

MODERN DRUMMER®

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Denny Carmassi

Stu Nevitt

OF SHADOWFA X

NASHVILLE'S

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DENNY CARMASSI

When Heart needed to change drummers a few years back, they were looking for someone with the power of a heavy metal drummer who could also be sensitive to ballads. Denny Carmassi fit the bill perfectly, and he and the group have gone on to their biggest success.

by Rick Mattingly 16

STUART NEVITT

While his group, Shadowfax, is often labeled "New Age," for drummer/percussionist Stuart Nevitt that label is much too restrictive. He discusses the background that has enabled him to combine a variety of influences into his distinctive style.

by Robert Santelli 22

HARRY STINSON

Most visible as the drummer with Steve Earle's band, the Dukes, and as a Nashville session player, Harry Stinson's activities as a background singer, producer, and songwriter give him insights that add depth to his drumming.

by Robyn Flans 26

MD SOUND SUPPLEMENT: NEIL PEART CONTEST WINNERS

A few months ago, drummers were invited to submit tapes to Neil Peart, with the three best winning three of Neil's drumsets. We are happy to present the winning solos by Jack Hess, Wayne Killius, and Mark Feldman. 32

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Setting The Record Straight

It's always been interesting to me how false rumors have a way of spreading. Without naming names, there are some people in this business who, for some reason, enjoy distorting the truth. Let me use this month's *Overview* to set the record straight on a few stories that seem to have been circulating.

One such rumor that really intrigues me is that we're going to stop publishing the magazine. Well, let me simply state that that's utter nonsense, spread by individuals who obviously have nothing better to do. As Publisher of *MD*, I'd like to emphatically assure readers that *Modern Drummer* has never been in better shape. Our worldwide circulation continues to grow, and our advertising support has never been stronger. You need only browse through an issue and decide for yourself whether this is a publication that appears in any way unstable. I believe the quality and content of the magazine speak for themselves.

This next one is a *real* winner! It involves the accusation that *MD* editors select the drummers we interview on the basis of the brand of equipment they play. Apparently, the implication is that we're receiving kickbacks from certain manufacturers in return for favoring their endorsers in our editorial pages. This again is an absolutely ludicrous insinuation with no basis in truth whatsoever.

Of course, there will be times when it might appear as though a particular line of equipment is being favored. This occurs primarily when two or

three drummers in the same issue all play the same brand, or when several consecutive cover artists use a similar line. The point to keep in mind is that we really don't consider that very important. *MD*'s selection of artists is based on individual musical achievements, talent, recognition in the drumming community, and an ability to impart something of a musical, conceptual, or philosophical value to you—the *Modern Drummer* reader.

Featured players are also selected on the basis of how well they balance one another in an issue. We're always searching for a variety of musical styles and directions, and this is a *key* consideration—not what line of drums, cymbals, electronics, or whatever else a particular drummer may use!

In my very first *Editor's Overview*, which introduced the magazine to the drumming world in 1977, I wrote the following: "Our publication will be free in spirit and content, and since we have no stake in any particular line or its endorsers, we can afford to be completely representative and unbiased in our presentation of artists and equipment." That statement is as true today as it was when I wrote it 11 years ago. I think it's unfortunate that I'm forced to defend our editorial integrity again, but rest assured, that's the position we'll hold for as long as *Modern Drummer* continues to be a worthwhile entity in the world of drumming.

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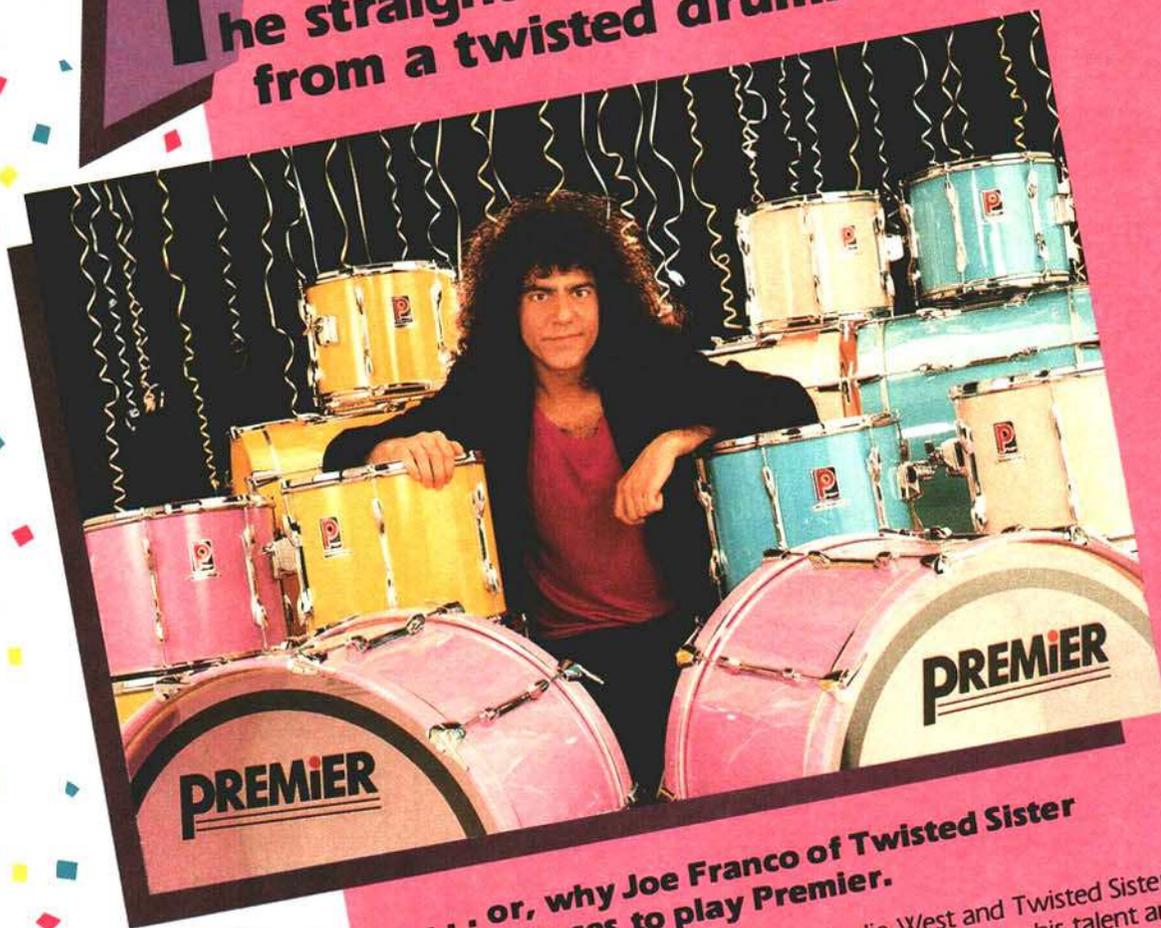
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A Member Of:



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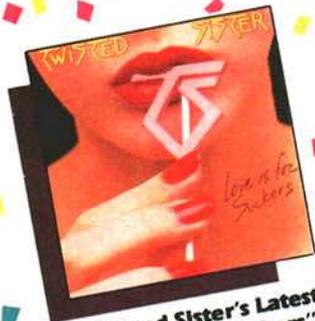
“Obviously, making good sounds is more fun than making mediocre sounds. At some point, you begin to find a direct link between the quality of sound of your drums and your progress as a drummer. I’ve been playing Premier drums for over 10 years now, and their sound has never disappointed me.”

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Twisted Sister's Latest
"Love Is for Suckers"

READERS' PLATFORM

KENNY ON RINGO

I'd like to say how delighted I am to see Kenny Aronoff's series on Ringo Starr. It's about time! I was 14 years old when the Beatles hit the U.S. in 1964, and had been playing rock 'n' roll for a couple of years already. I realized the unique differences in Ringo's playing right away. Those differences have influenced my playing to this day. I'm sure they have equally influenced thousands of other drummers—some more than they would care to admit.

Kenny's analysis of Ringo's style is excellent, but I must take exception to his reference to Ringo's "splashy ride cymbal" as being part of his distinctive mark. Ringo did, indeed, use a big, splashy ride cymbal sound on certain songs, such as "Boys," "Don't Bother Me," and others. But the sound that I believe was more noticeably Ringo was the hissing, partially closed hi-hat. This is the sound you hear on some of the Beatles' biggest songs, such as "All My Loving," "I Want To Hold Your Hand," and in the verses of "She Loves You." Indeed, the image I have of Ringo is of him playing cross-handed, riding his hi-hats, with his head bobbing from side to side and looking like he was thoroughly enjoying himself.

Ringo's cross-hand style and hissing hi-hat sound did more to propagate the use of hi-hats in rock 'n' roll than any other single thing I can think of. I know a lot of drummers—myself included—who ran right out to buy hi-hats as soon as we saw Ringo for the first time. Up until then, many drummers playing in the very early '60s—and doing songs by the Ventures, Surfari, etc.—were using little three- or four-piece sets with a 20" or 22" ride cymbal with rivets, because that was all that was needed at the time. Then Ringo came along and

bingo—hi-hats!

At any rate, thank you, Kenny, for a very informative perspective on one of the most creative, unique, and underrated drummers ever to hold a pair of sticks. Ringo showed us how you could move people by playing simple and being creative. He also demonstrated that technique—although very important—is not the be-all and end-all of making great music!

Joe Rossi
Auburn NY

THE NATURAL DRUMMER

I would like to thank Roy Burns for his article on "The Natural Drummer" in his November '87 *Concepts* column. It is true to a fact. I myself would like to think that I have a natural talent with all I have accomplished in the last three years. But I reached a hump in the road. I decided to do something about it, however, and am now a student at P.I.T. I am thrilled to death with all the knowledge I have acquired already. I see improvement every day! I definitely believe in Roy's adage, "Develop it or lose it!"

Tim Perron
Hollywood CA

AL JACKSON

Your October issue made a subscriber out of me. I just phoned in my order. I especially enjoyed your article on Al Jackson. Jackson continues to inspire countless drummers, including me. He is the epitome of good R&B taste. Bruce Wittet did an outstanding job of researching and reporting.

I also enjoyed the Sherman Ferguson interview, and the article on snare drum op-

tions was most informative. I look forward to reading more of this good stuff every month.

Pete Berg
Detroit MI

YUGOSLAVIAN CORRESPONDENT

I have been a *Modern Drummer* subscriber for two years now, and I'd like to tell you that I very much appreciate your fine magazine. I think it is a connecting point for drummers all over the world. Because I would like to be a part of that connection, please print my name and address so that drummers around the world may correspond with me.

Lazar Dzamic
Goricka 3
11300Smederevo
Yugoslavia

Murphy's Law

No matter how closely a magazine's production staff watches a magazine progress through the production stages, something almost invariably happens after they have made their final inspection.

Some of you may have noticed the unusually colored Pearl snare drums on page 125 of the January issue. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control, our printer inadvertently switched two of the color negatives used for printing and produced blue snare drums. For the correct color of these brass snare drums, see page 125 of the December 1987 issue. We apologize to all for any inconvenience and confusion this may cause.

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Twelve years is a long time to work with someone, but for **Joe Vitale**, working with Crosby, Stills & Nash seems to only get better. Last summer they did some extensive touring, and then the trio planned to go into the studio. But everything changed when Neil Young became involved once again.

"The foursome did a couple of benefits together," Joe explains, "and they had such a great time that they decided to make a record. It's obviously not a money thing; it's strictly a music thing. They loved what they did, and they remembered how good it was. CS&N were getting started in the studio, but they said, 'Let's not do this if we're going to do a CSNY album in three months.'"

Vitale will play some key-

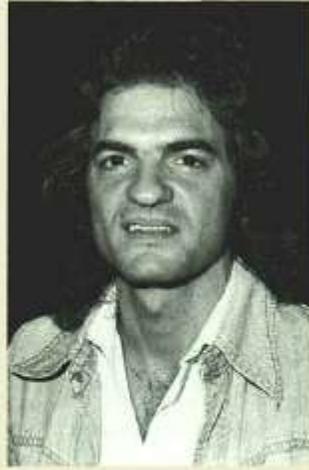


Photo by Rick Malkin

boards and drums on the album, as well as having some tunes on it. It seems that Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young have really embraced Joe in a capacity much greater than that of a sideman. "They

really have, and I say that with respect to them and very cautiously. They have a wonderful respect for what I do, and I have twice that for them."

When asked what the difference is between playing with the trio and the quartet, Joe laughs, "About 50,000 tickets a night. I'm serious. The three-some sells out everywhere they go, but with the four of them, it's like four different artists in this band. There are so many tickets sold that we go to stadiums or play multi nights at one place.

"Musically, there's no difference except for the songs we do. I'm there to keep the beat. Tempos are really important, as is the energy. Also, these guys really depend on the band a lot, so I have to be on top at all times. Joe Lala [percussion-

ist] and I have been with them the longest, and we have to keep the anchor happening for them. They like to sing without having to worry about the rest of it."

Last year, Joe worked on albums by two new artists, Tom Kimmel (Polygram) and Melvin James (MCA), as well as having a couple of songs on Joe Walsh's record. He also worked on David Crosby's solo project, and he is looking forward to a world tour with CSNY coming up shortly. When he's off the road, he enjoys writing and working in his 16-track studio in North Canton, Ohio. "I've got a ton of songs," he says. "So I'm looking for a record deal right now myself."

—Robyn Flans

When one of England's foremost session drummers—**Charlie Morgan**—decided to hit the road as a member of Elton John's tour band, it was a decision that he arrived at after much deliberation. "I was a bit reluctant at first," explains Morgan, "because I thought, 'Will I be cutting my throat as far as sessions are concerned?' And when I came back in early '87, there was a two- or three-month layoff period where there was very little work. But in the long run, it was very much to my advantage to go out on the road."

Charlie's track record includes work with the Tom Robinson Band, Kate Bush, Gary Moore, and Nik Kershaw, among others. Elton John selected Morgan partly because of the drummer's reputation, and partly because of his work with guitarist Kershaw. "Three or four years

ago, I was at the actual zenith of my session career," Charlie says. "I was working nonstop, morning 'til night, 75 hours a week. I was doing any jingles that came my way, a lot of film music, and then I did the Kate Bush album *Hounds Of Love*. I also worked with the Kane Gang, did Tracy Ullman's album, and did Gary Moore's *Run For Cover*, so I was pretty much going from one project to the next without a break. After Elton convinced me to do Live Aid, he offered me the world-tour spot, which I accepted, of course."

According to Charlie, the tour was just the remedy needed for his "cabin fever," caused by being in the studio too long. "I was feeling a lack of fresh input and that my chops were suffering a bit," he reflects. "I think there wasn't enough variety in what I was doing, but the dissatisfaction

came from my own playing, rather than the people I was playing with. After 162 dates out on the road, I definitely had my chops together," he laughs.

But Charlie had a brief respite from getting sessions upon completion of that tour. "People either thought I was too busy, I was too expensive, or that I wouldn't demean myself by doing jingles or sessions because of what I'd been doing. Of course, all of those assumptions were false, but I was upset by not working for a couple of months because my playing was sounding real good from the tour, and now I was feeling that my chops were starting to go again."

Of course, reading ability is integral to session gigs in London, so how did Morgan reacquaint himself with charts after being away from them for more than a year? "When I

came home, a friend of mine who plays in a West End Theatre musical called *Chess* offered me the chance to replace him for a short time. I agreed to go in, but it was baptism by fire. The first night was two hours of hell in that orchestra pit; that's the only way to describe it! The next morning, I spoke to him, and he said, 'You know, that's recognized as the hardest reading job in town.' I said, 'Thanks a lot for telling me this *now!*' But after doing it a couple of times, I really got into it. Still, it was a helluva way to do my first West End show!"

These days, it looks like Charlie will be dividing his time between touring and sessions. When Elton hits the road after his new release, you'll likely see Charlie on the stage, too.

—Teri Saccone

Drummer/percussionist **Jim Brock** doesn't believe in letting any grass grow beneath his feet. Within the past year, he's released an album as a bandleader, recorded with several artists, and has been touring with two acts: Windham Hill recording artist Scott Cusso

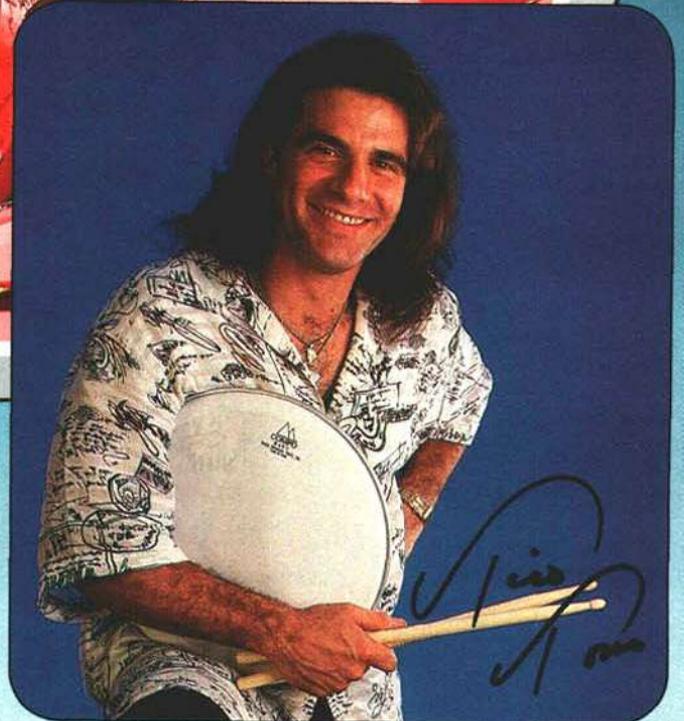
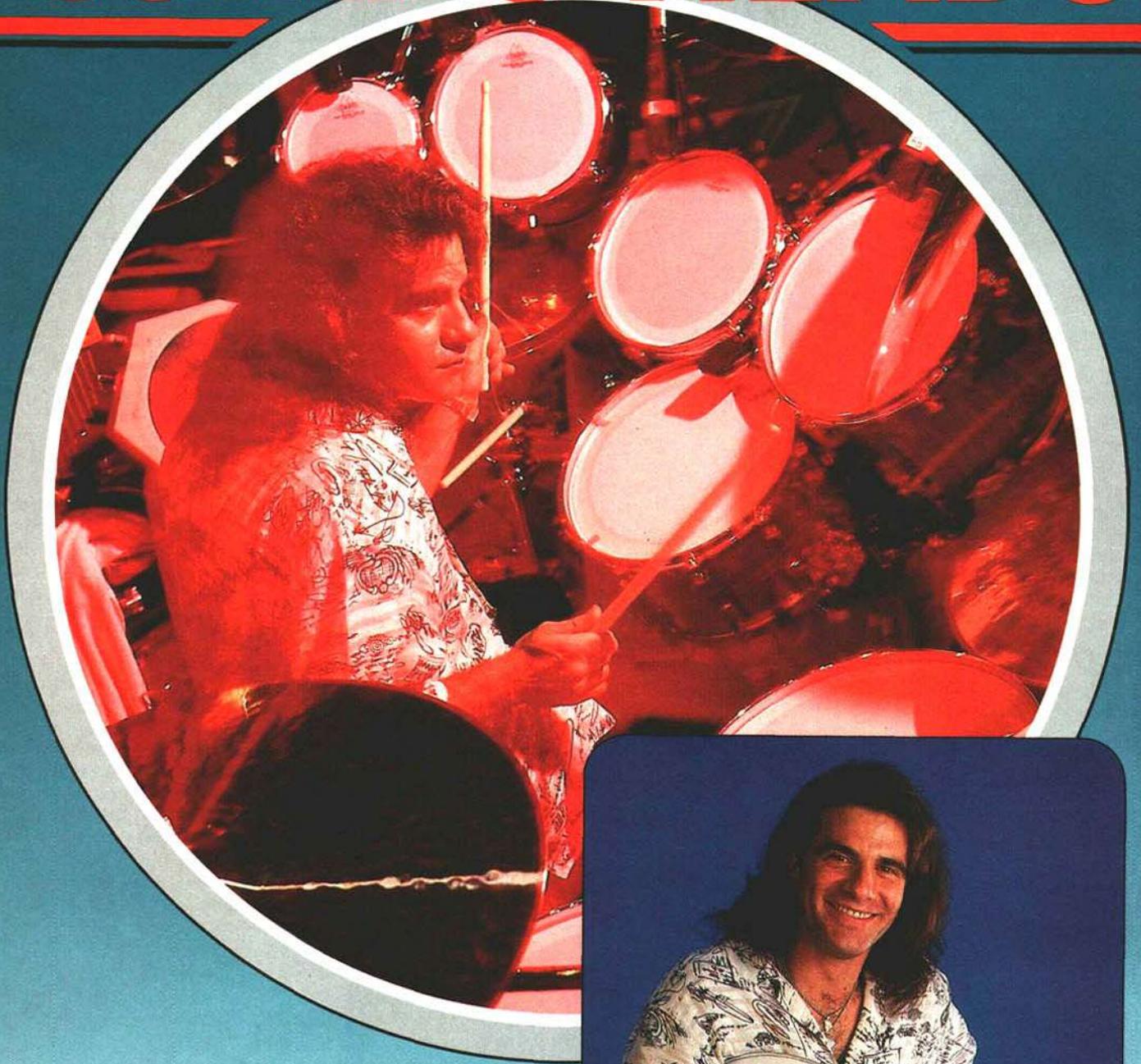
and Jim's own band, the Montuno Jazz Orchestra.

The greatest part of Jim's time has been involved with Scott. He's on Scott's latest release, *She Describes Infinity*, sharing the drum and percussion chairs with Alex Acuna. Although the album features

full-band instrumentation, when Scott tours, he uses only his own keyboards, a guitarist, and Jim on percussion. Like most Windham Hill artists, Scott Cusso's music is somewhat hard to define. As Jim puts it, "It's classified as 'New Age,' but I don't like that

term, because I don't know what it means. What's 'new' about it? People have been doing this kind of music for a long time. It's ethereal, but rhythmic at the same time. It's not folk, and it's not jazz; it kind of just stands on its own."

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How does Jim see his role as a percussionist in this type of music? "I'm not really a time-keeper. I support the rhythms that are there, but I tend just to color the sound—to reinforce certain things that come about and give them extra identity. In a lot of pieces, I also add somewhat of an ethnic identity. It's not that I want to define it as one certain thing—like Brazilian, Cuban, or African—but rather just kind of imply it."

Jim also uses his many percussion instruments to define the emotional quality of the music in several cases. While the keyboards and guitar might be creating the chordal structure, it's Jim's use of a triangle

in a samba pattern, or a conga for a backbeat, that gives the tune its character. Yet, Jim is never too "busy" with his percussion "toys." As he puts it, "I like to select the proper sound for any given point in the music and stick with that each time the tune is performed. I don't like to be constantly reaching for something else to shake or tap. I call that the 'yard-sale' approach to percussion playing."

Besides his busy touring schedule with Scott Cusso, Jim is also gigging on the East Coast with his own Montuno Jazz Orchestra. "We mix Latin rhythms with the blowing aspect of jazz," says Jim.

"And we do some African things, too, because that's where all the Latin rhythms come from. I also do some solo things on berimbau and other percussion instruments. I'm playing both drumset and percussion, trading off with another drummer by the name of Donny Marshall, who is excellent."

Jim also found the time last year to record and release his own album, *Pasajes*, on which he again played both drums and percussion. Long-time friend Mel Lewis also appears on drums on several cuts. An instrumental album of wide musical styles, this record was produced by Jim on his own

Mbira label. "I've got national distribution on it now, which is really exciting. It's my label, but the national-level people like the record, so it could do pretty well for me."

And in his *spare time* . . . "I recently cut an album with Don Dixon, which is a whole other bag for me. It was more straight-ahead, full-on rock 'n' roll than what I usually do. Don produced the R.E.M. records and some Marshall Crenshaw stuff. He's one of the top ten producers right now, and this is his own record. I don't know what the title is going to be, but I'm looking forward to seeing how the album does."

—Rick Van Horn

"There's no introvert here," says Farrenheit's **John Muzzy**. "I'm a pretty energetic person—pretty hyper—and people know that I really love what I do. It's not just from the way I come across talking about drumming, but also by the way I play. I see it as a love affair with the drums. Playing is one of my biggest passions."

Endearingly known as "Muzz," John has been finding some of that often elusive commodity—success—in this Boston-based trio, named appropriately after its guitarist (Charlie Farren) and bass player (David Heit). The group opened for another Beantown band—Boston—on the latter's national, sold-out tour this summer. The exposure was advantageous for Farrenheit, to say the least. But Muzz contends that it's been a long road

to get to this present juncture of his career.

"I've been at this for 17 years," he says, "and this is the first time I've had all this good fortune all at once. Our record company has been terrific. We've done two videos and the tour, and we're putting out a new record in the early part of this year. We always say to each other that we can't believe the luck we've had, but it really comes down to being ready when the opportunity arrives, which we were. I mean, we were together only about five months before getting signed—just ridiculous! You work 17 years, and nothing really happens. Then you get in a band and you immediately realize, 'This is it.' I can't imagine this chemistry happening between musicians very often. Everything just fell to-



Photo by Jean Renard

gether so well. But whatever happens next depends on us and how hard we're going to work for it. We're going to go the distance for this band, because we know that everything we've worked for is the situation we're in now."

Muzz positively requires a daily dose behind his kit and admits that this ritual is an important release that he can't easily omit. "Playing is very

therapeutic for me," he asserts. "If I don't play for a couple of days, I go crazy. It's not like I'm a manic player who has to play 24 hours a day. But I do have to play every day. I have this energy that I've got to express, and thank God my mother bought me a drumkit when I was little, because I'd be an emotional wreck if I didn't have this now. I don't think anybody would want to be around me. I realized early on that I had the drive and ability, and that I'd better channel it. One thing that's great about the music business is that you don't have to have a record deal or any recording experience to be able to go out and play for people. You can always have the enjoyment of people coming to hear you, and I love that."

—Teri Saccone

Tris Imboden recently did tracks with Siedah Garrett. **Denny Fongheiser** did work with Brian Setzer for the *La Bamba* soundtrack, a few tracks for Millions Like Us (along with J.R. Robinson), and albums for Balls of Fire, Tracy Chapman, Lisa Nemzo, Bonnie Bano, and B.J. Thomas. **J.R. Robinson** recently completed album projects with Yes' Jon Anderson, Reuben Blades, and Manhattan Transfer. He also provided live and/or programmed drums on several cuts from Michael Jackson's *Bad* LP, in-

cluding the title track. J.R. also has a self-penned song being recorded by former ABBA vocalist Agnetha Falksgog. **Michael Varner's** commissioned work "Ancient Voices, Distant Storms" for five percussionists was premiered at the Texas Music Educators State Convention. **Tony De Augustine** recently recorded two tracks for a project with Frankie Gaye, as well as performing with Billy Mitchell. He also performed on TV's *Truth Or Consequences* with singer Cheryl Barnes and most recently toured with Ben Ve-

reen. **Eddie Bayers** recently recorded with Ben Vereen. That is **Billy Amendola** on Debbie Gibson's "Only In My Dreams." Billy also plays live percussion from time to time on New York's Hot 103.5 *Saturday Night Dance Party*. Recently, Billy played on "Extraordinary Love" by Regina, and he can also be heard on the new Alisha album *Nightwalking*. Besides doing sessions, Billy has put together a new band called True Blue. **Mario Grillo** with Machito Orchestra playing dates in Europe and Japan. **Tony Coleman** and Si-

lent Partners played Farm Aid as well as various festivals. **Danny Frankel** recorded with the Satellites 4 and Victoria Williams, produced by Anton Fier. **John Molo** in the studio with Bruce Hornsby. **John Lee White** on George Highfill's new Warner Bros. LP and doing live dates with him. **Kenwood Dennard** has been busy with his new quartet, and has also been doing solo MRO (Meta-Rhythmic Orchestra) performances in New York clubs. **Andy Newmark** on the recently released Bryan Ferry album.



Simmons Design Brief

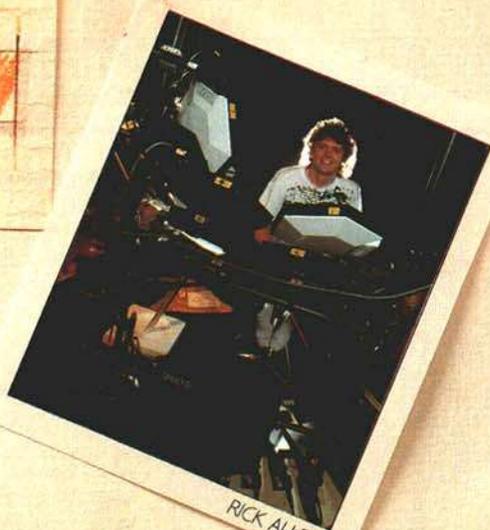
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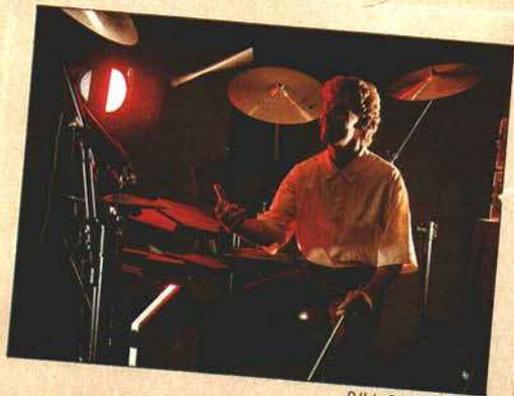
RICK ALLEN

Simmons Design Brief

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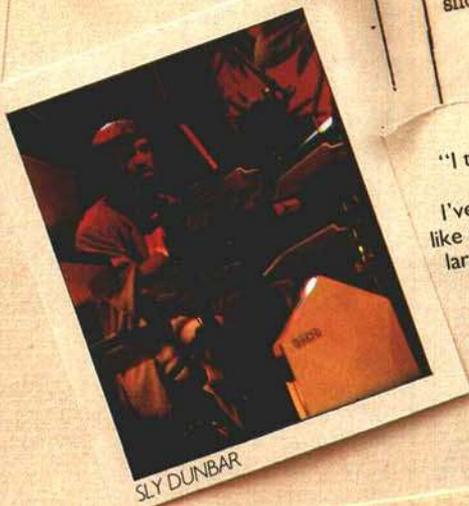


BILL BRUFORD

BILL BRUFORD ON THE SDS9

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SLY DUNBAR ON THE MTX9
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TERRY BOZZIO

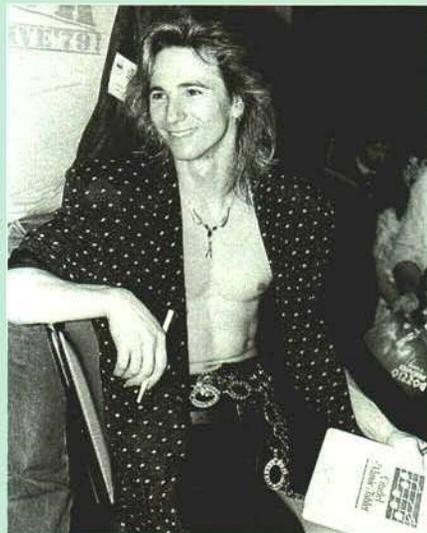


Photo by Lissa Wales

Q. I attended your clinic a while ago on Long Island, and found your playing to be thrilling and inspiring. I was also very touched by the warmth and sincerity you so naturally exude. I was wondering if you could write out a few of the double-bass patterns you play, incorporating your right and left hands off the swish cymbals? Also,

I'm trying to figure out your playing behind Mike Brecker's sax solo (about eight bars before the head) on the tune "Some Skunk Funk" from *Heavy Metal Be-Bop*. It sounds outrageous! Could you possibly write that section out for me? Lastly, I knew that you were teaching in L.A. at one time. Are you still doing so, and if so, how may I get in touch with you?

Glenn Cerone
New York NY

A. Thanks for all the compliments; I really appreciate them. What I would suggest that you do to develop patterns (such as those you mention in my playing) is refer to Ted Reed's *Syn-copation*. Page 46 of that book is the beginning of an accent section. The 8th-note, triplet, and 16th-note sections of this book are really great for working out those kinds of patterns. Ignore the bass drum pattern as written. Every time there is an accent that falls on the beat, use your right hand on the right swish cymbal and your right foot on the right bass drum. Play every accent that falls off the beat with your left hand on the left swish cymbal and your left foot on the left bass drum. The unaccented notes

would be played on the snare drum. In other words, when playing 16th notes, any accent falling on a 1, 2, 3, 4, or "and" would be played with your right hand; any accent falling on an "e" or "ah" would be played with the left hand. If you can whip those patterns up to tempo, that's basically all I'm doing. Once you master what's written on those pages, you'll be able to come up with your own patterns that will be equally as exciting as mine, I'm sure.

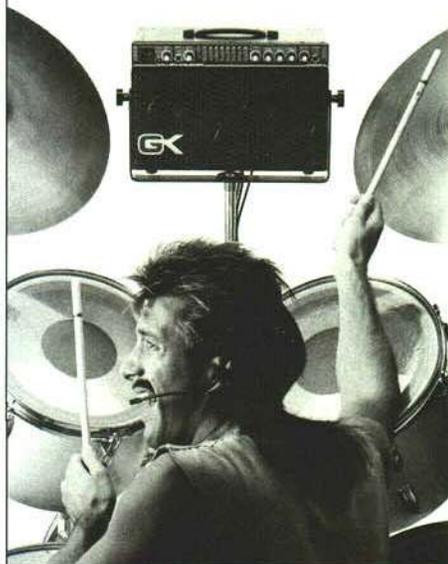
As for the part I played in "Some Skunk Funk," I'm afraid I haven't got a copy of that record in my possession, and it's been quite a while since I recorded it. The best thing I can suggest is to slow it down—perhaps rerecord it at double speed and then play that back at normal speed—so that you can hear the part clearly at a pace that you can follow more easily.

I'm not doing any teaching at the moment, since I'm really busy on a solo project. But if I ever do any teaching, I'll be sure to put an ad in *Modern Drummer* to let people know. In the meantime, I'm always more than happy to respond to questions in this department of MD.

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LARRY MULLEN, JR.

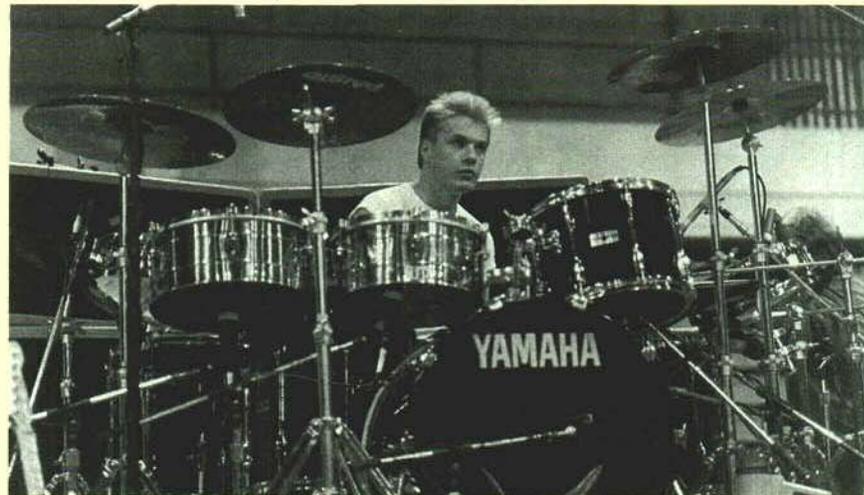


Photo by Paul Natkin

Q. I've been very impressed by your talent for a long time; your style is unique and original. Could you please tell me what snare drum you used in the *Under A Blood Red Sky* video? Have you thought about using triggers or electronic drums on your kit? And lastly, what bass drum mic' does your sound engineer recommend?

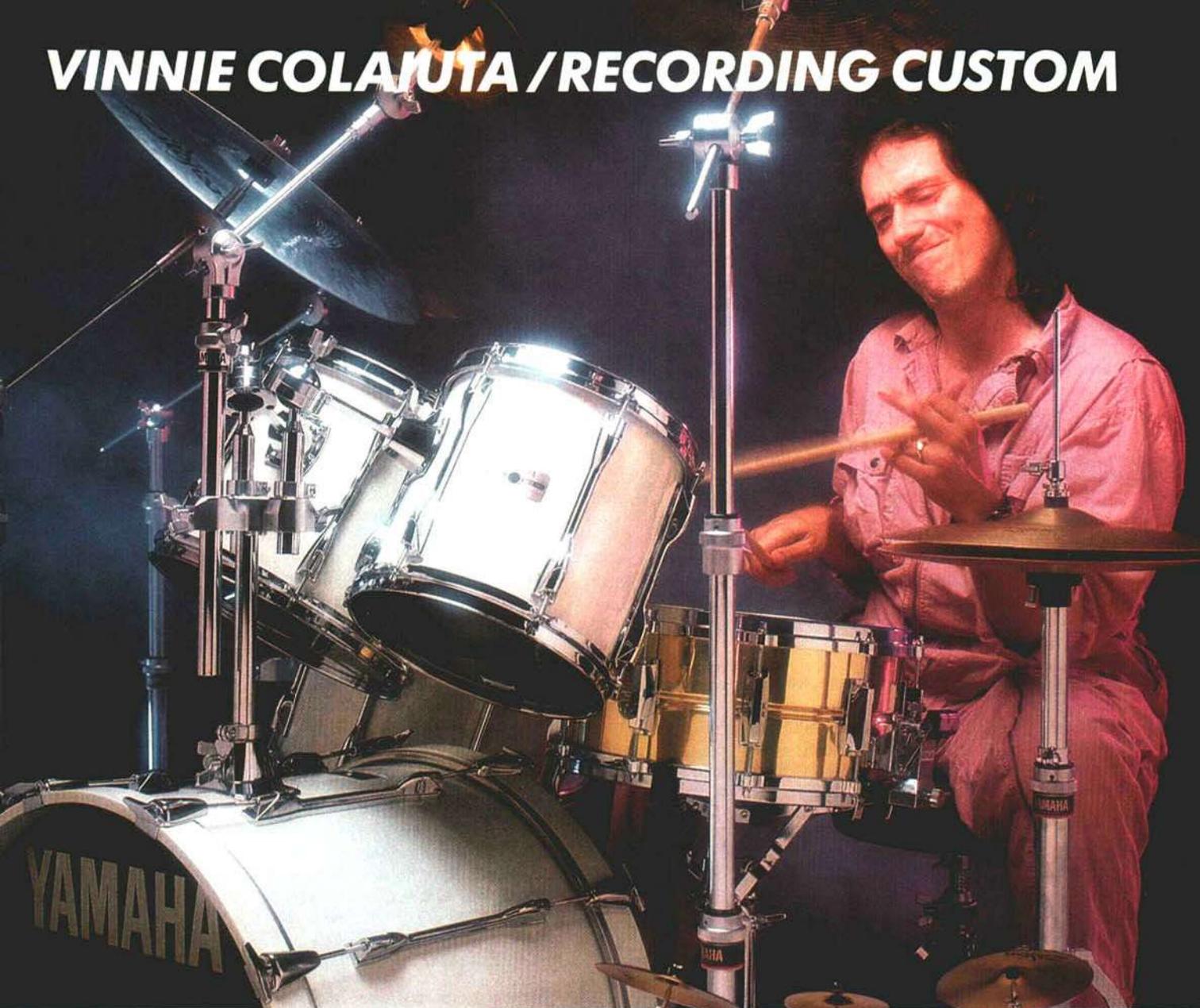
Greg Miller
St. Louis MO

A. Thanks very much for the kind words. The snare drum I used on the *Under A Blood Red Sky* video was a

Yamaha 5x14 9000 Series snare. I've since started using a 3x14 piccolo drum as well. As far as triggering goes, at the moment I use Simmons reinforcement on the floor tom on my left-hand side and occasionally on my kick drum—depending on what the sound is like in the hall. In terms of bass drum mic's, that choice depends, again, on where we're playing. Different halls—with their different acoustics—demand different mic's. There's no one mic' that we use all the time.



VINNIE COLAIUTA / RECORDING CUSTOM

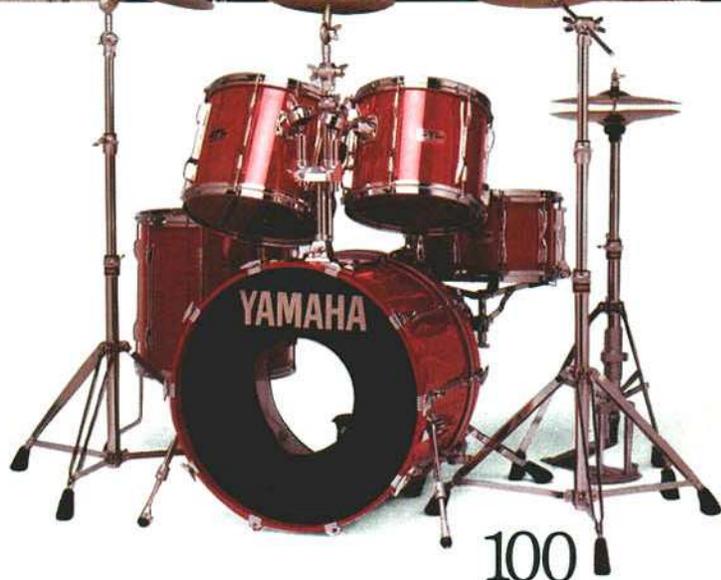


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Q. I'm interested in painting the hardware on my set of Ludwig *Vistalites*. I tried it with some old lugs first. I primed them and then painted them, but they still wouldn't hold the paint. Any suggestions?

M.C.

Lebanon PA

A. We forwarded your question to our resident drum customizing specialist, Pat Foley, who provided the following information: "I have done some work involving paint on hardware. For instance, Gregg Bissonette's set had the lugs frosted in black and grey to make them look burned. But there really isn't a way to make paint stick permanently to chrome. Some of the paint companies make what they call 'adhesion promoters,' but I haven't found them to work too well. The only way to permanently coat chrome with a color is a process called 'powder painting.' That is actually a baking process, and it's not terribly expensive. A company that specializes in plating or polishing can probably put you in touch with a good company that does powder painting; it's a pretty common process.

"There is, of course, the process known as 'anodizing,' but that is much more expensive. It actually involves either sandblasting or acid-bathing the chrome off of the hardware before the black finish is applied—which is why the process is so expensive. For someone wanting to color existing chromed hardware, the powder painting process is the better suggestion."

Q. I recently started working with a double bass drum pedal. I find that some exercises I do are easier to start with my right foot, while others feel more natural when I lead with my left. From what I have read, it seems that it is best to start everything with the same

foot. Should I try to relearn my patterns so that everything I do starts out on the same foot? If so, how should I decide which foot to lead with?

M.B.

East Setauket NY

A. There is no particular reason why you shouldn't play different patterns leading with different feet. After all, many sticking patterns require leading with different hands. The idea is to play fluidly and competently, in order to achieve a musical goal. The coordination of your feet with your hands must also be comfortable and natural. Depending upon the pattern, the foot you end up on is often more critical than the foot you lead with. As long as you feel comfortable and your playing sounds musical, there is no "right" or "wrong" way to begin a double-bass pattern. The end result is what matters.

Q. I was wondering if you could give me some info on how to get in touch with the Reuther Drum Company and the Kashian Cymbal Company. If there are any U.S.-based offices, I would appreciate their addresses. I believe Reuther drums were manufactured in Germany, and the company may now be out of business. I know that Kashian cymbals are (or were) produced in Italy.

E.P.

Alamosa CO

A. According to our best source of information, Reuther was a name given by a Chicago-based American musical-instrument wholesaler called Targ & Dinner to a line of drumkits imported from Taiwan—not from Germany. These were typical, low-cost import drums much like the "house brands" marketed by many other U.S. distributors under a wide variety of names. Targ & Dinner is no longer in business.

Kashian was a line of cymbals manufactured in Italy by UFIP. Although the name appears in the company's catalogs as recently as 1986, we have no information to indicate that the line is currently being marketed in America. To the best of our knowledge, UFIP cymbals are distributed in the U.S. by Jim Atlas Sales, P.O. Box 825, Levittown, New York 11756. Perhaps you could contact that company for information on current UFIP products.

Q. I would like the address of the Elvin Jones school in Nagasaki, Japan.

L.B.

Berlin, Germany

A. You may contact Elvin Jones for information about his school by writing: Elvin Jones, Amiba-machi 408, Nagasaki, Japan 851-01.



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JIMMY MAELIN FUND

Percussionist Jimmy Maelin, whose credits include work with Roxy Music, Kiss, Frank Sinatra, and numerous records and jingles, is in the hospital suffering from Leukemia. Because of the enormous cost involved in the treatment, a benefit concert was held in New York City on December 6, featuring such artists as Bryan Ferry, Andy Newmark, Paul Shaffer & The World's Most Dangerous Band, David Sanborn, Southside Johnny, Allan Schwartzberg, members of Kool & The Gang, and others.

Anyone wishing to contribute may do so by contacting the Jimmy Maelin Fund, c/o Pastor Zimmer, Northern Valley Evangelical Free Church, 12th Street and Stivers, Cresskill, NJ 07626.

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Vinnie Colaiuta

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Being one of today's most respected drummers, Omar has compiled a list of credits that reads like a Who's Who in the music business. Equally at home in either the studio or on the road, it's easy to see why he is considered one of the very best, a true player's player that will settle for nothing less than excellence, from himself and his drums. So what kind of drums does Omar play? The answer is obvious . . .



denny carmassi

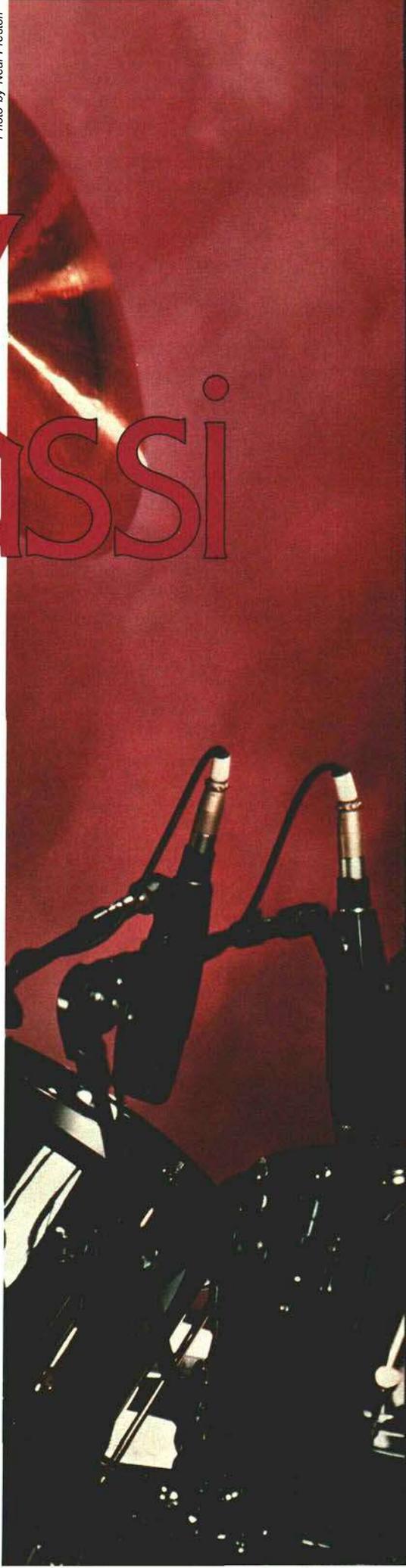
"**Y**EAH, I've got a great story about Denny," says Heart bassist Mark Andes, in reply to my question. "I remember being in Amsterdam with Denny and his wife and daughter. We were walking down a street and saw this guy get his wallet ripped off. Denny yelled, 'Let's get him,' so we gave chase to the crook and got the guy's wallet back. That gives you an idea about where Denny's at. He's an honest, straightforward guy who believes in his ideals. He's not afraid to take a risk and correct a wrong when he sees it going down."

