst), or "Custom" (the drummer's choice of design and color) finishes. "Collector's" and "Custom" finishes are available by special order at additional cost. For more information and a copy of DW's new drum catalog, please contact Drum Workshop, 2697 Lavery Court, Unit 16, Newbury Park, CA 91320, (805) 499-6863.

## CAMBER CUTTING EDGE HI-HATS



Out Front, Inc., U.S. distributor of Camber, Camber II, Savage, and Avanti cymbals, has announced the addition of *Cutting Edge* hi-hats to the Camber II line. The 14" matched-pair hi-hats are manufactured in medium weight, with a waved-

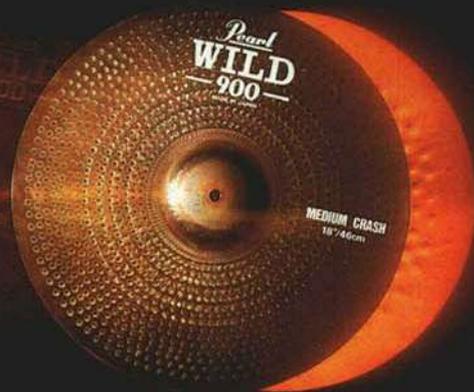
edge design on the bottom cymbal for a great "chick" sound. For further information, write or call Martin Cohen, Out Front, Inc., 101 Horton Avenue, P.O. Box 807, Lynbrook, NY 11563, (516) 887-3531.



# The New Cymbal of a Total Eclipse

Until now, a few manufacturers with cymbals orbiting in the higher quality range floated along unparalleled and unchallenged, a temporary condition that has reached its end. Because now released in the same orbit is the perfect hybrid of old world craftsmanship with new world technology. The new CX-900 Series Cymbals from Pearl.

Available in both traditional and wild types, and all popular sizes, weights and styles, this is truly the cymbal for the most demanding player. The CX-900 is destined to be the brightest spot on the horizon. But then overshadowing the competition is nothing new for Pearl.



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See the new 900 Series Cymbal line at your local Authorized Pearl Dealer or for a full-color catalog, please send \$2.00 for postage and handling to: In U.S.A.: Pearl International, Inc., Dept. 900TE, P.O. Box 111240, Nashville, TN 37222-1240; In Canada: Pearl Dept. 3331 Jacombs Road, Richmond BC, V6V 1Z6; In United Kingdom: Pearl Music Ltd., Dept 900TE, 11 Garamonde Drive, Wyrbush Milton Keynes, England MK8 8DF.

# Profiles in Percussion

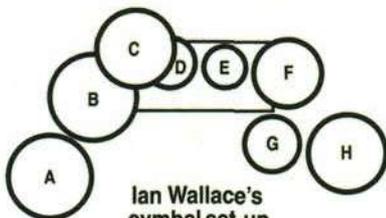
Ian Wallace



When former Eagles drummer/vocalist Don Henley was putting his band together for the "Boys of Summer" tour, he looked for a drummer who could provide a contemporary sound and feel yet be able to play convincingly in a variety of musical styles. His search led him to Ian Wallace.

Ian's colorful and successful career has included albums or tours with such artists as King Crimson, David Linley, Bob Dylan, Crosby, Stills and Nash and most recently with Jackson Browne.

His creative and tasteful use of modern electronics is acknowledged as superlative within the industry and has helped to make him one of the most in-demand musicians in the country.



Ian Wallace's cymbal set-up.

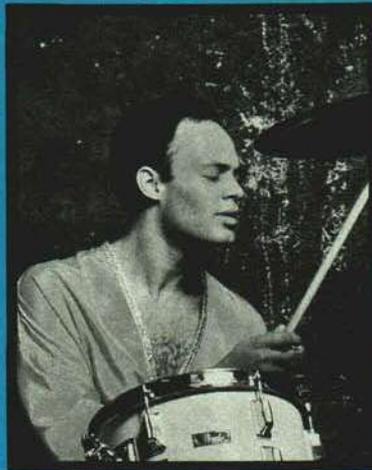
- A. 19" K. China Boy
- B. 20" K. Heavy Ride
- C. 18" K. Dark Crash Brilliant
- D. 12" K. Splash
- E. 10" A. Splash Platinum
- F. 17" K. Dark Crash Brilliant
- G. 13" K. Hi Hat Top
- 13" Z. Dyno Beat Hi Hat Bottom
- H. 18" K. Dark Crash