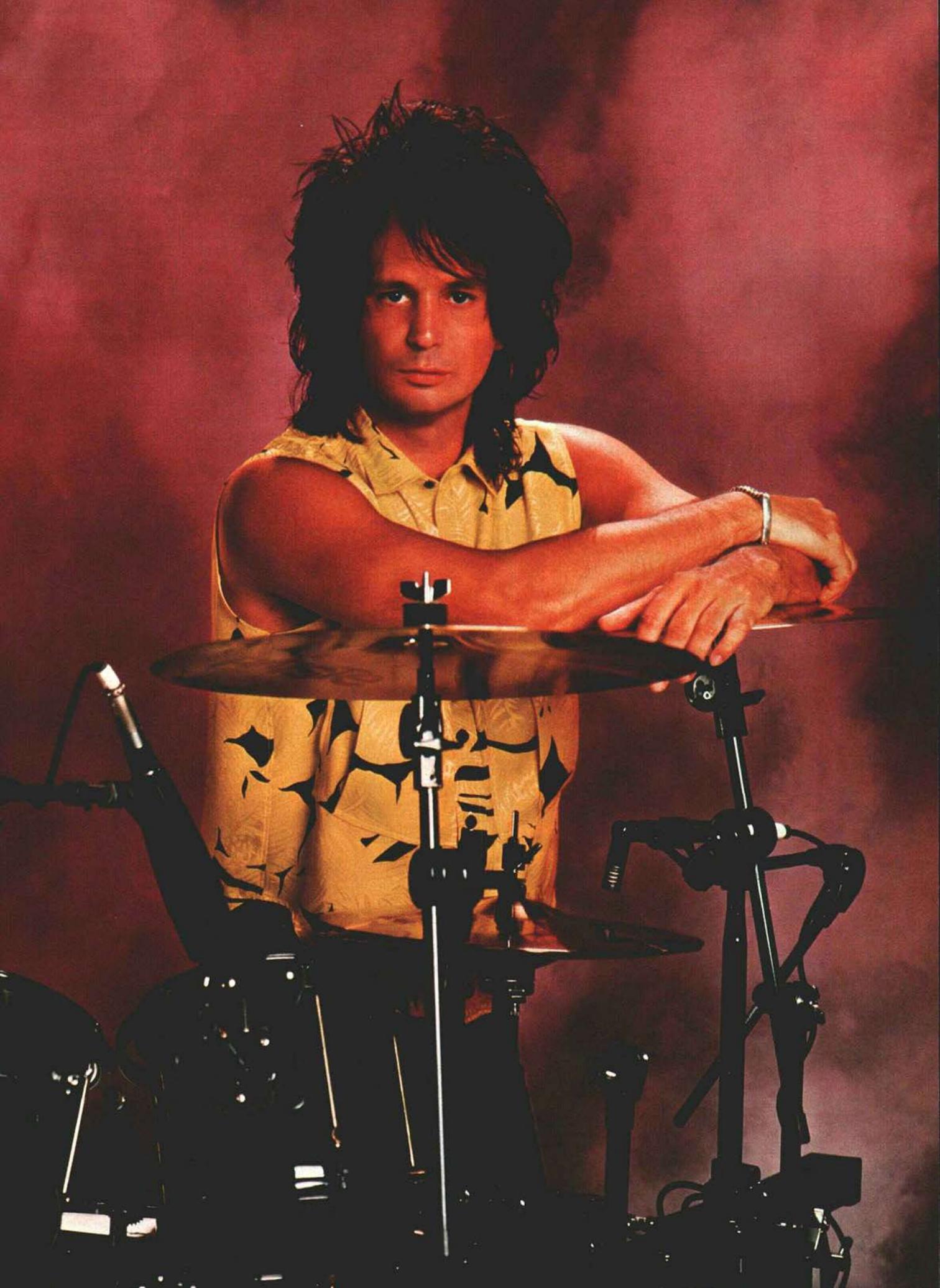
"Denny's Italian," adds guitarist Howard Leese, "and he doesn't take shit from anybody. Last night, Denny and I went out to hear a group at a club. When we got back to our hotel, we were walking across the parking lot to the front door when these two guys in a hot sports car drove up and mouthed off to us. They thought we were funny looking or something. I was going to let it slide, but like I said, Denny doesn't take shit. So he grabbed one of the guys and then I grabbed the other one, and we pretty much made them regret what they'd said. It's not like we're violent people, but Denny is a proud person and he's earned his place in the world. He doesn't need to take stuff like that from a couple of punks."

Vocalist Ann Wilson agrees. "Denny's a real passionate little Italian guy, and his moods are very volatile. Boy, I'd never want to be on the wrong side of him," she laughs. "He's this powerful, macho guy, but then he can turn around and be so sensitive with his daughter and wife. That's why I like him so much. He doesn't hold anything back. He's got a really amazing ability to give all of himself to something. He cares passionately about how things happen, and he's not going to sit back and just let things happen around him. He's either in or out, and when he's in, he's all the way in."

"That's right," guitarist Nancy Wilson says. "When we are working on something new, he'll put himself all the way behind it, even if he isn't sure if he likes it yet. A lot of players won't even try

by Rick Mattingly





something until they're sure they are going to like it in the long run. But Denny will apply himself beyond his own personal taste to try to bring something out of a song that wasn't there before. He's out for the good of the song and the good of the band, instead of for himself. It's inspiring to be in a band with someone like that."

If it sounds like the members of Heart think very highly of their drummer, then it's a feeling that is reciprocated by Denny Carmassi, who is very happy to be a member of Heart. He has been with the group longer than any other band he's ever been with, and he has no plans to leave. Whenever

"These Dreams," "What About Love," and "Nothin' At All." The group sounded fresh and energetic, and the crowd was clearly enjoying every moment of it. After all these years, Heart can fill up most of a 90-minute show with hits.

So it's really no big surprise that Denny should appear to be happy with life these days. When I arrive at the hotel, I find Denny sitting outside in a patio/restaurant that overlooks a bay filled with sailboats. (I had been wondering why the group chose to stay in a hotel that was so far away from the Arts Center. This explained it.) He's at a table with Howard, Mark, and another guy, who

appears to be interviewing them. But as soon as Denny sees me, he excuses himself from the others, and we sit down together at a nearby table. We spend a few minutes discussing "drum gossip," and he asks me who is coming up in the next issue of *MD*. When I mention that we're about to run a tribute to Al Jackson, Denny's eyes light up.

"I learned how to play the drums from listening to Al Jackson," he says. "I was probably about 14 years old, and Booker T. & The MG's had put out the record 'Green Onions.' I sat down with the record player and learned how to play to that record. I was fortunate enough to see Al Jackson play with Otis Redding when I was 17. He was one of the all-time greats. He could play so much with so little. Al was very expressive in such a simple way, and he always played what was right for the song. On our song 'Straight On,' I've got the tom hitting with the snare. That comes from Al Jackson, man."

There are other facets of Denny's playing that evoke memories of Al Jackson. Certainly one of them is the strong backbeat. And another one has to be the way that Denny can play a slow rock ballad in such a way that it grooves. I had been particularly struck by that the night before at the concert. "One of the most difficult things," Denny admits, "is to lay that beat back and have it feel good throughout a real slow tempo. I guess I just developed it through experience—playing a lot of ballads with a lot of different people. I was hanging out with Dom Famularo and Jerry Ricci a few days ago, and we were watching the new Steve Smith video. He was talking about playing like that, and he was actually breaking it down and counting 1-e-&-a, 2-e-&-a, 3-e-&-a, 4-e-&-a. Everybody has a different method, but it seems strange to me to be counting when you're playing. There's no real method behind what I do, except to have a feeling for the spaces in between the notes."

Denny's feel for slow tempos was one of the things that originally attracted Howard Leese's attention, and that eventually led him to invite Denny to join Heart. "Denny and I played together on Randy Meisner's solo album [*Playing In The Deep End*], and I really enjoyed his playing," Howard told me over the phone. "I knew that something was happening within Heart, and that it might get to the point where we would need

Photo by Michael Jachles



I've spoken with him over the past few years, he has always struck me as someone who is proud of what he is doing for a living. It's not an aggressive kind of pride, but rather a quiet self-confidence that gives Denny the air of a man who is at peace with himself.

That feeling is evident as we meet for this interview. The night before, I attended the first of two Heart concerts at the Garden State Arts Center in Holmdel, New Jersey. The group was only a couple of weeks into the first leg of a tour to support the *Bad Animals* album, which had been recently released. Already, the first single from the album, "Alone," was a hit, and many were predicting that this album would be as big a success as the group's previous album, which had the hits "Never,"

to make a change. So I discussed it with Denny. I said, 'This isn't going to occur right away, but if something happens, would you be interested in trying out for Heart?' He said yes, and a little less than a year later, everything happened that I expected. So I called Denny."

And what was it about Carmassi that had impressed Howard so much? "I was looking for someone who had the real solid power of a heavy metal drummer," Howard explained, "but who had a little more technique than most of the bashers who play metal, because our band plays a bunch of different styles. Denny came from a metal background, but when we did the Meisner album, we played a variety of stuff, and I saw that he could be sensitive to ballads and things like that. So he was the only person I ever really considered for the job. Ann and Nancy left it totally up to me to get a new rhythm section. I talked to a number of bass players before I decided on Mark, but Denny was the only drummer I talked to at all."

"So Denny joined the group, and we immediately did a tour in Europe. He fit in with our personalities immediately. When we would get to the fadeout of a song, we would get loose at the end; he'd play fills and I would do these polyrhythmic things. Sometimes we would play the same rhythms out of coincidence, just because our playing styles meshed so well. I had played with a lot of drummers who would play these fills that were so complex that I'd have to count to myself and hope that we'd come out right at the end. Maybe drummers would appreciate fills like that, but they were hard to play with. But Denny had that straightforward style and power that I liked. It kind of cleaned up our sound and made it less cluttered."

Heart had already been around for seven years at that point, and by rock 'n' roll standards, that's a full life. The group had sold a lot of records and had its share of hits, so even if the Wilson sisters had decided to throw in the towel when things started getting shaky, they had already earned their place in rock history. There were no guarantees that making a couple of personnel changes in the group would bring new life for the band. In fact, it could very well have destroyed the group feeling. History has shown that new members of a group are often regarded as mere sidemen for the original members, both by the members themselves and by the public.

So when Denny was invited to join Heart, there were no promises that the band would regain its former stature. In fact, the odds were probably against it. Denny, however, had no second thoughts about joining the group. "For me," Denny explains, "it was a step up—an opportunity. Ann, Nancy, and Howard didn't want to fold it up. Sure, they very easily could have thrown in the towel at that point. Maybe it crossed their minds, but they decided that they didn't want to. So Mark and I were an influx of new blood, and that can be invigorating for a band."

"Right off the bat, we had to make some hard decisions, because things weren't right with the management or with the record company we were with then. This was like the band's last shot, but everyone really wanted to keep it going."

As for feeling like a sideman for Ann, Nancy, and Howard, that was never a problem. "When I was asked to join," Denny says, "I was told, 'This

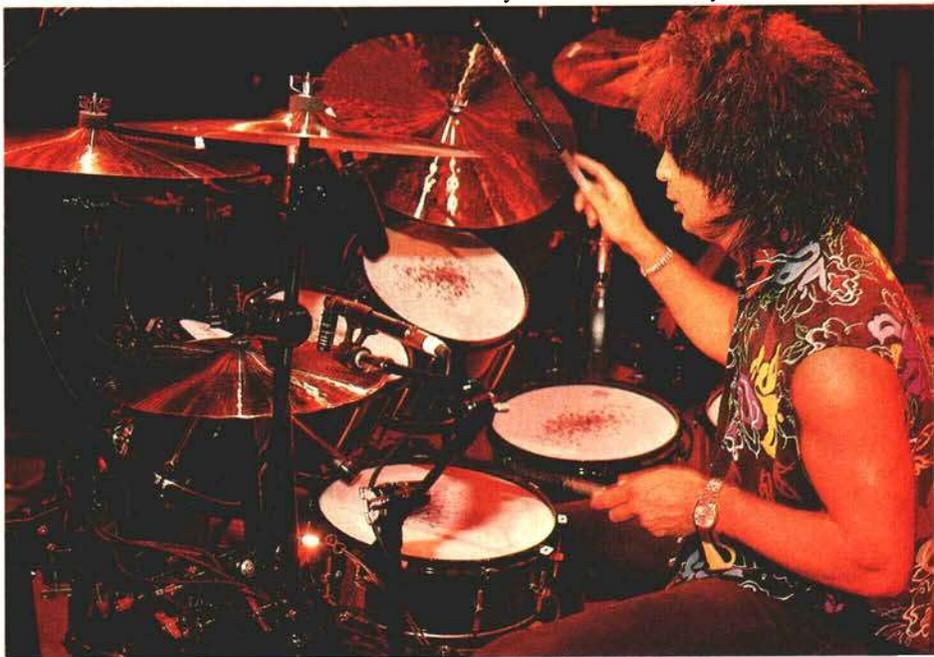
is a group. We don't just want side guys. We want input. We want opinions. We want you to speak your mind.' That's the way it has always been, and it's great. We have our differences of opinion and we argue, but nobody holds a grudge against you for weeks or months just because you disagree. That's hard to find. Maybe it's just a matter of getting older and more mature. When you're young and you're in a band, it can be a very volatile situation. In Montrose, the honeymoon lasted about a month, and then we were constantly at each other's throats. Some bands have made a career of that. They take their frustrations on stage with them, and it can make the group somewhat unique. But I don't think it's healthy. In the long run, it burns itself out."

"With our group, as Ann says, the ashtrays are full now. We know each other really well and get along well as a group. Everyone is real mature, real professional, and real dependable. I know that I can go out there every night and depend on those people to come through. I'm sure they feel the same way about me. Everybody knows that everybody else is out there giving 110%. That's a great feeling. I've always been in bands where there has been internal conflict. Some of that is a very natural thing in a band, because you've got four or five people and everyone has an ego. But in this band, we always seem to work things out. I think it has a lot to do with the fact that the five of us are doing exactly what we want to be doing. There seems to be a consciousness that we're all going in the same direction. I think it shows in the music."

You can speak to any of the members of Heart and hear similar words about how well the members get along, and that the band is like a family. Nancy Wilson actually gives Denny a lot of the credit for that situation. "At the time he joined the band," she told me, "he was the first person who dared to say, 'Let's communicate with each other and not have any of this behind-the-back stuff, which never works.' He became kind of a catalyst

**"WE MAKE MUSIC
THE OLD-
FASHIONED WAY.
WE PLAY IT!"**

Photo by Michael Jachles



for the members of the band learning how to communicate straight with each other. He really drew the band together as a family, because he wasn't afraid to just lay it on the table.

"Playing with him really renewed my inspiration to be in a band," Nancy added, "because we were coming out of a hard time. When he and Mark joined, they played together like a machine. Having really great players who you could also relate to as people—it was the first time that I was really proud to be in this band, because we had the best of all things: the talent as well as the family atmosphere. We've also got people who will get on each other's backs if things aren't right in the playing department. That's what it's all about: to always be getting better. Like Denny says, playing your instrument is a life-long project."

Denny's own professional playing life has already been longer than most. Again, rock 'n' roll lifespans can be relatively short. It's not uncommon for rock musicians to make it big in their 20's, but to be forgotten by the time they reach 30. Denny started playing in clubs when he was 17, and joined Montrose at the age of 25. After four years with that group, he worked with Sammy Hagar, Derek St. Holmes, Michael Schenker, and Gamma, and then joined Heart in 1982. Now, at age 39, Denny's career is still going strong. He attributes his longevity to his attitude.

"I'm going to play drums for the rest of my life," he asserts. "That's what I do. That's what

music as I can—stealing a little bit from this drummer and a little bit from that one."

In that regard, Denny's listening habits are quite eclectic. A couple of years ago in *MD*, he cited albums by such diverse artists as Tony Williams, King Sunny Ade, Gong, Peter Gabriel, and Bill Bruford as being among his favorites. With that in mind, I ask him what he's been listening to recently.

"You mean who have I been stealing from?" he laughs. "Well, the tapes that I brought on the road for this six weeks include Miles Davis' *Tutu*, Bill Bruford's *Earthworks*, Adrian Belew's new album, an album by an English singer named David Sylvian, an old Elmore James blues tape, a Ladysmith Black Mambazo record. . . . I know I'm leaving something out. There's a pretty broad range of music that I'm listening to right now. I just enjoy listening to music like that, and to drummers who play like Tony Williams or Bill Bruford. That type of drumming doesn't necessarily fit what I do in Heart, and it doesn't necessarily make me want to play exactly like those people. But I like stealing little things, and I try to fit those things in here and there in my music."

He gets the chance to try things when Heart learns new material. For the most part, new songs are introduced to the group through demo tapes, and most of those are made with drum machines. Even the Wilson sisters are using drum machines on demos these days, although, according to Denny, "They're not real programmers. They'll just have a simple beat running through the whole song."

But what's on the demo doesn't necessarily end up in Heart's arrangement of the tune. "When we get something," Denny says, "we really tear it apart and make sure that it's right for us. Most songs come in very rough form and are totally open to my interpretation. But I'll admit that there are sometimes some pretty hip things on those little drum machine parts that I might keep in the final product. I don't go in with the attitude, 'I'm not going to play that.' I try to stay open to the spirit that the song was written in."

One of Denny's more interesting beats on *Bad Animals* is on the song "I Want You So Bad," and he explains where that came from. "The verse feel with the hi-hat pattern is something that I came up with in my practice," he recalls, "and that I had been playing for a while. It seemed to work well for that song. On the chorus, I went from the hi-hat to the cymbal bell, and that seemed to separate the chorus from the verse. But it's still the same beat, so it ties the song together."

"Denny is like an arranger," Mark Andes told me. "He approaches a song like a songwriter and expresses that through his drumming. He's also a generous player in that he leaves nice big holes for other people to express themselves. I like to think of myself in the same way. I enjoy leaving a space for Denny to say something really powerful with his drums. When you get people who are not afraid to let someone else have the moment, it makes for a nice feeling. You wind up sharing more by giving than by trying to dominate or superimpose your musical will over somebody else."

Denny's drumming in Heart tends to be no-nonsense, straight-ahead rock drumming that is short

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Photo by Michael Jachles



I've always done, and it's a life-long process for me. I'm always learning new things. I've never thought, 'Okay, I've arrived.' I'm just constantly trying to improve myself as a player.

"Being in a band like this," he continues, "there are certain limitations. We play almost within a specific set of rules, and it's sort of a challenge to try to bend those rules as much as you can. So I spend a lot of time on my own trying to come up with new things. I'm always listening to as much

HEARTBEATS

Transcribed by Rick Mattingly

The following beats are from Heart's *Bad Animals* album, and they give a good idea of what Denny can do within a straight-ahead backbeat style. One characteristic of his playing involves changing the color to mark different sections of a tune. In "Who Will You Run To," Denny uses the same basic beat on the verse and the chorus sections, but changes from the hi-hat to the ride cymbal. In the example below, the first measure is the verse pattern, while the second measure is the chorus beat.

MUSIC KEY

Open	○	R.C.
H.H.	×	
S.D.	■	
B.D.	■	

"Who Will You Run To"

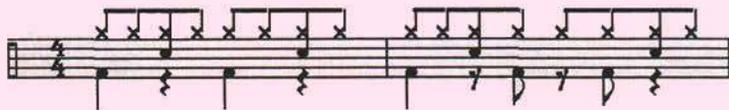


Denny often uses two-bar patterns, such as the following.

"Alone"

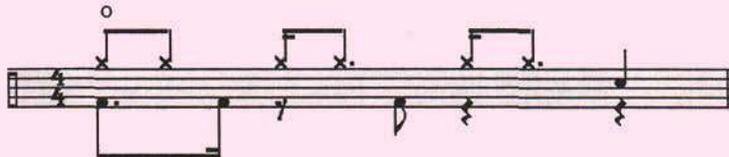


"There's The Girl"



The next example shows the verse pattern from "I Want You So Bad." On the chorus, Denny plays the hi-hat pattern on the bell of the ride cymbal.

"I Want You So Bad"



The following beat has a very funky feel. Denny uses a couple of simple variations on this pattern in different sections of the song.

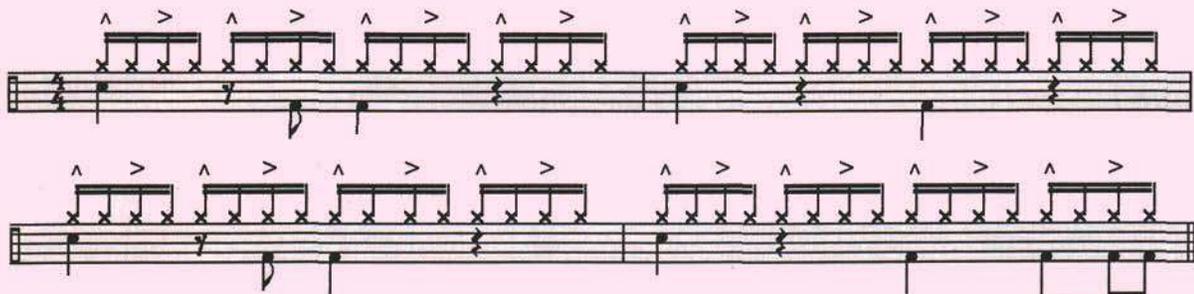
"Easy Target"



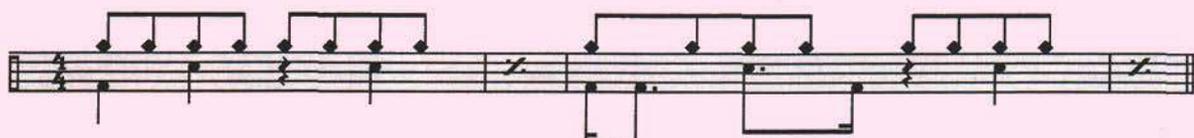
This final example shows Denny's use of space. The accents that are notated over the hi-hat pattern can only approximate Denny's feel. Listen to the record to hear why a machine will never replace this guy.

"Wait For An Answer"

Intro and Verses



Chorus



STU N



Photo by Robert Santelli

NO

evitt

by Robert Santelli

It's a long way from the Lone Star Cafe, a small but popular New York City honky-tonk, to Carnegie Hall. That's what drummer Stuart Nevitt is telling drummer Danny Gottlieb as they both admire the opulence and acoustics of this landmark venue.

The last time Nevitt and his band, Shadowfax, played New York, they played the Lone Star. Nevitt couldn't even fit all the pieces of his drumset on the stage there. But tonight Shadowfax is the headliner at Carnegie Hall. (Gottlieb will play drums for Alex di Grassi, the opening act.) It's all part of the JVC-sponsored New York City Jazz Festival, so you can understand why this gig is a big deal for Shadowfax.

It's even a bigger deal for Nevitt, though, because it's sort of a homecoming for him. The drummer/percussionist was raised across the Hudson River, in New Jersey's Union County (as was Gottlieb). And tonight, the family—parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins—they're all coming to see Stuart, their boy, perform on the stage of Carnegie Hall.

And Nevitt is nervous. But that's not surprising, because Nevitt is always nervous before a performance. "I can't help it," he says backstage. "It's part of me—the nervousness. I can't shake it. I really can't."

Yet, when it comes time to forget all about the butterflies and sweaty palms, and get down to some serious work behind his drumset, Nevitt is right on the mark. Both he and Shadowfax sound superb. The music they perform is crisp, bright, rhythmically sophisticated, and immensely interesting from where I sit in the audience. I seriously wonder how many of those critics who like to lambaste Shadowfax as a band that plays "New Age" music, which translated means "a bit wimpish and watery—an offshoot of jazz that is best suited for background music," have seen this band live.

It's a pity labels like "New Age" exist. I have the feeling that the "New Age" connection has prevented far too many people from discovering just how good Shadowfax is, especially live. For too long now, Shadowfax and a slew of other "New Age" artists have had to battle the stigma attached to their music and record label, Windham Hill. There is nothing emanating from the Carnegie Hall stage tonight but exciting, eclectic jazz-rock-pop-blues fusion layered atop "world music" rhythms. And not once, or twice, but three times during the performance the house stands up in appreciation and respect.

Nevitt is one of those drummers who views his instrument and his playing of it, not as a job, not as a career, but as his life's work. "I absolutely love the idea of playing drums and percussion," Nevitt says with a smile. "I live and breathe them. And it's been that way ever since I can remember."

Stuart began playing the drums when he was four years old. He's

now in his mid-'30s. It's safe to say Nevitt has paid his dues, and it's also safe to say he's one drummer you're going to hear a lot about in the years to come.

RS: Let's start off with a rather thorny question. Shadowfax is considered a band that produces "New Age" music. That term and the music it stands for have been beaten and battered by critics everywhere. How do you react when someone refers to you as a "New Age" drummer?

SN: I absolutely hate the term. I think most artists that are categorized under that term also have a strong dislike for it. Actually, it's merely a matter of semantics. The term "New Age" music means there is something called "Old Age" music out there. Shadowfax has so many influences on its music that I question whether anyone can rightfully put a tag on it.

RS: Why do you think so many reputable critics look down upon "New Age" music?

SN: I think, when they hear that an artist or band falls into the "New Age" music category, they automatically consider it background music. I take offense to that, because I think what Shadowfax does, musically, has a little more substance than that. I think our songs have some strong melodies and polyrhythms to listen to. But we've had a bit of what we call the "Granola Backlash," more so on the East Coast than on the West. But in March, we signed with Capitol Records, so hopefully, we'll be able to get out from under the Windham Hill umbrella, which is where the whole "New Age" music thing originated.

RS: That's true. What are your recollections of the time Shadowfax spent with Windham Hill?

SN: The thing with Windham Hill was that most of their promoting and marketing was geared toward the label. It was almost as if the artist was secondary.

RS: Does Shadowfax do anything to counteract the "New Age" link?

SN: The only thing we've consciously done is to include more vocals in our music. We don't like to do vocal tunes just to do them. In other words, we'll include vocals now where they might enhance the song. But we don't go out of our way to force them into our music.

RS: But now that Shadowfax is with Capitol—certainly a more mainstream company than Windham Hill and one with a much larger sales potential—might Shadowfax switch musical gears a little bit in order to, say, sound more accessible and less "New Age"?

SN: I guess it's possible. We've been working on new material. Right now, it's about half vocal and half instrumental. I don't know, though, if it will wind up on the next album that way.

RS: You mentioned before that Shadowfax's music is so varied that it's really tough to categorize. Has such eclecticism presented

CATEGORIES, PLEASE



problems for you as the band's drummer?

SN: No. The most important thing is that I have a pretty broad palette of colors and sounds to work with, which is why I use the E-mu *SP-12*—the sampling drum machine. That was an answer to my prayers. I always wanted to have a setup where I could have my acoustic drums and a bunch of different acoustic percussion instruments. But anytime I tried putting, say, an African drum or a Moroccan drum on a stand, all the sound went into the stand. And you couldn't play it with drumsticks. But now with the *SP-12* and the Roland *Octapad*, everything is right there. I don't have to change sticks to play it. Plus, the sampling quality is real good, so I at least get the real sound of the instrument. But to answer your question, playing in this band requires the use of a lot of different colors, especially with percussion.

RS: How do you blend acoustic sounds with electronic ones? Your drum sound is incredibly cohesive—even seamless. Is there a particular strategy that you employ?

SN: Most of the electronic stuff that I use is for percussion voices. On a couple of songs that we do, I also trigger some kick and snare drum sounds from the *SP-12*. But most of my kick playing is acoustic. I think it'll always be that way. I don't think I'd ever play a totally electronic kit.

RS: How do you incorporate the *Octapad* into your repertoire?

SN: I use it more for percussion voices than actual drumkit voices.

RS: Go back to what you said a moment ago about the broad spectrum of sounds and colors that you need as the drummer in Shadowfax. If I listen to a Shadowfax album, I hear all sorts of exotic rhythms and colorings. How did you come to bring this into your drum playing? It's almost as if you and Shadowfax sort of symbolize a United Nations of sounds and rhythms.

"THE BOTTOM LINE HAS TO BE BRINGING OUT THE BEST POINTS OF THE SONG."

SN: I grew up in the '60s, and the first things that turned me on to "world music" forms were albums by Ravi Shankar and Yehudi Menuhin. I was also very much influenced by some of the things that George Harrison did with Indian music. It was from this that I really started exploring and experimenting with different rhythms and such. I remember going into record stores and heading straight to the Ethnic Music sections. I'd pick up all kinds of African albums and Indonesian Gamelan music.

RS: Where did this fascination come from?

SN: I don't know. There was something there that caught my ear, especially the stuff by Alla Rakha, the tabla player with Ravi Shankar. I just couldn't believe what I heard coming out of two little hand drums. I always liked the exotic flavors of different music forms. If you can use that and put it on top of something a little more western, then I think you can come up with something a little unique. And that's what I tried to do.

RS: Were you playing drums when you first embarked on this musical exploration in the '60s?

SN: Oh yeah. I've been playing the drums since I was four years old. My dad used to play in Montreal. I remember the day he came home with one of those little red wooden practice pads with the piece of rubber on it.

RS: Did your father play professionally?

SN: You could say that. He played jazz and swing, mostly. He used to tell me about having to get on a bus with his drums tucked under his arms to go to gigs.

RS: I take it he was Canadian.

SN: That's right. But I grew up in Union, New Jersey, and later moved to Cranford when I was ten or eleven years old. There was always music around the house. My mom used to sing with neighborhood choral groups.

RS: Did you take drum lessons, or did you learn from your father?

SN: I did both. My father was the first one to teach me anything on the drums. He started me off with what he called "The Mama-Poppa Roll." Then I studied with a milkman named Gene Genova at the Union Conservatory of Music. I studied with him a couple of years, before moving on to Gene Thaler in Maplewood. He was a great, great teacher. I stayed with him for 12 or 13 years. Max Weinberg also studied with him. Thaler now has a studio with his son down in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Gene was great. When I began studying with him, I had to start all over again. The milkman had gotten me into a lot of bad habits as far as my grip was concerned. I wasn't keeping my fingers around the stick—that sort of thing. And I can still hear Gene telling me that, too. I still keep in close contact with him today.

RS: When did you join your first band?

SN: I guess I was about 12 years old, but it wasn't until I was 15 or 16 that I got interested in "world music." The earliest bands I was in played Beatles and Monkees songs. We did a few originals with



one band called the Rebels, but they were pretty weak, as you might imagine. We used to play CYOs and school dances. Then later on in high school, I played with a group called the Psychotic Blues Band. We did a lot of work. We opened some shows for Springsteen down the Jersey Shore when he still had Vini Lopez on drums. This was back in 1971, I guess, when that infamous place, the Sunshine Inn in Asbury Park, was still open. Even back then, you knew Springsteen would be something. I remember him holding the audience right in the palm of his hand.

RS: I went to school at Monmouth College back then and actually remember the Psychotic Blues Band.

SN: That's really amazing. It's a small world; it really and truly is.

RS: At some point in the early '70s, you left Jersey for Miami, right?

SN: That's right. I wasn't enrolled, but I was hanging out at Miami University. That was like 1973 and '74. And it was a great place to be. There was a great music scene down there at the time. Danny Gottlieb was down there. So was Jaco Pastorius and a bunch of other musicians. There was always a jam going on. It was back then that I was able to first start using some "world music" applications to my drumming.

RS: What kinds of drummers were influencing you back then?

SN: My earliest influences were drummers like Dino Danelli of the Rascals, Charlie Watts, and of course, Ringo—also, Keith Moon. I learned to make faces by watching Keith Moon play, [laughs] But after that, I started getting into more jazz. The first jazz drummer I ever really listened to was a fellow by the name of Louis Hayes. I heard a Horace Silver album called *Blowing The Blues Away*, and he was on it. Also, Coltrane's *My Favorite Things* was important to me, too, because it had Elvin Jones on it. He completely blew my mind. And from there, I started listening to Billy Cobham. The first time I saw him play was at the Sunshine Inn in Asbury Park with Dreams. He came out and opened the show by himself, and one by one, the other musicians in the band came on and started jamming. As soon as he started playing, my jaw just hit the ground. I said to myself, "Wow. So that's how you use rudiments of music!" It was like a big light bulb went on inside my head. But Cobham was a heavy influence on me at the time. And today, I think my two favorite drummers are Jack DeJohnette and Tony Williams. As far as rock goes, I really like Stewart Copeland and Phil Collins, especially for his sound. The sound he got with Hugh Padgham in the studio set some new standards.

RS: When did you join Shadowfax?

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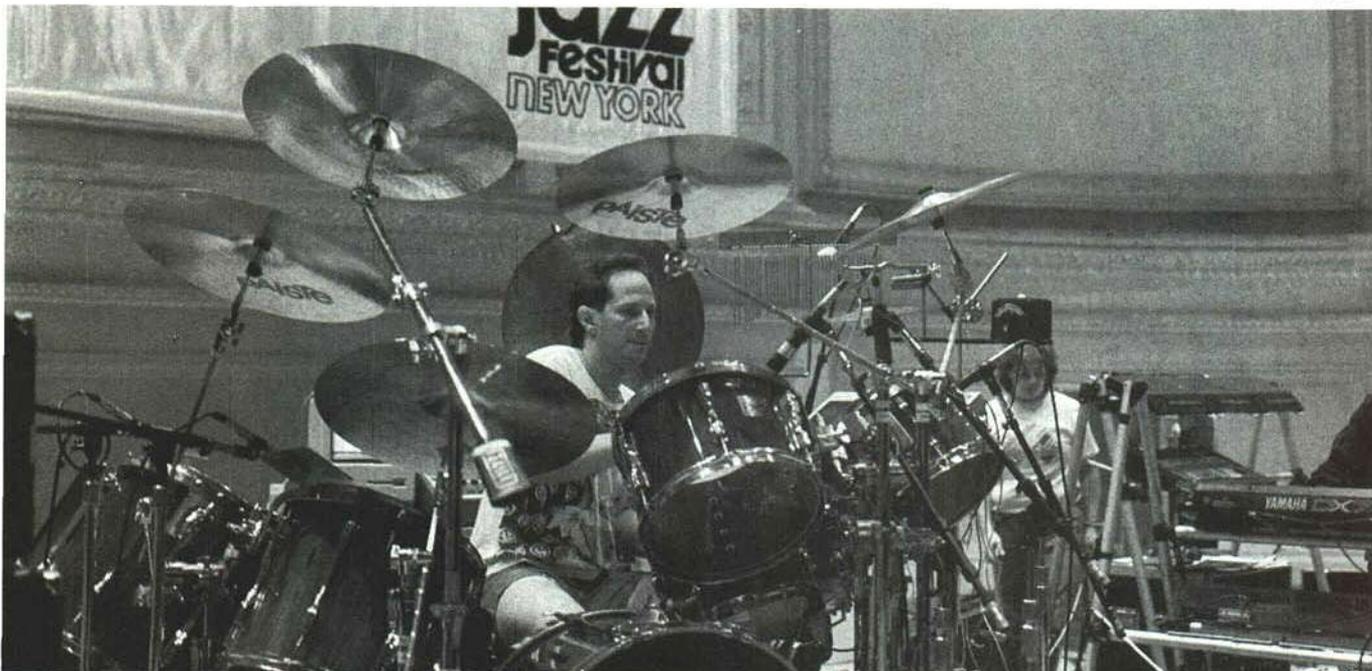


Photo by Robert Santelli

HARRY STINSON

by Robyn Flans

Is there anything this guy can't do? Harry Stinson is not only a session drummer, lending his talents to such hits as "Baby's Got A Hold On Me" by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, but also a session background vocalist singing on Barbara Mandrel! and Sweethearts of the Rodeo sessions. He's also a producer who has been at the helm of projects for artists like Wendy Waldman and A.J. Masters. He has a publishing deal with Silverline Publishing, with songs covered by such artists as Patty Oveless and Steve Earle. As a drummer, he has played with such acts as Al Stewart, America, Jay Ferguson, and Peter Frampton. Currently he is a member of Steve Earle's band, *The Dukers*.

But to Harry, all the facets make up the whole. His guitar playing makes him a more melodic, sensitive drummer; being a singer gives him knowledge, as a songwriter; being a drummer gives him insight into production from the other side of the glass.

The Nashville native is a drummer first and foremost, though, and has been since his grammar school and high school days of just fooling around with music. Finding school not to be his cup of tea, Harry studied with percussionist Farrell Morris, who helped "get me stripped down in my drumming," says Stinson.

In college, he met David Malloy, who now has produced such artists as Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton, and watched Malloy climb to the top of the studio ranks. In the early days, they would mess around in the studio together, and Stinson would "tear up Jerry Carrigan's drums and put dents in them," he grimaces.

He cut his vocal teeth singing backgrounds on Sammy Smith records that David's dad, Jim Malloy, produced, and on the Eddie Rabbitt record David was producing. In fact, Malloy was just about to give Harry his first major studio break as a drummer on that album when America's Willie Leacock broke his thumb and the group needed a replacement to finish out the tour. When neither Jim Keltner nor Jim Gordon could join the tour on such short notice, friends at Carlo Sound out on the road with America recommended Harry.

"I had to meet them the next day in Muscle Shoals where they were playing," Harry recalls. "I scrambled to find their albums. I listened to them, but their direction wasn't defined at that point, so it didn't do me much good. I just went down there completely cold, although I knew the sound crew, and they were real helpful. Luckily, they had taped the show three nights before. We did a soundcheck where we sort of ran through everything. I took their live tape, sat with it until showtime, and made all my own charts. Willie sat on the drum riser with one bad hand, holding

a flashlight on my notes, and David Dickey, the bass player, was yelling out, "Half time, double time," helping me with the cues. I didn't miss a lick except on the encore song. I turned it around and made it twice as fast as it should have been. They were so happy to have made it to the end of the show with this new guy that it didn't matter. I must have lost ten pounds that day going through all that stuff. After three shows, I had it down, and I finished the tour, which was great. From doing lounge bands, here I was riding around in a private plane, and I thought, "Wow, this is the way it is. This is great!"

RF: So you missed the Rabbitt record.

HS: Yes. I had to call in and say, "I'm sorry. I've got to cancel this session." I called Jim Malloy because he had something to do with it, and his wife said, "You know, I don't think Jim's going to like this very much." And I said, "I'm sorry, but I don't think there's anything I can do about that." I knew this was the right decision.

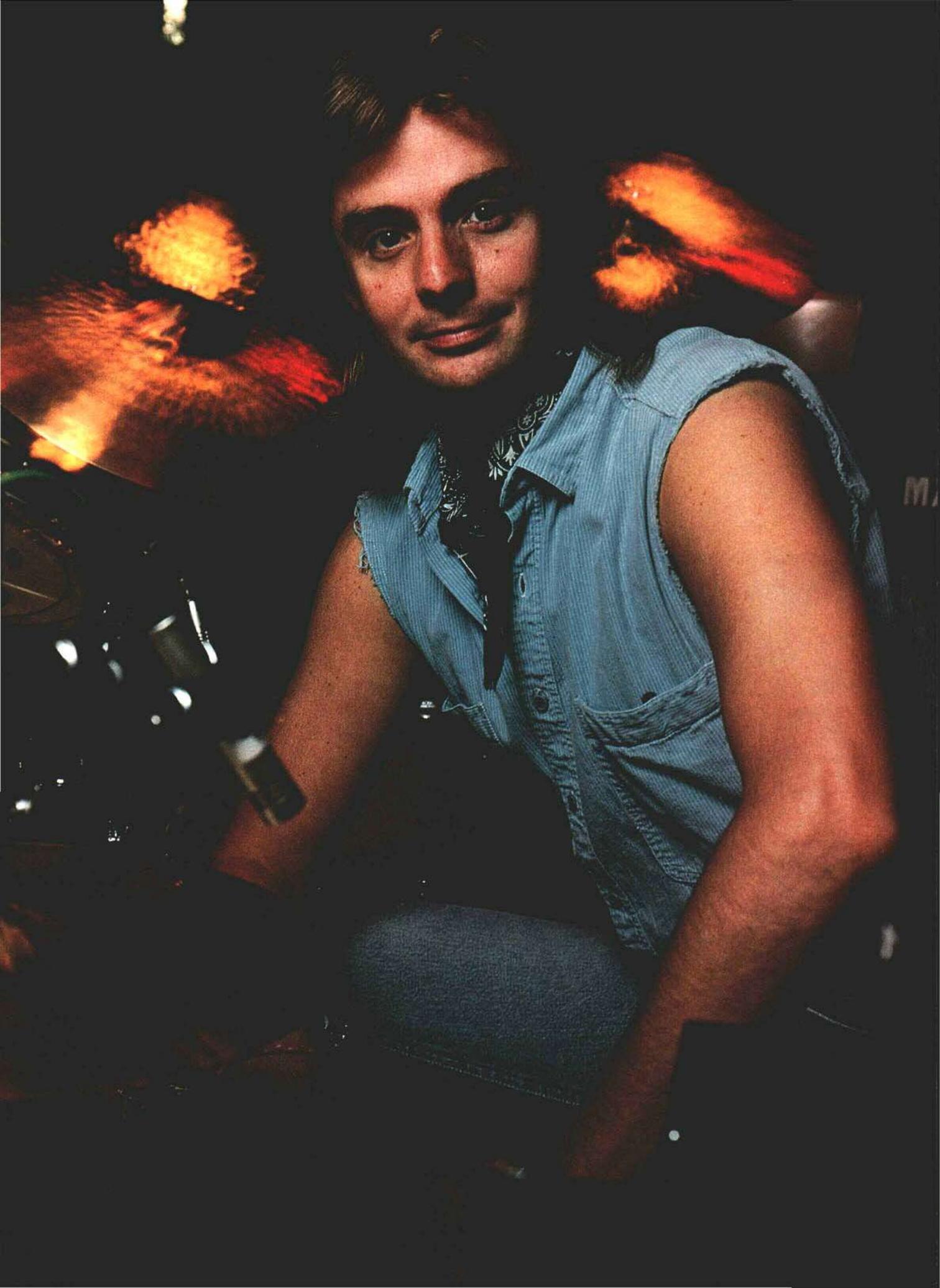
RF: Why was that more right than doing the record?

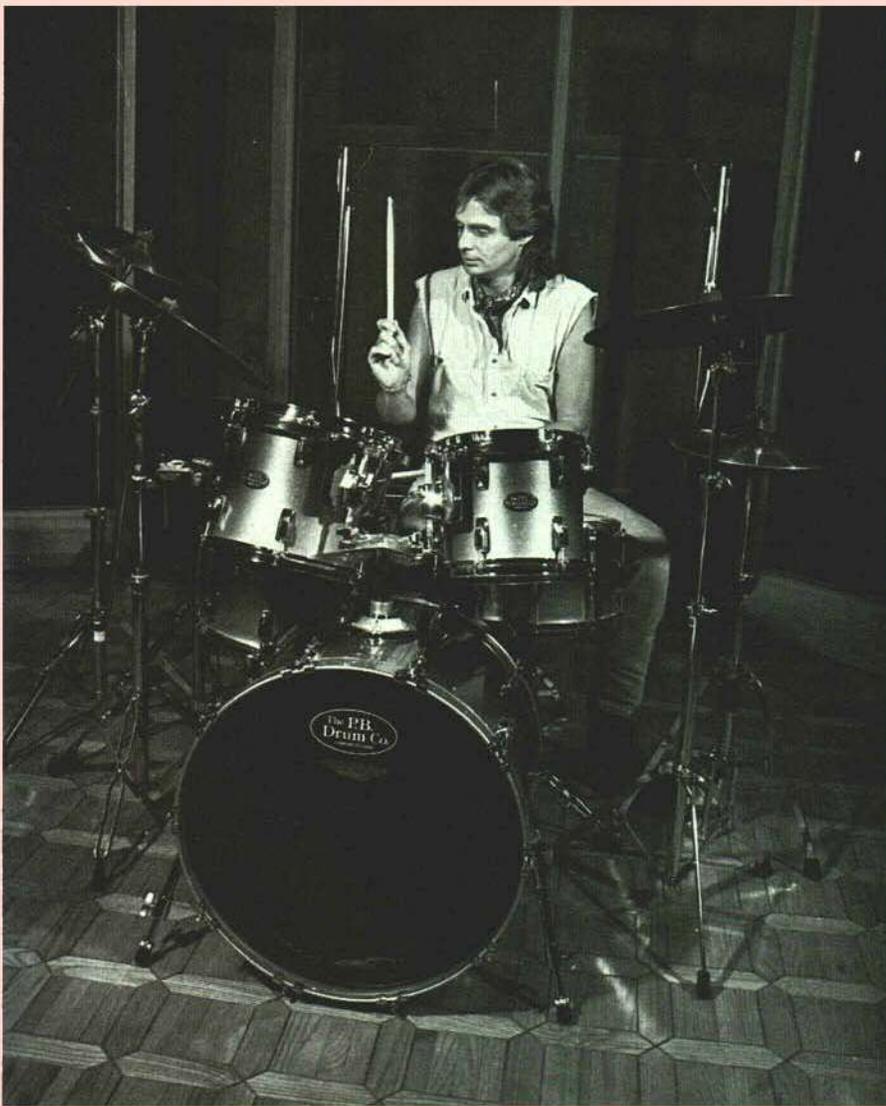
HS: It was more of what I wanted to do. Nashville at that time was pretty boring, and the technology wasn't nearly what it was in L.A. Now it's the same or even better. But at that time, I related to rock sounds, and America was a Top Ten group.

RF: Rock music was your goal?

HS: Oh yes, although I understood and loved country music. I used to listen to the Grand Ole Opry, and when I'd go camping with my family, they'd always listen to these little 20-watt stations up in the hills, so I have a real love for it. In fact, I played on the Grand Ole Opry right out of high school. I went to high school with Morris West, Dottie West's son, and we had a rock band together. At that time, there was no place for us to play, so Dottie took pity on us and said, "Why don't you boys come out with me." We did a lot of fairs and

NOT "JUST" A DRUMMER





things like that, and I played on the Grant! Ole Opry at the old Ryman Auditorium with her a few times.

RF: Were there drummers you were listening to?

HS: Buddy Rich's *Live At Caesar's Palace* was a big record for me, because he was doing pop tunes like "Mercy Mercy." I just remember that what he was coming out with sounded inhuman to me, and that stretched my thinking a lot. Of course, I listened to Ringo a lot. He's one of my big influences. Charlie Watts was also, although I think more now than before because I was more melodically conscious back then. Also, Jim Gordon and Jim Keltner were big influences. Keltner's still a huge influence on me. I really respect him a lot as a player, because he approaches drumming as an arrangement thing and doesn't necessarily play what other people would think of. He's very creative. Kenny Malone is also unbelievably creative. He was doing a lot when I was hanging around studios, so I saw him back then playing kick drum and conga, instead of a snare drum and things like that. He was great to watch. He would just get into the groove, and his head would move a lot, which I don't do that much. When I start moving

around, I'm not as precise. Kenny Malone and Kenny Buttrey turned me onto Sonor drums, which I used for about ten years. Now, I've got a custom set of PB drums with a sunburst finish that Gary Grimm built for me, which I've been using for two years. The 14" floor tom, which actually is a 12x14, sounds huge. Most 14" drums have a certain characteristic, but this one has more fullness. They're Eames shells, and I love them. I want to get something else and keep these here to use just for studio calls.

RF: So what happened after the America tour?

HS: I went out to L.A. to check it out for a couple of weeks. Then I came back here to Nashville, but nothing was really happening. I hung around David Malloy some more, but he was using studio players. Those guys were better than I was at that point, and although I probably felt a little hurt at the time, I totally understood it. There's always that battle between road players and session players, but I never cared to be just a session player. A lot of musicians just can't do both. It's not the chops, but it's the attitude and everything else that goes with it.

RF: Technically, it's different.

HS: It's completely different. Everything is under a microscope. All your little rattles show up, and even the way you hit is different. The microphone hears differently in the studio. I don't hit as hard in the studio, because it's not necessary. Unless you're going for an ambient sound—room mic's and that kind of thing—you're not trying to move a lot of air around in a big place. You're just trying to get the optimum sound out of that drum, so whatever sounds good is how you need to play. I do hit hard, but not all the time. I'm more dynamic in the studio, because it shows up. Live, you just have to go for it, because the mixers like to use a lot of noise gates and things like that.

I ended up going to Buffalo, because some friends of mine had a group up there. We played big clubs with big P.A.s, and we had a huge local following. When I wasn't playing with that band, I could go down to a club and sit in without any problem. Everybody knew everybody, so that was also a great woodshedding time for me. I did that for nine months, and then I got a telegram from L.A. from America's management saying, "Call me immediately. John Hartmann." I called him, and he had another project that he was trying to put together. He said that, if I came out there, I pretty much had the job.

It was a guy named Steve Ferguson, who was one of the first signings on Elektra. At that time, we were doing real country-sounding things, although it wasn't like Poco or the Eagles. The songs were a little bit "Beatley" sounding, actually, which made Steve's image even more unusual. We rehearsed real hard for two weeks. We did two shows. John tried to get Elektra pumped up about him, but Elektra wasn't really sure about it. John ran out of money, and it fell apart.

I didn't have anything else lined up, but I wasn't particularly worried about it. I was planning on getting married, but I couldn't afford to come home, so I had to put that off. I was in a severe transition at that point. But John Hartmann came to the rescue again. He'd had an act called Batdorf & Rodney, who were signed to Arista, but who broke up. They had a single cut that Clive Davis loved called "Wham Bam Shang-a-lang." John went to Davis with the idea of putting a band together around this song. Clive agreed but said, "This song has to go on there," and that was the one song we all hated the most. The band was called Silver, and we were like Poco with the three-part harmony. That song reached something like 17 on the *Billboard* chart, but because it was such a bop single, radio programmers would not play the rest of the record, which we wrote. Clive wanted us to submit songs for the second album, but he never liked anything that we turned in. We finally got out of the contract, and we couldn't get interest anywhere else.

I was fed up with the band situation, so I decided to just be a sideman. I started hanging out with people in Al Stewart's band. I'm really glad that I got to play in that band, because that was also completely different from anything else out on the radio. It was a big band with two keyboard players. The arrangements on top of the rhythm section were always real interesting.

RF: What was the role for the drummer?

HS: Timekeeper. It wasn't extremely interesting, except for a couple of things that Porcaro played on the record, which were more of that "Lido Shuffle" stuff. I actually learned how to do that by listening to him play it and having to recreate it. We went to some great places, including Europe, and I finally got enough money together to get married. That tour lasted five months, and then Al shut down to do his next record.

Jay Ferguson came along, and "Thunder Island" was a big hit, so I worked with him for a year. It was straight-ahead rock 'n' roll, and I did a lot of singing in that band, which was probably the reason I got the job. I really didn't like the boom mic' in front of my face. There really had to be something on the market I could use where I could sing and be seen, and have the mic' on my head or something. I found the Shure SM-10, which was not a good quality mic', but it was the only thing available. It just didn't have a big enough diaphragm in there to get a good response, but I bought one. I started using it, and with a little EQ, it sounded just fine. I had built a little on and off switch box that I put right next to my hi-hat, so I could turn it on and off for count-offs. When I didn't want to be heard, I could control that. I remember we opened a show for the Doobie Brothers



at the time, and I could see their soundman saying, "What's this?" Sure enough, here's Keith Knudsen using a little headset mic' three months later, and then everybody started using it. I'm not really sure if I had anything to do with it, but it was 1978 and I had never seen anyone do it before. I stopped using one after that point and went back to regular mic's, because the headset would never really stay in place. I'm going to get a new AKG that actually fits around your ears and holds tighter now. I think the frequency response is a lot better, so the soundman with Steve Earle will be happy. It will also cut down on leakage. There's so much leakage on stage with drums that I always wish there were something we could do with the vocal mic'. Every time I have to turn it on, the sound of the drums changes. Hopefully, this will help that.

RF: When did you actually start singing and drumming?

HS: Back in the days when I played with Morris West in high school. I was the only guy who could sing at all, so I got the job and learned how to put it all together. It was a little tricky at first, but once I got the rhythm of it down, I didn't think about it.

RF: What's tricky?

HS: The coordination of it—having all five things moving at once. Two arms, two legs, and a mouth are a lot to put together. Also, phrasing is different. There's so much going on when you're playing drums that it's hard to coordinate. But it really is a matter of coordination and feeling it in yourself. To get yourself to play a basic rock beat in a solid manner, you have to practice so you get it all locked in and it all sounds like one thing. With a voice, it's just an extension of that coordination. It's

juggling four balls instead of three balls.

RF: How were you feeling about being a sideman?

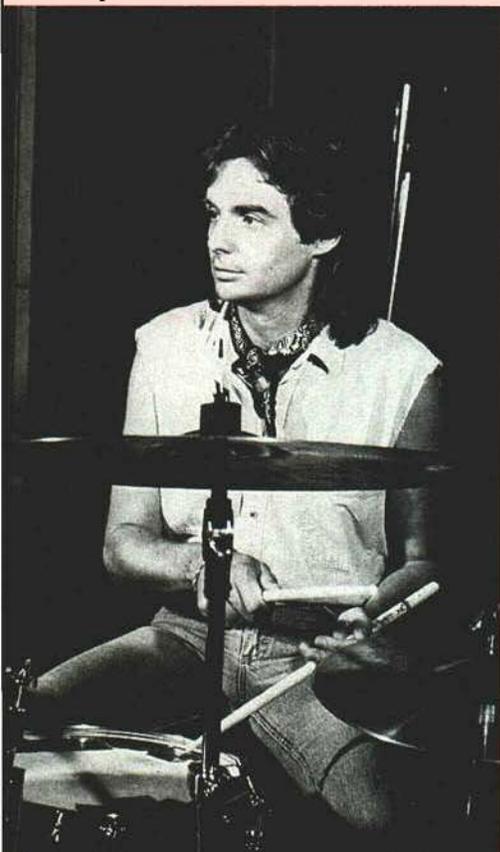
HS: I liked it because it was easy. I went back with Al, and I played on his next album, which was a complete disaster and probably went directly to the bargain bins. It was called *Indian Summer*, and it was a half live, half studio, two-album set. To make sure the tempos were the same on both nights of the live Roxy gig, I had everything on a metronome with a little light. I think they did actually cut from one night to another.

That reminds me: I did one scene in *The Rose* where Bette Midler goes home to a little country bar. That was also live, on-screen playing, which was actually one of the first movies done that way. Most movies are dubbed and you just play along with a track. We spent two complete days shooting a scene that didn't last more than two minutes. That was fun to do.

RF: How did you hook up with Peter Frampton?

HS: Over the years, I got to know Wendy Waldman, and I went into the studio with her. We came up with "Heartbeat," which was on her record, and Eddie Kramer engineered that. I was in heaven, because he was into drum sounds. He had recorded Traffic, the Kinks' "You Really Got Me," John Bonham, and the Stones' *Beggars Banquet* album. Wendy's album was pretty much my first one where I sounded like I wanted to sound and I was playing my own licks, not having to sound like anybody else. The bass player in the band was John Regan, who had been playing with Peter Frampton for a couple of years, and Mark Goldenberg, a great writer who plays guitar and keyboards equally well,

continued on page 99



If you've ever wished for a chance to meet and discuss music with a *leading* rock drummer ... one of the most experienced studio and stage professionals in the business ... this clinic tour is for you! The Paiste Cymbal Company is proud to present Nicko McBrain, drummer of Iron Maiden, up-close-and-personal. This very special clinic tour will be conducted in conjunction with fine music stores throughout the United States ... so look below for the location nearest you and call or, better yet, stop in for details.

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CALIFORNIA

Fullerton, January 19
Fullerton Music

TEXAS

San Antonio, January 21
Kirk Scott's Drum City
Dallas, January 22
Brook Mays Pro Drum Shop

MISSOURI

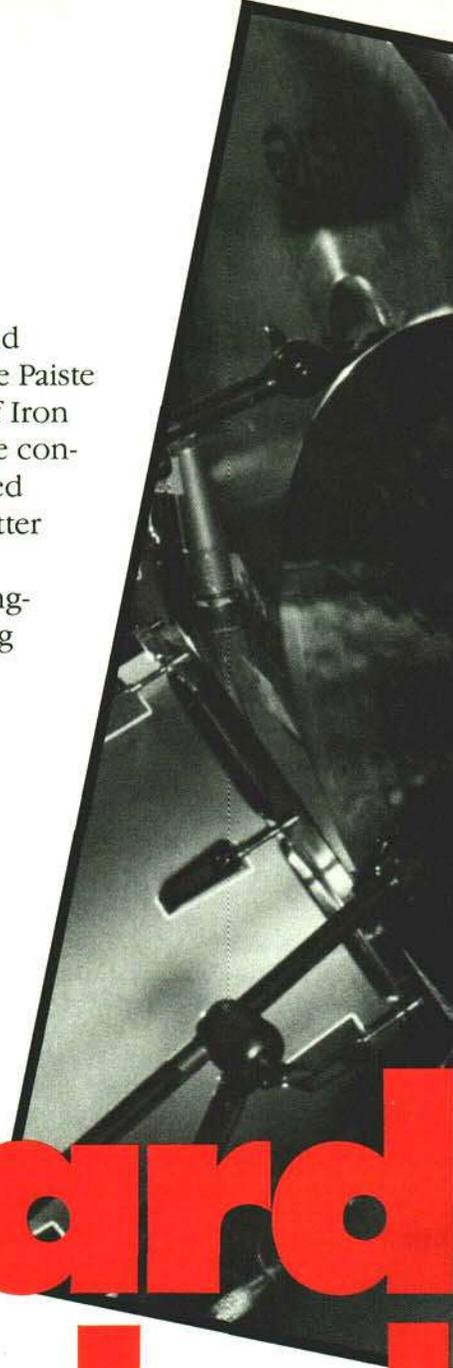
Kansas City, January 24
Explorer's Percussion

INDIANA

Jeffersonville, January 26
Far Out Music

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1981
Nicko McBratney

PAISTE



Technique

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Resurrection Drum
Tampa, January 28
Thoroughbred Music

GEORGIA

Atlanta, January 30
Atlanta Pro Percussion

NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh, January 31
Audio, Light and Musical

VIRGINIA

Virginia Beach, February 1
Abbey Music and Recording

MARYLAND

Towson, February 2
Gordon Miller Music

PENNSYLVANIA

Harrisburg, February 4
Dales Drum Shop

NEW YORK

Flushing, February 5
Long Island Drum Center
Commack, February 7
Long Island Drum Center

DELAWARE

Wilmington, February 6
Drumstix

CONNECTICUT

Wethersfield, February 8
Creative Music

MICHIGAN

Fraser, February 11
Huber & Breese Music

ILLINOIS

Chicago, February 12
Guitar Center—North

WISCONSIN

West Allis, February 13
Daryl Stuermer Music
Madison, February 14
Ward/Brodt Music Co.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul, February 15
Torps Music Center

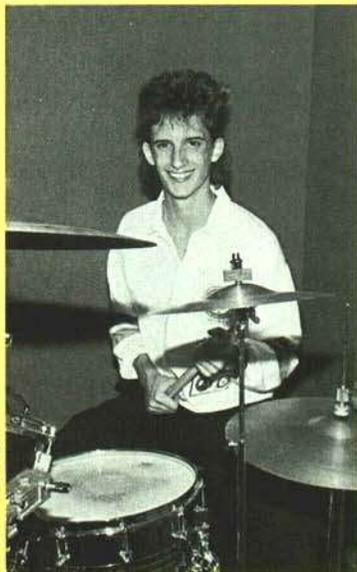


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SOUND SUPPLEMENT

A few months ago, Neil Peart decided that he had too many drumsets, and he wanted to give three of them away. A contest was held in which drummers were invited to submit a tape of a two-minute drum solo. From the 1,767 tapes that were received, Neil selected Jack Hess, Wayne Killius, and Mark Feldman to receive drumsets. We are happy to present their winning solos on this *Sound Supplement*. (Neil also awarded a fourth prize, consisting of a set of cymbals, to Mikel Masters. But Masters requested that his solo not be included on the Soundsheet.)

JACK
HESS



Age: 18

Age started playing drums: 11

Hometown: Indianapolis, Indiana

Music education: Middle school and high school instruction; private instruction from Sam Withrow; currently attending Ball State University

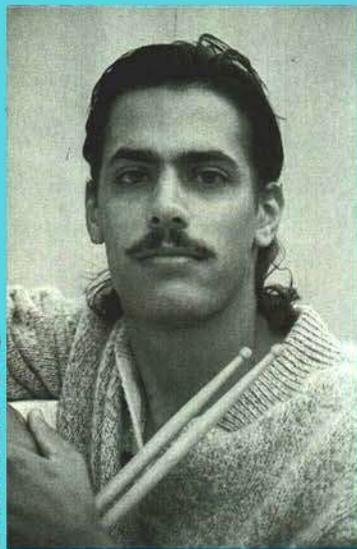
Musical experience: High school jazz band, 4 years; High school marching band, 4 years; All-State Jazz Ensemble, 1985 and '86; 15 First-Division ratings at State solo and ensemble contests

Influences: Father, Neil Peart, Omar Hakim, Sam Withrow, Don Lain, Sandra Butz

Primary musical styles: Rock, Fusion, Reggae

Neil's comments: "This entry is very original, in that he spiced up his performance by triggering occasional synthesizer sounds. He was one of a few entrants to think of this—a very imaginative idea—but he was the one to carry it off the best. He obviously spent a great deal of time working on this piece, and the work pays off in the tightness and integrity of the whole performance. The playing is first-rate, the rhythms are very modern, and the dynamics are effectively varied both by touch and by some tasteful rim playing. Overall, it's an excellent piece of music, which is very satisfying to listen to."

WAYNE
KILLIUS



Age: 22

Age started playing drums: 12

Hometown: Nashville, Tennessee

Music education: Private instruction with Herb Flower while in high school; college study with John Beck; graduate of Eastman School of Music

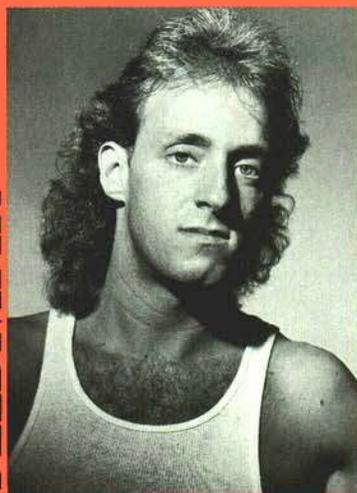
Musical experience: Eastman Jazz Ensemble; Gap Mangione Trio; recordings for HBO, *Lifestyles Of The Rich And Famous*, Playboy Channel, and others; Opryland; currently free-lancing in Nashville and performing with Jerry Tachoir Group

Influences: Steve Gadd, Steve Jordan, Dave Weckl, Jack DeJohnette, Tony Williams, Neil Peart, Vinnie Colaiuta, Elvin Jones

Primary musical styles: All

Neil's comments: "I like this one because it has such a nice approach to a traditional, but abstract, form. His playing demonstrates a lovely touch. It is also one of the very few to use a bit of brushwork—and is very musical and unusual. The groove is very sophisticated, based around a funky, walking kind of rhythm, and there are some great sections of what I call 'stiff-armed' syncopation—a difficult style to control so smoothly. This is a superbly restrained and deceptively simple piece of work."

MARK
FELDMAN



Age: 24

Age started playing drums: 16

Hometown: New York City

Music education: Private instruction at Drummers Collective with Rick Considine and Hank Jaramillo; attended master classes by Steve Gadd, Dave Weckl, Vinnie Colaiuta, Gary Chaffee, and Louie Bellson

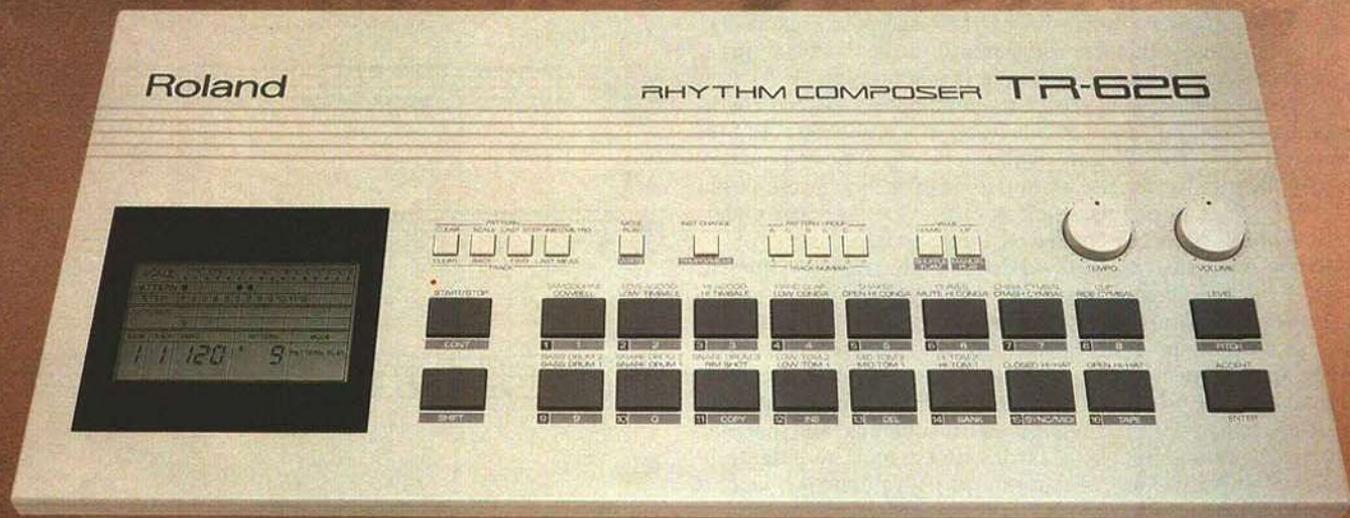
Musical experience: Free-lance sessions and gigs in New York City area with various artists and bands

Influences: Steve Gadd, Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, John Bonham

Primary musical styles: All

Neil's comments: "I like the dark mood, the interesting construction, his smooth technique and combinations of nice tonalities. I thought it was technically and rhythmically quite sophisticated and very smoothly performed. Again, this is not an easy style to pull off as well as Mark has done. The refrain of the intro is a tasteful idea and frames the whole piece nicely, making it, like the others, truly a piece of music."

THE DRUM MACHINE WITH TODAY'S SOUNDS, TOMORROW'S FEATURES AND YESTERDAY'S PRICE



Assuming you haven't already heard its incredibly low price, the first thing that will impress you about the new Roland TR-626 Rhythm Composer is the sound. We went back to the studio to create all-new high-resolution PCM samples of the finest percussion instruments to give you the latest in today's sounds. And that's just what you'll find on the TR-626: round woody-sounding basses, tight full snares (even including a gated-reverb snare) toms deep enough to please a Phil Collins, clear, vibrant cymbals, and the most complete selection of latin percussion instruments that'll really add some spice to those dance tracks. Thirty digital samples altogether, and each one is tunable as well as level programmable.

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by Clive Brooks

African Cross-Rhythms

Just like rock music, African music is constantly evolving. Performers add or subtract elements of the music at will, while remaining within the boundaries of their accepted framework. Every community within the whole continent has its own music. However, broadly speaking, there are two main types of African music: polyrhythmic, consisting of simultaneous, distinct rhythmic patterns, and polyphonic, consisting of simultaneous sounds or musical lines. The African rhythms, played almost spontaneously by the performers, are among some of the most complex in the world. The aim of this article is to provide a greater understanding of this often overlooked rhythmic heritage.

Rhythm in African music is subdivided into two very different forms: divisive, where the time is divided into equal pieces, resulting in a regular rhythmic pulse, and additive, which adds together little "pieces of time" of unequal length, with a stress (or accent) at the beginning of each piece. This type of rhythm creates a series of irregular (and for us difficult to follow) beats. Technique falls into two distinct classes: the technique used in drumming, and that used for songs, hand clapping, bells, rattles, and so on. This latter technique is often known as "background rhythm," and it is against this that the drums play.

The weird thing about the marriage between the background rhythm and the drums is that the stresses of the two must not be in step. This can be achieved by using a divisive (equally pulsed) rhythm for the claps and an additive (unequal) rhythm for the "song." Each divisive background rhythm would have either two or three basic time units per figure. Frequently, the Africans use multiple background rhythms consisting of many completely different patterns played simultaneously. Here's an example of just two different background rhythms against a "song":

Additive Rhythm

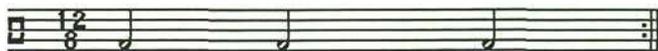
♩ = 204



Background 1



Background 2



These different rhythms all start together on the same beat, then weave in and out, and finally come back together again for the next repeat. The additive song melody is not fixed either. It varies according to the flow of the tune and, to a larger extent, the normal speech accents within the lyrics. The background patterns each normally add up to a total that is a multiple of two or three.

The rhythmic technique in African drumming revolves around the setting up of permanent cross-rhythms between each drum. If two drums were playing in triple time (3/8 or "three-beat patterns"), there would be three ways of combining the rhythms.

However, Africans only use two of these (options "B" and "C" in the following figure).

Main Drum



A



B



C



In example "A," the drum figure coincides exactly with the main beat. This should not be permitted to occur. In the other two examples, the pattern is permanently crossed and creating rhythmic tension, especially when accents are placed at the start of each beat.

In Africa, drumming isn't simply beating out a rhythm. Each drum produces different pitches and tonal qualities depending on how it's struck, making every drum pattern a unique rhythmic tune. The examples given are very basic. In practice, each drum would be playing a different pattern. However, whatever the patterns used, they must all be made out of the same time units (i.e., triplets).

How can such a rhythmic ensemble end? Well, quite often it's a case of one drummer getting too tired to carry on, causing the whole pattern to collapse. But normally, the master drummer gives a prearranged signal on the drum, at which point everyone goes into an "ending pattern," which uncrosses all of the drums and brings them back into phase for a final simultaneous beat by them all.

The most complex African rhythms exist in the forest areas around the Gulf of Guinea and in the Congo Basin. The further out of these areas you venture, the weaker the cross-rhythmic setup—which is the main character of African Rhythm—will be. Dance is the overriding element in all African music and rhythm. All forms of patterns take their principles from those exhibited in dance. Perhaps our music isn't so different after all!

Try splitting your drumkit up into its different component parts, and experiment with a few rhythmic friends. With one person on each drum, attempt some of the African patterns along the lines presented in this column. Such a study is, I feel, very valuable, and releases the player from the normally inescapable, mindless, "four-beat rut that we all find ourselves in from time to time."



the real life

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"Make sure that you put in that I said that they're definitely the best drums Tama has ever made! Definitely! Naw . . . that's gonna sound like you made me say it. But I really love 'em. Tell 'em that the bass drum just kicks ass . . . can you say that?" Yea. We can say that.

Dealing With Studio Acoustics

The first time you walk into a new studio, you immediately notice where the engineer has instructed the cartage company to set up your drums. If you haven't recorded there before, you sometimes wonder why they're set up where they are. The second engineer, who's usually busy getting mic's ready, patching cords, and generally getting everything ready for the engineer, normally says that, from experience, they've found this to be the best spot for a great drum sound. So before the mic's are even in place, you hit your drums to hear what they're going to sound like in this particular spot in this particular room.

I've always maintained that a drummer, more so than any other musician, is affected by the acoustics of the performing environment. Guitar players have amps and can get a fairly consistent sound wherever they go. But for a drummer, every element that has gone into the construction of a room has an effect on what the instrument will sound like and, in turn, may even

influence the way he or she plays.

I think drummers learn this very early in their careers. I can remember having favorite C.Y.O. church halls when our band played rock dances in the '50s and early '60s. Certain halls made my drums sound like what I was hearing on records—just the right amount and length of decay, and a true, *natural* echo. I hated playing outdoor dances. No matter how hard I hit the drums, I still heard comments that you couldn't hear them or that they sounded wimpy. Remember, this was when you carried one or two mic's at the most, and they were plugged into a guitar amp.

All studio drummers today have rooms they love and rooms they dislike very much. When I posed the question of how acoustics affects a studio drummer, Jim Keltner responded, "Every room is different, and every room puts a burden on you as to how you tune or tension your drums. You'll get an *incredible* sound in one studio and you'll say, 'Fabulous. I won't change a thing. My drums sound great.' The next day, in a different studio, everything sounds awful! That's where experience comes in. You've got to be able to make changes quickly, and not waste people's time and money."

Mike Baird said, "Sometimes the things you play just don't translate as well in a dead room as they would in a live one, like one that has brick walls, cement floors, and a high ceiling. The natural acoustics of a room most definitely affects the way you approach and play a song."

Rick Marotta responded in a similar fashion. "It has a real big effect on the way I play. Dead rooms make you play a certain way, and live rooms make you play a certain way. If the room is dead, you *lose* the little nuances of your playing. You don't hear them. More importantly, you can't feel them. I have to trust the feel of the way I touch the instrument to know that it's speaking, and I have to listen to a playback in the control room as soon as I can to make sure the subtleties are coming through. If a room is too live, every little nuance becomes exaggerated. Once again, you have to learn to trust your touch."

All of the drummers agreed that, today, things have gotten better with acoustics. It's not as bad as it used to be. Keltner said, "There are more engineers and studio designers with an awareness of sound, in particular, what's necessary acoustically for a great natural drum sound."

It appears to me that the more ambient and live a room is, the more ambient and live you can leave your drums. You might think the opposite would be true—that in a dead room you'd need to open your drums up more to compensate for the deadness. *But that doesn't hold true.* A very dead room seems to exaggerate unwanted ring, harmonic overtones, sympathetic buzzes, etc. A great, ringing snare drum (*a la* John Bonham and Alan White) becomes thin and quite obnoxious in a dead studio. Normally, I have to slightly tape, pad down, and tighten up my whole drum sound in a dead studio.

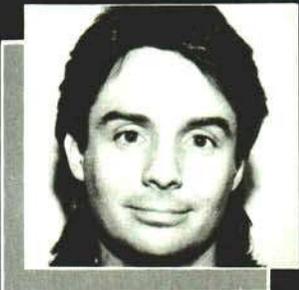
Years ago, drum booths were in vogue. These were little isolation rooms usually only big enough to accommodate a four- or five-piece kit. The engineers didn't want any leakage of drum sounds into the other mic's in the room. It was usually an upfront, dead kind of sound. If a larger studio put the drums out in the open, they would be heavily baffled, again, to prevent any leakage.

I always seemed to think that ambient, live drum sounds started with the English records of the late '60s and early '70s. It took quite a while for drummers on the West Coast to be recorded like that. We were still in the "wallet on the snare" and "drum booth" mode. Nowadays, the remnants of drum booths have been turned into guitar or bass booths. I haven't been in a drum booth for more than five years. Engineers and producers have learned how to deal with live, wide-open drum sounds.

Now, please don't draw the inference that *only* live rooms can capture a great, big drum sound. Mike Baird related, "You can always be surprised. I was recently flown into a little studio in Texas. The drums they had set up for me were a totally mismatched set. The studio was extremely dead, and everything appeared to be quite mediocre. I thought, 'Great, two days of overdubs, stuck here in the middle of nowhere.' Well, when I put on the 'phones, I heard one of the *best* drum sounds I ever heard in my life. And it sounded exactly the same in the control room. I became so inspired, I played the shit out of everything!"

Good studios come in all shapes and sizes. I guess you just have to hope the producer books the right-sounding room for the job: the one that fits the artist, the song, and the music. That's *still* the bottom line.

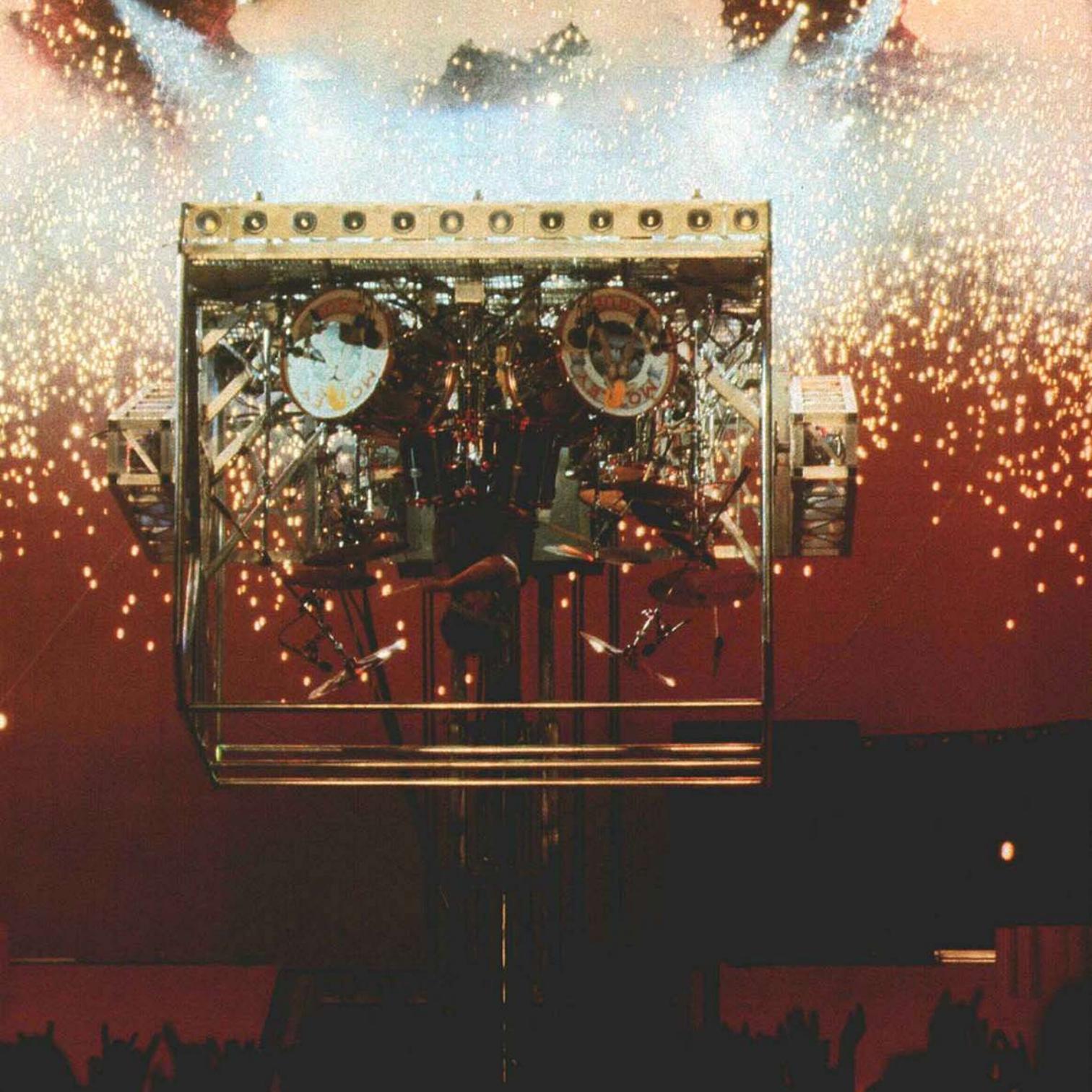
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by Jerry Tachoir

Recording The Vibraphone



Recording a vibraphone in a studio can be an "ear-awakening" experience. Unwanted noise, buzzes, and rattles can go on tape if your instrument is not studio ready. With the price of studio time being what it is, it can be very expensive to wait until you are in the studio to make adjustments to your equipment.

All musical instruments, especially mechanical ones like vibes, marimba, or drums, need to be made studio ready and constantly maintained—even new instruments. Music is difficult enough; having to deal with annoyances in the studio can kill the creative mood of everyone involved. I use a Musser *M-55 Pro* vibraphone, and I've found a few standard adjustments necessary on all Musser vibes, which I will share with you.

1. On older *M-55* vibes, there are leg braces on both sides that allow the instrument to fold. These are attached with a metal rivet button, which will buzz at cer-

tain frequencies. A quick and permanent remedy for this is to wrap electrical (or any available) tape around the bracket and cover the rivet push button. This problem has been solved by Musser on newer models, which now have a leg brace that is longer, connecting the frame with the leg at the place where the pedal connects with the leg. A wing nut is used to attach it.

2. There is a metal hinged cover that goes over the belt assembly, which vibrates where the plate touches the wooden frame. Placing felt, or something soft, under the plate solves the problem.

3. There are certain sympathetic vibrations that occur on all instruments and change from room to room. The only way to deal with this is to allow enough time to set up your instrument and give it a thorough going over. Vibrations from the resonators or the frame can generally be eliminated with duct or electrical tape. Sometimes, certain frequencies set off vibrations in mic' stands, control room windows, lighting, etc. It is preferred to have a fairly dead room to eliminate room noises.

Transients, on the other hand, can be a real problem and difficult to deal with. Transients are the high overtones that are generated from the vibrating bar. They may or may not be heard by the ear; however, they can cause the VU meters to peak, and generally distort and saturate the magnetic tape. I have found the notes D, E, and A of the upper octave to be real transient senders. The problem can be dealt with in several ways.

A. Make a mental note of which notes cause these transients, and play them softer. However, this approach tends to take away your creative freedom, and it is a lot to think about when recording.

B. Experiment with different mic's and mic' placement. All mic's have certain characteristics, and their specs will show their frequency curve. Where the curve goes up or peaks, the corresponding frequency will be emphasized when played, and the reverse is true for any dips or sags in the curve. I prefer to start with a fairly flat sounding mic', meaning that the curve will be represented by a straight line across the frequency spectrum. My object is to get the true sound of my instrument without any coloration from the mic'. Certain PZM microphones have a flat response

and record very true, and in certain situations, Neumann *U-87s* also produce a warm sound on the vibes.

Once you've decided on the mic', your next challenge is placement. There are many factors to consider when placing the mic's; however, your ability to play your instrument without interference should get prime consideration—regardless of what the engineer thinks. If your recording sounds bad because the microphones got in your way, nobody will ever say that it was the engineer's fault.

I try to keep my mic's about two feet above my vibes, and set between the B and C* on the bottom end, and the G and B on the upper end. This placement has been ideal for the rooms that I've recorded in. Other factors to consider are (1) leakage from other instruments, (2) size of the room, and (3) type of mic' (uni-directional, cardioid, etc.). Tell the engineer where you want the mic's and that you want a flat sound, and let him help decide on the correct mic'. (That's one of the reasons he's there.)

C. If all else fails, limiters and compressors can be used to squash transients before they go to tape. But be careful in using these machines; they can create an unnatural sound. Some engineers only want to use compressors and limiters as outboard gear in the mix, but if you have an over-saturated vibe sound on tape, caused by the transients, they cannot be removed later. When listening to your vibe sound, don't be too concerned with the VU meters. Listen to the sound to be sure that it is not distorting and that the transients are not too hot. Some engineers will be quick to say that you can't possibly be hearing distortion because the VU meters show that there is plenty of head room. Let your ears be the judge. Remember, it's *your* sound and recording, not the engineer's.

In summary, I find that vibes are one of the toughest instruments to get on tape. Both the mechanical problems and the nature of the sound make it a real challenge, but with today's quality microphones, tape, and recorders, it is possible to get a good recording of the vibes. Once you have a good sound going on tape, you can concentrate on getting your most artistic performance recorded. Good luck, and may we all receive Grammys.

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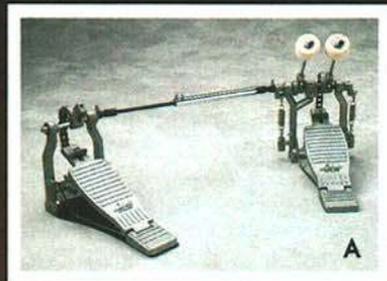
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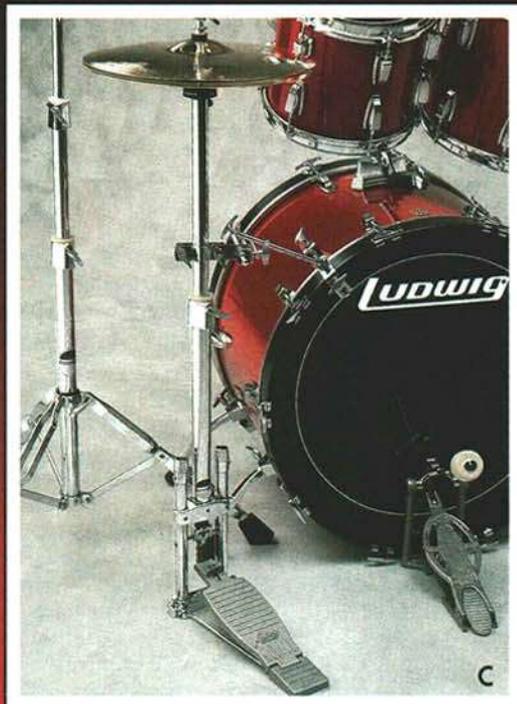
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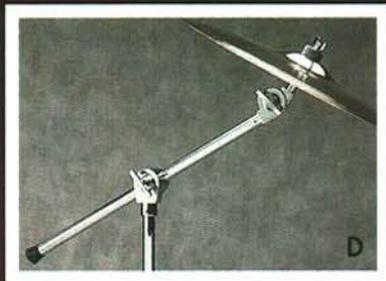
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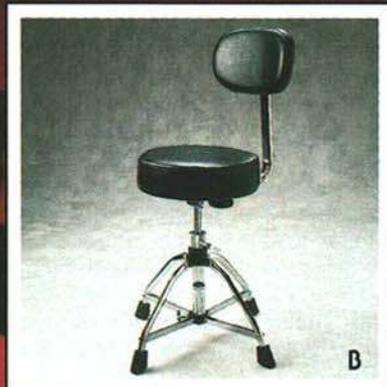
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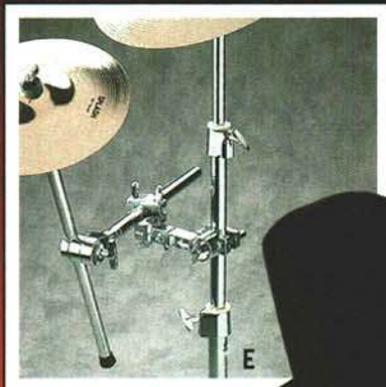
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by Emil Richards

Sight-Reading In The Studio



I don't know that sight-reading music anywhere, under any conditions, is any different than reading music for film, TV, jingles, or records. There are many things I unconsciously think about and take into consideration. First of all, one of my strongest influences as a teacher, Asher Zlotnik, once told me, "You cannot make a musician out of an untrained ear," and this has become evident throughout my 28 years in the L.A. studios. While the rest of the orchestra is rehearsing the next cue (on a movie call, let's say), the percussionists are usually moving the instruments they just played on the last cue out from under the microphones and rolling in the new instruments needed for the present cue.

For this reason, having a good ear is imperative, as you are moving instruments while everyone else is rehearsing. I usually keep my music handy and follow it to be sure the copyist hasn't made any mistakes, or that my music corresponds to what the other sections of the orchestra are playing. Being able to "hear" what you see is having "good ears" and will ensure that you will be able to correct your music as you are setting up, while the rest of the orchestra gets to rehearse. Usually, by the time you are all set up, the rest of the orchestra has rehearsed, and you are sight-reading when the red light goes on, which is when you are literally recording!

There are so many things you can do to develop your ear. I hope that, if you will try them all, you will find that your reading is improved. First, you should take a good course in sight singing! There are many solfege classes that teach singing. Be sure to find one that utilizes singing down, as well as up, from one interval to the next.

Too many sight-singing courses teach only singing "up" from one interval to the next, when it should be remembered that music does not only go in one direction.

A good practice I have found is to find three songs that you know with every interval up and down from unison to the octave in both directions and that begin with that interval. For instance, the first interval of "My Country Tis Of Thee" is a major 2nd going up. Now find three songs that *you* know whose first two notes are a major 2nd apart. Similarly, the first interval of "The Star Spangled Banner" is a minor 3rd down. Now, find three songs that *you* know in which the first two notes are a minor 3rd apart. This system will help in reading any music from one interval to the next up and down. It is also a marvelous device for helping you tune timpani.

Another good practice I do often is to keep a tuning fork next to my bed, hit it, and listen to it just before going to sleep. When I get up in the morning, I try singing an A and testing it against the tuning fork. This tends to help your relative pitch. I find that I can look at a note on a vibraphone and sing the note I am looking at. Try singing middle C. You will find that it is quite high for a male voice but quite comfortable for a female voice. Another good practice is to find the lowest note you can sing. You can use this as a gauge to help with your relative pitch, as this lowest note you can sing will remain fairly consistent.

There are some excellent courses on reading rhythms, and I suggest you get into studying one of them to help you with your rhythmic reading. In a future article, I will elaborate on this particular subject. Steve Houghton and I started World Institute Of Percussion (W.I.P.), a branch of P.I.T., in Hollywood, and these are some of the areas we are covering for the percussionist in a one-year, extensive-study schedule.

If some of the following concepts are utilized, I'm sure they also will help with sight-reading. Ask yourself: What makes a

new piece of music seem difficult? It's usually its unfamiliarity. What makes it unfamiliar? Not knowing certain things about it. What key is it in? What is the time signature involved? Are there any key changes, tempo changes, or time signature changes? What is the tempo of the piece? What are the loudest and softest passages in the piece? What are some of the rhythms found in the piece? What is the smallest denomination of rhythm in the piece? Are there any scale passages? Are there familiar scale passages? Are there any familiar chord structures? Can you sing any of the music? Are there any familiar melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic passages? What sticking can you use? Are there repeat signs? What passages need looking at? What is the total road map? Are there any sharps or flats added? What could the composer have had in mind by writing this piece of music? What would you have done differently?

It's amazing, but try this experiment. Take a piece of music you have never seen before, and while looking at it before trying to play it, answer all of the above questions. You will find that, by the time you actually go to play the new piece of music, it will no longer seem new or unfamiliar to you. The more you use this method, the faster you will become, and the easier it will be to pick up a new piece of music and play it with ease.

We read music "by the pound" in the studios and because, in many cases, the music has been written to correspond to and fit with film, the musical content is not systematic or metered. The timings very often cause the music to be very erratic. Listen to some cartoon music as an extreme example of what I'm talking about. Also, listen to some TV music or theatrical film scores to hear some of the content of the music and rhythmic notation.

You should make it a point to play, or at least *look at*, one new piece of music every day of your life. So many wonderful musicians have cut their musical careers short because they said they couldn't *read* music. If you can read the words in this article, understand them, and "picture" their meaning, you should strive to do the same with reading music. If you can "hear" what you read, you are well on your way to becoming a fine musician. 



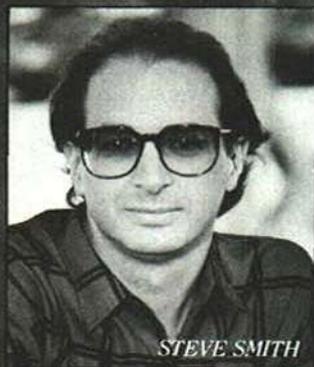
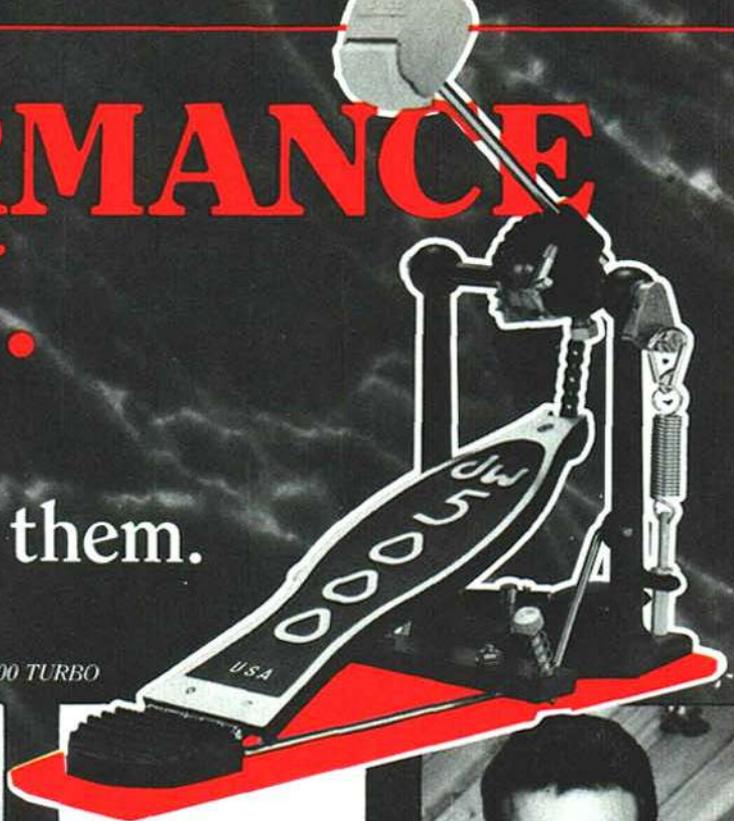
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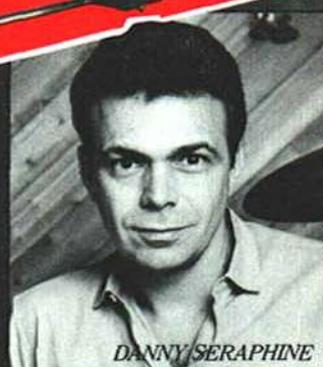
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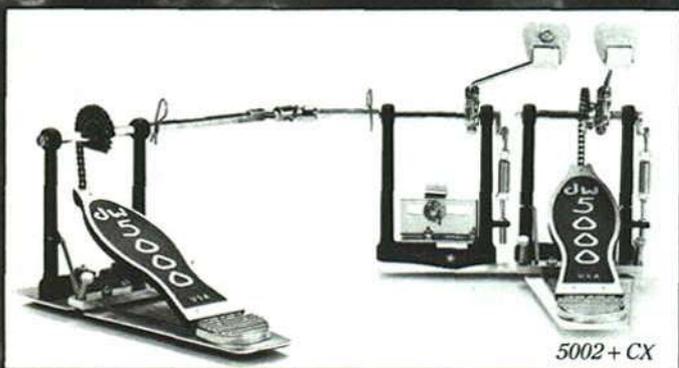
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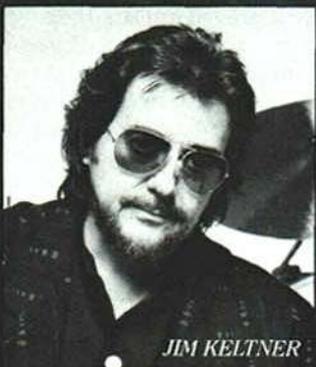
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by Simon Goodwin

All In Good Time

When we talk about time (in a musical context), we can be referring to two different things or a combination of both: There is the tempo, speed, or pace of a piece of music, and there is *playing* time, which in its most basic sense means the natural drum pattern for the piece. When we talk about having *good* time, we're talking about the ability to hold a steady, constant rhythm. This doesn't only apply when we're playing basic "time," but also when we're playing fills, soloing, or even counting or feeling measures while we're not playing but waiting for our entrance.

A lot of attention has been focused on the need to play good time because of the move, in recent years, towards working in conjunction with machines. However, even before the machine age came upon us, it was always the drummers with good time who got the work. Sadly, there have been many otherwise great players who've had all the other bases covered—technique, reading, presentation—but who have never been successful because their time-keeping wasn't up to standard.

It might be stating the obvious to discuss the need for good time, but I'd like to do so in order to get the whole picture. I can state from experience that the virtue of good time isn't necessarily obvious to nonmusicians. When I was about 12, before I started playing, I had a record by a successful English skiffle group. This song accelerated throughout and finished up twice as fast as it started. To be fair to the group, this might have been intentional, but my friends and I used to love the way the excitement was achieved by acceleration. We'd play a bit of the beginning and then move the stylus forward to the end, just to demonstrate how good it was. Some music does change tempo, such as certain classical pieces for instance. And there are some common devices in other forms of music, such as slowing down at the end, but these shifts are all prearranged, written, and/or rehearsed. We can assume that, as a general rule, anyone playing, singing, or dancing to a piece of music needs to have a steady tempo as a point of reference. Things that *work* at one tempo often don't at another. There are certain things we can execute on the frums at a particular tempo, but which can be uncomfortable or impossible if we take them very much faster or slower.

It goes way beyond the simple matter of

technical execution on one's instrument. Some tunes sound right at particular tempos and not at others. One of the very best ways to develop an awareness of "time" is to *know* the tempos of favorite pieces of music on record. When you're listening to a familiar album and one track finishes, it's easy to imagine the beginning of the next track. When you do this, it's natural to think of the melody line, the rhythmic feel, *and* the tempo. When you know a track so well that you can pick up the exact tempo automatically, try to imagine it a bit faster and then a bit slower. Does it feel right at alternative tempos, or is the speed of the record the obvious one to use? Having imagined a number sped up or slowed down, try to lock your mind back into the original tempo. When you've done this, check your perception of the tempo against the actual record.

Another interesting experiment, which can actually be played as a game with other people, is to take a record that you're familiar with and that you *know* has a steady tempo, and play it while singing along to it. When you feel comfortable with it, turn the volume down and carry on singing. The longer you leave the volume down, the less likely you are to still be singing in time with the record. If it works for four bars, try eight, and so on. It's very satisfying if, after a chorus or so, you turn up the volume and find that you're still spot on. An obvious variation on this game is to drum along with the record. Ideally, you should have another person work the controls for you, so you can use both hands, and concentrate on your playing and on your time.

Before we leave the subject of relating in our *mind's ear* to recorded pieces of music, it's worth mentioning that certain songs work well at particular tempos in particular *keys*. You often find that different versions of the same number, which are at different tempos, are also in different keys. It doesn't have to follow that a lower key will be slower, but if the number is being played faster, it will also sound better higher. For this reason, it helps if your *aural* image of the music includes the pitch as well as the tempo, because if you get one wrong, it can affect the other.

Being able to remember the exact tempos of particular songs is a standard device with most musicians. So if your band is about to launch into a new number that

you don't have total recall for, you can think, "This is the one that goes like so-and-so." This trick is particularly useful if you're responsible for counting the number off, which drummers often are. In this instance, it's essential to have an accurate sound picture of the piece in your head or, failing that, another one just like it in feel, unless, that is, you're using a metronome or drum machine to give you the tempo, *or* you're one of the lucky few who can pick up certain metronome settings in the same way that some people have perfect pitch.

Practicing with a metronome can have its drawbacks as well as advantages. Obviously, if you can get used to playing along to something with a mechanical, set tempo, it means that you're capable of playing a steady beat that doesn't fluctuate, just as long as you don't *have* to rely on it as a prop. Once you're able to play steadily with a metronome, try without it. Set your tempo, listen to it, and then switch it off and play. The second you finish, switch it on again to check how close you are.