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## Advertiser's Index

APM/Kahler	59
Ascend Hardware	60
Atlanta Pro Percussion	99
Beyer Microphones	89
Camber Cymbals	73
CB-700	39,50/51
Connections	69
Corder Drum Co.	72
DC1000 Percussion	96
DCI Music Video	81
ddrum	38,40,88,108
D & F Products	12
DOG Percussion	116
The Drum/Keyboard Shop	105
Drum Workshop	58,72
Drummers Collective	103
E-mu Systems	41
Evans Products	52
Fibes Drum Sticks	90
GC Music	67
Gretsch Drums	Inside Back Cover
Grove School of Music	117
Grover Enterprises	38
Impact Industries	54
Imperial	108
JT Enterprises	75
Kevin Roadbag	107
Latin Percussion	7
L. T. Lug Lock	116
Ludwig Industries	Inside Front Cover,34/35,83
Maxtone Musical Instruments	83
MCA Records	49
McMahon Drum Studio	118
MD Back Issues	97
MD Equipment Annual	64
MD Library	93
Meinl	56/57,111
Musicians Institute	109
Noble & Cooley	74
Paiste Cymbals	11
Pearl International	13,62/63,91,123
Percussion Center	118
Percussion Paradise	108
Precision Drum Co.	88
Premier Drums	3
Promark	53
Regal Tipi/Calato	10,48
Remo	51,61
R.O.C. Drums	101
Rolls Music Center	79
Sabian, Ltd.	43,55
Sam Ash Music Store	95
"Set-The-Pace" Pedal Practice Pads	44
Silver Fox Percussion	78
Simmons Electronic Drums	37,95
Slobeat Percussion Products	112
Sonor	121
Tama	9,46/47,113
Thoroughbred Music	40,87
Thunderstick	40
Universal Percussion	86
Valley Drum Shop	40
Vic Firth, Inc.	45
Xerstick	88
Yamaha	4,14/15,119
Zildjian	5,38,77,124,Outside Back Cover

# Why do I play Gretsch?

**Marc Droubay**  
Survivor



"I was skeptical at first. You know, I've been playing drums for eighteen years and I've only used two kits. And I'd always thought of Gretsch as a jazz drummer's drum. Tony Williams is one of my favorite drummers and he always plays Gretsch. I wasn't sure if Gretsch had what I needed. But they have. A big, beautiful sound that fills up the hall—it's fantastic!

"The first thing that I really noticed when I played them was their projection. You know, it's real hard to get that punch and definition out of most drums, but when I set up the Gretsch drums, and I played them,

they just exploded, the sound men went crazy. That was about a year ago...and I've been playing them ever since.

"I really like the workmanship and the detailing. Their new line of hardware is right 'up to date'...it's taken a lot of wear and tear. It's real sturdy.