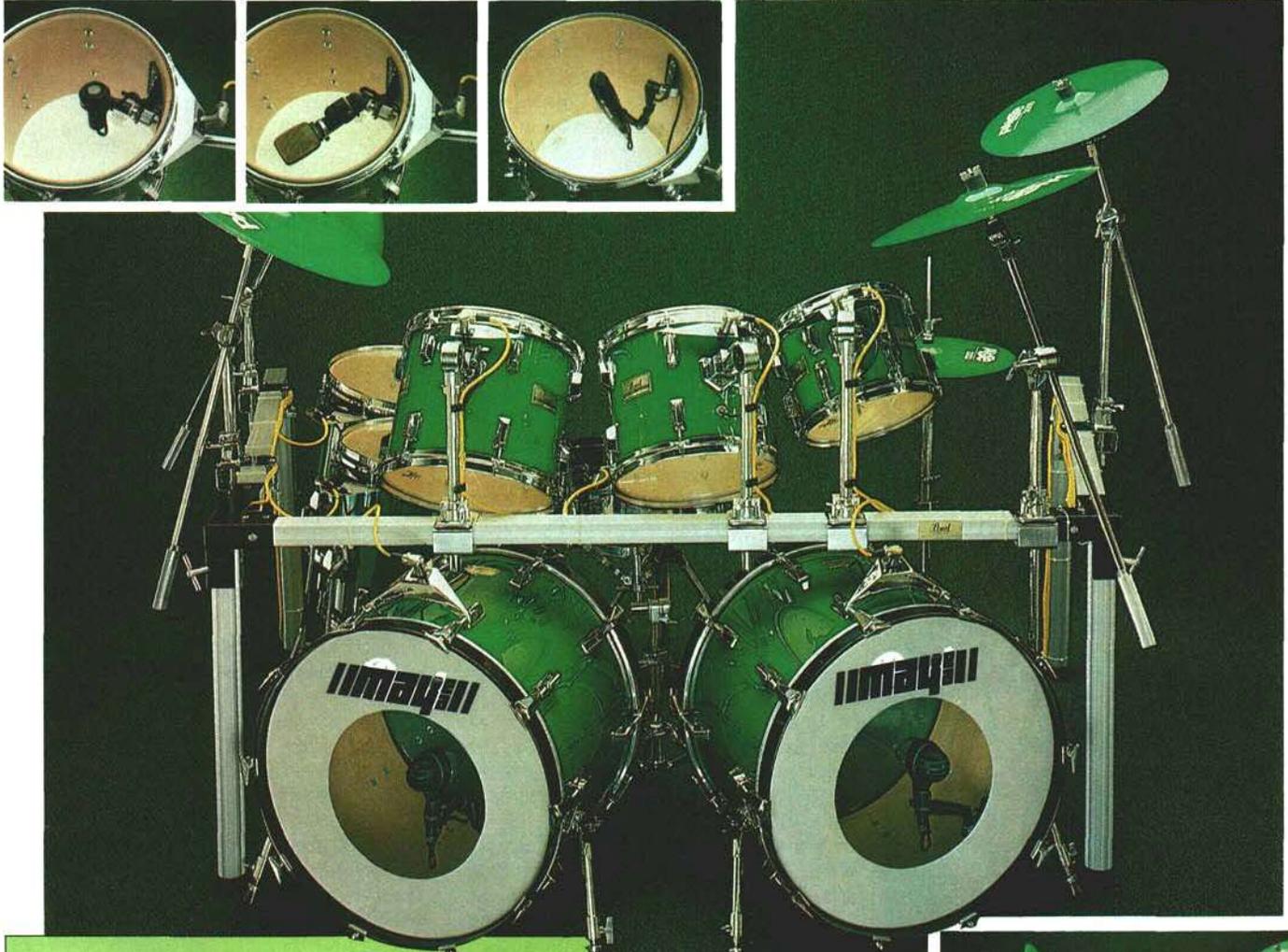
It's common to find musicians who are quite capable of playing along to a mechanical beat when they're on their own, but find it difficult to stick to the set tempo when playing with other people. This is because it's natural to react to other players. If everybody is listening to the same beat, it's easier than if one person is hearing it and setting the tempo for the others to follow. The fact is that the *beat* has a top, bottom, and middle. You can play slightly ahead, slightly behind, or right on. In the first two cases, you won't be speeding up or slowing down, *as long as* your feel is consistent and the pulse is regular. It isn't necessary for *every* note you play to lie exactly on top of a metronomic click, either actual or imagined. Nor is it necessary for each member of the band to play on the *same part* of the beat. In some types of music, it can be acceptable for different sections to have different points of emphasis. In rock, the rhythm is often in the middle of the beat, while the melody is on top. In Latin, the rhythm is on top, and the melody is in the middle or on top. In country, the rhythm is behind, while the melody is in the middle. It comes down to the *chemistry* between the players concerned.

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drummer is often the only person whose part involves the repetitive statement of certain beats, and for this reason, it's natural that other musicians depend on the drummer as a point of reference. A standard method for an instrumentalist to keep in time is to tap a foot. A drumkit player, with both feet operating pedals, is unable to do this. The drummer is often playing something like a four or an eight on the hi-hat or ride cymbal, but not always. There are occasions when none of your four limbs are playing something regular, and then the time must come from *inside*.

What are some of the pitfalls that prevent us from keeping good time? Letting technique get in the way of musical sensitivity is a common one. You can feel more comfortable playing at one tempo than another, not because the music feels better, but because *you* feel better. This is because you're used to practicing and playing certain things at certain speeds. This is natural. Some things work at certain speeds and others don't, but you must allow yourself some perimeters within which to operate efficiently. It's very little use being able to play a groove at a certain tempo, if that's the *only* tempo you can play it at, and you always want to speed up or slow down to get back to that level.

Another problem is losing time during fills. Similar things can happen to other instrumentalists. A guitarist or keyboard player might slow down during a tricky run or speed up in an exciting passage, but it doesn't happen so often. The reason is that something being played on a melodic instrument is part of the melodic structure of the piece and must therefore be played in time. Inexperienced drummers have been known to look on drum fills as dramatic explosions within the framework of the music. Okay, so you must start and come off in the right place, but even that isn't always achieved unless you look at the whole fill as being part of the *rhythmic structure* of the piece. Fills must be a controlled extension of your "groove." You're likely to use some technical tricks in fills that you wouldn't use when laying down a straight rhythm, but these tricks must be practiced in tempo as musical exercises.

We need to control our feelings while we're playing, because these can affect our ability to keep good time. The adrenaline that comes with the excitement of live performance can cause things to get faster. *Tiredness* can slow you down; *anger* might speed you up. Fluctuations in volume can cause fluctuations in tempo. I remember my teacher once saying, "Play that again, only louder," and after I'd played for a few seconds saying, "I said louder, *not* faster!" We must be careful not to speed up when we get to a loud passage, or to slow down when there's a quiet one.

There's a point at which technique and feel meet to gel as good timekeeping. It's

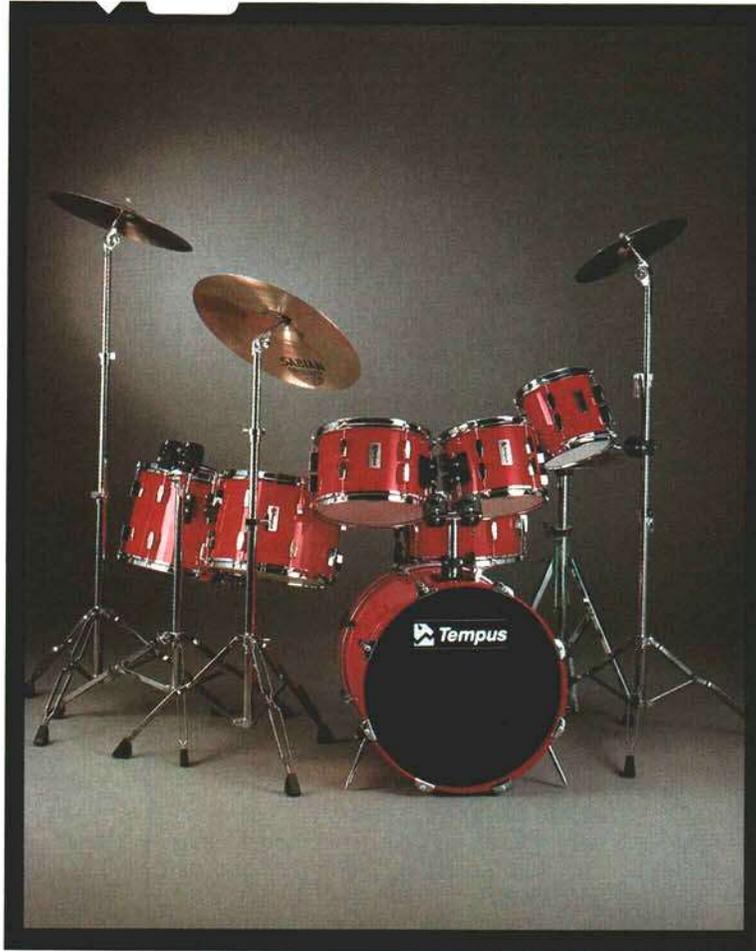
having the technical ability to play the notes, and the mental control to feel not only the notes you're playing, but the *spaces* between them. For instance, you can play straight 8ths on the closed hi-hat at widely varying tempos. The slower you play, the more space there's going to be between the notes, but being a fairly dry staccato sound, there isn't going to be much in the way of sustain to fill the gaps between them. We can practice playing ride patterns of quarter, 8th, and 16th notes at exactly the same tempo, switching from one to the other, so that sometimes we're playing certain gaps and sometimes we're feeling them. Doing the same thing on the ride cymbal, the sustain is there but it's of indeterminate length. In other words, the amount of actual sound that comes from a cymbal depends on how hard you hit it. If you play at a relatively slow tempo, the force of the sustain is going to increase the louder you play, so the feel of the gap between the notes will be different. But you must make sure that the *length* of the gap remains the same.

One of the most successful ways to "nail" a tempo is to control the length of the sustain as you can with a brush or a guiro. With these instruments, the sustain isn't a ring that dies away, as with a ride cymbal. It's a sound that continues for as long as you make it. When you feel, as well as hear, the sweep of the brush against the drumhead or the stick against the guiro, it can make you extremely aware of any fluctuations in tempo. I discovered this one day in the studio when I tried to overdub a guiro on a rhythm track that I *thought* was quite steady. I'm not suggesting you start using brushes or guiros on gigs when you wouldn't otherwise do so, but for personal practice, or even at rehearsals, they can be useful as additional aids to timekeeping.

As a final word, I must say don't get so paranoid about *time* that you forget to enjoy your playing. Good time also comes from mental and physical relaxation. If you start to tense up because you're worried about your time, you're likely to make the problem *worse*. Be aware of your role within the band. The drummer is an important member of the ensemble. If you're feeling good, chances are you'll be making other people feel that way, too. ⌚

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Carmassi continued from page 20

on flash but heavy on groove. It's a less cluttered style than he used with Montrose, but he didn't change his playing as the result of a conscious decision. "It just seems like the natural way to play with Heart's music," Denny says. "Heart is a real song-oriented band, and we have a great singer. I try to be sensitive, and be in support of the song and the vocals. A lot of times, that means not playing a whole lot."

Once Heart has the tunes picked out for a new record, the band spends a couple of weeks working on them before going into the studio. "But we don't overdo it," Denny is quick to point out. "We just get the tunes to the point where it's right to go in. Then we book a little 8-track studio and lay things down in very rough form. After that, we're ready to go into the studio. Studio time is very expensive, so we like to be prepared before we go in."

Once they go in, the rhythm tracks are cut live. "It's me, Mark, and Howard, with Ann doing a guide vocal. The drums are done all at once. We might go back and overdub some percussion stuff, but the drums are live. That's the beauty of working with someone like Ron Nevison, who comes from that whole school of Led Zepelin and The Who."

Like most groups, Heart works with a click track in the studio. "It centers the time," Denny says. "If you can play well with a click, you can make the time sort of ebb and flow around the click track to where you don't feel that it's so metronomic. Not every beat is exactly on the click. When the chorus comes, you get on top of it a little to give it that little bit of excitement. When it goes back to the verse, you lay back on it a little. So you sort of move around it."

But while Denny is perfectly comfortable playing with a click track, or playing along with a couple of sequenced keyboard

parts that the band uses live, there are other aspects of modern recording methods that do not sit so well with him. "I know that technology is part of the record-making scene now," Denny says, shaking his head, "but I find it kind of disheartening to go in and just do cymbal overdubs on people's records. I did a session a few months ago where I played into a computer, and the computer 'corrected' my little time inconsistencies. It broke the time down into these incredibly small increments, and then it corrected everything. It was wild. I went in, and they wanted me just to play. I didn't have to know the arrangement. They told me just to keep playing, even if I made a mistake. If there was a section in one of the verses that I played well and they liked, then they would use that section for all of the verses. If I blew it on the turnaround, they would take that out, I would go back and play it again, and they would just drop the new part in. The whole song was constructed like that."

Most of the sessions Denny does outside of Heart, however, are more straight ahead than that. "Most of the stuff is rock," he says. "It's the kind of stuff I'm noted for. I played on that 'Over The Top' song that Sammy Hagar did for the Stallone movie. Sam played guitar and Eddie Van Halen played bass. Mark [Andes] and I played a Whitesnake thing with Dave Coverdale a while back, called 'Here I Go Again.' I know the album cut was done over with a different band, with Aynsley Dunbar on drums, but I'm on the single version. I also played on a Russell Hitchcock track recently. I do a lot of work for [producer] Keith Olson. When I'm not on the road and he's doing a project for someone who doesn't have a regular band, he usually calls me."

"I did an album a few years ago with a buddy of mine named Mitchell Froom. It was called *The Key Of Cool*, and it was

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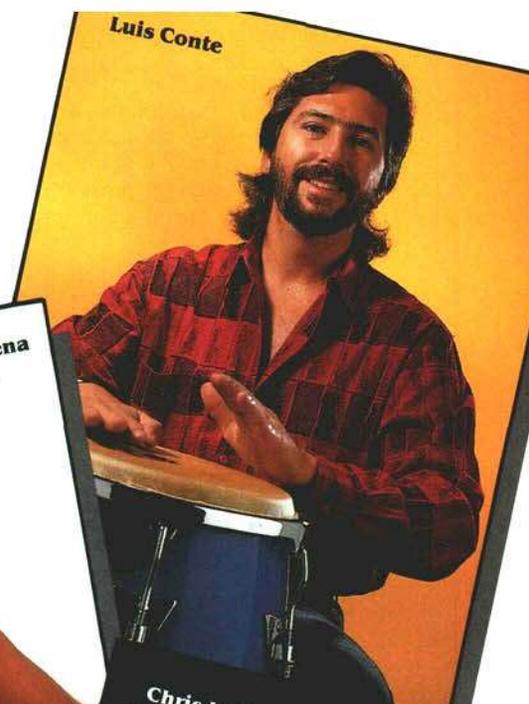
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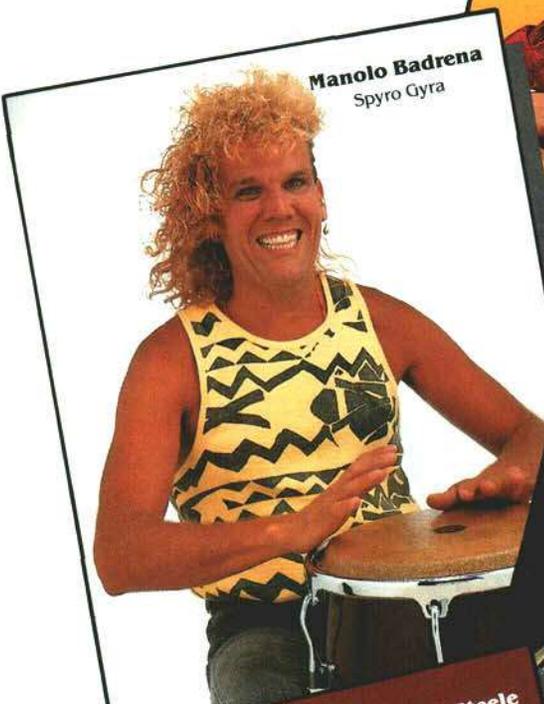
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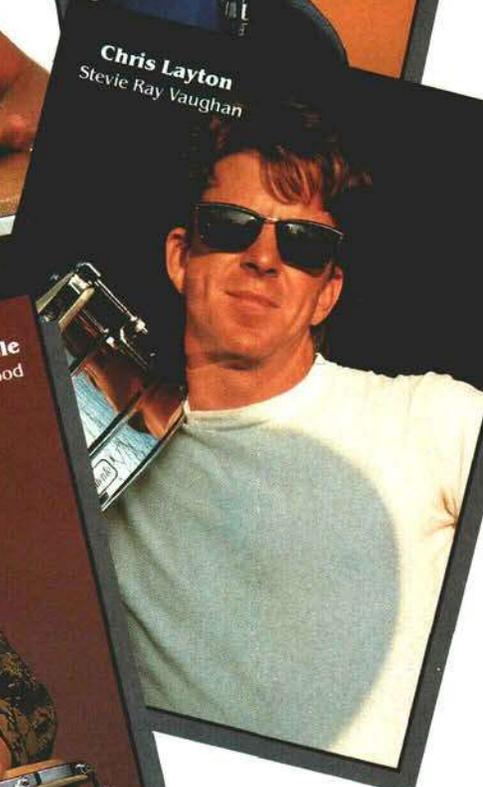
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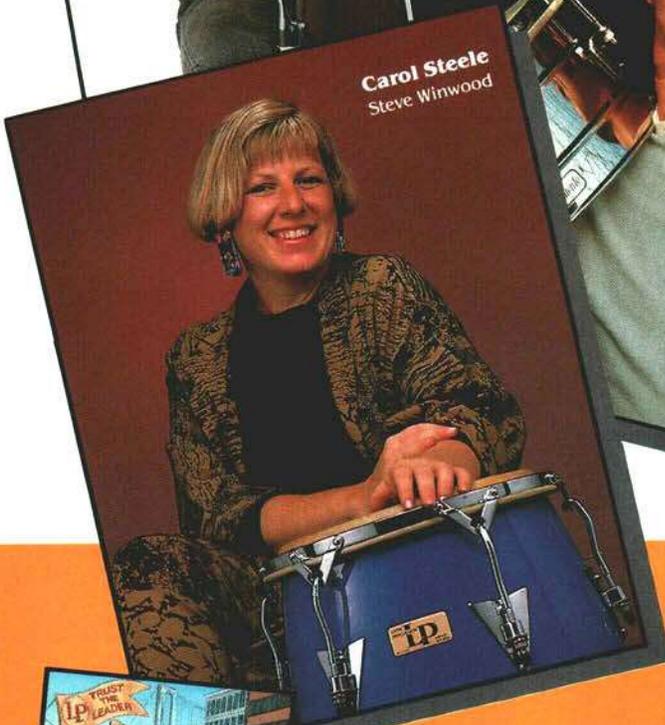
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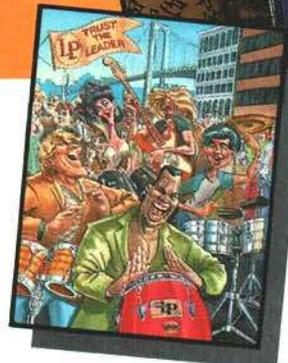
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sort of avant-garde jazz. That might be the most obscure thing I've ever done, and the thing that maybe shows off a side of my playing that most people don't know about. But Heart takes up most of my time, so I don't really have a lot of time to do things with other people."

And even if he did, he wouldn't be looking to spend very much of that time in the studio. "I like playing live," he says. "It's nice to mix both, but boy, a steady diet of the studio would not sit well with me. I don't think I could do it every day. It's a lot of pressure, and you get called to do silly stuff—cymbal overdubs and tom-tom overdubs. I like to *play*. I'm glad to see

that the whole drum machine period that we went through is sort of leveling off, and that there are bands like Heart who can have a hit record with a real drummer on there."

Howard Leese: "Denny likes to say, 'We make music the old-fashioned way. We play it.' "

One should not, however, get the impression that Denny is opposed to new ideas. He was one of the very first to use Simmons toms in his setup, and he went to considerable trouble to find them. "Back when I was in Gamma," Denny recalls, "I saw something—probably in *Modern Drummer*—about these electronic kits that

were made in England. Gamma was getting ready to go over there for a tour, so I wrote Simmons' name down. I tried to get a hold of them, but I couldn't find them.

"I was really intrigued by the electronic thing, though, so I kept looking until I found them. I got into the whole scene. I started with the *SDS5* and went through the *SDS7s*. I got into the MIDI stuff with the *MTM*, and I got an E-mu *SP-12* that I could trigger from my pads.

"Then I got tired of it. I found myself spending a lot of time reading manuals instead of playing drums. It seemed like there was something new every six months, and the technology was very hard to keep up with. I decided that I wanted to get back to what I originally started out to do—play a really good drumkit. Electronic drums are great in the studio for people whose philosophy is 'time is money.' You can get a sound just like that [snaps fingers]. But there's nothing like a real drumkit. I think the use of electronic drums may have reached its peak. We might see it sort of leveling off."

Even while he was using Simmons toms, Denny always had an acoustic snare and an acoustic bass drum. Back in May of '86, I saw Denny backstage after a concert, and he told me that he was looking forward to getting a Noble & Cooley snare drum, which he was supposed to pick up in a few days. He must have liked the snare drum a lot, because when Heart embarked on the *Bad Animals* tour this past summer, Denny had an entire Noble & Cooley drumset.

"I think this is the first drumkit they've made," Denny boasts. "I don't know of anybody else who has one. It's the first one out on the road, for sure. It's not something you can just buy off the shelf. If you want one, you have to wait. The Noble & Cooley people are trying to make the best not-mass-produced drumkit they can. I'm really in love with this drumkit, and I'm having the time of my life with it. To me, buying that drumkit was like buying a Stradivarius violin. I plan on having this kit for the rest of my life; it sounds that good. It's a very musical instrument, and I hope I'm playing it musically.

"I got it last October, the day before we went into the studio. Every drum sounded good, right out of the box. With a lot of drumkits, you have a clunker in there somewhere. Who knows why it doesn't sound good? But the Noble & Cooley drums sounded great right out of the box. We pulled out the little 5" snare drum and used it on half the record. Even Paul Jamieson, who's a dear friend of mine, said that for something that was not hand-picked those were the best drums he had ever seen, and he's very critical. If it was made after 1920, Paul probably won't like it," Denny laughs.

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were mixed in with the acoustic drums on a few tracks, but on the road, Denny doesn't use any electronic enhancement. "People keep asking me what I'm triggering," Denny smiles, "but it's just straight drums." On the video for the song "Alone," Denny is seated behind a Simmons kit, but that was because his Noble & Cooleys were in Fort Wayne, where Neil Graham was getting them ready for the road. "He did the black powder coating on the hardware," Denny explains. "But it was just cosmetic work. The drums already sounded great," he reiterates.

Denny's choice of a Noble & Cooley drumset represents a definite departure

from the norm. An often-noted paradox is that drummers have to pay a lot of money for equipment during the years that they can least afford it. But once they become successful and famous, they can get most of their equipment free through an endorsement deal. Sometimes, one has to wonder if certain drummers are really playing the brand(s) of equipment they feel is the best, or if they went with the company that offered them the best "deal." (That's especially suspect with those drummers who tend to change their endorsements frequently.) But when a guy *buys* a set of drums from a small company who can't afford to feature him in full-page

magazine ads, send him on clinic tours, or supply him with a new kit wherever he goes in the world so that he doesn't have to worry about carrying his own kit around, then you have to figure that he must be pretty happy with the sound of those drums. And you have to give him credit for having the integrity not to pretend that he's using something else, just for the sake of having an endorsement deal.

"I like to play what I like to play when I want to play it," Denny says. "I like to change things around sometimes, and I don't like to be locked into playing something that someone expects me to play because it was given to me. Those deals can be real traps. In the past, it was an uncomfortable situation to have somebody always turning up and saying, 'Gee, you're not playing our snare drum. You're not playing our tom-toms.' Fortunately, I'm in a position now where I can buy whatever I want, and that's what I want to do. I feel better this way. I have a great relationship with the companies I do endorse: Vic Firth, Paiste, and Remo. And I have a great relationship with Noble & Cooley."

Denny's Noble & Cooley kit consists of a 5½ x 14 snare drum, 8 x 8, 8 x 10, 9 x 12, 10 x 13, and 12 x 14 toms, and an 18 x 24 bass drum. The toms are mounted on a Pearl rack system, with RIMS mounts. The bass drum pedal is a Tama chain drive, and the beater is a Rogers *Black Jack*. The hi-hat pedal is also a Tama.

Denny uses Remo *Emperor* white coated heads on both sides of the bass drum, and the tops of the toms. The bottoms of the toms have *Ebony* heads, and the snare batter is a white coated *Emperor* with a dot in the center. The heads are struck with Vic Firth 3A hickory sticks.

"That dot in the center of the snare head gives me a little extra thickness where I tend to wear the head out," Denny explains. "The snare heads are changed every day, and the tom heads are changed every two shows. In the studio, I use *Ambassadors* all the way around. They are changed after about four to six takes."

On the last Heart tour, Denny was using Paiste black *Colorsound* cymbals. But for the *Bad Animals* tour, he made a change. "I went out to Paiste just before we went on the road," he explains, "and went through all of their cymbals. I fell in love with the 5000s. They're just amazing. I don't know what they did to those cymbals, but they sound great. The ride, in particular, is fantastic. It doesn't load up with a lot of overtones, so you can really hear the time on it. The crashes also work well for me. Paiste claims that every drummer sounds different on the 3000s. I don't know if that's true or not, but they work well for me in a live situation."

Denny's tour setup consists of 14" *Sound Edge* hi-hats, a 20" power ride, two 18" thin crashes, a 16" thin crash, and a 20" China cymbal. All of the cymbals are

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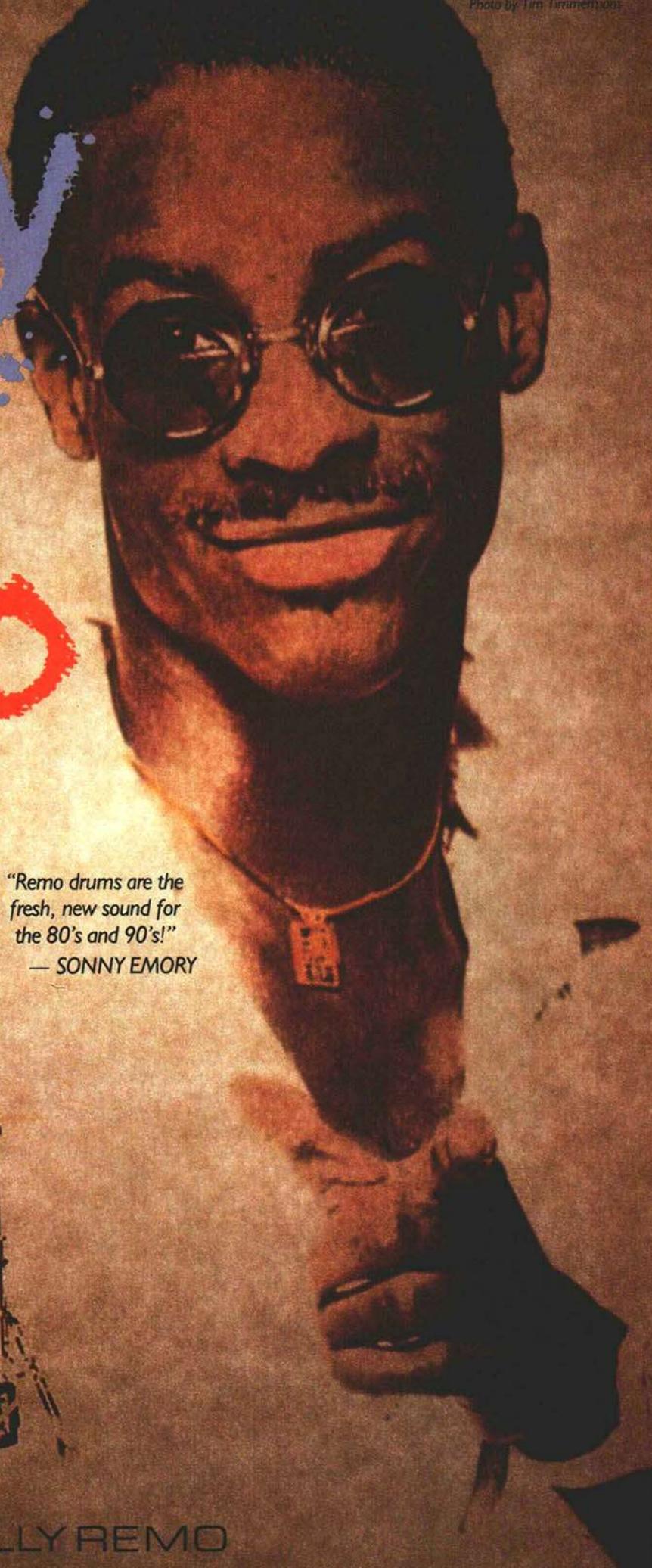
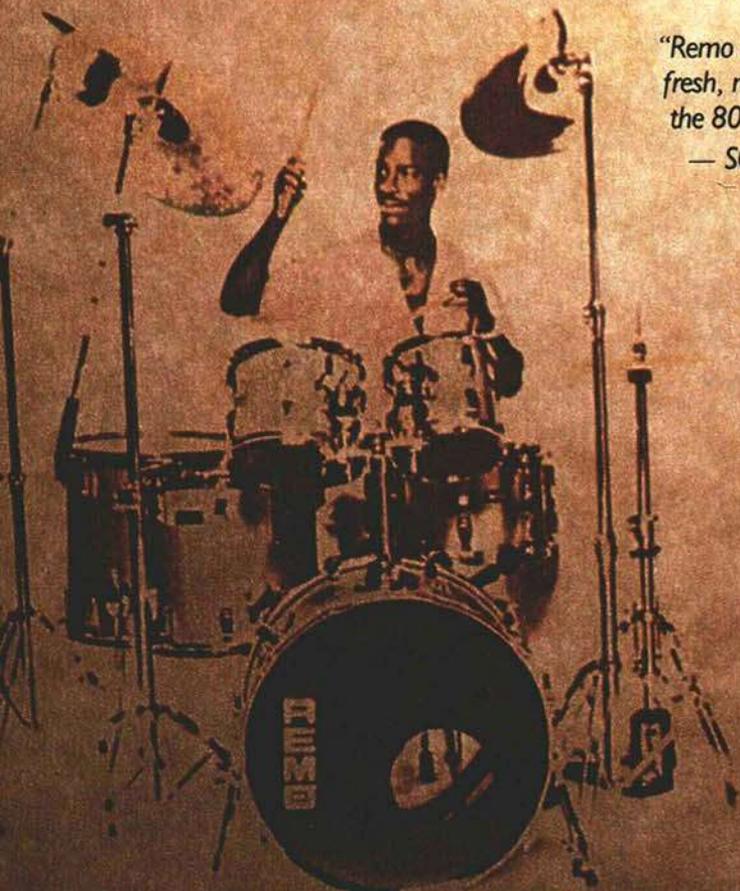
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For recording, Denny has a different set of cymbals. "I use a *Sound Creation 20* dark ride, a *Sound Creation* dark China, and the other cymbals are 2002s: 14" *Sound Edge* hi-hats, and 17" and 19" crashes." Why does he favor those cymbals in the studio? "Well," he answers, "the *Sound Creations* have a darker sound. Studios tend to be very bright. If you use a bright cymbal in a bright studio, you get this awfully bright sound. So the *Sound Creations* tend to record well for me. I haven't tried the 3000s in the studio yet, but the next time I record, I plan to A/B them against my current studio setup."

At various times in the pages of *Modern Drummer*, some drummers have explained that certain things about their setups were the result of a request from the sound crew. That has been true especially in the area of electronics, where sound crews often favor the ease of getting a consistent sound from electronic drums. So, with that in mind, I ask Denny if Heart's crew had complained at all when he abandoned the Simmons drums in favor of an acoustic kit. "That's not their job," Denny replies. "My job is to play what I want to play, and their job is to do their best to make that instrument sound good. I would refuse to deal with someone who took that attitude.

I'm the one playing the instrument, and I have to be comfortable. I'll work with the crew to make that instrument sound as good as possible, but I have to feel comfortable.

"I guess there are situations where drummers can't use what they want to use, but I would not allow myself to be in a situation like that. I'll try to meet people halfway. I've had engineers tell me that a drum is ringing too much, and maybe they'll suggest that we try a different type of head or put one of those rings on top of the drum. I'll try it; I'm open to anything. But if it doesn't feel good to me when I'm playing, then they will have to find another way to deal with it.

"I have to mention that I've got a great roadie," Denny adds. "His name is Gary Clark, and he's been with me since I joined Heart. He's my right-hand guy, and I'd be lost without him. He knows what I want, and he tunes the drums on the road. I might come in and do a little fine tuning, but we have such a great crew that we hardly ever soundcheck anymore. We can go out on stage without doing that and know that everything is going to be right—every night. That's a great luxury to have. We've also got a great monitor mixer named Tommy Holmes. No matter where we play—outside, inside, live hall, dead hall—it sounds the same. It's like a Holiday Inn—no surprises," Denny laughs. "I know what it's going to sound like every night."

And there are a lot of nights. Unlike a lot of top bands who do a record, tour for a few months, and then take a year or two off, Heart works on a pretty consistent basis. "Ever since I joined the band in '82," Denny says, "we've been on and off the road the whole time. After the last record, we toured for ten months. We came back from Japan in July of '86, and started working on the *Bad Animals* record in September, so that was only a two-month break. We finished the record, and then we did a video. Then we took a few days off before going to Europe for two weeks. We came home, went to Seattle and rehearsed for ten days, took a couple of days off, then went to L.A. to rehearse for another ten days, took a couple of days off, and then started a six-week tour. We'll probably tour for about a year. We'll do six to eight weeks at a time, with two- or three-week breaks in between. We could do the tour in a shorter amount of time if we just banged it out, but we like to take breaks. That makes it more civilized. We all have families, and it's sort of a nice pace."

But even with all of the breaks, that's a lot of time away from home—especially for someone who has a four-year-old daughter. Does Denny ever feel that he's missing something in terms of watching his daughter grow up? "Yeah," he says, "but there's another side to that. Even though

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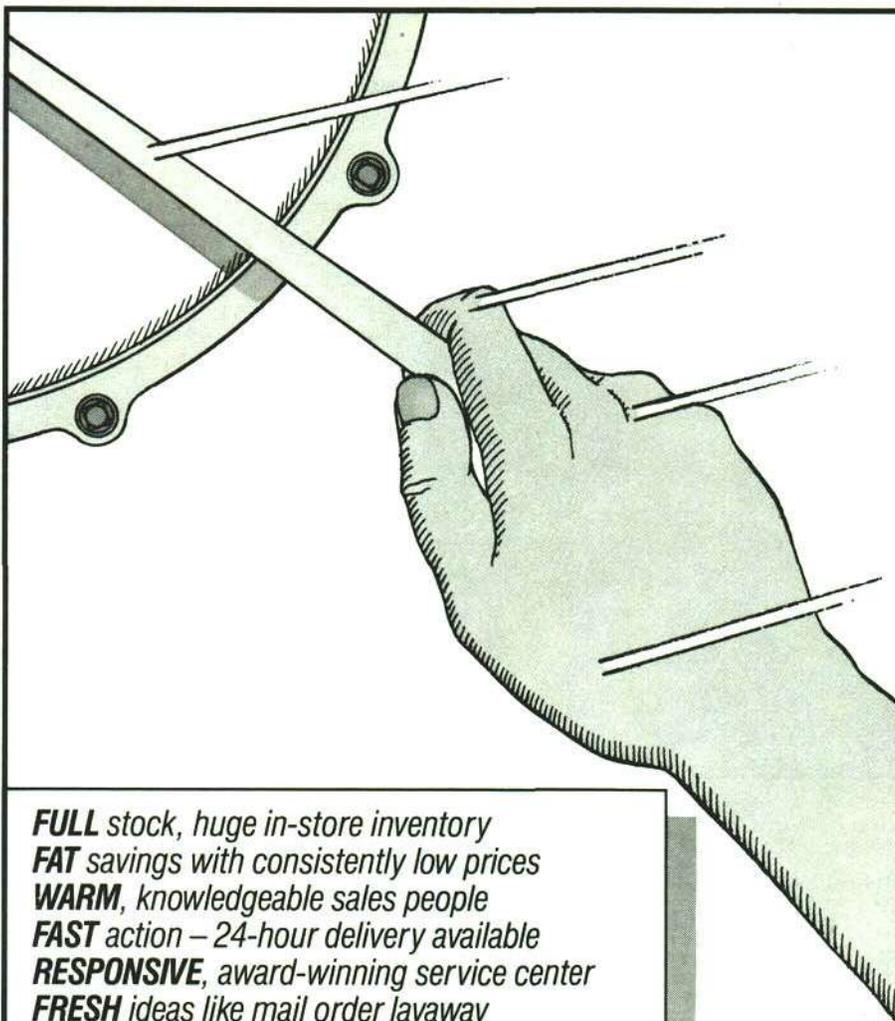
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"This works out okay. Sometimes the band will stay someplace nice for several days, and we use that as a hub. My family comes out and stays with me in those cases. We just spent five days together at Lake George. So it works out.

"The family unit is real important," Denny stresses. "It takes a lot of support to do something like I do. Every family is different, and we accept that this is the way it is—that this is what Dad does for a living. We make it work the best we know how."

One thing that probably helps is the attitude of the whole band. I remember Andy Newmark once explaining to me that there are basically two philosophies about going on the road. Some people try to make the road as civilized as possible, which often means having families along. The other philosophy is that going on the road has nothing whatsoever to do with leading a normal life, so why even try. The main conflicts come when some people in the band are trying to follow the first philosophy while the rest of the band is following the other one. But in Heart, everyone seems to have similar ideas.

"Everyone is real family oriented in the group," Denny admits. "The girls are real close to their parents. Nancy's married. Mark's married, and he has an 11-year-old son who spent a few weeks on the road with his dad this summer. So it works out. It's not always easy, but we've adjusted to it after all these years."

But for whatever negative aspects there are about being on tour that much, Denny feels that all of that time on the road has definitely benefited the group. "I think the five of us are really hitting our stride as a band," he says. "We've become a good live band. The shows are very good every night—very consistent. Everybody's playing great. We try to keep it fresh, and it shows. We're still excited about what we are doing. I think if we ever stop feeling that way, we'll just stop."

But stopping does not seem imminent at this point in Heart's career, and even if the group does eventually call it quits, you can bet that Denny will continue to play the drums. "I've been very fortunate to have such a long career," he says. "I know that it's not always going to be what it is now, with MTV and multi-platinum records. But for me, just being able to support myself and my family by playing drums is the best. Anything else—like success or acclaim—is just icing on the cake." 

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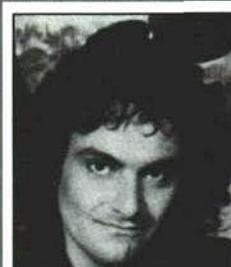
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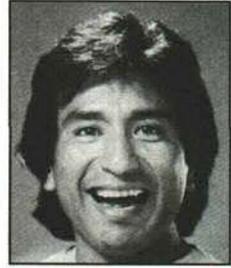
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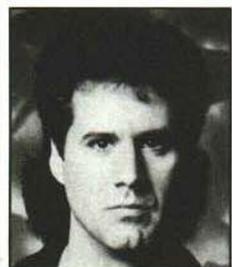
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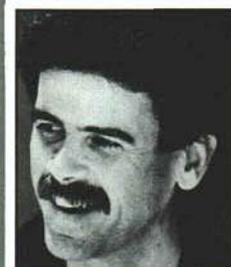
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A Little Can Go A Long Way: Part 2

MUSIC KEY

Open
H.H.
T.T.
S.D.
F.T.
B.D.
Add'l Tom

Last month, we talked about different ways of applying rhythms to the drumset. Using *one* rhythmic pattern, we explored several possibilities. Let's pick another rhythm and see how we can continue to "make a little go a long way." The beats and fills that follow will be based on this rhythm:

If the previous pattern is divided between the bass drum and snare, there are many interesting and funky-sounding beats to be found. For example:

Add an 8th-note hi-hat pattern to complete the beat. Notice that part of this beat's flavor comes from the fact that the snare drum part is highly syncopated and not playing the normal 2 and 4 backbeat:

We can also combine the syncopated snare pattern with part of the backbeat (that is, play the snare on 2 or 4, while syncopating it somewhere else) as in the following example:

Add the hi-hat to round out the beat:

Try adding the offbeat cymbal pattern for variation and independence:

Here's another bass drum and snare combination with the snare syncopated only:

Add a 16th-note hi-hat pattern, and the beat will have a Latin/funk feel. Strive to play the accents as written for independence and control.

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

The following example has the snare playing on beat 3, giving it a half-time feel. Also, note that the original rhythmic pattern is divided between the bass drum, snare, and open hi-hat.

Give this beat momentum with the addition of 16ths on the hi-hat:

I often find that incorporating tom-toms into beats can effectively enhance the overall sound. The following pattern uses small, medium, and large toms, in addition to bass and snare.

Quarter notes on the cymbal or open hi-hat make this beat groove along:

by Rod Morgenstein



Photo by Rick Malkin

A rhythm can also be used in many different ways for drum fills. First, play the original pattern with the right hand and fill in the 16th-note spaces with the left hand. This completes a continuous 16th-note pattern:



Now, accent the original pattern with the right hand, while the left hand plays relatively softly:



Next, bring in the toms by applying them with the right-hand pattern, while leaving the left hand on the snare:



Add the bass drum by displacing some of the accented right-hand notes. This will strengthen hand/foot coordination, while also encouraging the bass drum to play a larger role in your fills:



This final pattern is what I call a beat/fill, as it works great either way. The sticking pattern is the same, and the right hand plays the toms. However, the left hand accentuates the 2 and 4 backbeat, and the bass drum plays quarter notes to further establish the pulse.



The past two articles have dealt with taking a rhythmic pattern and applying it to the drumset in different ways. Basically, we've just scratched the surface in terms of the numerous possibilities there are for exploiting a rhythm. The only limit is your imagination. So grab your sticks, find a rhythm, and see what amazing beats and fills you can come up with!



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Protecting Your From AC Power

You've invested a lot of money into your brand-new Smackworth *Model 10*, 24-channel, 18-bit, digital drumset. It's sitting there, interfaced to the Micro-melon PC with dual, turbo-charged, integral MIDI ports. The FM voice units are stacked chest-high in the corners of the room. MIDI processing gear and outboard effects are crammed into any available space. The disk drives are humming with your latest creation. Your finger is poised over the large green START button. Suddenly, the lights flicker and dim. Over your shoulder, you hear a thunderclap. The disk drives stop. The Smackworth *Model 10* starts to emit an odor that reminds you of burned toast. Meanwhile, the Micro-melon PC is busy trying to reboot itself after having dumped your latest timpani sample, in spite of the fact that 400K of memory is now a fried array of useless silicon.

Sound like a bad dream? Hopefully, that's as close as any of us will get to the AC power monsters. But like all monsters, the power monsters are hungry beasties and enjoy nothing more than chomping on your electronic gear. In an effort to starve a few of these gremlins out of existence, we're going to take a closer look at them and see what kind of precautions we can take. In other words, "Know Thine Enemy."

Our little scenario introduced perhaps the most widely recognized of the power monsters, namely, the lightning strike. I'm not going to go into all that business about earth and cloud discharges and 10,000 ampere spikes. The bottom line is that, if you're running your gear and your house suffers a direct strike, you are, in a word, screwed. I say this now so that there is no ambiguity. You might as well tie the gear to a mine and free-float the mess in a major shipping lane. Now I realize that there's going to be *somebody* out there who can relate a similar story where his or her equipment survived, thanks to (a) luck; (b) spiritual intervention; (c) pyramid power; (d) that person's horoscope; (e) other bozo stuff. Don't bank on it. If there's an electrical storm brewing in your area, shut down your gear and unplug it. Fortunately, most homes are not frequently struck by lightning. However, a hit on your power grid (i.e., the distribution system in your area)

may be more common than you think.

What happens when lightning strikes a power system? First off, AC power directly out of the socket is *supposed* to be a nice, smooth sine wave with an effective value of 120 volts. (This means that the waveform will peak at about 170 volts.) Inside your equipment, connected to the AC line cord, is a step-down isolation transformer (or a step-up version, in the case of higher voltage gear like a power amp). This device does two things. First, it isolates the equipment from the power line (for safety), and second, it reduces the voltage to a more manageable level, which is then turned into DC. The final DC output to the circuitry may be as little as 5 volts in the case of standard digital logic circuits. When lightning strikes, a large voltage spike will be superimposed on the normal sine wave. This spike may be several thousand volts in amplitude. Sizable spikes can be produced by strikes even miles from your humble abode. Assuming that this spike passes through your transformer (which may very well be the case), it will then pass on to the remainder of the circuitry. Electronic carnage is the result, which your gear's fuses will be helpless to prevent.

To make matters worse, lightning is not the only spike-producing monster. Another common source of spikes is inductive load switching in equipment with sizable motors. A good example is your refrigerator. Every time the unit cycles, spikes get thrown onto the circuit. These are, of course, less dangerous than lightning. Spikes can also be generated by electrostatic discharges (like when you zap your friends by sliding your feet across the carpet on a dry day).

How do we control these spike monsters? First off, you have probably seen a number of "spike-protecting" power strips around. These are okay as a first line of defense, but I will caution you that many of these units offer marginal protection at best. Many units are designed for RFI/EMI noise reduction and offer little protection against damaging spikes. (RFI and EMI are high-frequency interferences that can play havoc with your gear, like when your tape deck picks up a local radio station). Many times, these little filters are included right inside your gear. (If you're a hobbyist, you can buy these as part of the modular AC input socket for a couple of bucks.) A typical filter is shown in Figure

Figure 1: A simple RFI/EMI power-line filter

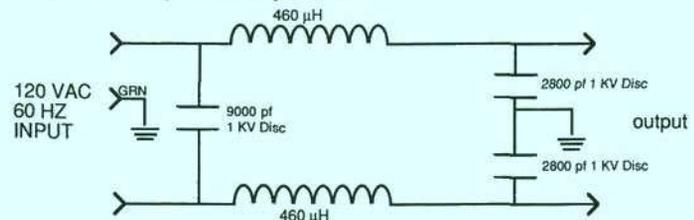
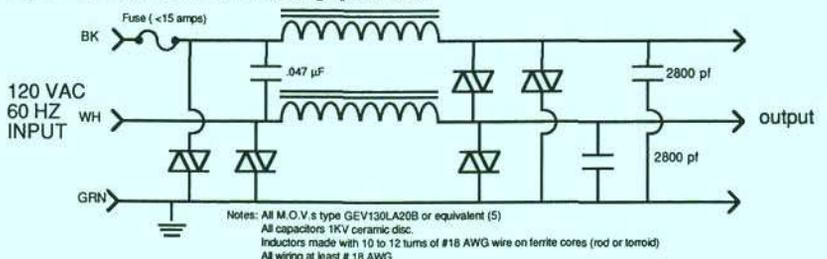


Figure 2: A filter with multi-mode surge protection.



Notes: All M.O.V.s type GEV130LA20B or equivalent (5)
All capacitors 1KV ceramic disc.
Inductors made with 10 to 12 turns of #18 AWG wire on ferrite cores (rod or toroid)
All wiring at least #18 AWG

Gear Monsters

by Jim Fiore

1. A more extensive filter with multi-mode varistor clampers is shown in Figure 2. If you've never worked with AC power gear, I do *not* recommend trying to build this. Leave the construction to someone who's trained, because AC power direct from the socket can be *very dangerous*. Some companies, in an effort to make their spike protectors more effective, will cascade a number of filter elements or will filter each output separately. This last technique offers a certain amount of circuit-to-circuit isolation, which is nice.

Did you ever notice that the power has a way of going off during an electrical storm? Power outages are another AC power monster, and can also be caused by equipment failure on the grid, downed power lines, overloaded circuits tripping breakers, and the like. As a rule, electronic equipment is not too fond of having its power suddenly cut off. If you happen to be saving data at the time, it's almost a sure bet that it will be lost. Of course, the ever popular "Oooops, I tripped over the power cord and unplugged it" trick will produce the same results. To overcome the problem of now-you-see-it-now-you-don't power, you can turn to the Uninterruptible Power Supply, or UPS. In order to use the UPS, simply plug your gear into the UPS, and then plug the UPS into a wall socket. During operation, the UPS constantly monitors the AC power line. If everything is okay, the system draws off a little current in order to keep a fairly large battery at full charge. If the power line drops below a certain voltage, the UPS kicks in, converting the DC from the battery into a normal 120V AC signal. This switchover is usually done in less than 10 milliseconds (1/100 sec). The standby power duration depends upon the available battery system and the load (i.e., the current draw from your gear). Reasonable systems will usually give between 15 minutes to one hour of operation. The basic idea is to give you enough time to save whatever it is that you're working on and allow a normal powerdown. UPS systems are not cheap. A typical arrangement will probably run from \$500 to \$1,000. Also note that UPS systems may not include surge and noise suppression under normal conditions.

Besides spikes, noise, and no power at

all, there is the problem of non-standard power. This power monster is better known as "The Brownout." Believe it or not, your power company can only produce so much power at any given time. What happens when the demand for power outstrips the power company's ability to produce it? Usually, the utility will get power from another utility or network. If everyone is experiencing a shortage (like on real hot days when the air conditioners are going full blast), the power company will start to drop the line voltage as compensation. Normally, you should receive about 120 volts RMS at your house, but during a brownout, you may receive less than 100 volts RMS. Many household items—like light bulbs—are hardly affected by this drop, but electronic gear—like your computer or sampler—can suffer dearly. For example, data saves and recalls may not be executed correctly. It is also possible to have a "localized" brownout. This happens if you're working near large, power-hungry machines or if the wiring is inadequate for modern use (as is the case in some older houses). To tromp on the brownout monster, we have the AC Line Conditioner. Do not confuse line conditioners with the much simpler surge suppressors mentioned earlier. (Read those ads carefully.) A line conditioner monitors the AC line signal and boosts it if the signal drops. Better devices will also turn down the signal if there's an over-voltage, and will also provide noise reduction and surge suppression. A typical unit may output a 120V AC signal +/- 5%, as the input varies from 95 to 135V AC. Line conditioners are a bit more costly than the simple surge suppressor, but less than the UPS. You should be able to purchase a typical 10 amp line conditioner for less than \$200. (I have seen some very nice units available through mail order for only \$150.) If you've got the money, a good line conditioner is an excellent addition to your electronic music setup.

Well, that about covers our tour of the power monster zoo. I hope that this prevents some potential accidents and nightmares. Remember, people get cranky if they're served lousy food, and electronic gear is no different if it's served lousy AC.



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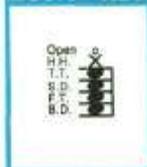


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Programming

MUSIC KEY



This month, it's blues that comes under the scrutiny of the push-button drummer. This style revolves around a feel commonly known as the "shuffle." The key to this new approach is in the hi-hat pulse. Instead of it being made up of eight evenly spaced 8th notes, it is based on something known as triplets. The triplets that we're concerned with are known as 8th-note triplets, and are groups of three notes played in the time it would usually take to play two normal 8th notes. This forces the programmer to think in threes, with a complete bar of 4/4 time comprised of 12 steps (four times three).

Pattern 1

Make sure that you quantize your machine to 1/12 before entering this pattern. On playback, you'll hear a series of evenly spaced hi-hat pulses. There are some blues recordings that rely on this pulse. However, the majority use a variation of it. Normally, the middle note of each triplet is removed and replaced with a rest, providing the more popular shuffle feel:

Pattern 2

We can complete the rhythmical picture now by including the snare and bass drum components. The bass drum notes are sounded on beats 1 and 3, while the snare drum comes in on beats 2 and 4.

Pattern 3

Essentially, this is identical to a great many simple 8th-note programs, the only difference being that the hi-hat is maintaining a shuffle throughout. In fact, any 8th-note pattern can easily be converted to a shuffle by using the triplet 1/12 quantize approach, as discussed. Patterns 4 and 5 are adapted from 8th-note rhythms. Try them out.

Pattern 4

Pattern 5

Shuffles

These rhythms sound great with slow blues, but are equally at home when replayed at a faster tempo along with a strong, heavy boogie backing. Perhaps now's the time to get those old ZZ Top albums out again and scrutinize the drum parts. I've included a few more choice shuffle rhythms for you to program into your machine. Check these out in Patterns 6 and 7.

Pattern 6

Pattern 7

Every kit drummer augments his or her playing with fills, and modern drum-machine technology provides the opportunity for

this to be duplicated electronically, too. Here we take a brief look at some fills that integrate well with shuffle patterns. Using song mode, you can chain several patterns and fills together.

The fills that work best are based around triplets. I've supplied two suitable candidates; one is a complete single-bar fill using four triplets, and the other is a half-bar fill, with a standard triplet rhythm being maintained through the first half of it. Arrange your drum machine so that it will replay a 12-bar phrase in song mode. Use any shuffle rhythm for bars 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, and insert pattern 9 into the fourth bar, and pattern 8 into the twelfth bar.

Patterns

Pattern 9

Incidentally, although this series is designed with the contemporary programmer in mind, all of the techniques apply equally well to the kit drummer. If you are one of these, don't just skip over these pages; stay with us, and try to master the simple concepts presented. I've supplied each pattern in standard notation to make it easier for you to follow. Remember, there's not really much difference between tapping a button with your finger and tapping a drum with your stick, is there?



Carlton "Santa" Davis



Photo by John Skomdehl

As I pulled into the parking lot at S.I.R. rehearsal studio in Los Angeles recently, I noticed a tall, dark, handsome dread leaning against a traffic sign with his arms folded across his chest. I was there to interview Big Youth—one of Jamaica's biggest DJ stars—and I was unaware that the man I was looking at was Carlton "Santa" Davis, drummer for the Soul Syndicate Band, as well as for Jimmy Cliff and Peter Tosh. He followed me into the studio and sat down behind the drums. He looked tall even behind the trap set, and it was then that I realized who he was. I was going to interview him, too, that day, and that would complete all my interviews with the Soul Syndicate.

I had heard Santa play once before when he backed the Reggae Sunsplash 1986 at the Universal Amphitheatre. I had been extremely impressed by his drumming and by the stamina it took to be able to play for so many different groups all night long. I was more impressed by the way he handled himself during this rehearsal with the temperamental Big Youth, who kept jumping all over the replacement keyboard player every time they began to play. "Big Youth," he said, "you're a singer, and you've heard this tune many times. But in order for the new keyboard man to get the feel of this, you're gonna have to let us explore it and get into it to feel what we're doing. We can't start the tune and stop every two bars. We've got to play it."

Big Youth finally agreed, and they began the song again—this time playing it all the way through as Santa had requested. I interviewed Big Youth several hours later, but had to leave before I could interview

Santa. We postponed our conversation until after he finished rehearsal the next day, at which point Santa began talking about his career and drumming.

Santa: I started playing drums in the St. Peter Clavers Drum Corps. It was a church and they had these different activities, like drum corps and so on. Actually, I was passing by one day, I heard the music playing, and I had that inclination to play drums. My first ambition had been to join the army or the police force. But growing up, I realized what I really wanted to do. So I said, "I'm gonna take this opportunity and join the church." I enrolled in the drum corps and began learning the rudiments of drumming—the basics.

CB: I heard that Leroy "Horsemouth" Wallace taught you drums.

Santa: No. I didn't really learn anything from those guys. I just picked it up. Sometimes people go around telling other people what they teach people and what they do to people. I wouldn't be ashamed to say somebody taught me something. The church corps had this big drum room, and I was the quartermaster. I used to take care of all the instruments. I used to go into the instrument room and set up this big bass drum. They had this little pedal, and I would put it under the bass drum and just make up a trap set—but it wasn't really one. I just made it up out of the drums that were there.

I used to play to music, but I never really had the rhythm required to play in a regular band. There was this guitar player named Bobby Akins, who had a band called Bobby Akins & the Caribeats. He used to come by the church and give a couple of the guys guitar lessons. One day, I was in the drum room playing, and he came inside and said, "No, mon. You have this thing all wrong. You're not playing the real rock-steady stuff." In those days, we had rock steady. He was the person who told me, "Look, let the snare drum and the bass drum drop together." That made this one-drop thing we have, like a Bob Marley kind of beat. From that day on, I really got the idea of things, and I started practicing

on my own. Nobody never ever taught me how to play the drums. I mean, I listened to other people. You have to listen to hear various drummers. I listened to jazz drummers like Art Blakey and Elvin Jones. I got my ideas from those guys by listening. I didn't get any formal training from any drummer in Jamaica. Some people like to take credit for other people's successes by saying, "I taught Santa how to do this," but no guy did that.

CB: Is the snare and bass dropping together the thing that distinguishes reggae drumming from other styles of drumming?

Santa: It's one of the things. Reggae music is really coming from way back—coming from a variety of different rhythms. But in those days when I first came into music, [the style was] rock steady. So you had to play that way to get that beat—the same kind of beat Bob Marley had when he was around. In those days, it was rock steady and ska. So you had to play that, too—the uh uh, uh uh. You had to play four or a six or twelve. In those days, you played mostly fours on the hi-hat. In between, you might put a little offbeat with the bass drum, like intermittent licks or something like that. As time went on, everybody started improvising, but in those days, it was mainly the bass and the snare dropping together with that swing feel to it.

CB: What do you do to practice?

Santa: I work. Music is my life. Before I leave my home each day, I try to put in a few hours. I might not practice as hard as I did when I was first starting, but you still have to keep those vibes going, not because you're a professional and playing, but because you have to practice in order to get new ideas. You cannot improve or progress without practice, because you can't be playing the same thing every day. You need to improvise. Any musician who does not practice is not really a musician. That person is like a hustler. I see myself as a professional musician, so I have to practice. It is more important than going on the stage.

CB: Because you're not going to play any

by Chris Boyle

better on stage than you do in practice.

Santa: Right! Even when I'm out on the road, I might go to the beach where I can meditate, take out my sticks and practice pad, and do a few licks. It's like a constant involvement. Wherever I go, I go with the music. That is my only life, so I have to live it that way. Drums, to me, are just like breathing fresh air. It's important to keep that vibe going—to keep really strong and flexible. You must know what you're practicing for. You have to know what you're reaching out for. Music is a thing you can never stop learning, because there's always something new coming on. Each time you play, you get so excited that you just keep reaching—keep reaching out. It's like an endless tradition. That's why I think it's important to practice. Especially if you find you're weak in a certain area, then you have to work to strengthen that area.

When I practice, I don't just practice my licks or a particular beat or thing. I practice to create more feel. That means I might be playing reggae, but I try to innovate different things. I practice coordination to keep the left hand in tune. My left hand is the weak hand. I'm a left-hander, but I play right-handed. Sometimes, I might practice speed on the bass drum. I don't restrict myself in what I'm gonna do. Sometimes an idea might come to me, and I get up on the drums and work out that idea.

To drummers who are just starting, I would say it is important to learn the rudiments. You can play. You know what to do. You learn the value of each note. A drummer is supposed to know these things. I don't have much skill in reading music, but there are a few things you *have* to know. You have to know a little about quarter notes, 8ths, and 16ths. You have to know these things, so you can know the value of each note you're playing. You can create. You can do lots of things around the drums. You can fuse the music when you play. You might not be as fluent a reader as some people, but at least it is important to know these things. It's part of the music. It's a rudiment. It's impor-

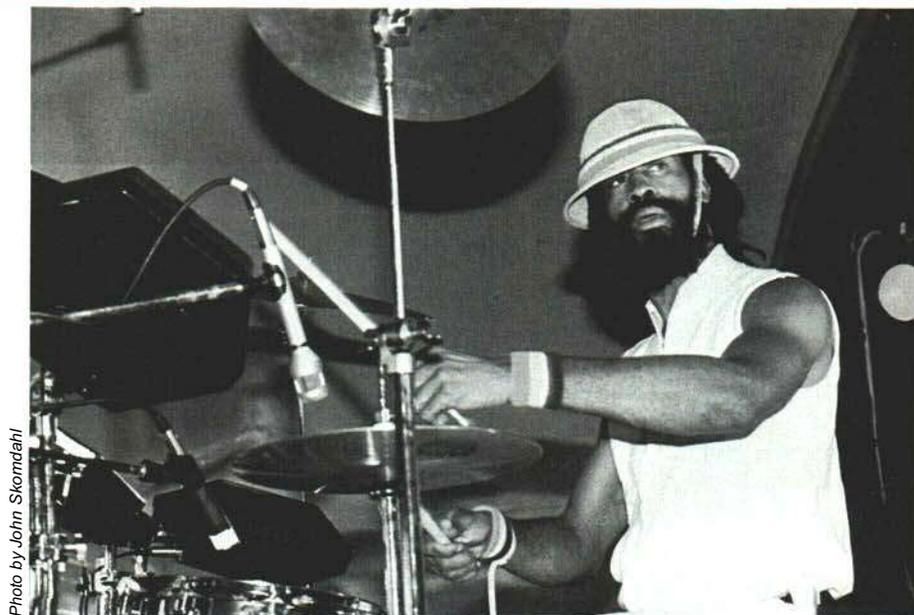


Photo by John Skomdahl

tant to know if it's a 1-2-3-4 count. There are a lot of drummers who only know a 4/4 beat. It's important to know all the different times—5/8, 2/4, 6/8, 12/8—so that when you play, you can swing into these little beats and times and come back out. Sometimes a good drummer might come up to me and say, "Hey man, how did you do that?" It's just knowing how to innovate these different times.

CB: If you know the framework you're working in, then you know how much you can get away with.

Santa: Right! You can flirt.

CB: A jazz drummer once told me, 'Great drummers can play outside the music. The secret is being able to come back in on time. If a drummer can do that, everybody will say, "That guy's great."'

Santa: That's right.

CB: Is it a combination of talent, knowledge, and hard work?

Santa: Right. You have some people who are born drummers—people who can create without even practicing. I know lots of people who play drums, but they're not really drummers. They just like to play drums. I know I was born to play with feeling. I didn't really have to go through much schooling to play what I'm playing. I try my best to put myself inside the music, so I can really bring out the beat.

I think a drummer has a very great responsibility. The drummer is really the backbone of the whole structure of the music. Without the drummer, there's no feel. That's why it's good for the drummer to practice. You have some drummers who speed up the time or drop it, and that's not good. It's important to keep that structure—to groove with the music and keep that time.

CB: In 1986, you backed the artists at Sunsplash. You were popping from start to finish all the way through a three-hour show. Does that stamina come from practice, too?

Santa: Yeah, mon. You have to be physically prepared. You have to be strong and flexible, and have that will power within yourself. I used to smoke, but I stopped because I used too much energy, and after I'd finish playing, I didn't feel natural. Many people might think—when they see me play a certain way—that I'm high on something. I'm not. It's just that will power within me. When I sit on those drums, I go off in a trance. That spiritual feel comes to me. They used to use drums as the first instrument, and they used the drum to communicate like a telephone. Somebody just went "boom boom," and somebody answered "boom boom." Then somebody else would pick it up, and it would just keep going. I think the drummer has to be a very powerful person. A drummer has to be very spiritual and have a lot of inner strength, because it takes a lot to do it. When I don't smoke, I play better. I use energy; I don't waste it. When you smoke, you burn up too much of your inner fluids. It's important, because the Father didn't make man's lungs to strain smoke. He made them to breathe oxygen. It's just us, as human beings, who say, "Let's do this," and "Let's do that"—and it's generally not right. I realized these things, and I decided I had to do this. I know what's good for me. I'm not against anyone who smokes. I have a lot of brethren who smoke. It's not for me. I think I function better and do my best without it, because I get a spiritual high. When I'm on my work and I sit down behind those

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drums, I'm ready immediately. I start communicating with the earth and heaven, because the Father is my source of strength. Jah is my source of strength, so I'm ready. He's my inspiration.

CB: You can go all day now.

Santa: Right. I was doing this tour with Jimmy Cliff in Canada, and we were supposed to play about an hour and a half or so. There was this drummer watching me, although I didn't know it. We started on a certain energy level, and at the end of an hour, he thought, "He can't go another half hour." I went past another half hour, and this guy thought, "He can't go another 15 minutes." We did 45 minutes more. This guy watched me play for two hours and 45 minutes. I just kept rising, rising, and he couldn't believe it. He came into the dressing room looking like this [mouth and eyes wide open in disbelief] and expecting to see me lying there passed out. But I was up. He said, "I can't believe it. I watched you play for two hours and 45 minutes, and I didn't think you could do it." Well, I've just got that love for what I'm doing. I feel good about what I do.

CB: I noticed you didn't waste any energy. On breaks, you were quiet and kept to yourself.

Santa: You have to do that. You love what you're doing, but you don't overwork yourself. When it's time for duty, you know it's time. It's not time for messing around. When it's duty time, you just have to go. I'm ready to play anytime—any amount of work. Whole day? No problem. You have to have space in between to relax and cool down, just like a motor. You cool the motor down, and then you're ready to go again.

CB: What type of drums do you play?

Santa: Simmons SDS9 electronic drums. That's more direct than a regular trapset. Even though you get more feel out of a regular set, I prefer the Simmons set overall.

CB: How did you get the name "Santa"?

Santa: I used to ride roller skates in Jamaica—not the kind you're thinking of, but homemade ones with a stick and ball bearings. Our skates looked more like bicycles. Anyway, it was near Christmas time, and we used to ride through this tar patch in the road. It was very hot one day, and the tar started melting down—and there was a little pebble in it. I was speeding down the street, and when I rode over the tar patch, the front wheel hit the stone and I went over. I cut my face up and got all these bruises.

I went to the clinic, and they put dressings on the cuts. When I came back, a guy who had just come from Canada saw me and said, "Now you look like Santa Claus." From that day on, it just stuck. I

didn't really like people calling me Santa for the first couple of months, but after a while, I got used to it. So now, all over the world, people know me as Santa.

Editor's note: As we went to press for this issue, we learned that Santa Davis had been at Peter Tosh's home last September 11, when purported robbers invaded the house, shooting and killing Tosh and two others. In the same attack, four other individuals—including Santa—were wounded. Santa is expected to recover.

At the time of the attack, Tosh was making plans to tour the U.S. in support of his No Nuclear War LP, which was released in July of 1987. Santa Davis is the drummer on that album.



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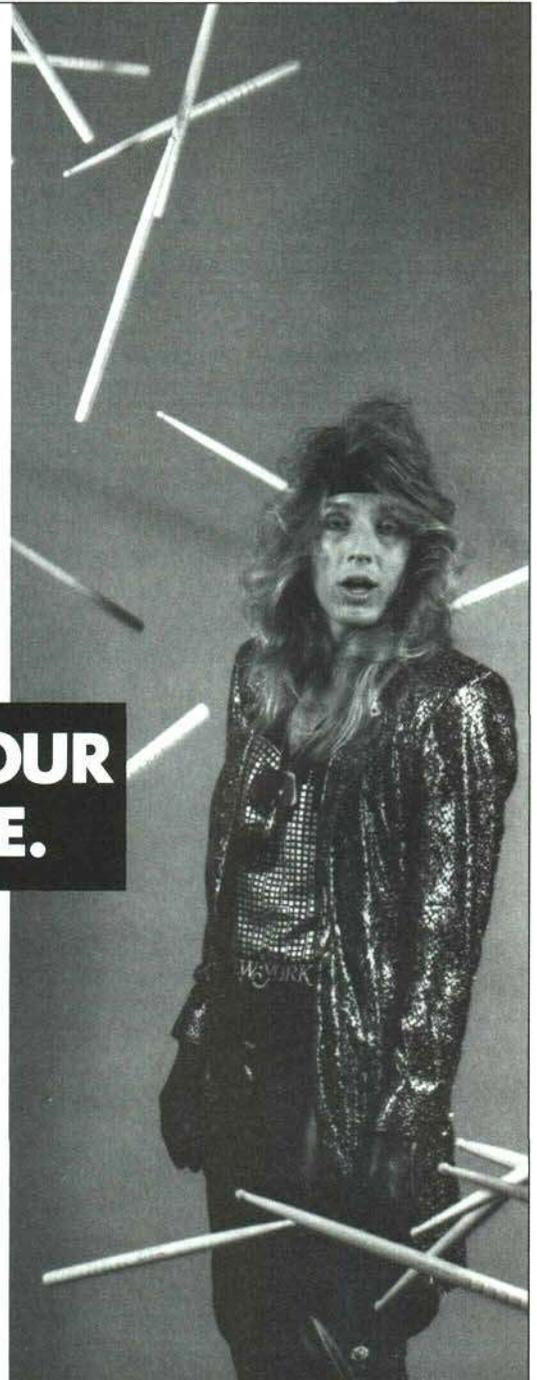
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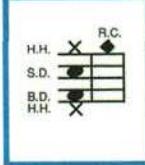
Ralph C. Pace

Box 63, DM, North White Plains, N.Y. 10603

by Bradley Branscum

5/8 Funk

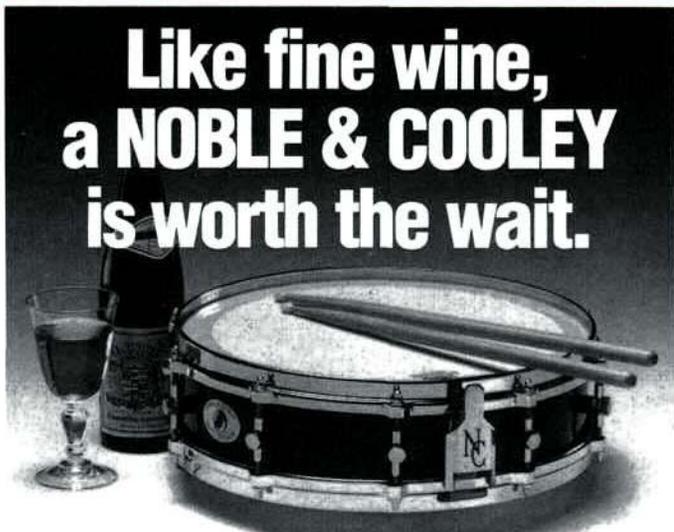
MUSIC KEY



In this article, we'll explore some funk patterns as applied to 5/8 time. These patterns alternate rhythms between the hands and feet, and with the use of syncopation and accents, evolve into the funk style. When practicing these exercises, the emphasis should be on feel and dynamics, not on speed. Once you have a good feel for 5/8 funk, then you can slowly increase your speed.

This study will help develop four-way independence and acquaint you with playing intricate patterns in an odd meter. Note: The accented notes should be played loud (*f*), while the unaccented notes should be played soft (*p*). This is important, because the dynamics play a significant role in determining the "funky" feel.

The following patterns utilize the hi-hat with the left foot. The right hand moves from the hi-hat to the ride cymbal. When the accents fall on the ride cymbal, use the cymbal bell to punctuate the note.



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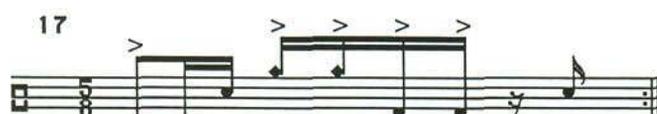
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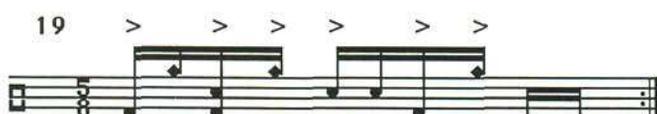
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Photo by Rick Malkin

Nevitt continued from page 25

SN: After about six or seven months of being down in Miami. The original keyboard player was also from New Jersey, and I did some playing with him. He recommended me for the job. He was commuting between New York and Chicago to do rehearsals with Shadowfax. You have to remember that Shadowfax started off as a Chicago-based band. Anyway, I went up to Chicago and spent a weekend there, just jamming a lot. Three weeks later, I moved all my worldly possessions up to Chicago and joined the band.

RS: Was Shadowfax a working band at the time?

SN: Actually, at the time it was Chuck Greenberg, who plays Lyricon in the band, and G.E. Stinson, our guitar player, along with Phil Maggini, our bass player, and Danny Maluchnick on keyboards. I eventually completed the group.

RS: So you've been Shadowfax's one and only drummer.

SN: That's true.

RS: What was being discussed when the band spoke about the musical concept of Shadowfax? Wasn't the band originally a blues band?

SN: The group definitely had blues roots. But the reason why Chuck and G.E. got together was to expand their boundaries and get into a little more experimentation. Back then, the music was wide open. I think we might have worked on one or two tunes that they [Greenberg and Stinson] had written. They involved a lot of really strange time signatures. Nothing was written out, either. G.E. was writing new material, too. He didn't know anything about theory or harmony, so the only way for me to learn the stuff was to sit down and learn it by rote. At first, it was real difficult for me. But gradually, like everything else, it became second nature.

RS: What attracted you to the band in the first place?

SN: The musicians were so good—so high caliber—and the direction of the band was so wide open. We really had a chance to take

the music anywhere we wanted to.

RS: Looking back to those early days, how do you view your progression as a drummer?

SN: There have definitely been a lot of peaks and valleys. One thing I've noticed is that the older I get, the less notes I play and the more I leave out. One of my favorite musicians is Wayne Shorter, who is like the king of "less is more." We opened six shows in Chicago for Jack DeJohnette's Directions back in 1976. I had a chance to sit down with Jack and talk with him for a long time. He was great. I remember that he thought Shadowfax should be doing a few more things in four. At the time, I don't think we did anything in four. It took us a few years, but gradually we took his advice. That's when we got with Windham Hill.

RS: What kind of equipment were you using back then?

SN: Back then I had a Sonor kit, which I still have in my garage. I don't use it anymore, because I'm really fond of my Tama set.

RS: When did the connection between Windham Hill and Shadowfax first occur?

SN: Our first album with Windham Hill came out in 1982. It was called, simply, *Shadowfax*. On it, we made a real effort to showcase more of the acoustic side of the band, because at the time, Windham Hill only had George Winston's solo piano stuff, and artists like Alex di Grassi and Will Ackerman. They were doing solo acoustic guitar records. Shadowfax was Windham Hill's first band project. We didn't want to scare them away with the real heavy Mahavishnu-type material we had been doing at the time. I remember I used one of those old, real fluffy wool bass drum beaters for that whole record. I listen to it now, and I can't stand it, because it's a real wimpy bass drum sound. But it was something we had to do so we wouldn't alienate the label. I think that, if they had heard our first album that we did for Passport Records, they would never have signed us.

RS: How could Windham Hill have signed Shadowfax without coming out to hear the band or listening to any previous recording projects?

SN: We had a friend, Robit Hairman, who was a songwriter and screenwriter from South Africa. He met Alex di Grassi in one of the subway tubes in London. Alex was, at the time, simply playing acoustic guitar with a hat that he hoped people would fill with their spare change. Robit made the connection with Alex, and they stayed in touch when Robit moved to Los Angeles. They started exchanging tapes, and one of di Grassi's found its way to Chuck Greenberg. Chuck put it on his tape machine and added Lyricon parts to it. Robit sent the tape back to Alex, and he loved it. So Chuck wound up playing on Alex's *Clockwork* album. From his part of that record, Chuck was offered a solo deal by Will Ackerman, the founder of Windham Hill. At the time, Shadowfax had broken up. So that gave us the opportunity to get the band back together again. G.E. and I were living in Chicago at the time, so we moved out to L.A. and the band put together the first Shadowfax album on Windham Hill.

RS: Why had the band broken up?

SN: Well, it was 1978, and we were doing kind of a cross between Mahavishnu, Led Zeppelin, and Miles Davis. You have to remember that this was the height of the disco era. We couldn't get any label interest. We even had a hard time finding gigs in and around Chicago. The truth is that we spent most of our time gigging in the basement of the farmhouse we all shared. At the time, I had an offer to join a country-rock band called Heartsfield, which was real big in the Midwest. I went on the road with them, and Chuck and Phil moved to Los Angeles. I played with Heartsfield for about a year and a half, and then worked in some other country and rock bands in Chicago. Then the thing with Windham Hill came, and I, too, moved to L.A.

RS: Was the reason you joined Heartsfield essentially a matter of financial survival?

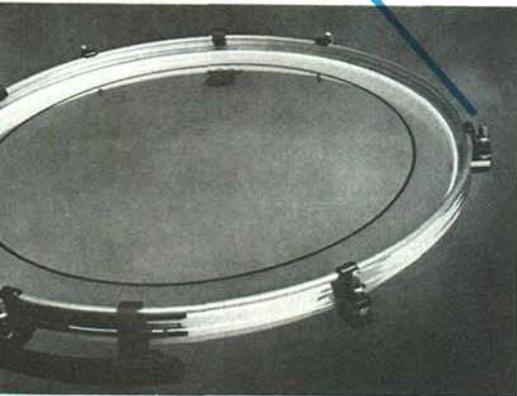
SN: Basically yes. At the time, I was working in a record store about 20 hours a week and making something like \$40. I didn't work more than that, because I needed time to rehearse. The gig with Heartsfield was a salary situation, plus I got a place to live and

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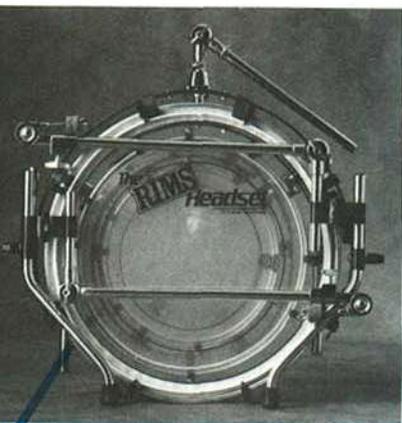


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all that. It was primarily an economic decision on my part to join the band.

RS: Was it difficult getting back into a Shadowfax frame of mind after spending a couple of years playing mostly country music?

SN: It was a real good break, because we all had a chance to stand back from what we were doing with Shadowfax, and after a year and a half or so of not doing it, when we came back to the situation, we all had open minds. The biggest adjustment for me was sound-oriented. I was used to playing loud. But like I said before, I had to use a fluffy beater on the first album, and I had to hold back quite a bit. But as we went on with Windham Hill, I was able to open up more, and I kept adding more and more electronics to my basic acoustic drum setup.

RS: From a drummer's perspective, what do you consider your best work with Shadowfax? What things are you most proud of?

SN: There are a few tunes that I like in particular, as far as my contribution goes. Off the last album, *Too Far To Whisper*, I really like "Street Noise." I also like "New Electric India" off the *Shadowdance* LP. It has kind of a tabla rhythm that I transferred over to drumset. Also, from the first Windham Hill album—the *Shadowfax* album—there's a tune called "Ariki." That was my first experience working with Emil Richards in the studio, which was—and always will be—one of my favorite experiences. Working with him is like going back to school because he's so knowledgeable, especially concerning world percussion. I had a tune that I wrote called "Slim Limbs Akimbo," which appeared on the *Too Far To Whisper* album. It was in two sections: One was primarily African, while the second section was Gamelan-oriented. I got together with Emil on the song, and he just nailed it. I knew what kind of flavor I wanted the piece to have, but I didn't know exactly what instruments would make it happen. Emil knew right off the bat. I'll tell you, it's just such a joy working with him.

RS: How did you meet Richards?

SN: Through Marty Lishon, whose family used to own Frank's Drum Shop in Chicago. It's one of the best drum shops in the

country. Emil is an old friend of Marty's dad, and Marty is a good friend of Shadowfax. When we moved out to the West Coast, he kind of made the hookup for us.

RS: You mentioned "Street Noise" as one of the songs you're most fond of. It's one of my favorite Shadowfax songs. What is it about your performance on that song that you like?

SN: I like the sound of my drums, as well as the sound of the song. I think it's the first song that we got a real contemporary sound on. I'll tell you a secret. You'll get a kick out of this. One of the Sound Supplements in *Modern Drummer* had a lot to do with the sound we got on that song. I played around with that sound sheet; I think it was the very first one the magazine ran. The sheet had something to do with non-linear reverb. I had never heard of that before, but I knew that was the sound I wanted to use on "Street Noise." I asked our engineer as well as Chuck, who was producing us at the time, if they had ever heard of non-linear reverb. They said no, so I played what I knew from the sound sheet. They both agreed that it would be great for "Street Noise." So when we got into the studio, we located an AMS Reverb Unit, and lo and behold, there was a setting for non-linear reverb. We dialed it up, and it was exactly the sound I was looking for. I thanked *Modern Drummer* for that.

RS: When you're in the studio with Shadowfax, how much off-the-cuff recording goes on? And how much freedom do you have as the drummer when it comes to contribution to songs?

SN: Well, actually, most of the material is worked out in pre-production before we get into the studio. The rhythm tracks are pretty much set. We get into experimentation when we bring in Emil Richards, percussionist Adam Rudolph, and people like them. The music almost always seeks out its own direction when they're around. And that makes recording pretty exciting.

RS: How much of a say do you have in structuring the rhythm tracks?

SN: It's pretty open. A lot of times, we'll try one feel, and then I'll get an idea and we'll try something else. But it's basically up to the composer of the tune and what he feels comfortable with. Still,



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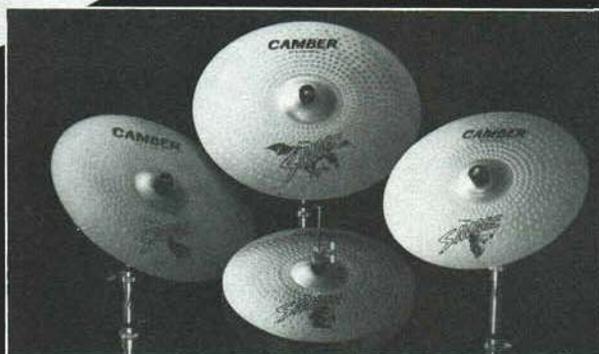
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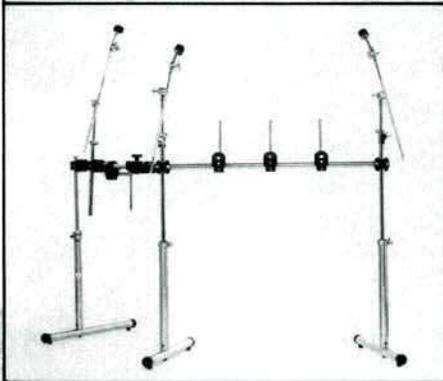
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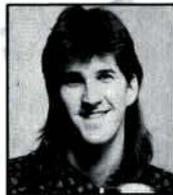
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there is a lot of input from everyone in the band, including me.

RS: How important is songwriting to you? Is this something you want to pursue seriously in the future?

SN: I've become pretty serious about songwriting with this last album [*Too Far To Whisper*], since it marks the first time that I placed a song of mine on a Shadowfax album. I've written songs in the past. Most of the songs were country and rock pieces for bands that I was working with at the time. But I'm enjoying the whole art of songwriting more and more. I have a couple of pieces that I hope will wind up on the next album. I've been watching Phil Collins very closely, [laughs] I only wish I could sing like him.

RS: What instrument do you use to compose a song or work out song ideas?

SN: I do most of my composing on the *SP-12*. That has really helped open up the composing part of me. It sort of acts as a multi-track recorder, too.

RS: Do you play any other instruments—perhaps the guitar or keyboard?

SN: Not really. I can play mallet parts, but I'm not really a mallet player. I can't improvise on mallets. I do play a tiny bit of guitar, but not enough to consider myself a guitar player.

RS: Are you comfortable in the recording studio? Do you enjoy recording?

SN: I love it. I absolutely love it.

RS: Better than performing live?

SN: I love both. I couldn't see myself just being in the studio, because I do like getting out and playing in front of people. And I do like to travel very much. But I would also like to get involved with more studio work. Basically, the only recording and studio experience I have is with Shadowfax. I'm not really hooked into any kind of scene in Los Angeles, although I would like to be. But a lot of times, if artists who are recording know that you go on the road with a band, they won't call you for sessions.

RS: And Shadowfax does seem to tour quite a bit.

SN: We do. We're on the road a good seven months a year. But I

still want to explore studio work outside of Shadowfax in the future. I want to do sessions wherever I can. I think it's just a matter of meeting the right people. I think Shadowfax's association with Capitol Records could open up things for me. At least, that's what I'm hoping.

RS: Touring has a positive side, too, as I'm sure you'll agree. You've been to many places, and I bet you've been able to expand upon your interests in world music and world music rhythms.

SN: Definitely. We went to Japan a couple of years ago, to give you an example. While we were there, I had the chance to listen to some of the Daiko drum troupes, which are traditional Japanese troupes. They use one drum that's called Odaiko. It's amazing. It's a 700-pound drum made from the trunk of one tree. There are two guys who play it, and when they do, it sounds like thunder. In fact, I bought a CD of some Japanese drum-troupe music. It's incredible stuff. The dynamics are just a killer. It's really like rudimentary drumming, but on traditional Japanese instruments. One place Shadowfax hasn't gone is Bali. I'd love to go to Bali, because I have a real soft spot in my heart for Gamelan music.

RS: You've mentioned that a couple of times in this interview. Where and how were you introduced to Gamelan music?

SN: A lot of it came through Emil Richards. He did some work on "Shadowdance" off the *Shadowdance* album. He brought in all these Gamelan gongs and angklung, which are bamboo rattles. He also brought to the session these metal angklung that Deagan made in the late '20s. It took four of us to play these instruments. That's one thing that I love about working with Emil. He's really into getting little percussion groups together, assigning parts, and getting everybody involved. Nowadays, sounds and processing are so important. Emil makes sure that the "human element" is still part of it. And when you add the tones and sounds that our engineer, Harry Andronis, is responsible for, well, we have a pretty good team. Harry does our live sound, as well as performing the tasks of the engineer in the studio. That's a real rarity. Most studio people don't like to go on the road. Harry has been with us for five or six

years now. We see him as another member of the band. He even gets points on our records.

RS: And you work with him when it comes to establishing your drum sound?

SN: Oh yeah. I trust him a lot, especially live. I have to. I have no idea how my drums sound out front. Harry knows our music as well as anybody in the band. I like his sounds, and basically, I trust him a lot. The thing I've been concerned most with lately is learning the technology behind the sounds, especially drum sounds. I've had my *SP-12* drum machine almost two years now, and a few weeks ago, just before we left on this tour, I bought a Mac Plus computer to help with the loading of sounds. I've been spending more time reading keyboard magazines and manuals than playing my drums when I'm off the road.

RS: That's interesting. I think more and more drummers are doing the same thing. How much do you play your drums when you're not touring or in the recording studio?

SN: Well, I work out on the practice pad a little bit, but I've really been spending most of my free time working on my songwriting and understanding the concept of new drum sounds and new equipment.

RS: Contemporary drummers are more assertive; they're hungry and want a bigger part of the pie.

SN: That's really true. You hit it right on the head. And I don't think that's bad. I think you have to be aggressive and ambitious.

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

SN: Great. I'm a gear-head from way back.

RS: Why don't you begin by telling me what your present drum setup is.

SN: Well, it's a Tama *Artstar*—an original *Artstar* set, which consists of a birch shell with South American cordia wood covering on the inside and out. And the reason that I was attracted to those drums when I was looking for an endorsement was that the Tama *Artstar* set struck me as a cross between Sonor and Gretsch. I had been playing a rosewood Sonor kit that was covered on the inside

and outside with a rosewood veneer, which I thought had a nice, warm sound. But it was a little dark sounding. I'd always been a big fan of the Gretsch sound, which basically came from a thin-shelled drum. So, when I saw the Tama *Artstar*, like I said, it really struck me as a combination of the best features of both. I got in touch with the Tama folks, and it took me about a year of pounding on their door and calling them up and staying in touch. We finally got the endorsement details worked out after I had gone to Japan and had a chance to meet the folks at Hoshino Gakki, which is the head company for Tama.

RS: Let's get into the details of the Tama set.

SN: Well, I have a 16 x 22 bass drum, and 16 x 18 and 14 x 15 floor toms. My rack toms are 8x12 and 9x13. All my toms are mounted on the RIMS system, which really opens up the sound of a drum. The main snare that I'm using is a 6½ x 14 rosewood Tama, and for my spare snare, I have a 6½ x 14 Bell Brass, which is a beautiful, very loud, and very attack-oriented drum. And then to my left, I have a mahogany timbale—a 6½ x 13—and just above that is my Roland *Octapad*, which triggers my *SP-12*. I've got pickups on the bass and snare drum. I'm using the Barcus-Berry 2050 pickups. Those are plugged into the Roland, which, in turn, triggers the *SP-12*. I'm also using Drum Workshop's *EP-1* electronic bass drum pedal trigger for some stuff. I can now play a lot of patterns that I wasn't able to play before, because I can assign any voice I want to the *EP-1*.

RS: What about cymbals?

SN: I'm using Paiste. I've played Paiste cymbals for five or six years now, and just love them. I've got the 3000 line. I have a 20" power ride, 17", 18", and 20" crashes, a 20" *Novo* China-type, an 11" *Rude* splash, and 15" *Rude Sound Edge hi-hats*.

RS: Is this also the setup you take into the recording studio?

SN: Yes. We do some blues gigs every now and then with a friend of ours, Morris Dolleson, who is also known as Cash McCall. He used to be a staff producer at Chess Records in Chicago. He's known Phil, G.E., and Chuck for about 20 years now. When I play

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with him, I use just a kick, snare, hi-hat, and one cymbal. It's a nice change from the big setup with all the percussion stuff with Shadowfax. I'm also using windchimes and triangles, now that I think of it, as well as a gong as part of my acoustic percussion setup.

RS: You have a fair bit of equipment, yet you said before that you're going after the "less is more" philosophy as far as your drumming goes. How do you ensure that you use the equipment you possess properly—without overplaying? Certainly, there must be temptations every now and then to want to use a lot of what surrounds you.

SN: Sure, but I think the most important thing is that you have to play something that's good for the song. The bottom line has to be bringing out the best points of the song. With the material Shadowfax does, there are so many layers of sound between the keyboards, guitar, horns, violin, and everything else. Plus, there are always a lot of polyrhythms happening. So I just try to leave enough space for everything to be heard. Regarding my snare and bass drum hits, I like to find an open space in the music, so that I can just drop that snare drum beat and bass in it. But in the end, you've got to consider the song. That's one of the reasons why I love Max Weinberg. He's the best at that—the absolute best.

RS: Max is a pretty hard hitter. Are you?

SN: Yeah, I've always played hard, no matter what I play, be it Shadowfax music or country or rock N roll. I think that I've played for a lot of people in the past who appreciate when they hear a 2 and a 4.

RS: How do you control your dynamics? Most of what Shadowfax performs doesn't require heavy hitting.

SN: I pretty much approach most gigs the same way. I try to listen to the song and give what the song needs, no matter what the gig is.

RS: Let's talk a little about percussion. I understand you're a collector of percussion instruments.

SN: Oh yeah. I have a couple of different African balafons, which are kind of primitive marimba instruments with gourd resonators.

I have some Gamelan gongs and things called boobams, which, in their mature form, are made out of bamboo. They have bamboo resonators and are set up chromatically. They're tuned like a piano. Each resonator is cut like an organ pipe. I also have some different bushman dance rattles, which are sort of like wooden pods that all band together. I've got a lot of different African bells, too. Emil Richards taught me how to play them. It's a technique where you hit the bell and then mute it against your thigh, so it has a synthesizer envelope to it. I'm a big fan of a guy named Pete Engelhart, who lives in Berkeley. If you've ever seen Airtio, you probably remember his playable metal sculpture called Josephine. Josephine kind of looks like a scarecrow. You can play different parts of her body. Anyway, Pete made Josephine for Airtio. I have some of the bells and metal sculpture things that he's made. He's a real artist.

RS: And, I take it, you use your collection, or parts of it, whenever you can, be it on the road or in the studio?

SN: Definitely. I use them a lot. In fact, I have a set of Pete's Rack Six Bells that I'm using tonight in a couple of tunes.

RS: Do you consider yourself a student of percussion?

SN: I try to be just that. Working with Emil Richards has really gotten me more involved, too. I've been to his warehouse a couple of times where he keeps his collection of percussion instruments. It's unbelievable. He has all of John Cage's instruments, which are mostly one-of-a-kind instruments.

RS: How do you balance your interest in drums with your interest in percussion? Both are demanding in their own way.

SN: They are. To stay on top of my drumming and to improve any way I can, I study with a teacher. Recently, I've been studying with Roy Burns. He was advertising in some of the local California papers. So I took a couple of lessons with him. It's the type of thing where he gives me a concept to follow. I was having a little bit of a problem relaxing when I played. I was just tensing up too much. And the more I tensed up, the more tired I got. One thing was feeding the other. So I got together with Roy, and he gave me a

book to read called *The Inner Game Of Tennis*. The book taught me a way to stay relaxed throughout my playing. I wasn't really studying rudiments with Roy. It was, as I said, more conceptual. But through all this, I got involved with the Aquarian Company, and I'm now endorsing their sticks and cymbal springs. I've also been working with them as far as their new drumheads go, which are real nice. But Roy gave me a real good program to follow in order to prepare mentally for playing. Roy has always been a hero of mine. When I was studying with Gene Thaler, we went through a lot of Roy's method books. So working with him has been a real thrill for me.

RS: Before the tape was rolling, you mentioned a few things about tuning. I was wondering if you could elaborate on what you said.

SN: Well, I was talking about Jack DeJohnette. He tunes very, very high. He's got his toms real tight. I asked him what the reason was for that, and he said to get the drums up and out of the range of the bass and guitar. After I talked with Jack about this, I tuned my toms up high. But I've brought them down a bit since then. I don't really try to tune to any notes. What I do when I'm setting up my drums for studio work is go with a coated *Emperor* on top and a clear *Diplomat* on the bottom. I usually put the bottom heads on first and just tune them up where I can hear them resonate. If it's a little too loose, the sound will be flabby and dead. As you tune it up, you get to a point where the tone starts to open up. You get a fullness to your sound. But when you tune past that—when it's too tight—I find you choke off the sound and tonal qualities. I really just try to get my drums to the point where they're as live sounding as possible. And after I get the bottom head in tune, then I'll put the top head on. Then I'll repeat the process I just mentioned.

RS: Are there areas in your drumming that you specifically work to improve?

SN: Oh yeah. I'd like to get a little more precise as a player. One criticism that I have of myself is that I'll tend to get a little bit sloppy, especially when I'm playing for volume. I'd like to be able to control my dynamics a little bit better than I presently do.

RS: And on the opposite side of the coin, what aspects of your drumming do you see as strengths? Forget about being modest for a moment.

SN: [laughs] I think my time is real good. That's gotten better because I've worked a lot with sequencers and drum machines. I remember the first time that I had to go in the studio in Chicago and play with a click track. I was scared to death. But that's behind me now.

RS: I think every drummer of note has had an experience similar to that.

SN: I hope so. I mean, I really didn't know up to that point if my time was good or bad. With a click track, you find out pretty quick. Also, my knowledge of various music forms and my ability to combine drums with percussion is a plus for me. I'm able to take a percussion attitude as easily as I'm able to take a drum attitude and make it work.

RS: Personally, do you consider yourself a drummer who plays percussion or a percussionist who also plays drums?

SN: I'm a drummer. I'm definitely a drummer in my eyes.

RS: Looking ahead to the future, what are your ambitions? What do you want to be doing, say, five years from now?

SN: Well, there are definitely certain artists who I would really like to work with outside of Shadowfax. I'd really like to do something with Peter Gabriel. He's a big hero of mine. And if Max Weinberg would like to go on vacation for a while [laughs], I wouldn't mind taking his place in the E Street Band for a bit. I'm a real big Springsteen fan.

RS: No mention of jazz bands or jazz artists. How come?

SN: I really don't consider myself a jazz drummer. I hear myself as a pop or rock drummer. I don't happen to work in either of those veins, but I think that's where I'm coming from. You know, the general public sees Shadowfax as a jazz band. And here we are tonight playing a jazz festival in Carnegie Hall. But Shadowfax sees itself more as a rock band. But we don't want to get into categories or classification and all that now, do we?



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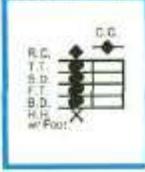
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"You can take the drummer out of the big band, but you can't take the big band out of the drummer." I'm not sure if the above sentiment is true, or even if it is, if that's such a bad thing. Now, small group playing has become my favorite medium for making music with more than one person. But professionally, I did start out as a big band drummer. And I think that, if

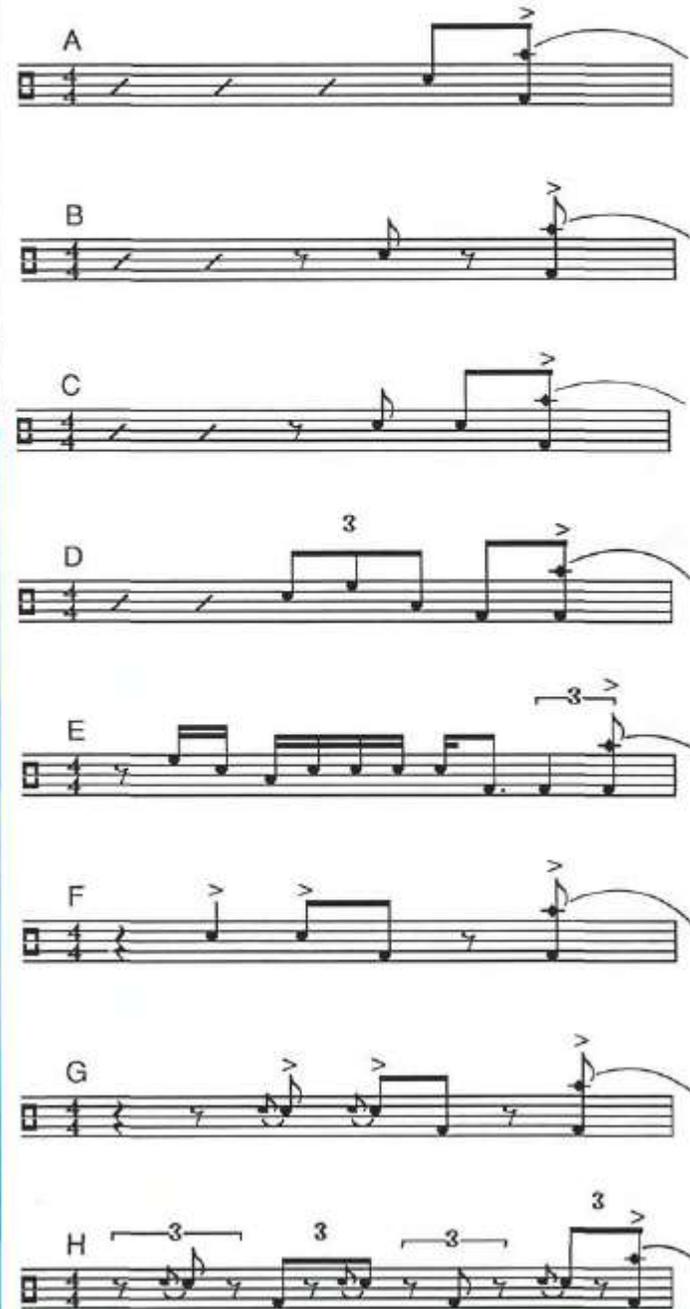
you listen enough to any kind of music, you can capture its spirit and feeling (or its essence). No matter what your preference may be, some experience in large ensemble playing can be beneficial.