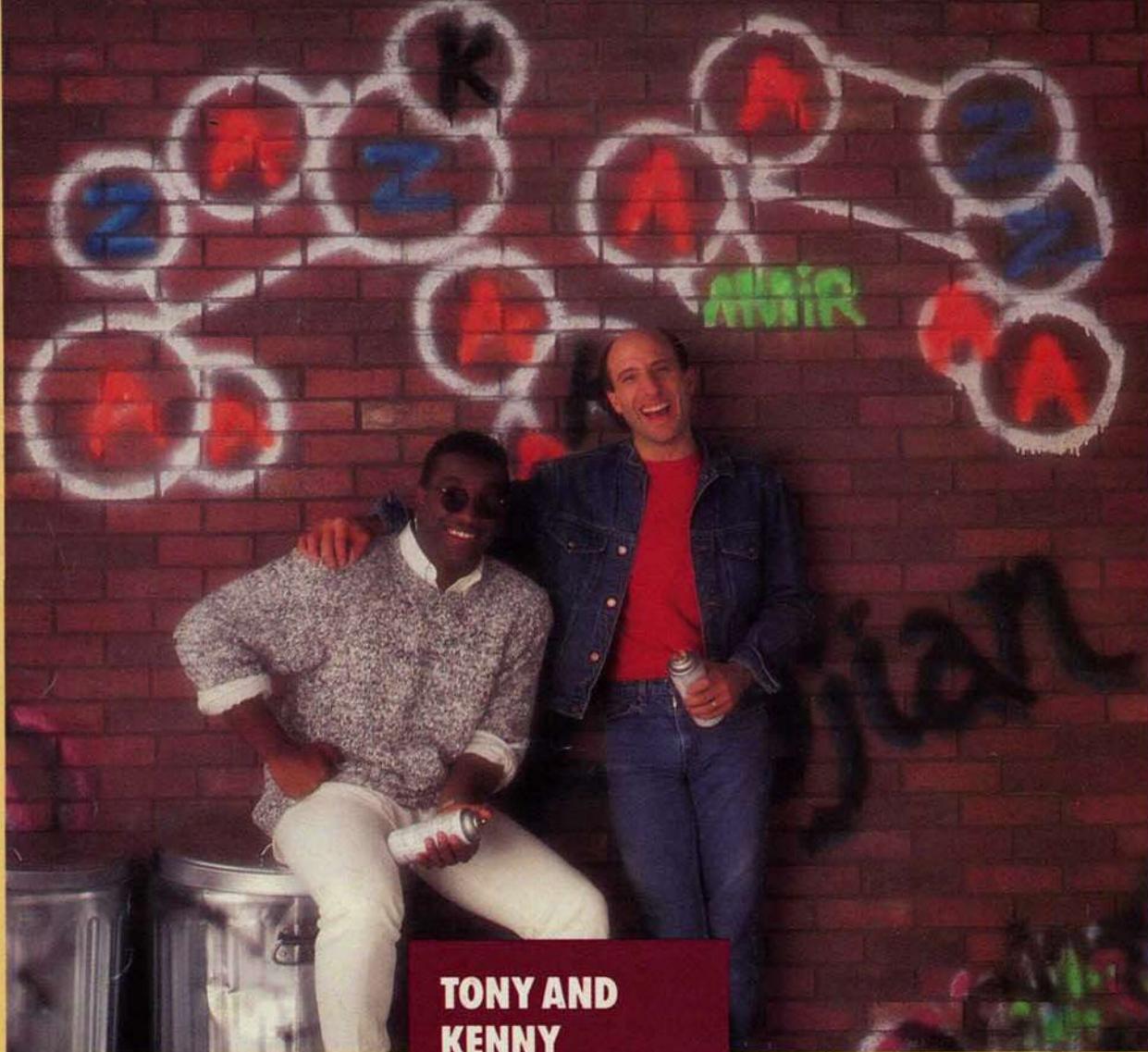
"I play Gretsch on the road and in the studio."



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**TONY AND  
KENNY  
ON THE A'S, K'S  
AND Z'S OF  
MIXING  
CYMBALS.**

Each Zildjian A, K and Z cymbal series has a distinct voice, character and personality. Indeed, Zildjian offers the greatest range of sounds—for every kind of music.

How can you mix and match the right Zildjian cymbals to create your own sound? One that sets you apart from other drummers?

Two of rock's most celebrated power players, Kenny Aronoff of John Cougar Mellencamp and Tony Thompson of Power Station fame, have discovered the answer.

"The only rule is that there are no rules," says Aronoff. "You have to experiment. Once I started using the new Z Power Crashes on stage I found I needed a louder and more powerful sound from my Chinas. So I went from 18" and 20" A China Boys to two 22"s. Kaboom! These babies explode."

Thompson takes a similar approach, "I switch around a lot. I've been using a 22" A Ping or a 22" Z Light Power Ride on current studio projects and with my new band, The Distance. And I match them with A Quick Beat Hi Hats—the ones with the flat bottom and holes. I might use K crashes in the studio, but on tour I'll go with A's and Z's. I love the way the Z's cut through on stage. I hit hard and want my cymbals to be heard."

"Music is a series of frequency ranges. I look for the one that isn't being saturated, so my cymbals stick out. For example, recently I was in the studio and tried an A Ping Ride, then a K. But for the music I was playing, the Amir Ride really cut it. It was incredible!" says Aronoff.

"With the A's, K's, Z's, and Amirs, Zildjian's got every sound covered," adds Thompson. "And they're always creating new ones. Zildjian's been around forever, but they move with the music of the times."

"Zildjian gives me all the letters of the alphabet. I can pick and choose the ones I want to create the words, the sentences, the paragraphs, the story. The way you put your cymbals together is what makes you sound unique," concludes Aronoff.

"Zildjians are the only cymbals for any drummer that's got a really good ear. I know, I've tried them all. But Zildjian's definitely happening," says Thompson.

If you'd like to learn more about the A's, K's and Z's of mixing cymbals, stop by your Zildjian dealer. Chances are, if you hear it in your head, there's a Zildjian cymbal that can bring it to life.

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