I'd like to address an important stylistic consideration: the "cutting" of figures. Consider the following rhythmic figure:



That's pretty common in jazz music arrangements. Now, in drumset notation, the standard practice is: For any rhythm written *within* the staff, the drummer is expected (or encouraged) to play it, while rhythms written *above* the staff are for the benefit of the drummer's knowledge (i.e., all or part of the band will be playing that figure), and it is left to the drummer's discretion whether to "cut" it or not.

Here are some examples of fills and setups for that rhythm.



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And so on. You can go from simple to complex and from not too many notes to a whole lot of rhythmic activity. But here are some things to consider:

1. If, in a big band context, there are five, ten, or fifteen horns playing a figure, that may be enough punctuation by itself, without the drummer having to play the figure as well. If there is too much catching of all the horn figures, the jazz band can start to sound like a circus or show band.

2. Orchestration on the drumkit becomes really important here. Consider the different sound possibilities: playing the bass drum/crash cymbal together; the snare drum/crash cymbal together; a rack or floor tom/crash cymbal together; the bass drum by itself; the snare drum by itself; a tom-tom or the crash cymbal by itself (or whatever sound you may have lurking behind that electronic drumpad/trigger). One thing that I can tell you is that a rhythm on the "&" of 4 tends to lead somewhere, and your playing should have the effect of stepping off of the curb with one foot, and continuing your trek with the other. It shouldn't sound as if you were jumping off of the curb and landing with both feet . . . in the mud!

3. Jazz music's essence is improvisation. The music is like a dialogue. Sometimes it sounds good to play a rhythm *before* or *after* the figure, and not actually catch the figure that the rest of the group is playing. It's kind of like you're making a suggestion (or an afterthought) to the band.

4. If you're playing a chart that has been recorded, listen to the recording and notice how that drummer interpreted the part. There are no rules when it comes to drumset reading. In fact, I think that the most important element for a drummer to have in reading a drum chart is a good pair of ears. Listen to what the rest of the band is doing. And if you've got the opportunity to study someone else's interpretation, then take advantage of it. Interpretation is what drumset reading is all about.

5. Don't always use the same fill-ins or setups for a particular figure. Be creative. (Just don't play "Stump The Band!" too often. Remember that a fill should take the music from where it was to where it's going and should not be too big of a mystery—for yourself or anyone else in the group.)

6. Don't approach the same rhythms in a small group the way you might in a big band. And watch the tendency to catch too many of the figures, whether written or not, that the band may be playing.

Of course, the same rules for musicality apply here as anywhere else: Keep good time, use discretion, and play with dynamics. (Drummer: "Dynamics? Whadd'ya mean, *dynamics*? I'm playing *as loud as I can!*")

Keep swinging. See you next time.



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A Converter Dr. Robert

Robert Litwak started drumming at the age of four—with table knives on a Steinway piano! He began more formal—and parentally acceptable—drum training at nine. His high school years, just prior to World War II, were spent drumming in local big bands in the Long Island, New York area. But then the war called. Robert joined the navy, went to college, entered medical school, and ultimately took graduate training in cardiac surgery. He became Doctor Litwak and, in 1956, began a distinguished career that eventually led him to a position as Chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at New York City's renowned Mt. Sinai Medical Center.

Unfortunately, the demands of a medical career all but prevented Dr. Litwak from pursuing his musical one. As he puts it, "Up to a point just a few years ago, I hadn't played for the better part of 25 years—other than to set up my old Slingerland Radio Kings, pull out a record, and play with a couple of old Goodman tracks." Even this occurred infrequently. Then a personal family tragedy led Dr. Litwak's wife to suggest that he return to drumming more actively—as a diversion. A fortuitous string of circumstances allowed him to start taking lessons, become involved in jam sessions, and finally to begin gigging regularly with a small jazz group in New York City. To further facilitate this rediscovered pursuit, Dr. Litwak stepped down from his post as a division chief in 1985. He now holds the position of Senior Cardiothoracic Surgeon at Mt. Sinai. MD called on Dr. Litwak's combined talents as physician and musician to gain some insight into the relationship between drumming and health.

RVH: You represent a rare breed within any field of medicine. You can offer not only expertise in your medical field, but also a background in, and understanding of, the profession of drumming from your own personal experience.

RL: One of the joys of my life is to serve musicians in general—and drummers in particular—in a professional capacity. Therefore, anytime I can point a musician in the right direction, medically speaking, I will.

RVH: Are there any points that you would like to bring to the attention of the drumming profession—medical things they should be aware of?

RL: Yes, there are. There are certain lesions that clearly involve drummer pathology. I'm happy to say that virtually none of them involve my own specialty—cardiac surgery. But let's talk about them. Number one is something called a ganglion, which is a lump that is quite firm and looks for all the world like a small tumor. It generally appears more on the right hand than on the left, and is the result of moving the wrist and traumatizing various tendon sheathes for many, many years. It can be frightening, of course. Drummers should be aware that it is not a malignant tumor, but on the contrary, a very benign lesion caused mainly by overwork of that particular tendon area.

Another condition involves a drummer's hi-hat technique. At the base of the foot, there is a major muscle that attaches from the calf down into the heel. Because of the amount of pressure involved in getting a good hi-hat sound—that solid, non-sloppy "chick"—obviously, considerable force is applied. There can periodically be hemorrhage in that area, which produces what we call a small hematoma. That, in turn, can calcify, and when it does, it can be extremely painful. As an example, Joe DiMaggio had a calcified Achilles tendon, which is loosely known as a bone spur. It's an extremely difficult thing to treat. Orthopedists—in whose area this condition falls—will obviously try to treat it conservatively. But sometimes, with continued pain, operative removal may be indicated. Now, not being an orthopedist, I can't suggest how this condition can be avoided,

because the hi-hat technique simply demands frequent elevation of the heel. When you consider it, all you have to do is grab hold of that very big muscle in the back of the heel to realize how much tension is being transmitted to the Achilles tendon.

Another typical drummer lesion involves areas of the shoulder where drummers can suffer major spasm, hemorrhage, and calcification involving some of the muscles of the shoulder girdle—particularly the trapezius muscle or the rhomboid muscle. These muscle conditions can be agonizing, and yet, heaven knows, a drummer has to work—pain or no pain.

These three typical drumming lesions come from hard work. The more you practice, the worse they get. But every drummer that I've ever known who's worth a darn simply says one thing: "Damn the pain. I'm going to practice." So it's really a self-fulfilling prophesy, because the great ones who simply refuse *not* to practice are just contributing to the pathology. But that's the name of the game.

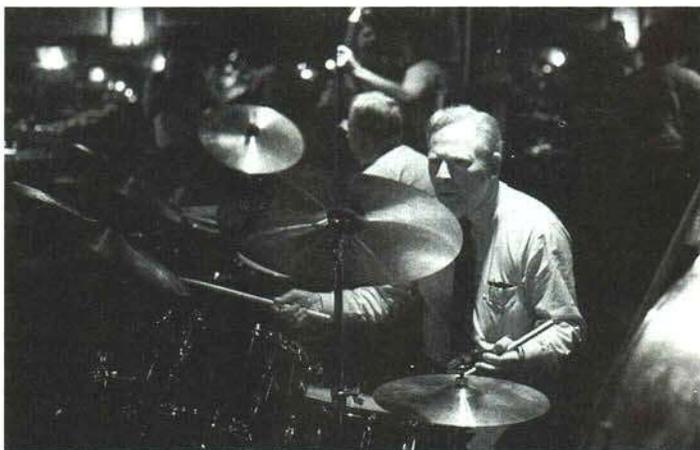
RVH: The question then becomes—speaking both medically and musically—what can be done? Is there some hope that a slight change of technique—or perhaps study with a teacher who could alter some element of a drummer's playing—could, in fact, result in a positive medical benefit?

RL: Yes, there is. One thing that is very important—and I emphasize it because I have really not accomplished it myself—is to try to play in a completely relaxed manner. Let's face it, all of the truly great drummers do it with such simple aplomb. I can't think of one who doesn't just move around the set as if he or she owns it. On the other hand, of course, is the fact that they don't *get* that fluidity without practice, [laughs] So what to do? It's difficult to prescribe a program that would really improve things.

One thing I can mention is the slouch some drummers have. We all should try to

by Rick Van Horn

sation With Litwak



sit up straighter. In this regard, it's probably better not to sit on the entire drum throne but, rather, more towards the front edge. Keep only those big bones that attach to the upper leg bone—called the femur—on the drum throne. That will—almost of necessity—demand that you sit a little straighter. If you sit on the entire circular area of the drum throne, you'll tend to slouch. But please remember, the lesions we've discussed so far fall outside my specialty, so my expertise is rather limited when it comes to prescribing for these conditions.

I will say this about my own area of cardiac surgery. I think it's permissible now to speak of our late, truly unique colleague Buddy Rich. It's general knowledge that Buddy had serious coronary artery disease for years, which necessitated several coronary bypasses. My dear friend Sonny Igoo told me that he saw Buddy—at the end of one of his *West Side Story* solos—not only exhausted, but with his head hanging on his chest and in obvious pain from angina. He was clearly a man who had driven himself literally to the wall. Well, that was Rich. All I can say is that I've had the pleasure of knowing a number of other drummers who have, unfortunately, ended up on the operating table. I have advised all of them that, if the tempo is enormously high and they can't quit, they should just play quarter notes with the right hand instead of the conventional ride beat, do very little with the left, and try to limit the pressure on the hi-hat.

RVH: Let's talk more about your specialty and how it relates to drumming. What can today's drummers do to *avoid getting* on your operating table? What are the factors involved with playing—physical, environmental, and toxicological—that can contribute to cardiothoracic problems, either on a short-term basis or over the long career haul?

RL: Well, there are two ways to look at it: first, those things that do contribute to the

problem, and secondly, the avoidance thereof. To begin with, the problems of cigarette smoking are very serious. Even a non-smoking drummer is at risk. It's been conservatively estimated that a non-smoking individual working in a smoke-filled room will—over the course of one week—inhale the amount of cigarette smoke equivalent to a full pack of cigarettes. Unfortunately, for all intents and purposes, that's something drummers can't avoid. But they certainly *can* avoid cigarette smoking on top of it.

A drummer's health has a great deal to do with the body he or she is given to begin with. None of us can select our parents, so from the standpoint of genetics, there isn't a hell of a lot we can do. But if we *could* select our parents, we'd want long-lived, slim individuals. That's terribly important, because we know that obesity in any shape or form is a major contributor to coronary artery disease. Obesity in individuals, of course, relates in large measure to dietary indiscretion. It also relates to lack of exercise, but more than anything, to dietary indiscretion. It's been pointed out that, if you are going to depend on exercise to keep you slim, you really have a long row to hoe. It takes a hell of a lot of exercise to get rid of approximately 3,500 calories, which, in turn, reflects about a pound of weight loss.

It's important to mention that dietary indiscretion includes drinking too much booze. In fact, it includes many of the good things in life that we all seem to like—the ice creams and junk foods. In other words, it's not only the weight per se, but the nature of the *contributions* to the weight. There are individuals who think they're eating a healthy diet by eating red meat five or six times a week. Well, they're not. A heavy diet of that kind of protein contains a great deal of fat and, unfortunately, also includes a number of chemical additives that this country permits.

When I was a kid, we were told to eat

lots of red meat and drink whole milk—all the things that allegedly were body builders. But they simply piled cholesterol into the coronary and other major arteries of the body. Interestingly—and sadly—enough, during the Korean conflict, most of the soldiers who died were autopsied. These poor fellows—young men in their early 20's at most—already had major signs of diffuse constitutional atherosclerotic involvement—widespread artery disease—because of the dietary indiscretions that our parents were taught were healthy for us.

RVH: Is it likely then that older drummers who are experiencing heart trouble today are doing so because of the sociological dietary norm of their era?

RL: There is no doubt in my mind that that is true. And that's *in addition* to whatever other aggravations they may have experienced. When I was a child, I can assure you that parents who gave their children anything other than whole milk were thought of—if only in whispers—as being parents of the non-caring variety. The sociological impact on the day-to-day intake of various foodstuffs complicated the problem years down the pike. But we are now a generation beyond that. The average drummer working today—and I say the average, with a range of 20 years on either side—is perhaps in his or her middle to late 30's. Drummers today have the benefit of 30 years' more dietary research. They've been brought up on a slightly better diet: more lean meats, chicken, fish, skim milk, etc. That should improve the general health condition for drummers—at least as far as the influence of diet is concerned.

RVH: On the other hand, the world has become a 30 years' more stressful place. We are now being told by the medical establishment that stress is a major causal factor for heart-related conditions. Are we reducing one problem at the expense of increasing another?

RL: Absolutely. In the last issue of *Circu-*

lation—one of the major cardiovascular journals—there were articles on the psychobiological events that contribute to coronary artery disease. The bottom line is that there are careful experimental data now to indicate that the various psychosocial traumata of today—which are far worse than in years gone by, let's face it—do contribute to the development of arteriosclerosis. That, in turn, is a primary cause of hypertension and other problems. So you can see that the emotional traumata of the day are a major factor in coronary artery disease or even strokes due to hypertension.

RVH: In years past, it might have taken a drummer 30 or 40 years of a career to reach

a point of serious physical deterioration. Today's drummers play harder physically and live in a more stressful world. And if they're really involved in the music business as a full-time career, they might be in an even *more* stressful situation professionally. Are they likely to reach that point of deterioration much sooner?

RL: Absolutely, and I think the data in this latest *Circulation* verifies that hypothesis.

RVH: You spoke earlier about things that a drummer can do to avoid physical problems with diet, substance abuse, etc. Obviously, it's very easy to say, "Don't eat bad foods. Don't drink bad liquids. Don't smoke. Don't stick yourself with needles. Stay away from those things." That's a

choice. A drummer can say, "Yes, I will," or "No, I won't." But a drummer has no choice when it comes to living in today's society. What's the alternative? You've said that a drummer should play relaxed in order to avoid physical problems like ganglions. It would follow that he or she should *live* relaxed in order to avoid stress. But that isn't always possible. Stress can be diagnosed, but can it be treated?

RL: Unfortunately, I'm not really competent to deal in this particular area as a professional. I wish I had a psychiatrist next to me at this moment. The answer is—in a broad generic sense—yes, stress can be treated. There *is, I am told*, a great deal of conditioning that can be done. We are smart enough, *I am told*, to modify our behavior. I repeat, *I am told*. I am uncertain that I really believe that. I believe—and this is hypothesis and I beg you to accept it as such—that our *external* performance can be modified. The psychiatrists tell me that it is possible to work with someone who is like Buddy Rich was, for example, and have that individual modify his or her behavior so that he or she would become much less incendiary. That's external performance. But I am unconvinced yet that we can measure what's going on *inside*.

There are certain chemical compounds in the body called catecholamines, and their half-life—the scientific term for a chemical's average life span in the body—is measured in seconds. Only recently have valid measurements of catecholamines been able to be made. I am uncertain that anybody has yet been able to measure, in a valid sense, the catecholamine level of a Buddy Rich at the moment he becomes furious with a sideman. I am equally unwilling to accept that valid data are available on the Buddy Rich type after external behavior has been "modified" so that that person is the essence of control. Maybe somewhere along the line, the individual is silently gritting his or her teeth. As the person grits his or her teeth, I can assure you that the thing that is associated with that internal control, and *seeming* external control may yet be an elevated catecholamine level. Every general practitioner can tell you that your blood pressure goes up when you're angry. Why? Because the catecholamine levels rise. Those elevations of the catecholamines are frequently associated with subsequent onset of heart attacks. I'm still asking myself whether or not it is really true that external control, which can be taught, is paralleled by true internal control. I don't think there's a clear answer yet as to whether you're truly *changing* behavior or merely sublimating it, while adding even more pressure on top of it by trying to change the external behavior. I am way out of my field, but I recall being taught that there are those who do much better by venting than by keeping their anger internal. And yet there are no

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measurements to define whether or not it is true.

RVH: Let's talk about the physics of drumming and its relationship to medical problems. The great jazz and big band drummers were noted for the fluidity of their movements. But the vast majority of today's players are in the rock and contemporary pop fields. Drumsets are bigger, and the amount of movement most drummers do is incredible. Is the orthopedic strain increased proportionately?

RL: It's really a hard question to answer. When I think of drummers *my* age—drummers who have spent their lives in the business, like Sonny Igoe, Mel Lewis, or Louie Bellson—they really don't have a particular physical impediment related to their drumming that I'm aware of. On the other hand, I've watched a number of rock drummers, and while I marvel at their stamina and the amount of trauma that they're visiting upon various parts of their bodies, I must say to you that, without any data—and I stress that point very heavily—I do worry about the long-term result of that type of pounding and twisting as they get older. Orthopedists tell us that baseball players often develop disk problems because of the repeated trauma of impact, the way they twist their bodies, and the type of excessive follow-through that is required. Whether a person is at the plate batting against a pitcher in the big leagues or moving around one of those large drumkits that you referred to, any type of sudden, inordinate twist applies pressure to sensitive areas of the body. A continuum of that will result in the body building up fibrous tissue trying to do what it can to react to the trauma. The body reacts to trauma only in certain limited ways. For example, if you were to have a particular area of a shoe that constantly rubbed a toe, you would develop a callous, which is just a type of fibrous tissue with a cutaneous covering. Why? Merely that the body is saying, "We are going to do something about that irritation." It does the same thing in the spine and other areas. So yes, I think that that type of inordinate trauma will produce a response by the body that is sadly deteriorated in terms of overall performance. At the same time, I have never yet met any musicians who were willing to accept the hypothesis that they should modify their performance *now* in order to avoid a problem *later* if the performance—as modified—would wind up being what they conceive of as suboptimal.

RVH: Let's talk about the benefits of exercise on muscles—including the heart, which is the most important muscle. Drumming is the most exercise-oriented of all musical pursuits. We've interviewed a number of rock drummers who have said, "My gig is all the exercise I need."

RL: It's probably true.

RVH: But might such strenuous exercise as arena-style drumming—even if beneficial

at the moment—be detrimental over a period of time? Are today's high-energy drummers at risk just from doing what they're doing?

RL: In general, I can say this with confidence. Given an individual without overt organic disease involving heart, lungs, or kidneys, virtually any level of exercise performed consistently is acceptable. The safety component is that, when we've exercised to a point where metabolic performance demands we stop, we fatigue first. Fatigue is a complicated biochemical and biophysical set of events, and it would take us three hours to discuss it. But I would say that the usual physical demands that are made on any drummer are quite within

acceptable bounds if the drummer is in good health.

RVH: You made the point that the body has a built-in fatigue factor as a sort of safety valve. If you're working and you become tired, you stop. But what if a drummer does *not* stop? What if a drummer decides to push it beyond the threshold—either through sheer force of will or with chemical help? Isn't the risk of illness or injury dramatically increased?

RL: Absolutely. And of course, realistically speaking, many drummers do depend upon chemical help, one way or the other. It might just be in the sense of smoking a cigarette or two to get a "kick" to drive some more. I will admit that I used to drink

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coke—which contain caffeine and lots of sugar—because carbohydrates provide a fast means of energy. That's a means of providing something that is biologically acceptable and not hurtful to the body. But simply driving oneself beyond that point can be dangerous. I talked earlier about the way Buddy was so exhausted and presumably in pain from his coronary disease at the end of "West Side Story." That's going the extra mile. He had pushed himself beyond the point of safety and, for all we know, may well have inflicted serious damage. But it was a price he was willing to pay. That's what makes great musicians—the fact that they're uncompromising with everything, including their own health.

RVH: But from a medical standpoint . . .

RL: It's proscribed. It's not good. But you find me some really accomplished musicians who are willing to function within that dimension of safety. I ain't seen any yet.

RVH: It's true that drummers are often unable—or unwilling—to modify their life-styles or playing techniques. Does it then become all the more important for them to pay attention to the signals they receive from their bodies, and to have regular medical monitoring so as to become aware of potential problems?

RL: There is no doubt that the single most important thing any drummer—any individual, for that matter—can do is to have periodic checkups once a year at least. It's

the single most critical thing I can possibly insist upon. An electrocardiogram is done. A chest X-ray is done. A urinalysis is done. Generally, some blood tests are done, to check blood sugar and other chemical data to discern how the kidneys are performing apart from the urinalysis. These very simple tests can pinpoint the possibility of a serious problem. I don't know how many times over the years musicians I've known have—through sheer good fortune—ended up with a physician who has found something that was treatable but that, if it had not been treated and delay of a considerable period of time had been allowed, might have become inoperable—completely beyond the pale as far as recovery is concerned.

RVH: I'd like to get your comments on the importance of a patient/physician relationship. Drummers have no medical training, so we rely on the physician to interpret the data that we supply. It's incumbent upon us, as patients, to supply as much data as possible. As a drumming physician, you are in a unique position. I could come to you and say, "My wrist hurts when I play a rimshot," or "If I reach up for a crash cymbal to my right, I get a pain in my shoulder." You know what is involved with reaching up and hitting a crash cymbal. But it's difficult for drummers to make the average physician understand what it is that we *do*—what the stresses are. It's one thing to have a checkup and take a battery of tests. But if a doctor doesn't understand what they relate to. . . .

RL: Your point is extremely important. Sadly, it pinpoints a major deficiency that does exist in the average physician, and even in the specialist physicians dealing with musicians. Music demands certain stresses on the body. I can think of a pianist with various types of digital small muscle problems. There are close to 20 muscles involved in just the four fingers of the hand apart from the thumb. Unless the physician has played piano, he or she really doesn't have an appreciation for the various stresses that a pianist is involved in. Obviously, the same situation applies to drumming. I only wish it was possible for me to say that there has been really broad appreciation of the importance of medicine for the arts—just as there has grown up the specialty of sports medicine. The only place in the City of New York that I'm familiar with is the unit now being run at the Miller Institute. The people over there are simply magnificent. But they are trying to do the best they can with limited insight, because, unfortunately, most of them have not been involved with consistent playing of a variety of musical instruments. It represents a deficiency that must be addressed, if musicians—particularly drummers—are to have optimally insightful medical care.

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Revamping Your Snare Drum

This month, we're going to change a snare drum over from a complex snare system (such as the Slingerland *TDR* system) to a simpler throw-off and butt-end system. The system we're removing has snares that extend past the edge of the shell and that are supported by stationary braces that bolt to the shell on either side. These braces act as guides to keep the snare wires perfectly flat. This type of system needs practically no snare beds, so one of the steps in our project will be to cut a good snare bed in the shell. The other steps will be: (1) to remove all hardware from the old system; (2) to fill the extra holes with wooden dowels; (3) to drill new holes for the new throw-off and butt end; and (4) to install the new snare system. The tools you'll need to perform these steps will be a single-edge razor blade, a measuring tape, a hammer, a small jeweler's saw, a good flat mill file, an electric drill fitted with a 3/16" drill bit, and some sandpaper of various grits.

In this example, I'm using a Ludwig P-85 throw-off and butt end, but there are many types of throw-offs that are equally dependable and simple. The key word, for me, is "simple." I like a throw-off that will just hold the snares in place, adjust easily, and not cause any problems.

Plugging Old Holes

First, remove the existing throw-off and all the hardware that goes with it. You will be left with lots of holes in your shell that must be plugged. To plug these holes we use wood dowels, which are available at any hardware store or hobby shop. Get dowels that are as close as possible to the diameter of the holes you need to plug, but slightly oversized. Most dowels are a light-colored wood, like maple, and come in any diameter you need.

Take the dowel, and sharpen one end slightly with a razor blade. You want a tight fit, so sharpen only the tip of the dowel just enough so that you can twist the dowel into the hole in the shell. Next, put a dab of woodworking glue on the sharpened end of the dowel and a drop in the hole. Twist the dowel into the hole until it is snug. Using a jeweler's saw or a fine-toothed hack saw blade, cut the dowel off about 1/4" from the shell wall. Then, carefully tap the dowel into the hole with a hammer. Voila! The hole is plugged permanently.

Using your razor blade, carefully shave the tip of the dowel so it is perfectly flush with the shell. If your shell is maple, you should hardly be able to see where the plug

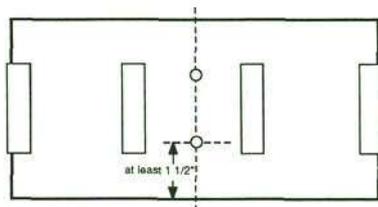
is. If your drum has either a colored lacquer finish or is covered with a colored material, a bit of auto touch-up paint in a matching color will help to disguise the plug.

This is the only proper way to plug a hole in a wood shell. Putty or wood filler will eventually chip out, and is not a very good substitute.

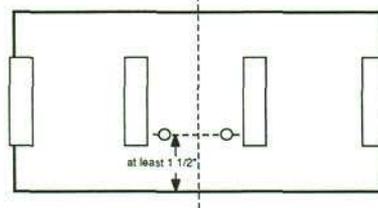
Drilling New Holes

Once the old holes are plugged, you are ready to mark the drilling spots for your new throw-off. In the case of the Ludwig setup, only two holes are required for the throw-off and two more for the butt end. If you measure the distance between the two holes in the throw-off itself, you should be able to easily and accurately mark the spots to drill the shell.

Make sure you center the throw-off between the two lugs on either side of the snare bed. If you have a small T-square, you can draw a perfectly vertical line midway between the lugs. Otherwise, find the center point between the lugs at the top and bottom edges of the shell, and use a straightedge to draw a vertical line as accurately as possible to use as a guide for your drilling. (You should put a piece of masking tape on the shell first and draw your line on it so as not to mark up your shell unnecessarily.)



Repeat the process directly across the shell for the butt end. Again, make sure you're centered between the lug casings.



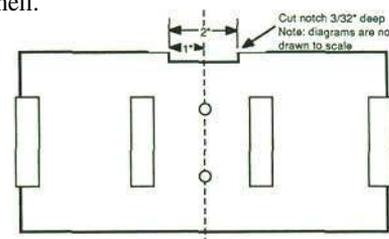
The throw-off and the butt end should be at least 1 1/2" from the bottom edge of the shell, so that the counterhoop will not block the movement of the throw-off. Just to be safe, put the bottom hoop back on the drum, and make sure it won't interfere

with the up-and-down movement of the throw-off *before* you drill through the spots you've marked. I've been doing drum repairs for a long time, and I still always double-check before drilling any holes in a shell. I suggest you get into the same habit.

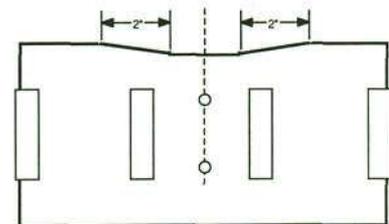
Cutting A Snare Bed

Now we come to the trickiest and most important part of this operation: cutting a good, functional snare bed. I've spent a lot of time and have done a lot of experimenting to come up with a good snare bed that will really allow the snares to lie flat against the head. This type of bed increases the sensitivity of your drum and helps alleviate sympathetic snare buzz. The operation *must* be performed carefully and accurately.

First, find the exact center point between the two lugs on either side of the existing snare bed (just like you did for your throw-off). Put a mark 1" on either side of that point. Now, draw a horizontal line 3/32" from the bearing edge. (Once again, use a piece of masking tape to draw your markings on.) With a coarse flat mill file, cut straight down to your marks on the tape so that you end up with a notch cut out of the shell.



(Remember that, in the illustration above, the drum is upside-down, and we are working on the bottom edge.) From each edge of the notch, make another mark 2" along the edge of the shell. Draw straight lines from the bottom corners of the notch up to the new marks, creating the angles shown below.



Once the angle is marked, you can *carefully* cut the shell down to the mark with

continued on page 89

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Joel Rosenblatt

work is any indication of what's to come, you'll probably be reading about Joel in future issues of MD, and checking out his dynamic drumming.

TS: To what do you accredit your success thus far?

JR: No matter what anybody says, there's a lot of luck involved. I was born in California, but I grew up in New Jersey, so I was always near New York. When I applied to colleges, I considered the University of Miami and Berklee in Boston, but I decided on the University of Bridgeport because I didn't want to be too far from New York. That proved to be the first wise decision that I made, because New York is one of the best places to get started. And as luck would have it, Bridgeport turned out to be the place where I met a lot of people who were great influences on me.

Before I got this gig with Michel Camilo, I was just working as much as possible, doing club dates and whatever came along. I had always kept the attitude, "I don't care what kind of musical situation I'm involved in as long as I'm working and getting the chance to play," as opposed to, "If it's not X amount of dollars, I'm not doing it." I used to do gigs for no money, just to get the chance to play with musicians I hadn't played with before. If I heard of something that was happening in town, I'd check it out.

I've got to mention that Dave Weckl—who was my roommate at school—was instrumental in my career. He got me the audition with Michel when he left to play with Chick Corea. But up to that point, I just practiced real hard, and played whenever and whatever possible. The real important thing to do is to keep a real good attitude. I cannot stress that enough.

TS: You mentioned that you had been playing in a variety of situations. Could you elaborate?

JR: I played in a wedding band during the day, and in an R&B/Motown band in Connecticut at night. I was doing this every weekend, and it was really a lot of fun because the Motown band was a great release. After the club dates, *that* gig was the only time I could really play. In fact,

Dave and I played double drums with that band once in a while, which was unbelievable fun. I also did a few sessions here and there, but strictly low-level stuff.

During that time I was going to see Dave play with Michel Camilo. When Dave decided to leave, he recommended me. I had ten days to prepare for that audition, and I practiced harder in those ten days than I ever had in my life—seriously.

TS: Before we talk about your playing with Michel, could you trace some of your experiences with the other bands you were in?

JR: One of the fondest memories I have is going out on the road for eight months with Matt "Guitar" Murphy from the Blues Brothers. That was authentic Chicago blues with the Hammond organ. It was a serious road gig, driving all over the country in a car. Oh man, that was incredible—driving 14 hours a day, playing the gig, then packing up the equipment ourselves, and driving to the next town. But we did get to drive in a Cadillac, [laughs] And of course, we'd usually get booked someplace that was an all-night drive away, so we couldn't really sleep. But when you're young, the road is all-glorious. Everything is an invaluable experience. I learned a lot from Matt. He's a 50-year-old black blues guitarist from Memphis, and I'm a white Jewish guy from New York, so just talking with him about his life taught me a lot. Besides, being out on the road—you get robbed a few times, you deal with the rigors of that life—you get hip to the road; you get road-wise. The best part of that tour was meeting Toni, who I married a year ago.

I also worked with the country & western band Pure Prairie League. A friend did some guitar tracks on one of their demos and recommended me when the band needed a drummer to cover seven gigs. I did the seven gigs, and either their drummer got tied up permanently or he didn't want to go on the road, so I started working with them. They didn't work that often, but in the summer, we'd do the Budr weiser festivals with Marshall Tucker and the Atlanta Rhythm Section. It was my first experience playing in front of 10,000

There are few experiences that can come close to the exhilaration of an awe-inspiring live musical performance. That special feeling is even more enhanced when the featured musician is a relative newcomer to the scene, because one suspects that future prospects for that player will likely prove to be even more sublime. Drummer Joel Rosenblatt irrefutably evokes those kinds of sentiments.

About a year ago, Joel stepped into the spot vacated by his friend and ex-roommate Dave Weckl in Michel Camilo's Latin-fusion trio. With all the attention afforded to Weckl recently, the thought of having to replace him might seem rather intimidating to most drummers. But with all due respect to Dave, Joel's compelling presence in the group nearly eclipses all traces of his renowned predecessor.

Although most listeners would think of "keyboards" when The Michel Camilo Trio is mentioned, it's obvious that Rosenblatt is the conspicuous centerpiece of the unit. Layering intricately complex polyrhythms, delivering both brash and subtle phrasings, and climaxing with incendiary solos, it's no mystery why Joel's flawless playing will send you reeling!

The 27-year-old maintains that he's still probing the perimeters of his instrument. His modest response to the observation that his role in his present band is an extremely focal one is simply, "The band is based on a lot of rhythms, so there's a lot to keep me busy. It's a very exposed playing situation."

In addition to his playing with the trio, Joel has been working on Paquito D'Rivera's upcoming album, while his reputation in jazz circles continues to grow. Only time will tell, but if his current

by Teri Saccone

people, and it came at a good time in my life. I really needed to get out and change my surroundings.

TS: And the stuff you were playing with them must have been worlds away from the Latin-fusion in the Michel Camilo Trio.

JR: It was very simplistic, but I enjoyed doing that. That was a busy period where I'd play the C&W gig, fly back that night to play with Michel, and also do the Motown band gig that I mentioned before. I got to juggle all three styles, and it was one of the most enjoyable periods in my career. I didn't stagnate at all.

TS: It's difficult to get bored when you're working so much.

JR: I was working a lot, and I looked forward to every gig because it was always going to be different. That's what's so great about living in New York. It's so stylistically diversified that you can play just about every kind of gig imaginable. Ultimately that can only have a positive effect on your playing.

TS: You had a formal musical education. Do you consider that a contributing factor to your ability to adapt your skills to any musical format?

JR: I went to college for two years, but I didn't finish. I went as a Musical Performance major, because I wanted to play drums, not teach. I went to school to become a better player, but I ended up leaving school for the same reason. If you want to be a teacher or to be involved in the music business, then teaching music becomes a vocation and you should get an education. If you want to be a player, then you learn by watching, listening, and maybe by getting some help from a private teacher.

I don't want to imply that I'm self-taught, because I did study with Ed Soph, Gary Chester, and Randy Jones. Randy was really the one who made me aware that sounding good was more important than how you hold the sticks. Other teachers had said, "You've got to hold the sticks *this way*," and "You have to sit with your back *this way*. Otherwise, it's wrong." Randy emphasized that it didn't matter

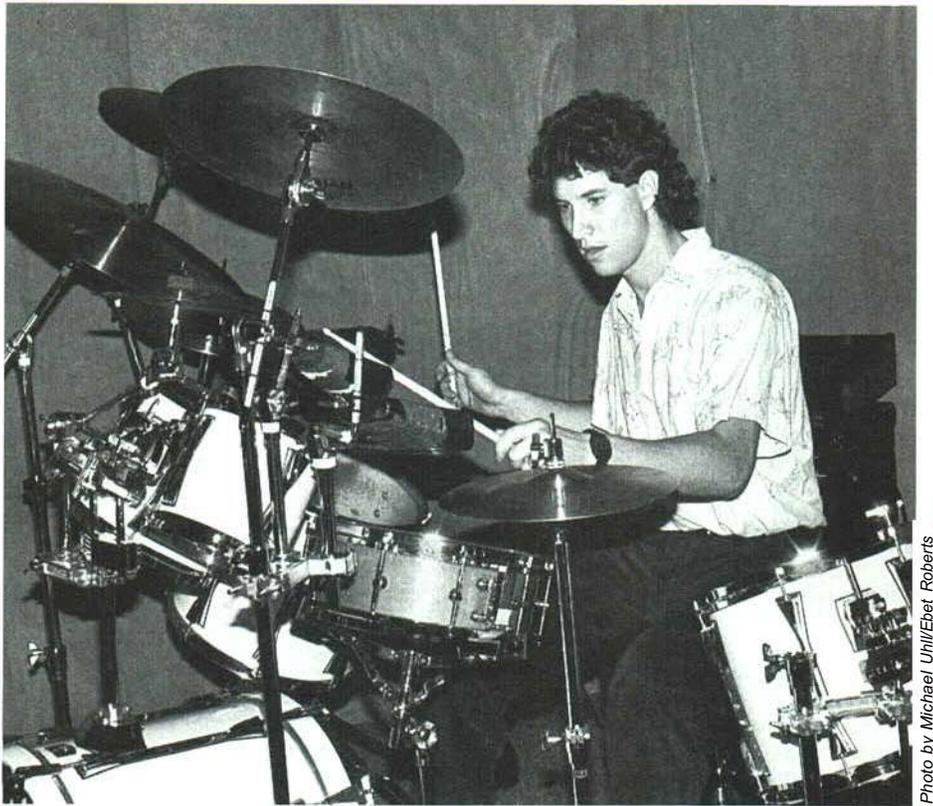


Photo by Michael Uhl/Ebet Roberts

how you pulled it off as long as *it felt good* and sounded good. *That* was the bottom line.

I originally went to college to be a better player, but when I was there, I had parental pressure to get a college education. After two years of taking out loans that I'm still paying back—for what I consider wasn't worth the money—I decided to leave. What school really did for me was put me in touch with a lot of people. School lumps all kinds of musicians together so that they can interact—and interaction is the whole idea behind music. You're hanging out with musicians all the time. You're talking about music and staying up all night listening to records—as well as playing in the ensembles. But you can't graduate from school and then expect someone to hire you because you've got a degree. There will always be somebody who can't read a note of music, but will get the gig because he or she *can play*.

TS: What kind of music was the impetus for your playing?

JR: When I was in high school, I played in big bands, and my dream was to play with Woody Herman or Stan Kenton. I still enjoy that kind of music, and there are a couple of big bands in New York City who call me to sit in with them. They're rehearsal bands and they don't pay anything, but if I'm not busy that night, I'll go and sit in just to keep my reading up. That's real important.

TS: Do you practice diligently?

JR: I'm not really a practice fanatic. When I was playing with local club and wedding bands, I was usually the best player in the band—which is not inspiring whatsoever because you can't go beyond a certain point. Then I got involved with the "big guys," and I suddenly found myself being the worst player. *That's* a great situation, because you get to improve—if the other players will bear with you.

When I started working with Michel Camilo, I would tape myself and then really work hard on trying to improve. Improvement does come with time. But it was difficult putting the time in *before* I had the gig with Michel, because I never had a definite goal to work towards. I wouldn't have practiced nearly as hard if I had thought, "Out of 3,000 drummers, maybe Michel will call me!" Those odds weren't good enough for me to put in the hours that were required to get that kind of gig—which was not a good attitude to have. I always had a hard time practicing intricate rhythms if I had nowhere to use them—even though I know that's undisciplined.

I have a lot of outside interests, so nine-hour practicing does not exist for me. Some people believe that you should immerse yourself in playing all the time. That might be true for some, but it's not for me. I need those other activities to make me a happier person.

TS: Do you still tape yourself now that you've gotten settled in?

JR I still do, because tapes don't lie. As I'm playing, I really don't know when I'm happening and when I'm not. I know the things I can do and the things I can't. You can't fool yourself; there's no way to do that.

TS: Are there any practicing tips you could share?

JR: First of all, what you practice is directly related to what you're going to play on the gig. I know this has been said before, but you've got to play with a metronome and make the inevitable mistakes. You should also realize that real good rhythms and grooves can come out of those mistakes. But you have to know how they relate to where you are.

A good technique to open your ears is to tape someone or yourself playing a one-bar keyboard vamp for 16 bars or so, with a click track. Then you play over the vamp. Then you take the click track and move it one or two beats, without touching anything else. You just change where you're putting 1 on the track. Now when you listen back to the track, you're going to be hearing 1 in a different spot, so all your licks will sound different. This gives you a whole new perspective.

TS: Earlier, we were discussing your experiences over the last few years in terms of getting jobs. You admitted that luck played a key role in it all. Had you ever gone the route of submitting demo tapes to any prospective artists or producers?

JR I never approached anybody. I was lucky in that I had a few connections, so I didn't really feel the pressure to get out there and hustle. It's not really my nature to send a tape around, call people up, and badger them. I'm not trying to put down people who take that approach, but that's not me. Maybe if I had done that, I could have gotten on the scene sooner, but I really wasn't in a hurry.

Although Dave told Michel, "Check this guy out," I played, and I delivered the product. But I'm not ashamed to admit that I had the advantage of knowing Dave. I think most people get help from someone along the line who really makes a difference. Dave got help from Peter Erskine in the beginning. So the moral is: Be a nice person, be on time, and have your act together. It's *so* competitive today that you have to have more than just *your playing* together; you have to be able to have the whole *package* together.

Learning aids today are amazing. People can go out and buy videocassettes where they can see what a drummer is playing while it's being demonstrated. You can play audiocassettes over and over again on special decks that allow you to slow down the speed. And there are CD players with the A/B shuttle function, so that you can keep on listening to a fill until you get it down. Overall, it's a lot easier for kids to learn.

TS: Turning to the subject of the Michel

Camilo Trio, your live playing *sounds* utterly impromptu. But because of the intricacy of the rhythms and the time signatures involved, it would seem to require substantial forethought.

JR: There's a little bit of forethought and a lot of concentration, because Michel is playing different things every time we do a song. It's never the same. I mean, I could give myself a guideline, like maybe planning to throw a fill in at a certain spot or planning to play a particular groove behind one of Michel's solos. But that's as far as the forethought goes. It all hinges on what he plays. He may play something that would change my plan because it wouldn't fit in with what he's playing at that moment. So besides maintaining serious concentration while I'm doing the gig, I've got to keep myself as mentally flexible as I can, because I never know what might be around the corner.

TS: "Tombo," one of the songs you played live, is in 7/8. Did you have a problem adjusting to time signatures such as that?

JR: When I first got into the band, I could barely play in 7/8. If there's one thing that particular song taught me, it's that I could succeed at playing anything. I initially thought I couldn't even play the tune itself, never mind solo in it, but now I feel fairly comfortable. And that came from just getting in there and doing it.

You know, if most pop songs, dance tunes, etc., were in 7 rather than 4, then 7 would be comfortable to play in, and 4 would feel weird. It's just a matter of getting used to it and putting in the practice time until it feels right. I knew I had a place to play the 7/8—this gig—so it was easier for me to learn it. I just played until I *felt* the groove—and there's definitely a groove to 7. There's a groove to *any* time signature; you just have to find it and subdivide it in the right spots. There's just no substitute for putting time and effort into it; you've just got to work with it until it flows. Sometimes I'm in the practice room playing in 7/4, and I don't even realize it's 7 until I actually count it out. That's because 7 is so comfortable that it's lost its mystique and is now natural.

TS: You alluded to me in another conversation that you sense a vast improvement in your playing over the last year. Aside from mastering challenging meters and dealing with the demanding pace in this band, to what else do you attribute this upgrade in your playing?

JR: I've learned to be able to hear something the bass player or Michel is playing, and translate it to my hands and feet a lot quicker than I could before. When I first came into the band, I would hear them play a rhythm over the bar and off the beat, and I'd think that either they or I had made a mistake. So I'd adjust and shift time—which was wrong—because I just couldn't understand what they were doing. To over-



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come that problem, I'd tape myself with the band. If somebody played a rhythm that I couldn't identify, instead of taking the chance of losing the time and going with that musician, I'd go back and listen to the tape, and analyze what that person was doing with it in relationship to 1. I'd learn that rhythm, so that the next time it came up, I'd recognize it. Now, I can hear where most of the rhythms are in relation to 1, and that's the important thing. My ears have really opened up a lot.

TS: You really push yourself in a live situation.

JR: Yeah. I want to keep playing more and different things each time. The last thing I want to do is sound stale. Michel is always innovating on the piano and there are always great rhythms happening, so I draw on all of that. It's a great playing situation, and it's really made a difference for me.

This situation has allowed me to exercise and refine the vocabulary that I've been working on. I've been able to take it out of the practice room.

TS: I understand that you've recently acquired a new kit.

JR: I'm using a Tama *Artstar II* kit with maple shells. I'm using Tama's new snare drum, which is sort of a *Radio King* replica. That's a 5". I also have a 6 1/2" bell brass snare. I alternate between a 20" and a 22" bass drum, depending on the gig. I choose my toms from 8", 10", 11", 12", 13", 14", and 15" sizes with *dear Emperor* heads on top, and clear *Ambassadors* on the bottom. I use a *coated Ambassador* on the snare. I use a left-hand floor tom, a *la Dave Weckl*. I try to utilize it as a second bass drum under certain circumstances, so I get a double bass drum feel without using a double pedal. However, I received a double pedal from Tama, and I'm starting to practice with it.

I also mike all my drums. I take a small PA with reverb and EQ to every gig, and I check every drum to make sure they all sound good so that I enjoy playing them.

As far as cymbals go, I use Paiste. They're making me a prototype ride because I wasn't happy with the rides they had, and they're also making me some dark crashes. But starting from the left of the kit is an 18" *2000* mellow China. Then directly to the right is a 16" paper-thin *602* crash. A 10" *2002* splash is at the center of the kit. Next comes a 20" *2000* crash that I

use as my ride, and then a closed hi-hat that has the 14" *Sound Creation* or *602* hi-hats. A 14" paper-thin *602* crash is above that, and then I have a 17" *602* crash all the way to the right. I use 13" *602* heavy hi-hats on my pedal stand as well.

TS: When you're working with Michel, don't you also include some Latin percussion?

JR: Right. I've got three cowbells and a sound effect from Pete Engelhart Metal Percussion called a *Ribbon Crasher*.

TS: It's such an incredible feeling to hear and see you playing live, because you have so many elements—power, emotion, flash, control, and fluidity—literally at your fingertips. Do you ever get the same rush from *playing* some amazing fill that the audience does from *hearing* you?

JR: I'm just trying so hard to play that I'm not really aware of the effect that I'm having on other people. I'm never thinking, "Wow, that was great." More often than not, I'm more aware of what I need to improve. While I'm playing, it's really all concentration. And because of the caliber of these musicians, I can trust that, if I do some crazy things, they'll always be there with me. On the other hand, I'd also like to play in a very disciplined situation, because it's hard to play the same thing for 32 bars in a row. I'd enjoy the challenge of mastering that.

TS: Besides the album with Paquito D'Rivera that you're about to work on, what other projects are you looking

towards?

JR: I know a lot of people say this, but I have an interest in production. But that's real hard to get into, because if you don't have a name and a track record, it's hard to make it happen. Although I still don't have enough experience at getting the sounds in the studio from that side of the board, I think I know good sound when I hear it. But that's a long way off. I'm really just working hard at getting my playing in control.



Shop Talk continued from page 84

your file. If all goes well, you should now have a channel with a total overall length of 6" and a depth of 3/32" at its deepest point. Use your file to sharpen up this new edge, so it conforms to the profile of the rest of the bearing edge. Next, take some rough sandpaper (about 150 grit), and clean up any rough spots left by your file. Then use finer paper (220 grit or so) to smooth it all out. Repeat this entire procedure on the other side of the shell where the butt end will go, and the job is done. You can now attach the throw-off and the butt end, and reassemble your drum.

As you can see, this is a pretty advanced repair job and should only be undertaken by persons with a good degree of confidence in their skills as craftsmen. If you have any specific questions, please feel free to send them to me in care of *Modern Drummer*. I'll do my best to respond, either in this column or by mail.



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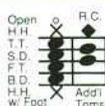
Transcribed by Bobby Cleall and Mathew Letley



Photo by Ebet Roberts

Steve Gadd: "Up Close" Video Solo

MUSIC KEY



This month's *Drum Soloist* is a bit different from our usual transcriptions. This performance by Steve Gadd is from a video, not a record. The solo is from Steve's first video, *Up Close* (available from D.C.I. Music Video, 541 Avenue Of The Americas, New York, NY 10011), and it appears about ten minutes into the tape. It's the first solo that Steve plays.

For the sake of clarity, there is a time signature change at bar #23. The basic pulse stays the same as the 4/4 meter shifts to 2/2. (Notice the quarter note equals half note sign.) This change in the notation makes the solo easier to read, *and* since the feel changes at that point from a 4/4 funk to a double-time jazz, it correctly notates the change. Steve's wish was for the transcription not to look too imposing or intimidating.

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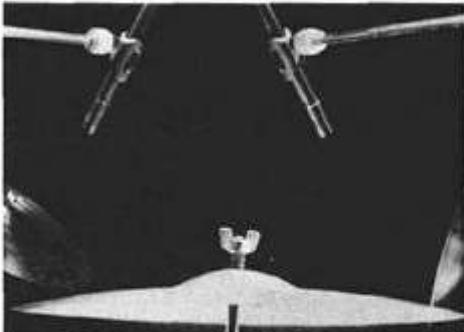
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by Rick Mattingly

Upbeat Rhythm Programmer

Upbeat is a software package that lets you program a MIDI drum machine with an Apple Macintosh computer. It is put out by a company called Intelligent Music and is described as "the smart rhythm programmer." What that means, essentially, is that *Upbeat* has the ability to play random accents and fills, based on what you program into it. But first things first.

Like anything that is MIDI, a lot depends on what you are MIDied into. *Upbeat* will work with any MIDI drum machine, but some of its functions will not work on some machines. For example, you can specify different dynamic levels with the *Upbeat* program, but if your drum machine doesn't respond to velocity data, then all of the notes will come out at the same volume, no matter what you program into the Macintosh.

But that's not to say that this program does not add anything to what your machine already does. The primary advantage is that it gives you a visual image of the rhythm you are programming, which is especially useful in step-time programming. It also allows for easier editing of patterns after they have been entered.

The easiest way to explain *Upbeat's* features is to go through the whole process. But first, a warning: You should not try to use this program unless you are *very* familiar with both the Macintosh and your own drum machine. Because of the fact that *Upbeat* can be used with a number of different machines, the manual is written in a somewhat "generic" manner. You will need to have a good understanding of how your own machine works—in terms of MIDI implementation, for example—so that you can apply the information in the manual to your own machine.

That becomes obvious with the very first thing that you have to do, which is "teach" *Upbeat* about your drum machine. The basic concept is simple. You first call up a Device List on the Mac's screen. (You can enter up to 16 separate devices, one for each of the 16 MIDI channels.) You name the list with the name of your drum machine, and then, by simply pushing the buttons on your drum machine, you can enter (and name) each sound. This is where you might need to know certain things about your own drum machine. With a simple machine such as the Roland TR-505, each button only has one sound, so entering the sounds is a fairly simple process. But with something like a Yamaha RX5, there are more sounds than there are buttons, so you have to spend some time reassigning sounds in order to put all of them into the *Upbeat* program. However, since each of the RX5's sounds has its own MIDI note number, you can then access any of the sounds from the *Upbeat* program, even if the buttons on the machine are set for different sounds. With something like the Korg DDD-1, on the other hand, the MIDI note numbers are assigned to the *buttons*, not the voices. Therefore, if you change the voice assignments on the machine, it will affect whatever you have in the *Upbeat* program. Again, none of this is explained in the *Upbeat* owner's manual, so you have to be aware of any peculiarities that your own machine might have.

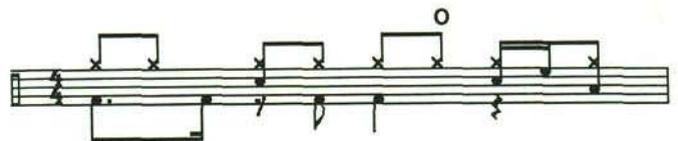
Anyway, once you have "taught" *Upbeat* about your machine(s), you are ready to record a pattern. You can do this in real time, by hitting the buttons on your machine, or you can "paint" the pattern by using the "tools" in *Upbeat's* cursor palette. Recording in real time is very similar to the way you would record a pattern into your drum machine. First, on the *Upbeat* program (rather than on your machine) you set such things as tempo, time signature, number of measures (up to 75 in 4/4 time), and sub-beats (8th notes, 16th notes, 8th-note triplets, etc.). Then, you set the program to Record. There is a visual marker that moves

across the screen, showing you which beat you are on, as well as an audible "beep" on the downbeat. There is also a metronome that can be turned on, which will click on each beat. From there, you can go to your drum machine and enter the rhythms you want by pushing the buttons. Each time you push an instrument button, it will be recorded visually on the screen.

If you have MIDI drumpads that you can connect to your drum machine, then you can play the pattern into *Upbeat* that way. Also, you can load any pattern that you already have stored in your drum machine into *Upbeat* by setting the program's Clock to External. By the same token, once you are happy with the pattern you have recorded into *Upbeat*, you can then load that pattern into your drum machine. That could be handy if you wanted to use the patterns on a gig, but you didn't want to carry a Macintosh around.

The other way to record a pattern is to "paint" it in. This is the equivalent of step-time programming, except that it's a lot easier—especially if you have a drum machine that doesn't have any type of visual readout for the rhythms. There are five symbols used, which represent five dynamic levels. This, again, is where you have to know your own machine. If your machine does not respond to velocity data, then you'll get the same volume no matter which symbols you use. Even if your machine does respond to velocity data, you might have to adjust something. On the RX5, I was only getting three dynamics, although I was using all five symbols. By experimenting a little, I discovered that I had to adjust the Voice Level on the RX5. By changing the Voice Level on the snare drum from 28 (the factory preset) to between 11 and 19, I was able to get all five levels. Once again, I had to figure that out from my knowledge of the RX5; the *Upbeat* owner's manual doesn't tell you these things.

Anyway, you can use these symbols to construct your pattern. Perhaps the easiest way to explain this is to show what a typical rhythm would look like on the screen. This rhythm:



would look like this:

Tracks:	Tempo	Time	Length	Position	Edit	View
	= 120	4/4	1	Bar	Unit	16
O hihat						
C hihat						
SD1			*		*	
tom1					*	
tom2					*	
tom3						
tom4						
BD1			x	x	x	x
SOLO						

I've only used three of the symbols here; their sizes correspond to their relative volumes.

Even if you originally put your pattern in by pushing buttons on the drum machine, you can still edit the patterns by use of the symbols. That can be handy for editing such things as dynamics. For example, let's say that you entered your patterns with a machine that does not have dynamic-sensitive buttons (but that will respond to velocity data from another device). All of the strikes will be recorded at the same volume level. If you want to accent a few of them, just select the symbol with a louder level than the one that is recorded, and use it to replace the notes that you want accented. I found *Upbeat's* visual editing to be quicker and easier than most of the editing functions on the *RX5 I* was using.

Upbeat also has a pattern-editing feature that is not available with most drum machines. This is the ability to "shift" a pattern. Let's say that you enter a two-bar pattern, but then decide that you want the second bar to be first and the first bar to be second. You can "push" the first bar sideways into the second bar's position, and the second bar will "wrap around" to become the first bar. You can do the same thing with individual bars to displace the beats by as much or as little as you want.

Once you have several patterns entered, you can link them together into songs. Most drum machines also have this ability, so you're not gaining a whole lot, except that a drum machine's memory is limited. By storing your patterns and songs on Macintosh disks, you can keep more songs on file.

But now we get to the features that really make *Upbeat* unique—the "intelligent" features. The first one is called Fill, and it adds notes at random. For example, let's say that you have four 8th notes on the small tom voice programmed into your pattern. If you select the Fill option for that voice, you will get additional, random tom notes sounding along with the four notes that you programmed. You do, however, have a certain amount of control over where and when these notes occur. First, you can set the division. If the division is set at 2, then quarter notes will be divided into 8ths, 8th notes will be divided into 16ths, etc. The next setting lets you determine the probability with which fill notes will sound. At 100%, every note that you programmed will be broken into fills. At 50%, half of the original notes will randomly trigger fills, and so on. Next is a Limit control that limits the speed of fills, so that you don't end up with something that sounds like a roll (unless that's what you want, of course). Next is a filter, that works as a quantization for the fills. You can set this for 8th notes, 16th notes, etc., so that you don't end up with fill notes in "unusual" places. You can also set random velocities for fill notes, so that the notes will not all be at the same volume.

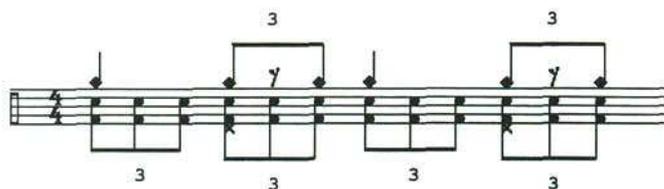
The Fill function can be useful for creating a background that has consistent elements, but that also has some variety. For example, I programmed in a fairly simple rock beat with the snare drum

hitting only on 2 and 4. I then set the program so that there would be fill beats on the snare drum 25% of the time. I always had my 2 and 4 backbeat, but I also got extra notes here and there that added an element of unpredictability to what would otherwise have been a repetitive pattern.

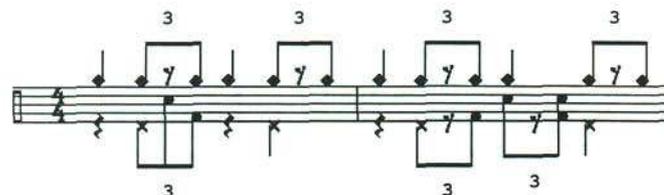
Another option is to have one voice be the fill sound for another voice. For example, let's go back to those four 8th notes on the small tom voice. I set the fills to occur on a mid tom voice, and that way I always heard my original four 8th notes on the small tom, but I got random mid-tom notes in addition to that.

There is another feature that is sort of the opposite of Fills, and that is the ability to set Note Densities. In other words, after you have programmed notes, you can select the percentage of those notes that will actually sound. At 100%, which is the normal setting, the machine will play exactly what you programmed. But at 50%, only half of the notes will sound. Again, this is at random, so each bar will be a little different. You set this control for each voice individually.

I found an interesting way to apply that function. I first programmed the following:



Next, I set the note densities for the snare drum and bass drum at 15% each. When I played the pattern back, it sounded like a jazz drummer "comping" with the snare and bass. Each bar was different, but a typical two bars sounded like this:



You can also use the Fill function in conjunction with the Note Density function. By setting the snare drum voice for Fill, I got a few random 16ths mixed in.

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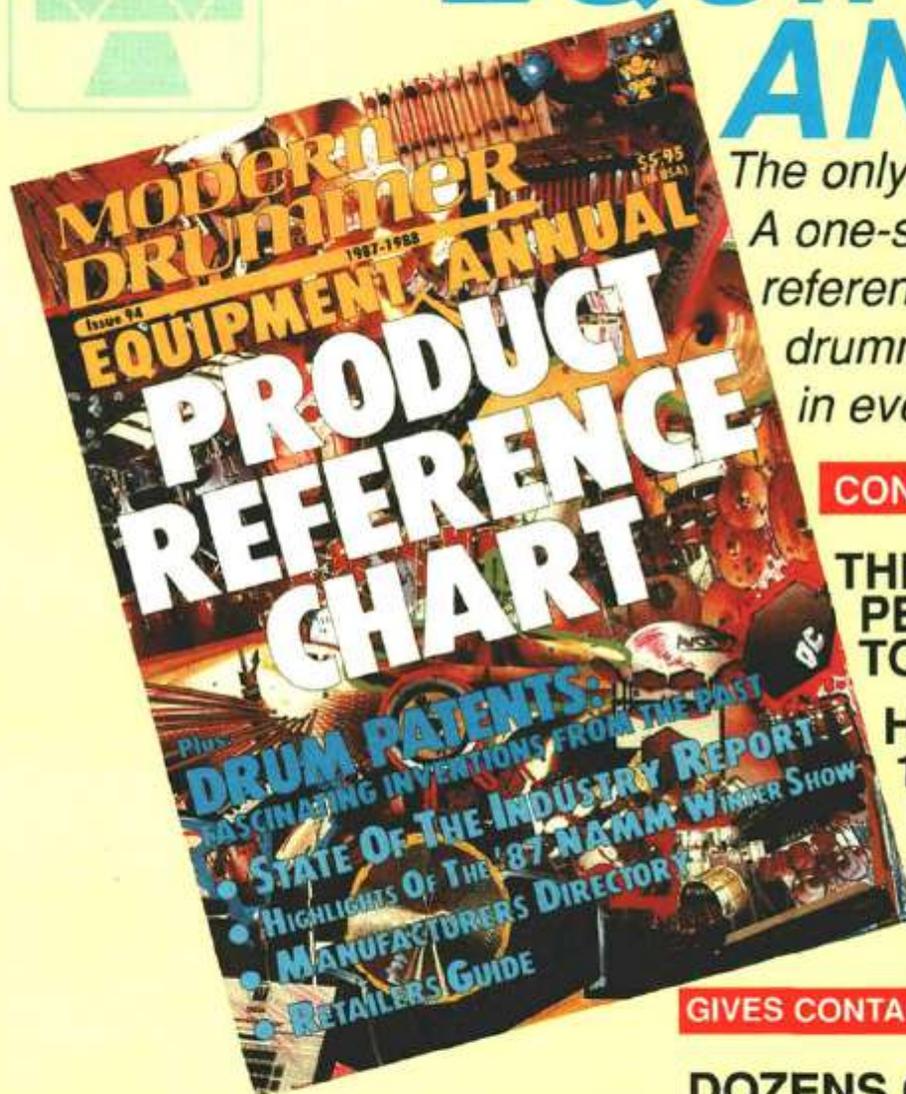
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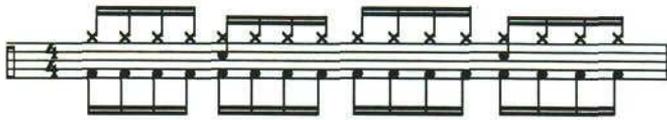
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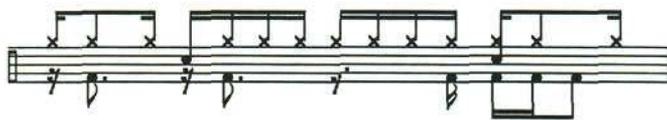
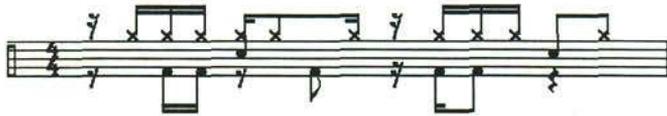
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I also used the Note Density function to create a funk pattern. First I programmed this:



I then set the hi-hat's note density to 75% and the bass drum's to 50%. A couple of typical bars looked like this:



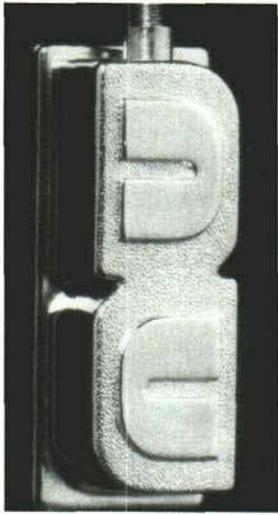
The "intelligent" features described above will work with any drum machine, as it's the *Upbeat* program that controls them. There is one additional feature, however, which will only work with machines that can respond to velocity data. That feature has to do with setting a range for each velocity value, so that you get slight variations in volume, at random. If the velocity value for one

of the symbols was 50, you could set the velocity range for, say, plus/minus 10, which would mean that your velocity would randomly vary from 40 to 60. Apply that to something like straight 16ths on a closed hi-hat, and you will approximate the imperfection of a real drummer, giving your machine a less machine-like sound.

I haven't described absolutely everything that *Upbeat* will do, but you should have a pretty good idea of its most important functions. Basically, I found it to be quite helpful in programming a drum machine because of the visual readout. I also enjoyed being able to get a readout of patterns that I played into the drum machine. If you are looking for an easy way to transcribe your own playing, this is it. The "intelligent" features were fun to play with, but I suspect that non-drummers might have more actual use for them than drummers. (In other words, I'd like to think that drummers are not just throwing a lot of stuff in at random.) As with most computer programs, you have to spend some time with *Upbeat* to really understand what it will do. The owner's manual was reasonably helpful, although I did ultimately have to call the Intelligent Music company with a couple of problems that I couldn't seem to solve by reading the manual. I must say that the people at the company were very friendly and cooperative. I realize that there are a lot of different drum machines out there, and so the *Upbeat* manual has to be written in such a way that it will apply to any of them. But even so, if the manufacturer could find a way to include a few specific tips about using some of the more popular models, it might add a little "user friendliness" to the program.

The list price of the current version (1.1) of the *Upbeat* program is \$150. If you don't already have a Macintosh computer, then I would not recommend that you spend a couple of thousand dollars to get one simply to use *Upbeat*. But if you already have a Mac, then another \$150 might be a reasonable amount to spend for the added control *Upbeat* will give you over your drum machine. 

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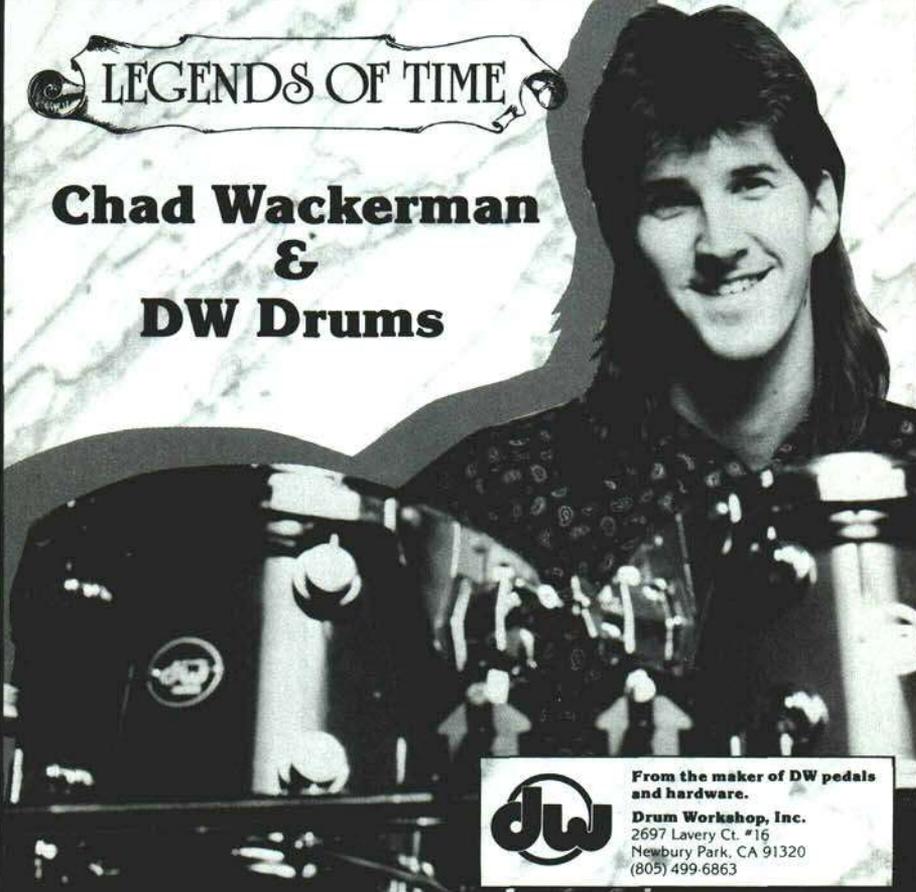



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had also been out on the road with Peter. Peter was in town, talking to A&M about his next project. He came by and ended up playing on "Heartbeat." He was looking for a drummer for his next album, and John was trying to get me into the project. Eddie was also trying to get the gig as engineer.

After we finished Wendy's album, Peter called me up and flew me to New York where he was writing with Mark. John was there as well. Peter had a studio in his basement and we jammed for a little bit. He probably had the two-track running. I thought he liked me, but he was very careful about letting me know. He was real friendly, but as soon as the audition was over, it was like, "Okay, it's time for you to leave. Rodney's going to take you to the airport."

I went back home, did some work with Al Stewart, and I didn't hear from Peter for about a month. Then I was called to come back out. He had tried out a lot of drummers—guys who were a lot more well known than I was. I was told that I was to come back, and if it worked out, I would stay and do the album. I didn't know if I was going to pack for a couple of days or weeks. I went out there and played some of the new songs he was working on. It was obvious that he was really happy with it. He and Eddie went into the back room for literally three minutes, and Peter said, in his English accent, "Well, Harry, how

much clothes did you bring?"

We did *The Art Of Control* at a big mansion in Sharon, Connecticut, Zeppelin style, with the mobile unit out front. You walked in, and there was a long entry hall—about 40 feet. On the right was the dining room, and on the left was a library. Back towards the landing was the study, and then you went off to another area where the kitchen was. Here was this big staircase, and there was a landing there with one of those old Georgian windows. Then you went to the upstairs where all the bedrooms were. I set up on the landing, and Eddie miked me from all the way down the hall. He miked me up close, he miked me from halfway back—all kinds of options. Peter set up in the library, Mark set up in the dining room, and John was set up in another huge room. Everyone had long cords, so they stood out in the hallway and played. It was what everybody talks about, but usually doesn't do: ambient mike everything and get the room sound. At that time, digital reverbs weren't around like they are today. The idea was to find an acoustical environment that would give you that effect. A lot of times, people think that recording in a large studio is going to give you a lot of ambience, but usually studios are dead, even if they're big. Peter likes to make records in castles, so he was used to that way of recording and enjoyed it very much.

It was also great because it was four guys

playing live, and we could turn up as loud as we wanted and get the sound going down on tape, without having to mess around with it later. Each one of those rooms was closed off, so we didn't get any leakage in the drum mic's. The rooms were huge enough that they could ambient mike the amps as well, so it was an optimum situation. It was Peter's last record for A&M, and it's a good album. Had he been promoted correctly, and had he been accepted by the press like he was nine years before that, it would have been fine. Peter's still a good friend of mine, and I like the way he plays. He plays from the heart. He doesn't work things out. He plays different every night. In certain areas of the songs, he'll stretch out and play what he feels.

RF: How was it to play live with someone who stretched differently every night?

HS: There was always something to look forward to. It was more fun than playing in a structured situation, definitely. We did a month-long tour of the States, came home for a little while, and then we went to Brazil for two and a half weeks, where he was enormous. Going down to Brazil, I got a taste of what *Frampton Comes Alive* must have been like. It was amazing.

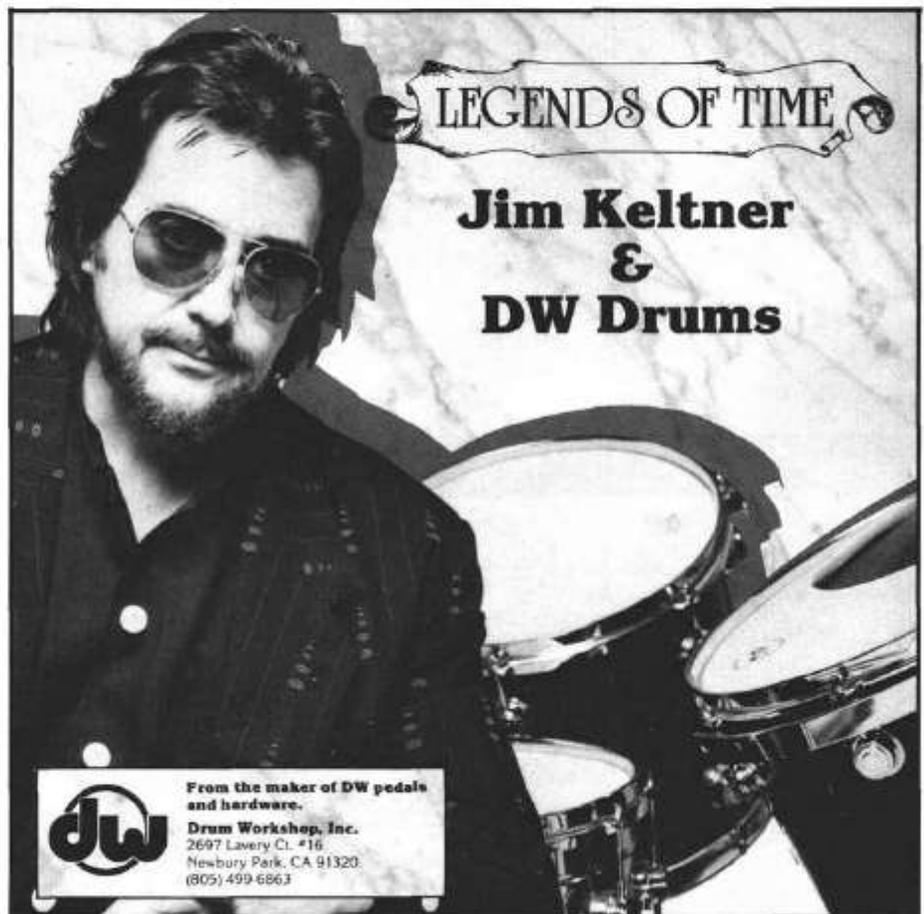
Besides being an experience playing with Peter, Brazil also became a very influential time, musically, for me. I heard the music firsthand and felt that culture of music, which is different than here. In America, people listen to music like fashion. They

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wear the new Talking Heads album, whereas in Brazil, it's like Africa where people speak through music and communicate that way. I just felt an undercurrent of rhythm the whole time, which was really incredible. I bought a whole lot of traditional percussion instruments that you can't find up here. They're not made by manufacturers; they're made by people in their houses. I got turned on to Brazilian music, and Milton Nascimento became a big influence.

After that, Mark and I put together a band called Our Town. We got a deal on RDM, Roger Davies' label, and he had a subsidiary deal with MCA. We ended up doing a record for him that never came out. That was a real sad time.

RF: How were you making a living?

HS: I was doing some TV work, and Mark would always get these incredible Japanese jingles and we'd all play. I worked a little bit with Peter Bernstein, who does movie scores out there, and I also did the source cues for *Cheers* the first four years it was on.

RF: Explain what a source cue is.

HS: Source cues are the little interludes they play in between scenes. From the commercial to the shot, they have these ten-second things. I didn't really enjoy that too much. I remember one situation where I was in the studio with 30 other musicians. I was an okay reader, but I wasn't great. I was scared to death. I didn't want to put everybody into overtime, so I didn't take my breaks. I sat and looked at the next chart to make sure I could play it

before they came back. I was always so amazed at how nonchalant the other players were—so confident in their reading. I was quaking in my boots.

I also played with Etta James during this period. It was fun to be with her, but after playing with her for about six months, I had sort of had my fill of it. Also around then, I started working on my songwriting a little bit. Josh Leo and Wendy Waldman had moved to Nashville. They were sitting around writing a song one night and called me up. Josh said, "Hey Harry, you've got to come down here. Nashville is not anything like what you remember, I'm sure." So I booked one of those cheap fares and flew in. I was only in for four days, and I met Wendy's publisher. I was handing out tapes left and right. Then Josh took me down to Warner Bros., and I met all those people. Jimmy Buffett was in town recording. I went out for dinner that night with Wendy and Josh and ran into Timothy Schmidt. I had worked on his album, which Josh had produced in L.A., and he was surprised to see me. We really sing a lot alike, so he said, "You want to sing on Buffett's album?" He went and talked to Buffett. Later that night, he came walking in with Jimmy, who said, "Welcome aboard Harry m'boy." For two days after that, I sang on *Last Mango In Paris*. I was in heaven with Timothy. Barry Beckett was producing Pam Tillis down the hall, so we got to sing on her album as well. Tony Brown was one of the producers on Buffett's album, so he got turned onto me, and I played him my songs. I went back to L.A., wrote more songs, and made another trip out with the idea that I was going to move here. I wanted to test it out a little more, so I got a job with Nicolette Larsen, which was perfect. I stayed with my parents and went out with Nicolette on weekends. The rest of the time I was meeting people and writing songs.

RF: What was different in Nashville the second time around that made you want to move back?

HS: My state of mind, for one thing. I had done a lot of things, and I was more comfortable with myself, as a person and as a player. I was tired of L.A., because there was nothing happening out there that I really wanted to do and I was ending another cycle of bands that went nowhere. All along, I had been shown that I had the potential to do it because I was doing it, but in very sporadic points. Then I came to Nashville and everything was wide open. When you call somebody, that person talks to you. When you go to see a publisher, the publisher remembers you and sees you right away. Because of Wendy and Josh's help, right off the bat I knew everybody important in town, and people started calling me right away. I was enjoying the stuff I did, which was the main thing. I wanted to pursue my songwriting career, and Nashville is much more a

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songwriting town than either New York or L.A. I knew I could support myself playing drums and singing on sessions, and I was already locked into Steve Earle's situation. I was producing Wendy, without a record deal, and Josh and Wendy were pretty established here, so it wasn't like I was a new kid on the block without any help at all. I was a hometown guy, so I knew a lot of people from before, like [producers] Marshall Morgan and Paul Worley, who would turn me on to things. I also was in a band called the Roosters, which played every now and then.

Then I met Steve Earle around that time, and it was decided that I'd play on the record and be a Duke. So I scheduled the move with my family around *Guitar Town*. I knew Steve had the potential to be a major artist, although I wasn't sure MCA had the wherewithal to make it happen, because he fits into a rock format. I figured it was really worth a shot, though, because I really like his music a lot. We got bumped by Bowen from the big studio into the little studio, and we really had to earn our keep because Steve was not a priority artist, by any means. Then the record came out, and the press was great.

RF: What appeals to you about the Steve Earle gig?

HS: It's a roots gig. It's not flash or hype. It's great songs and just enough playing to get the song across in the best possible way. I think my tendencies lie towards roots music, anyway, because I feel that's where most of my inspiration comes from. That's why I like Steve so much. He didn't just make up that stuff. It's not that he lives all of it either, but he is a "Fearless Heart," which is a song off of *Guitar Town*, and I relate to that a lot—just being honest. That's the way I like to play: with honesty. To get the feel is the most important thing to me, and that's why I play as minimally as possible to achieve that. Playing is not an ego thing; it's getting the whole song to work.

RF: You've done a lot of different kinds of stuff, like Lyle Lovett's stuff. I can tell by your smile that you really enjoyed that.

HS: I loved it. Once again, it was something completely different.

RF: Jazz brushes are a whole different ball game from country brushes. What did you learn about that?

HS: I didn't. I'm self-taught in that, but I watch people a lot. When we were at the Grammys and Tony Williams was playing, I was checking it all out right there. I have prepared as much as I could. I practiced on the road before I did Lyle's album. Also, when I was in L.A., I played a gig at a small club called Chadneys in Burbank with Harry Middlebrooks, and we did everything. It was just a three piece, and it was a blast. We did a lot of stuff like what is on Lyle's album—real jazzy "stirring the soup" stuff—or Bobby Darin music. He covered a wide spectrum.

RF: The other day, I watched you do country brushes on a country demo. That's a whole different feel.

HS: That's a lot easier. Two-beat brushwork is very easy. You just have to get a brush that makes a large splat. There's one beat I do that's become one of my trademarks. It's on "Baby's Got A Hold On Me" [Nitty Gritty Dirt Band]—that kind of shuffle kind of snare drum that sort of comes from New Orleans. I used it on Wendy's album on "Heartbeat" in the verses. I don't like to use ride cymbals or hi-hats a whole lot. I like to play the drums like Keltner would, so the beat just fills up the groove like mad, and it pushes the band without really splattering using cymbals. And there are a lot of different ways I can use that beat to make it shuffle just a little bit more, bring it back a little bit more, or make it sound more slinky. It's a real useful beat for me. Country brushes are the

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same thing. I just get into a groove, and I can't be pushed from that groove, once I get into it.

RF: With the variety of music you play, what do you enjoy playing the most?

HS: That's a hard one to answer. It's more of a feeling that comes from the songs, who I'm working with, and that kind of thing. If I were asked to do a Barbara Mandrell session, that might be a great feather in my cap, but I wouldn't really be into it. I think the people Josh produces and the people I work with just do what I like to do, and I've been real, real lucky to be able to be selective and play with people I want to play with.

Singing is different. I can be a session singer and do velvety oohs and ahs, and I can fit in with a lot of different singers. I enjoy that challenge. It's a real specific challenge for me to sing with another

singer who has a completely different voice and be able to blend with him where he maybe couldn't do a two-part harmony with himself. I did a Tammy Wynette record and sang two-part with her, trying to match her phrasing. That's a real hard thing to do and get it exactly the way she sang it. It's the same thing with Steve. To match Steve's phrasing is real tough, and a lot of times, people don't realize that's me singing with him. That kind of thing is a real challenge, but with playing the drums, it's the song that moves me and the kind of person I'm working with that matters—the environment.

RF: How do you come up with an approach to a song that is new to your ears?

HS: I like to listen to the artist sing the song. For instance, with Kevin Welch, who is a songwriter, the way he sings and plays it is what should be amplified with all the other instruments. I listen to him sing the song, and I get the feel from that. Then when I sit down at the drums, I just try to accent what's important to what I heard. By the time we get to that point, I'm so happy anyway because we've gone through all the drum sound mania. I'm never comfortable until the engineer and I have gotten the drum sound. Every studio is different, and every engineer is different. A lot of engineers now are so spoiled with the sampled sounds that are perfectly sampled and perfectly EQed. When you bring in a drum and put a mic' to it, it sounds

dull. It might have some kind of characteristic to it, but they have to work at it to get it to come out.

RF: Are you not interested in getting into sampling?

HS: I'm really interested in it. I was one of the first to buy a set of Simmons. What burned me out on it was that the technology changed so fast and the value of all that changed so quickly that I was dumping all this money into something and not getting enough back. I'm not that good at buying and selling; I'd rather play, so I'd let the thing devalue until it wasn't worth anything. What I've been doing for the past year is collecting snare drums, because those are the most flexible part of the kit and they can change the whole sound. Hopefully, very soon I'll get a sampler and start getting into it. I don't need a whole rack with three or four reverbs. I need something very basic.

RF: Drummers have a stigma attached to them that they are "only" drummers. How did you know you could go beyond being just the drummer?

HS: I think that's just me. I'm not really trying to be a studio player, so I don't try to play all the right licks. Just as a person, I don't necessarily try to fit in. I'm going to do what I want to do, no matter what. If it's something I want to do, I know I have the power to go for it. A lot of people are afraid to branch out, or maybe they're content doing what they do. I've learned so much, and it helps me as a drummer and in



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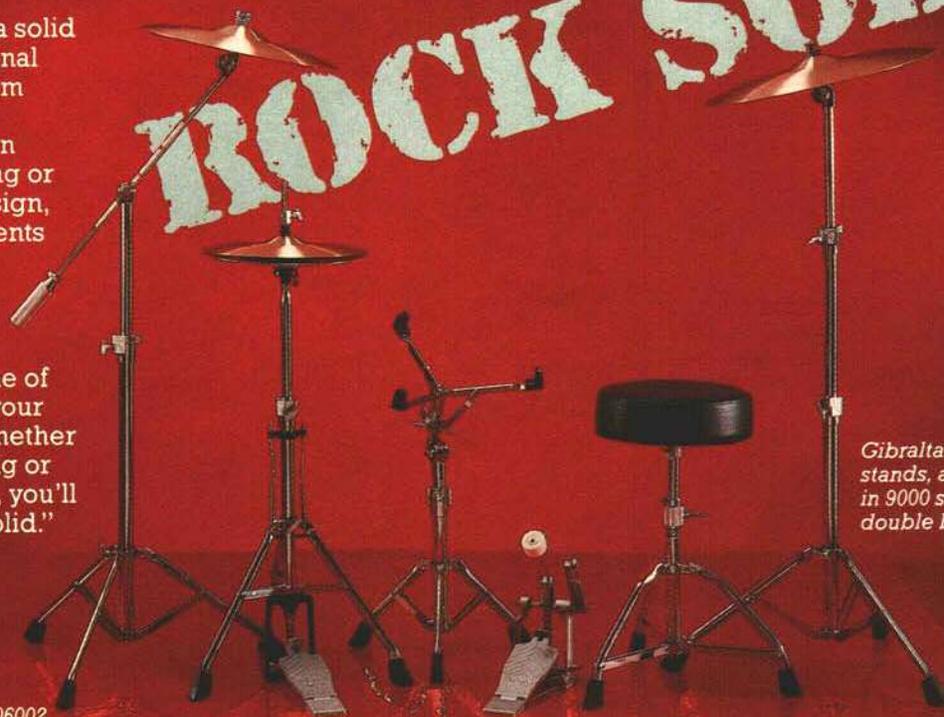
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everything else that I do to go from all sides.

RF: What has being a producer taught you about drumming?

HS: It's helped me assess what is really important, as well as what a producer would want from a drummer. It's also helped me to have an open mind and to try something as a player that might be unnatural to me. I find that, if I do keep an open mind about it, I usually learn something.

RF: Can you recall a situation where a producer asked you to do something that you felt was unnatural?

HS: I can't think of anything specifically, but there have been countless times when I was asked to do something that I might have thought sounded ridiculous. But then, I'd try it and it would work. Maybe it wasn't obvious in the tracking situation, but once the overdubs and everything were piled on top of it, it really showed through. It's really important to keep an open mind and try whatever is asked of you.

I've learned how to relate to musicians by being on this side of the glass and having someone who is not as communicative trying to tell me how to do something. It's

all connected, and as for my doing it, it's just something I've done. Drums are my favorite thing, though. I'm a drummer before I'm a singer, songwriter, or producer. It's real close to my heart, but it's never been all there was for me. I am just more faceted than that, and it all fits together for me that way.

RF: Do you want to be a solo artist?

HS: Yes, I think so. I have a real desire to sing and play and be part of a record in that respect. I know I have some talent to put there, although I really don't know where it's going to go. At this point, I want to continue with Steve, but I also want to do my own thing. I want to co-produce it with Josh and write all the songs. That's what's holding me up at this point. I'm still gathering material. I think it will be very commercial, though. I want to do music that makes people feel good and that is positive. I am a little apprehensive about it, because the road at this point in my life is tough to deal with. I can deal with it with Steve because I know it's not forever, but as an artist, it becomes your own commitment, and isn't something you can walk away from. I really miss my family when

I'm out there, and it takes a lot of energy to get something going. Steve is barely breaking even, and look at all the great press he's gotten. It's a hard road. On the other hand, I write some good songs and I know that I can do them as well as anybody, so why don't I put them out myself? I do have to go somewhere. When I get older, I will be pissed off if I look back and think, "I could have done that, and I didn't try." I definitely will have to give it a shot at some point. I think the love that I have for what I do will find its own way into whatever it turns out to be.



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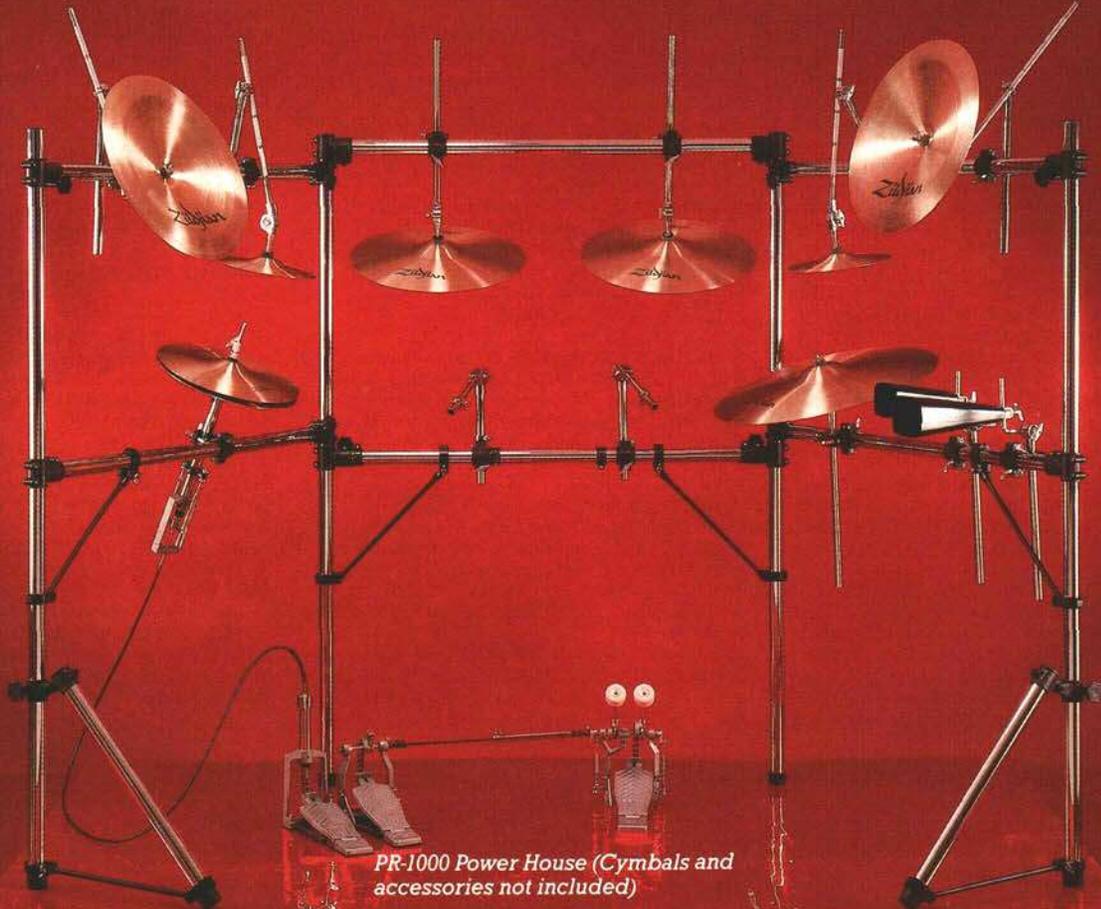
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by Roy Burns

Practicing And Balance

I have several students who are talented, dedicated, and hard-working. Most are in their teens. One of them said to me recently, "I must discipline myself to practice more." I asked, "How much do you practice?" He replied, "An hour to an hour and a half each day, except weekends, when I play in a band." This young person goes to high school, gets good grades, takes a lesson once a week, and works in a professional band on weekends. To me, this sounds like a pretty full schedule. I advised him to remain *consistent* in his practicing but not to worry about it.

When another student suggested to me that he also should "discipline" himself to practice more, again I asked, "How much do you practice?" He replied, "About 30 minutes a day, but sometimes only 15 to 20 minutes." In all fairness, this young person goes to high school and works a part-time job to pay for his lessons. My advice to him was that he organize his time and try to practice at least one hour each day. I also reminded him that 30 minutes is far better than nothing.

The dictionary defines "self-discipline" as, "Training and control of oneself and one's conduct, usually for personal improvement." "Burn out" is defined as, "Becoming exhausted, especially as a result of overwork." Somewhere between these two extremes is a *balance* that is workable for each person. In order to achieve this *balance*, it is best to begin by analyzing your situation. Put your weekly schedule on paper, charting each day from morning 'til night. Write down the hours you spend in school. If you have a part-time job or a job in a band, write down

those as well. Include travel time and rehearsal hours (if you are in a band), and the time needed for homework. If you are not in school, simply chart your working hours, travel time, and the time spent rehearsing or working in a band. Include any other activities that you do on a weekly basis.

Once you have charted all of your activities, you will usually notice that a lot of free time is readily apparent. Now, set about organizing that free time into a real practice schedule. Whenever possible, try to practice at the same time each day. If necessary, break up your practicing into two sessions. Dedicate one half hour to strengthening your reading and technique—if you are taking lessons. If you are not taking lessons, work on developing some new skill, rhythm, or style. The second half hour can be devoted to creative drumset practice, such as practicing with records. Practice more than one hour if you have the time. Include some time for *serious* listening in your schedule. Listen to something new whenever possible. Listen to some of the great drummers of the past who can now be heard only on records. Listen to music from different styles or from other countries such as India, Africa, and South America.

Schedule some time for fun as well. Sit down at the drums and reward yourself by saying to yourself, "I'm just going to play. Nothing will be preconceived or from a book. I'm just going to see what happens and have some fun."

I have one student who has been playing for some time, is a hard worker, and practices consistently. However, at the first les-

son it became apparent that he was practicing out of the same books over and over. As a result, he had become rather stale and frustrated, and was bordering on a real "burn out." I advised him to put his old books away. I suggested to him, "Don't practice this week! Just go home and have some fun playing the drums. Put on the headphones and *play* some music. Have a good time, and be creative." I also made a few suggestions about some *new* things to experiment with on the set. He's now working out of some new books, and his practicing is more varied, productive, creative, and rewarding.

Self-discipline is a great quality—but you must apply it with some sensitivity. If you have had a really hard day or if you don't feel well, there is no need to *force* yourself to practice. If you have to force it, you probably won't get that much out of it anyway. If you continue to force it, you may burn out or end up hating the drumset. It is okay to give yourself a day off on occasion. One good rule is: "Do not practice on Sunday." Your family and your neighbors will appreciate it, and it will also give you the time to recharge your battery.

"*Inspiration*" is sometimes a far better source of motivation than self-discipline. There is a large number of really great drummers performing today. If you don't have the money to go to a concert, go to a drum clinic. Most of them are free, and you will get to see a top drummer play up close. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions. Today, more than ever before, drummers of all styles are presenting clinics. No matter what style of drumming you like, you can most likely see someone proficient at that style at a clinic.

Sometimes, after a good concert or clinic, you may feel a little overwhelmed. You may feel like "giving up." However, my experience is that this feeling usually gives way to inspiration, and you find yourself in a hurry to get to the drumset to try some of the things you have heard and seen.

So when self-discipline isn't working and you feel as though you may burn out, seek some *inspiration*. Inspiration usually carries with it a new influx of ideas and energy. And inspired drummers not only play better, but they inspire others as well.



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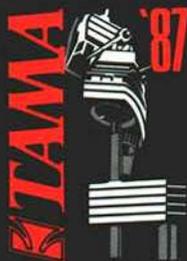


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othing takes it out of you and your equipment quite like a fast paced tour that criss crosses the United States and Europe several times. Just ask Mark Simon, drummer for England's hottest new Metal proponent, Grim Reaper. The band's been at it for months now promoting their latest release 'Rock You To Hell' . . . right at the center of it all; Tama's new Granstar drums and Power Tower System.

We talked to Mark during sound check at the Capital Theater in Passaic, New Jersey.

- Tama: That's got to be one of the more inventive uses of Power Tower I've seen in a while.
- Mark: Yea . . . we've got it set up on two levels to accommodate all the miking as well as the drums. It works out very well.
- Tama: How about the Granstars? . . . they holding up for you?
- Mark: Without a doubt. I mean, this kit has gone up and down so many times . . . never any problems, and they sound unbelievable . . . you just heard for yourself, right?
- Tama: Right. They did sound very good.
- Mark: Every gig we do, I get comments from the guys behind the board on how the drum sound really cuts right through. Even before they're miked up, they're just . . . well, very loud!
- Tama: How much longer does this tour run?
- Mark: Good God, I don't really know. I think till we all keel over! (laughs)
- Tama: Good luck.
- Mark: Thanks.



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Adapting

One of the beauties of playing long-term, steady club gigs is that you get to know the room and its needs. And when you play the same clubs regularly on a "circuit," each time you come into a club, you're already familiar with its stage, technical facilities, acoustics, etc. You can easily come prepared. This was the type of situation I enjoyed for many years when I played full-time in California and Hawaii.

However, not all club work involves long-term gigs. Since coming east to New Jersey, I've discovered that many of the clubs here offer entertainment on week-ends only and most do not book their bands for more than one weekend at a time. In other words, you're in on a Friday and out on a Saturday.

Obviously, this type of schedule doesn't give you the luxury of "learning" the room on the first night or two, and then settling in comfortably for a long, problem-free run. In order to maximize the quality of your performance in a minimal amount of time, you need to be prepared to make changes to your physical setup, your acoustic output, and perhaps even the structure of your performance. The bottom line is that, when you play "quickie" gigs, you have to be adaptable.

This was all brought home to me during a one-month booking period recently, when my band played three clubs we had never worked before. I was fortunate in that two of the clubs were near my home, and I was able to check them out in advance of our going in. This is something I highly recommend to any band that plays many different clubs. Whenever possible, go to the club a day or so in advance, and "check out the territory." Find out how large the stage is, what type of lighting and electrical power is provided, and what type of acoustics the room has (or *doesn't* have). Also, discuss the crowd's taste in material with the manager, bar staff, regular patrons, etc. I've always believed in the old adage that "forewarned is forearmed." It's a great deal easier to make any necessary changes in your equipment, setup, wardrobe, or material ahead of time than it is after you arrive on the night of the gig. All of that said, let's take a look at some of the situations I faced and use them as examples of how a bit of adaptation can save you a lot of grief—and very likely improve your performance as well.

Adapting For Volume

It's not unusual at all for bands to be told they are too loud for a given room.

Today's pop music is pretty powerful, and bands are faced with having to play that popular music in lounges, restaurant clubs, and other locations that simply can't tolerate the volume levels of dance clubs or rock venues. Simon Goodwin did an excellent column entitled, "Adjusting For Softer Drumming" in the May '83 *MD*, and I heartily recommend it for drummers who face this particular problem.

However, my problem was quite the opposite. My band plays in fairly small rooms these days, and my drums are often tucked into a corner of a stage and/or are generally set up in a low-ceilinged area. We don't play particularly softly, but neither do we play at arena levels. I'm generally quite adequately heard with my 5A sticks on my unmiked kit.

But recently we played a room with a large, open entertainment area in front of the equally large stage. The walls were covered with plush wallpaper; the floor was thickly carpeted, and the ceilings were quite high. As a result, we found that we needed to increase our regular volume substantially to adequately fill the room and give the music the intensity it required. For my part, I found that I was hitting *much* harder than usual, and that I still wasn't particularly happy with the projection of the drums, hi-hat, and ride cymbal.

I don't like having to overwork simply in order to meet the needs of the gig. It takes away from my concentration, drains my energy, and generally makes the gig a lot less fun to play. In this case, I realized that I had to do some adapting in order to be able to play in my normal manner, but still achieve the extra volume I needed at this location. Employing a philosophy I learned in the army—"If it doesn't work, get a bigger hammer"—I dug into my stick bag and trap case, and came up with a pair of Regal Tip regular 5Bs, a pair of *Quantum* 5Bs, and a Slobeat *Satellite* acrylic bass drum beater. Just by employing the larger sticks and heavier beater to do part of the work, I was able to get that volume boost I needed. On my own part, I had to adapt to the slightly different feel of the sticks and beater, but since I had only gone up a small amount in size and weight, that didn't take long. The point is that I was *prepared* for this adaptation by having the sticks and beater *available*. I've known drummers who take dozens of sticks to a gig because they "want to come prepared"—but all their sticks are the same size! I agree that spares of your regular

sticks are essential. But I strongly suggest that you also carry a pair or two that are one size larger (and perhaps one size smaller, for those softer situations), just in case. Ditto for bass drum beaters: If you use felt, carry a wood or other hard beater. If your regular beater is of moderate weight, carry one that is a bit heavier, so you don't have to risk muscle cramps stomping your pedal to death.

I've recently made a couple of other adaptations to my kit in response to acoustic problems. On the first night of a gig in a small, very "live" room, I found my regular crash cymbals to be a bit too loud and ringy. The next night, I cut down on the number of crashes, used smaller sizes, and swapped one of my regular Sabian AAs for a Sabian *Sound Control*. I could never use that cymbal under normal circumstances, but in this particular room, it was perfect. The opposite situation occurred in that louder room I mentioned earlier. I found that swapping my regular 20" medium ride for a 21" Rock ride with an oversized bell made a terrific difference in the projection of my ride patterns.

Adapting For Space

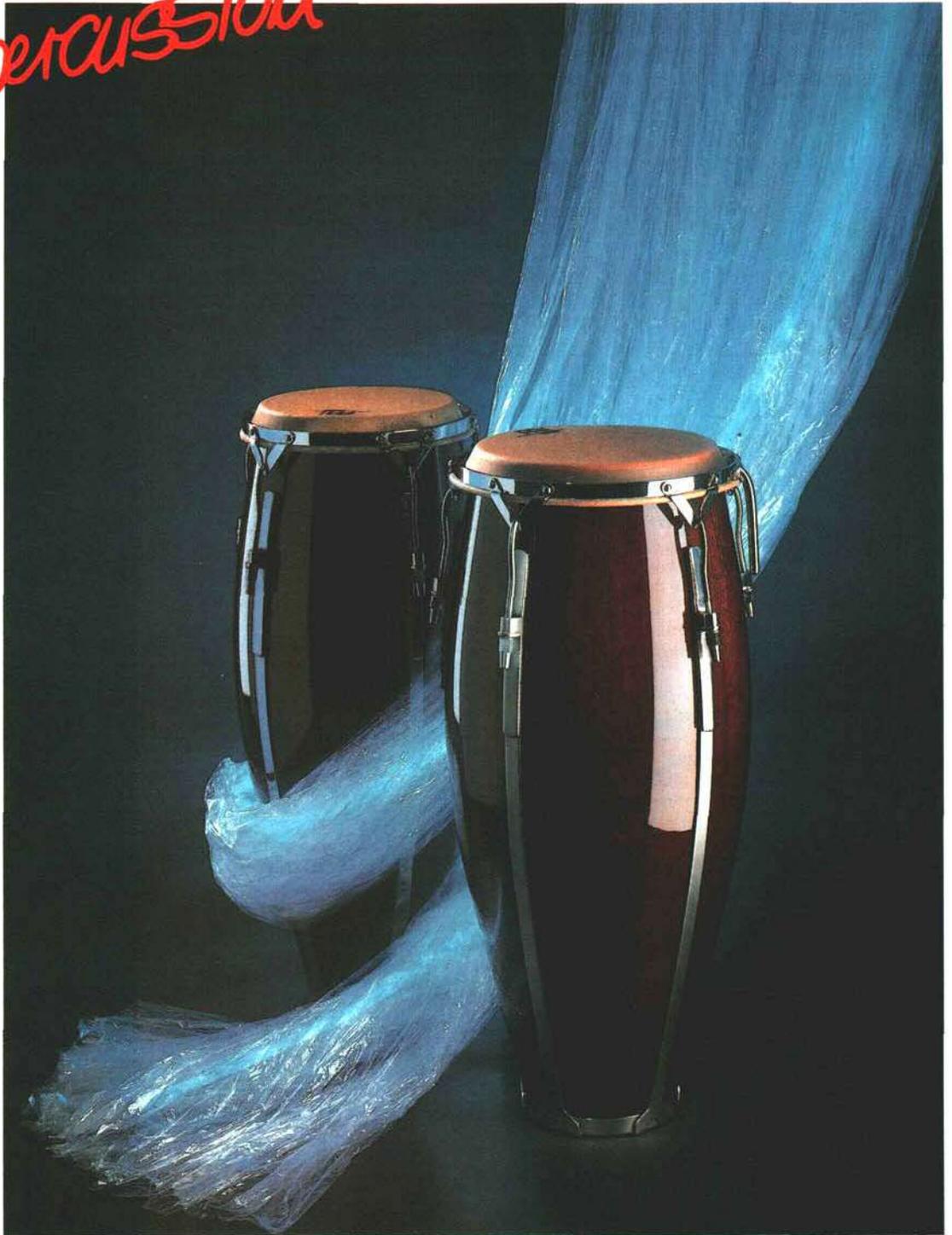
In my March '87 column, "The Instrument," I mentioned that under normal circumstances I like to use a fairly sizable kit. I've been pretty fortunate in that I've been able to use my regular kit in 99% of the clubs we play. But there was recently one club that had a stage so small that it was simply impossible to use my large kit. Luckily, this was one of the clubs I had been able to visit in advance of the gig, so I was aware of the size limitations and could take steps to deal with them. I created a "small-stage" kit from spare drums and hardware, so that I didn't have to "cannibalize" my regular kit. I did have to select my cymbals from among my regular set, but I made it a point to carry them in a separate cymbal bag, so that I didn't have to take my heavy cymbal cases to the gig. (Why carry the extra weight, and risk losing the cymbals that must be left in the cases and "stashed" on stage?)

Besides providing the solution to the stage space problem, I discovered that there was something refreshing in the challenge of playing on the smaller kit. Due to some of the musical limitations it posed, I wouldn't want to do it all the time, but just for the novelty of it, I must say I enjoyed the weekend.

I realize that not everyone has enough spare equipment to create a second com-

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plete kit. In that case, it becomes necessary to take the necessary drums and hardware from your regular kit, and create a smaller, "core" kit to use on smaller gigs. I have done this in the past myself, and found that the only real problem this posed was that I had to be careful to take *everything* I needed for the smaller gig. When one is used to just "grabbing the cases and going," it's easy to forget individual component items that must come *out* of those cases and be taken separately. On one occasion long ago, I "cannibalized" my large kit to create a smaller one for a studio call. I got to the studio and discovered that, although I had all the drums and

cymbals I needed, I had completely forgotten to bring a snare stand. If you must pick out individual items from a larger amount of drums, cymbals, and hardware, it's a good idea to make up a checklist, so that you can be certain that you have everything you need. Don't rely on memory.

Adapting For Taste

The third type of adapting that I was faced with in that month-long period I mentioned involved our material. We were booked into a club where the management had very specific requirements as to the types of music to be played. Management wanted '50s and '60s oldies—period. Our

repertoire was basically in conformance with those requirements, which is why we were booked into the club in the first place. But we filled out our set list with a variety of other songs, including some contemporary hits. Those songs were what the club didn't want. So we were required to rearrange our song list and add some material in order to meet the special needs of this one gig.

Let me be quick to say that I don't see anything wrong or unreasonable in club managers making such requests of bands. After all, they should know what their clientele likes, and it is certainly to your advantage to stick to that. Besides, the bottom line is that the club managers are paying you, and that certainly gives them the right to request that you play the material that they want. Obviously, this should all be clarified *before* you actually come into the club, so that you can be prepared in advance.

Preparing in advance need not involve a lot of rehearsal. Simply start with your regular song list, remove the unacceptable tunes, and see what that leaves you with. Fill in where you can with the "irregular" or "auxiliary" tunes that most bands have in their repertoire but don't normally play—older songs, specialty numbers, etc.—as long as they conform to the club's desired format. If you still don't have enough tunes to fill out the evening, you can repeat and/or stretch some of the more popular ones. An old—and very effective—trick is to note a few songs that go over especially well early in the evening, and then play them again later after announcing that you've had a "request" to do so. There's nothing wrong with doing this. Your crowd will probably love hearing the songs again (if they even remember that you played them before), and you will have fulfilled your primary mission: to entertain your audience.

Being able to adapt to changes in your usual method of performance is a measure of your professionalism. The key to being adaptable is being prepared—mentally, physically, materially—for whatever situation confronts you. That's not to say that you won't ever be surprised by something totally unexpected; our business is full of surprises. But the better prepared and more adaptable you are, the more comfortable you can be under difficult circumstances. And when you're comfortable, you have a much better chance of enjoying even an unusual gig.

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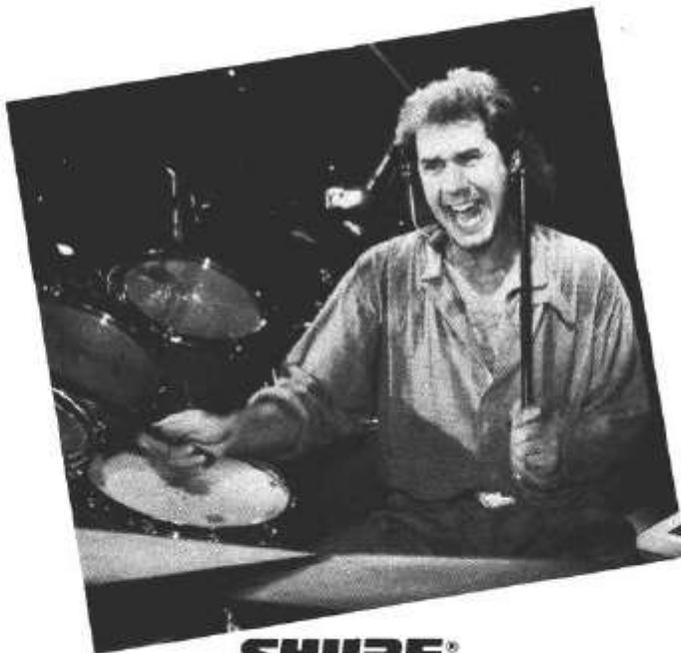
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PAT MASTELOTTO

(Mr. Mister)

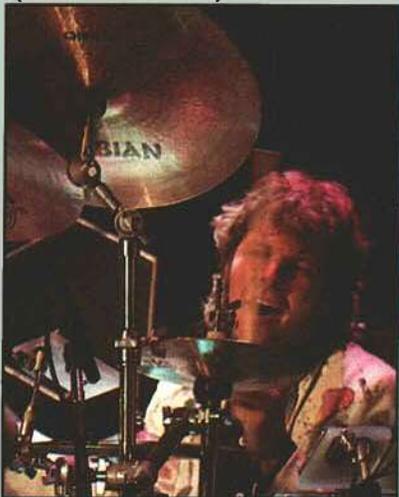
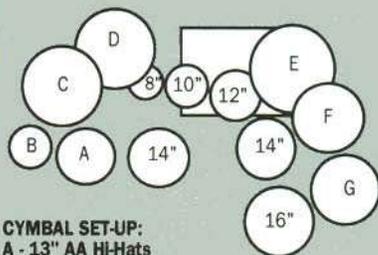


Photo: Pat Rodgers

Mr. Mister's albums 'Welcome to the Real World' and 'Go On' have not only introduced the music world to a great new band, they have also highlighted the tasteful, inventive programming and playing of L.A. drummer, Pat Mastelotto.

Raised on such disparate influences as The Dave Clark Five and Jimi Hendrix, Pat's powerful technique and great pop sensibility have added a degree of real excitement and credibility to the concept of drummers combining both acoustic and electronic percussion in their performance.

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- E - 20" HH Leopard Ride
- F - 16" AA Sound Control Crash
- G - 16" AA Chinese



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DONNY BALDWIN

(Starship)

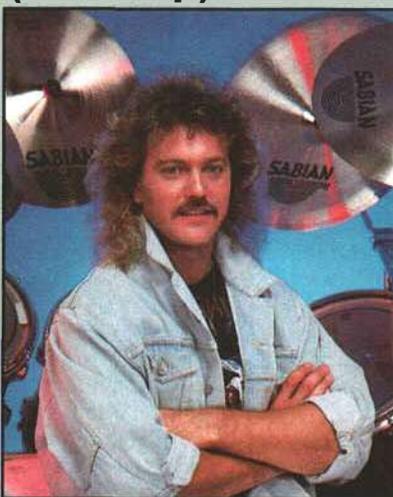
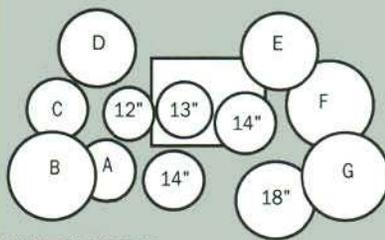


Photo: Pat Johnson

Donny spent several successful years on tour and recording with the likes of Elvin Bishop (that's him on the soulful classic, 'Fooled Around And Fell In Love'), Pablo Cruise ('A Place In The Sun') and former Doobie Brother, Tom Johnson, before taking up his present spot as drummer and backing vocalist in the ever-popular Starship.

Since joining, Donny's solid R'n'B leanings and no-nonsense rock grooves have integrated with the band's ever-evolving sound, adding, up to some of the best contemporary music of the decade. Songs like 'We Built This City', 'Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now', and the pulsating punch of 'It's Not Over' have not only re-established the band Stateside, but have topped the charts around the world.



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- E - 18" AA Medium Thin Crash
- F - 20" HH Leopard Ride
- G - 20" AA Chinese



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RICHIE HAYWARD

(Little Feat, Warren Zevon)

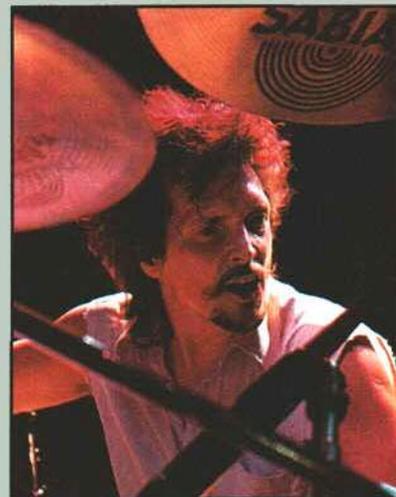
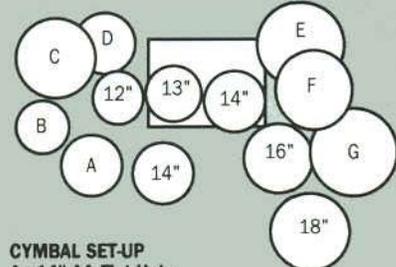


Photo: Pat Rodgers

The percolating funk and blistering rock grooves of Richie Hayward have delighted musicians for years. As a member of Little Feat, one of L.A.'s finest bands, his drumming propelled such great records as 'Feats Don't Fail Me Now', 'Time Loves A Hero' and 'The Last Record Album' into the hearts of listeners the world over.

Along the way he added his indelible style to Robert Palmer's debut LP, 'Sneakin' Sally Through the Alley', and later 'Steppin' Out', with the eclectic Joari Armatrading. Recording and touring Robert Plant's album, 'Shakin' and Stirred' not only put Richie back into the spot-light with an excellent band, but led to more sessions and, most recently, the drummer's seat on Warren Zevon's 'Sentimental Hygiene' tour.



CYMBAL SET-UP

- A - 14" AA Flat Hats
- B - 12" AA Bell
- C - 18" AA Sound Control Crash
- D - 14" AA Sound Control Crash
- E - 20" AA Medium Ride
- F - 18" AA Medium Crash
- G - 20" HH Chinese



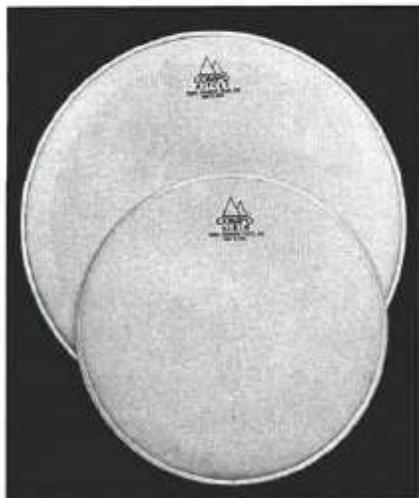
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by Rick Man Horn

Compo and Cana-Sonic Drumheads

Compo



Compo drumheads are a new line manufactured by the Asahi Chemical Cloth Company of Japan, and distributed in the U.S. by Kaman/CB (who also distribute CB-700 percussion products). The heads are unlike any others on the market today, in that they are created from a variety of woven chemical fibers, rather than from any form of plastic film or fiberglass. According to its promotional literature, Asahi Chemical Cloth Company is the sole manufacturer of "synthetic leather" percussion heads in the world. The company states that it has gone to great lengths in its research to "find and analyze causal relationships between every possible material currently available and its sound, and between compound materials and [the] tones they produce." The result, according to Asahi, was the "discovery of specific compositions of materials which can create the various sounds in demand."

That's a pretty tall order, and sounds a bit on the science-fiction side. For those of us who remember the last major woven-fabric drumhead attempt—the Duraline *Superhead* made of woven *Kevlar*—the concept of a "fabric" head of any kind may not sound too appealing. But after thoroughly checking out the Compo line, I must admit that the company seems to have done its homework very well. These heads are not only quite playable, they are also quite unique in their sound qualities. Furthermore, each model does precisely what the manufacturer says it should do!

There are five series within the Compo line—each designed to fulfill a certain function or appeal to a certain group of drummers. (No one type of head is intended to "suit everyone.") Those series include the *N* (*Natural*), *S* (*Studio*), *A* (*Attack*), *K* (*Kinetic*), and *M* (*Marching*). I was able to test all but the *M* series; that was introduced after we went to press. I have been informed that it is a thicker version of the *A* with a stronger hoop.

Compo describes the composition of its heads as follows: "Each head is actually a custom woven fabric, made from a variety of sizes of polyester and *Kevlar* materials, with a variety of ratios of polyester to *Kevlar*." Although the head material may differ, all of the heads are mounted on the same type of aluminum hoop. Generally speaking, the heads look "flatter" than any other brand of drumhead; they have no raised collar or other adaptation to conform to a drumshell. The manner in which the heads are formed into the aluminum hoops sometimes creates small folds or tucks in spots around the edge of the head but these don't seem to affect even tensioning or tuning to any noticeable degree. I tried a pull-out test on a 14" *K* series batter and was able to get the head as hard as a rock without pulling out of the hoop. I was quite impressed.

It's hard to make comparisons between the Compo heads and any well-known brand, since the fabric nature of the heads creates an overall tonality that is very different. Generally speaking, however, I can say that Compo heads produce a warmer, thicker sound than plastic heads. That's not to say that they won't cut or project, but the "ringy" quality associated with plastic heads is dramatically reduced in even the liveliest of the Compo heads. Some may think this a disadvantage; others may find it desirable, depending on personal taste.

Natural Series. The *N* series is the thinnest of the Compo models, and is manufactured with high levels of polyester and low levels of *Kevlar*. This is the head that Compo claims sounds the most like natural leather (calf) heads, and is the series that Tony Williams is endorsing in Compo's recent ads. Within the series, there are several thicknesses (or gauges) of heads: The *N1* and *N2* models are designed as bot-

tom heads only; the *N3*, *N4*, and *N5* are designed as batter heads. (I have been informed that the *N1 Resounder* head is being discontinued.) I tested the *N3* model in 12", 14", and 16" sizes. The 22" bass drum head was simply designated *N22* with no particular thickness indication.

I found the *N* series heads extremely nice. They produced a warm, round, mellow—yet very live—tone. I've been playing plastic heads all my life, so I can't really say how closely they resemble calf heads. But I can say that for any low- to moderate-volume application, these heads would produce a most pleasant, full-bodied sound. I did find the bass drum sound a bit thinner than I prefer, but it might work well in a non-rock application. On the other hand, a friend of mine who plays in a harder-hitting rock situation than I do was kind enough to test out these heads for me, and he reported that he very much liked the sound they produced—especially on the snare and toms—when hit hard. He was also impressed with their durability. Asahi does maintain that any model of Compo heads will outlast comparable-application plastic heads by several times. My friend found that even the *N* series held up as well or better than any plastic head he had ever used.

In terms of payability, there is a certain quality to all of the Compo heads—but that is perhaps most noticeable in the *TV* series. There is a kind of "give" to the heads that makes them very comfortable to play—if a bit strange to get used to at first. There is actually a "cushioned" feeling upon stick impact. This may also have a lot to do with why some drummers feel that these heads resemble calf heads.

In the interest of objectivity, I must point out that I didn't care much for the Compo *Resounder* bottom heads. They tended to accentuate that "warmer, thicker" sound, at the expense of cut and projection. For a jazz gig at low volume, they might be great, but for any kind of situation where volume was required from unmiked drums, I'd probably stick with a thin plastic head for additional resonance. But overall, I give high marks to the *N* series as a general-purpose, medium-duty head with a uniquely appealing sound. The *N* series batter heads come coated (except for the bass drum head), and a center dot is

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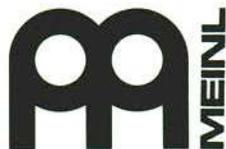
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S Series. The S series heads are manufactured with approximately equal quantities of polyester and *Kevlar*. They come coated, with what Asahi calls a "resonance-controlling outer ring," which is "actually sandwiched between the multi-laminate layers of cloth." Again, several thicknesses are available. I tested an *S3YC*, which is the thinnest of the series and the "standard" model.

In terms of sound, I found these heads to have a bit more attack sound than the *N* series—due most likely to the increased *Kevlar* content—and a slightly duller resonance. In other words, they sound best when smacked fairly hard, but they don't project very far or ring for very long—making them great for a miked-up application like studio recording. They aren't recommended for concert work because they don't have the durability factors of other models, but I'm sure that many drummers could use them quite successfully in that application. On a purely acoustic basis, I found that they sounded a bit flat and unpleasant on toms and bass drums, but were dynamite on snare drums (taking into account that non-projecting factor). I wouldn't use these heads live, but I would very definitely consider them if I were going to be doing any recording or miked-up playing whatsoever.

A Series. The *A* is for "attack," and that's what these heads have: lots of attack. This model has the highest percentage of *Kevlar* among all the Compo heads. Yet *Kevlar* by itself—though very durable—doesn't produce a particularly pleasant tone in a drumhead. Asahi has added "just the right amount of polyester fibers to produce a bright, clean, crisp attack sound." I found that another adjective needs to be added to that list: high-pitched. These heads are for *cut*, not for a deep tone. Even my 16" floor tom sounded crisp and cutting; it had very little bottom to my ears. The *A* series is designed for high impact, and only sounds good under that condition. The heads need that impact in order to draw depth and tone out of the drum. When used at low volume, they are flat, boxy, and unresponsive. Consequently, I wouldn't feel good about using these heads on toms or bass drums in anything other than a high-volume situation where the drums had to cut through without the aid of mic's. Given that situation, however, they would probably work very well, and be incredibly durable to boot. The heads I tested were the *A4XC* models, which is the medium of three thicknesses available.

Now that I've knocked the heads for their high tom or bass drum sound, let me turn around and say that they are capable of producing an absolutely devastating snare drum sound! If you're looking for a snare drum that will *crack* all the way to



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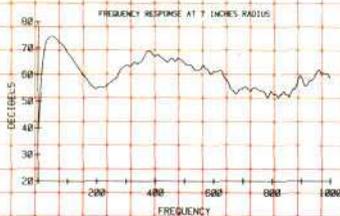
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the back of a big hall, this may be the head for you. There is a center dot, which in other heads tends to muffle impact sound. On the Compo head, however, the center dot seems to actually *add* tone quality that would not otherwise be there on a high-Kevlar-content head. Another positive feature of these heads—especially on snare drums—is that "cushiony" feel I mentioned earlier. Anyone who played on a Duraline *all-Kevlar* head will probably remember that it had little or no "give," and could actually be painful to play on at high impact over a long period of time. Compo's blend of Kevlar and polyester seems to reduce that hardness just enough, while retaining the crisp attack sound.

K Series. The K (for "Kinetic") series heads are similar in design to the A series, but utilize a different polyester material and a different laminating process. They are also black in color, and incorporate an outer sound-control ring. They are designed, according to the manufacturer, "for aggressive rock 'n' roll play, with a bright, clear, high-energy sound." I must take issue with Asahi on this one. These heads are obviously for rock playing; they are very thick and very durable. But they do not produce anything near what I would call a "bright" or "clear" sound. They actually sound quite warm and deep, but also quite thick and muffled—with little or no impact sound or "cut." I would say that these heads produce a drum sound

most similar to that produced by an Evans *Hydraulic*. Personally, I like that sound on toms and bass drums—it's deep and boomy—and I might use K heads on those drums for recording. But there's not enough cut or natural projection for my taste in any other application. This is particularly evident on a snare drum. There's absolutely no crispness from this head. If all you're looking for is a head that will produce a fat backbeat when you hit it with a *Louisville Slugger*-sized drumstick—and last more than one gig—this might be the one. But if you play at anything less than arena volume, you're not going to get much response out of this particular series. The models I tested were of medium thickness.

All in all, the new Compo heads are both impressive and interesting. They definitely provide alternative sounds to any other head on the market, and they seem to offer durability and performance quality equal to any. One important area in which they differ, however, is price. These heads are the result of high technology, and—predictably—carry a high-tech price tag. Using a 14" snare batter as a representative example, the N and S series heads list for \$30.00, the A series lists for \$39.00, the K series lists for \$42.00, and the M series will list for around \$50.00. Projecting these prices up into the larger sizes, it's easy to see that some drummers will be intimidated by Compo's prices. But taking into

account the added durability factor of most of these heads when compared to plastic, and considering the variety of sounds, I can recommend the Compo line to drummers who are looking for something new in drumheads.

Canasonic



The Canasonic brand has been around for a while, and may be familiar to many drummers for its multi-colored heads. But recently, Canasonic introduced a series called *Power Play*, designed to offer a totally new sound and projection. I tested heads from that series, along with Canasonic's *No Overtone* snare and bass drum batters.

As with the Compo heads, the construction of Canasonic heads is what makes them different from any other on the market. The basic, original-style Canasonic head is made entirely of fiberglass, in what is called "unit construction." That means that the head and hoop are molded together at the same time, creating a drumhead that is totally one piece. The fiberglass can be made in any color, hence the availability of colored heads. I must say that this method of construction produces a deceptively strong head; my pull-out test failed to create a weakness in a 14" batter. And yet the hoop is quite flexible and can conform to imperfections in drums readily. That's beneficial in the tuning department.

Power Play. The *Power Play* series adds a sheet of Mylar on top of a layer of fiberglass that is different from that used in the original-style heads. This, in turn, produces a livelier sound, greater attack, and even more durability than the original series heads could offer. The Mylar sheet is fitted onto the head during the same molding operation that creates the rest of the head—so the "unit construction" concept remains valid. The final head has a shiny, coated appearance, but since the color is in the fiberglass and the shine is from the

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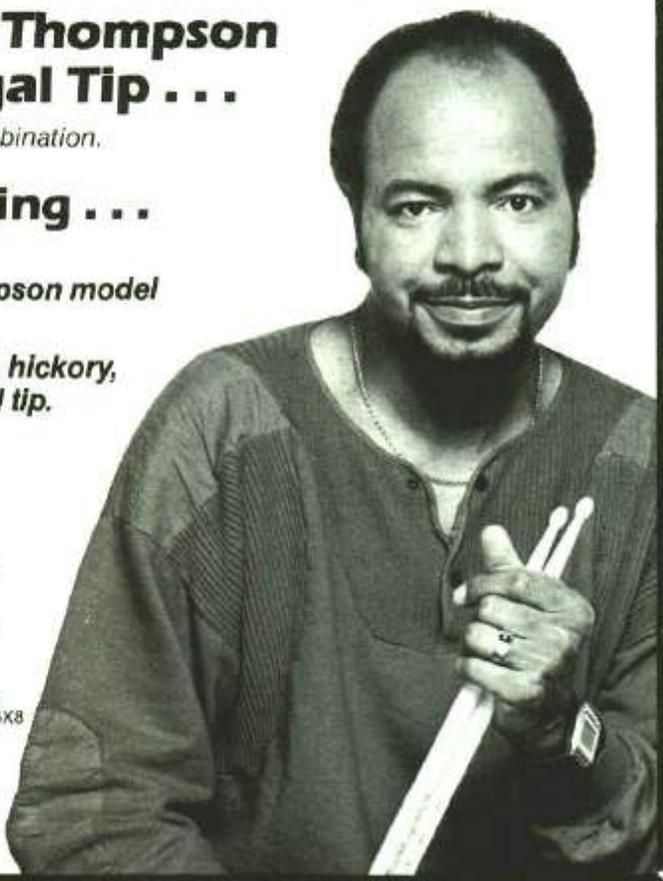
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Mylar, there's nothing to wear off. (The heads I tried were all finished in black, which was the only color in which the series was offered at its release. As we went to press, Cana-Sonic was considering adding multiple colors to the line.)

In terms of performance, I must admit to being pleasantly surprised by the *Power Play* heads—in most applications. The sound might best be compared to that of a clear Remo *Ambassador*: bright, cutting, and responsive. Yet there is a certain "thinness" to the sound of an *Ambassador* that was not present in the Cana-Sonic heads—owing, I believe, to the mellowing effect of the fiberglass under the single sheet of *Mylar*. There is no question that these heads are *loud*—I would heartily recommend them to anyone who needs to cut through a medium-to high-volume band in an unmiked situation. I especially liked the definition the heads produced from my floor toms.

On the other hand, there is one characteristic of these heads that drummers should be aware of: They need to stretch a bit more than a plastic head before reaching that "broken in" point. What this meant, on my kit, was that I had to bring the pitch of any given drum up a bit higher than I had been used to in order to get the best sound out of the *Power Play* heads. They did not perform well at low tensions. That may not be a problem for some drummers; I found it an annoyance in terms of not being able to achieve certain pitches on certain drums. The problem was especially apparent on bass drums. I tried both medium and thin *Power Play* heads on my bass drum, and was not happy with the sound in either case. Even the medium-weight head did not produce the low end I prefer in a bass drum. Instead, the sound was high, flat, and boxy. It projected very well, but didn't have enough "boom" for my taste. Again, if you're used to using an *Ambassador* head on a bass drum, you may not find any problem with a *Power Play*—and may gain a bit of volume. If you're used to using twin-ply heads, you'll probably not find the *Power Play* heads to your liking on your bass drum.

The characteristics that make a drum-head a poor performer on bass drums often make it excellent on snare drums, and that is the case with the *Power Play* head. I tested a thin head on my snare, and found it to be very crisp, responsive, and loud. I wouldn't use this head for anything but a live, unmiked situation where volume was called for, due to the resonance that the head produced even when I added a *Zero Ring*. But in that situation—which is generally the one in which I perform these days—the head proved most useful.

Playing on the *Power Play* heads was quite comfortable; there was a certain amount of "give" to them that I liked. The interesting thing about that was that there

was no sense of "looseness" in the heads; they remained crisp and tight at all times. Cana-Sonic's literature states that the heads will not dent, and I certainly found that to be true. Since this is often a problem with thin plastic heads, I feel it worthy of special mention here. Actually, durability seems to be very high with these heads; I bashed them for *several* band gigs and then only had to wipe the stick marks off with a damp cloth to have them looking absolutely new again.

No Overtone models. Although the *No Overtone* series is not new for Cana-Sonic, I was eager to try it for this review, since it is being promoted along with the *Power Play* series as particularly good for snare and bass drums. It is created of a different fiberglass composition than that used in the *Power Play* heads, and has no *Mylar* layer. Consequently, it is a bit drier and warmer, and produces noticeably fewer overtones—hence the name. I wish to go on record as saying that this is a dynamite snare drum head! It's the only one I've found that can be used in almost any application without any additional treatment whatsoever. It's controlled, loud (yet sensitive at lower volumes), lively enough for live work (yet easily muffled for studio work if desired), and very durable under heavy impact. If this head has any failing whatsoever, it's that it may not produce the amount of high end desirable for use

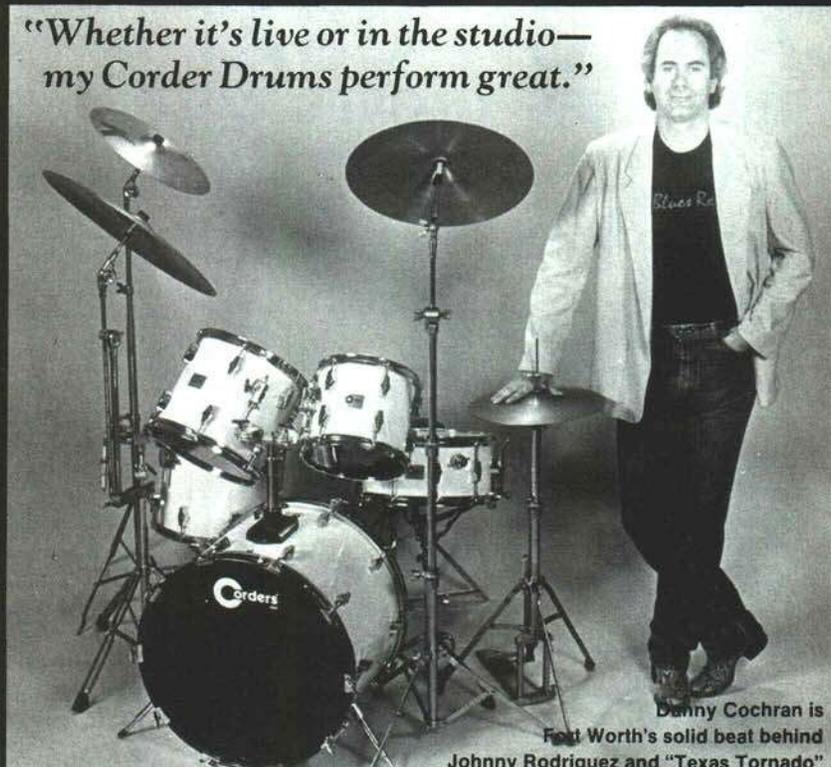
on deep-shelled snares. In other words, if you're trying to achieve crispness from an 8" or deeper snare, you might have a bit of trouble with this head. But it would certainly give enough crispness on any shallower drum, and would also give a tremendously fat and powerful backbeat sound on the deeper ones.

I cannot say that I liked the *No Overtone* model on my bass drum, because I like a lot of boominess and ring in a bass drum head, and this head is designed to reduce that. But if you're into a flatter, muffled kind of "studio" sound, this head can produce that sound very well—along with giving you a lot of "punch." Achieving depth may be a problem for some drummers, but a great deal will depend on the size of the drum and the personal taste of the drummer. Again, durability was excellent.

Cana-Sonic heads have never been big sellers in the overall drumhead market, and are probably unknown in several areas. This is a shame, since the company offers an excellent series of heads that represent yet another alternative to the norm for drummers who like to experiment. In terms of price, a 14" batter head in either the *Power Play* or *No Overtone* series lists for \$28.00, making the heads more expensive than some but less than others. Given all their performance factors, I'd say that a set of Cana-Sonics would be a worthwhile investment.



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NATIONAL DRUM & BUGLE CORPS DAY

This summer, a bill was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives designating August 20th, 1988, as National Drum & Bugle Corps Recognition Day. Drum corps participants, fans, parents, and anyone else interested in the activity are encouraged to write their local representatives and ask them to co-sponsor the bill. Simply address a postcard to the appropriate representative that says: "Please co-sponsor House Joint Resolution 342 for National Drum & Bugle Corps Recognition Day." Contact information for local representa-

tives can be found in local telephone directories under "U.S. Government." You may also contact the offices of Drum Corps International, P.O. Box 548, Lombard, IL 60148, (312) 495-9866, for further information or assistance.

Congressmen Robert Kas-tenmeier and Charles Pashayan, Jr., are the original co-sponsors of the bill. However, for the bill to become a reality, there need to be 218 co-sponsors from the House of Representatives. After the bill passes the House, it will then be presented to the U.S. Senate for their approval.

DRUMS LTD. RELOCATES

Bill Crowden's Drums Ltd., which had been located on the eighth floor at 218 S. Wabash in Chicago since 1963, has recently relocated. The business will now be located in a 3,238-square-foot ground-floor showroom at 222 S. Jefferson Street.

The well-known drum specialty shop has been a fixture in the Chicago area for many years, catering to drummers and percussionists from around the world with sales, rentals, lessons, clinics, and repair services.

ZILDJIAN ANNOUNCES PROMOTIONS

The Avedis Zildjian Company has announced three important promotions within its U.S. marketing group: Lennie DiMuzio to the position of Director of Artist Relations, Jerry Donegan to the position of Sales Operations Manager, and Colin Schofield to the position of Marketing Manager. Armand Zildjian, President, commented, "With these promotions, we have recognized the broad range of skills possessed by each of these committed players and also the years of hard work they have given the company. This year will be one of the Zildjian Company's most successful ever, so it was time to reward their success and spur them on to even greater heights."

DiMuzio is one of the long-

est-serving members of the Zildjian staff, having originally joined the company as a cymbal tester in 1961. His reputation within the industry as an authority on cymbals is preeminent. Donegan joined the company in 1966, and has since been responsible for such achievements as the marketing of Zildjian's line of activewear and the launch of the company's range of drumsticks. Schofield joined Zildjian in 1983 as International Promotions Manager, operating out of the company's office in Windsor, England. He will be responsible for the company's product marketing programs including all advertising and promotional activity, press relations, and new-product planning.

WANAMAKER ASSUMES NEW YAMAHA POST

Mike Bennett, General Manager of Yamaha's Musical Instruments Division, recently announced the promotion of Jay Wanamaker to the newly created position of Marketing Manager for Concert and Marching Percussion. Mr. Wanamaker will be responsible for directing all marketing activities relating to Yamaha concert and marching percussion, as well as all Deagan products.

Jay Wanamaker is a highly regarded clinician, educator, author, and arranger in the field of percussion education. He has directed the percussion sections of many outstanding marching bands, including the

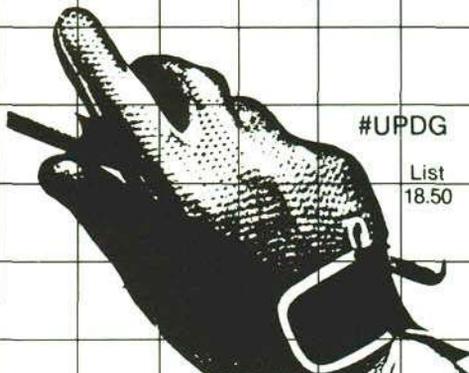
800-member 1984 Olympic Ail-American Marching Band, the 500-member Statue Of Liberty Ail-American Marching Band, and the 1000-member Pan American Games Marching Band. He currently instructs the McDonald's All-American High School Band. Mr. Wanamaker is also active in the Percussive Arts Society, where he is a member of the Board of Directors and chairman of both the International Drum Rudiments and Marching Percussion committees. He has authored over 50 percussion publications, including a textbook on marching band techniques.

NEW MANAGEMENT AT PEARL

Pearl International recently announced a new management roster—the result of multiple promotions within the company. New President of Pearl International is Tak Isomi, formerly Vice President of Marketing. After several years in the L.A. and New York offices, Mr. Isomi will now direct the company from its corporate headquarters in Nashville.

Former Artist Relations Manager Ken Austin has been promoted to the position of Corporate Marketing Manager, while Ken Mills—formerly manager of Pearl's East Coast sales and distribution facility near New York City—will assume the position of General Operations Manager. Both gentlemen will also be operating from the Nashville office.

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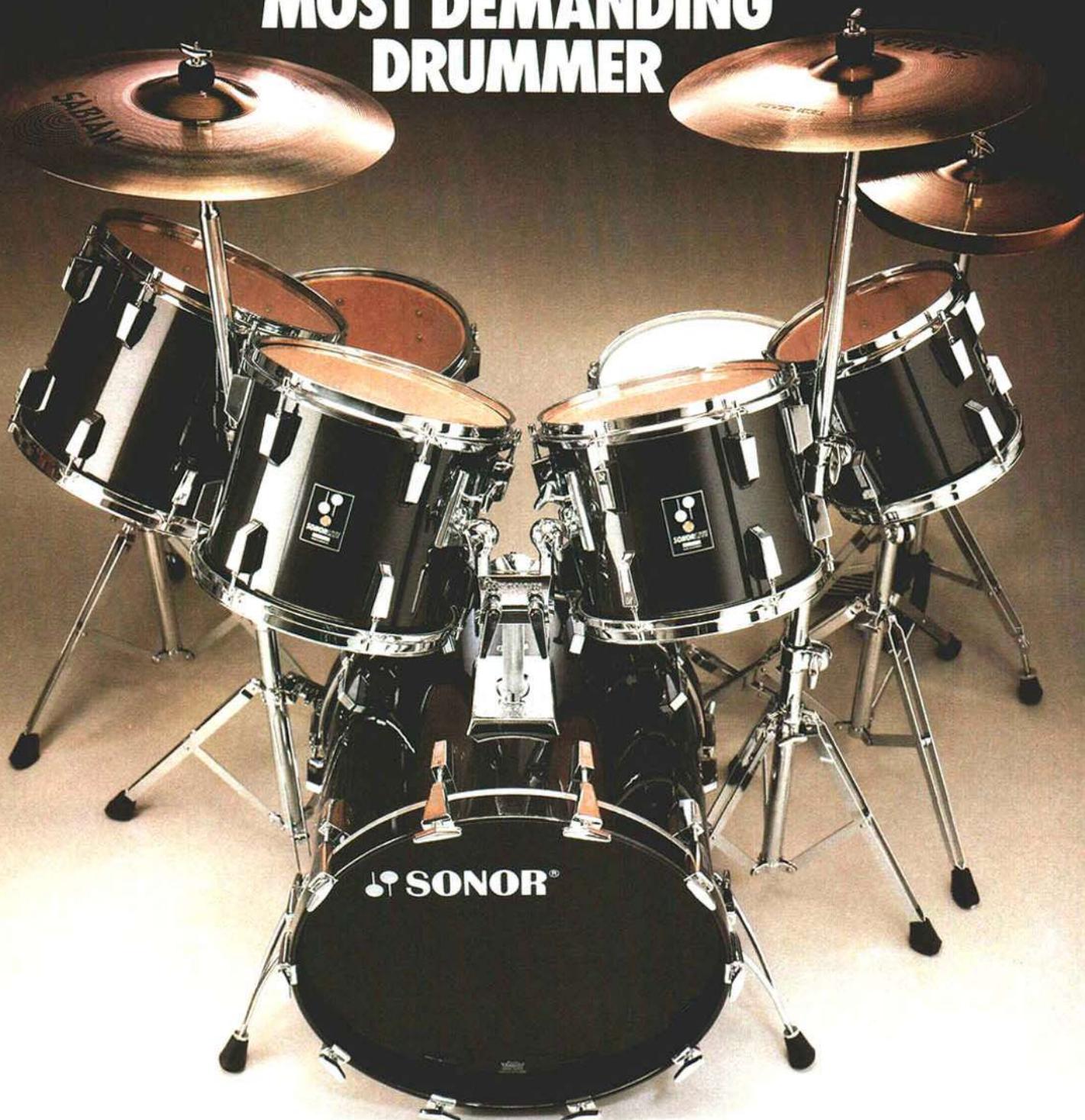


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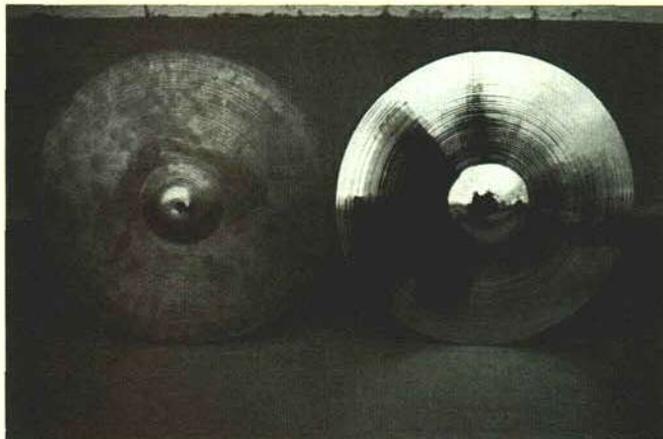
Sonorlite drums are constructed using the finest quality scandinavian birch.

Snare Drum and bass drum shells are 12-ply and measure only 7 mm, while tom tom and floor tom shells are 9-ply and measure 6 mm.

Sonorlite drums sound distinctively brilliant yet warm and powerful. Check them out at your authorized Sonor dealer!

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BRODIE'S BRIGHT WERKS



Brodie's Bright Werks recently announced the only known cymbal-care service in the U.S. and Canada. Jim Brodie, a specialist in the polishing of cymbals, states that he can "do it all for your cymbals—whether it be restoring that new look to old or tarnished cymbals, adding a special high-reflection mirror finish to old or new cymbals, or anything in between." There is absolutely no plating of any kind involved, which might result in "choked" or "muted" cymbal sounds. In fact, Brodie guarantees that his process produces no audible tone loss or sound distortion.

Some of the advantages of Brodie-custom-finished cymbals are: ease of cleaning, reduced cracking tendencies (in certain types of cymbals), and—in the case of "mirror-finished" cymbals—an absolutely brilliant light-scattering effect.

Brodie's Bright Werks offers this service to individuals, schools, drum & bugle corps, marching bands, or cymbal

dealers. Any cymbal—new or used, clean or tarnished, mass-produced or handmade in China—can be custom finished to the owner's specifications. According to Jim Brodie, "Brodie's Bright Werks does high-quality, not high-volume work. Each and every cymbal is very carefully cleaned or polished to the owner's specifications by myself on a machine I designed and built exclusively for the purpose of polishing cymbals."

The company also offers Bright Werks Cleaner and Polish. This new product is 100% abrasive-free and is highly recommended for use on Brodie's mirror-finished cymbals. It can also be used on all non-coated, non-ferrous and precious metals (i.e., brass, copper, aluminum, gold, and silver), and even on chrome and brass plating. For further information on prices or services from Brodie's Bright Werks, contact Jim Brodie, 818 Cook Avenue, Billings, Montana 59101, (406) 259-7669.

DRUM BOOK FROM PETER ERSKINE

Hal Leonard Publishing is currently distributing a new drum technique book from 21st Century Music Productions written by Peter Erskine. *Peter Erskine—Drum Concepts And Techniques* is a book for the beginning to intermediate drummer, and covers such topics as drum setups, beats, brushes, phrasing, tuning, and reading. Erskine shares his drumming

experience and philosophies, along with the rhythmic influences that make up his successful technique. The book also includes a discography of Erskine's performance on record. For more information on this publication, see your local music retailer or contact Hal Leonard Publishing Corp., P.O. Box 13819, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53213.

SOUND DESIGNER UNIVERSAL SOFTWARE

Digidesign's *Sound Designer* sample-editing software for the Apple *Macintosh* computer now features a new *Universal* edition that works with many samplers not previously covered. Samplers supported by *Sound Designer Universal* include the Roland *S-50*, *S-10*, *MKS-100*, and *S-220*, the Akai *X7000* and *S700*, the Casio *FZ-1*, the Oberheim *DPX-1*, the Dynacord *ADD-one*, and any sampler supporting the MIDI sample dump standard.

Like all previous versions of *Sound Designer*, the *Universal* edition displays up to three waveforms on the high-resolution *Macintosh* screen, allowing the user to edit each sound with up to 1/50th of a second accuracy. High-quality looping is made possible through the use of a special loop window and a

flexible crossfade looping function. Sounds can be digitally mixed, merged, equalized, and compressed, allowing the user to create unique, specialized sounds. Complex frequency analysis can be performed using *Sound Designer's* three-dimensional FFT (Fast Fourier Transform) display.

Unlike previous versions of *Sound Designer*, the *Universal* edition has the ability to transfer sounds between the many samplers it supports. However, front panel editing and Karplus-Strong digital synthesis capabilities have been removed. The program requires a minimum memory of 512K and is *Mac II* compatible. For further information, contact Digidesign, Inc., 1360 Willow Road, Suite 101, Menlo Park, California 94025, (415)327-8811.

TUKI COVERS



Tuki Covers has recently introduced a new line of musical equipment covers. As an inexpensive alternative to hard cases, Tuki offers a complete variety of soft covers ranging from studio equipment and amplifier covers to a full series of percussion bags. The percussion series features bags for every size of drum, along with conga, timbale, and tambourine bags, stick and hardware bags, and three different sizes of cymbal bags. Also included in the percussion series are bags for electronic drums.

The bags are made from dur-

able, long-lasting cordura nylon. All seams are double-stitched and the strapping is full-length for maximum weight support. As an indication of confidence in their product, Tuki guarantees the bags to be tear-free for a period of five years. All bags are available either padded or unpadded. (It is recommended that bags used for electronic drums be padded.) For additional information, write Tuki Covers, 306 Garibaldi Avenue, Suite 3A, Lodi, New Jersey 07644, or call (201) 777-4786.

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The only thing between you and your drums is your choice of sticks, and that makes that choice a very important one. If you could design the optimum drumsticks, first you would want to start with great wood, choice american hickory. Next the grip, you would need to feel the response thru the texture of the wood and not thru layers of slick varnish. And lastly straightness and balance, both of which are a must for good control.

Pearl has been listening and your optimum drumsticks are just what we've designed. Choice hickory sticks made in

the U.S.A. with the feel and look of quality wood. Hand selected for straightness, weight and balance. Available in all popular sizes and styles, both nylon and wood tip, and a few new styles all our own. There is a stick for every player from jazz to metal with a new hard rock version with black nylon tips.

When you take a closer look and compare, one thing that will stand out is that these are serious drumsticks for serious drummers.

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DAUZ DRUM TRIGGER PADS



Daz Designs, Ltd. recently introduced the finished version of the Daz Drum Pad. The new design features a 6" free-floating rubber playing surface, a shock-mounted spring system, a removable backplate, an adjustable dome top clamp, crosstalk eliminator gaskets, tension-rod fastening, and a 1/4" input jack.

Daz Drum Pads offer the feel of rubber snare pads with extra resiliency due to the shock mounting. The new added

clamp adjustability and grip lock gaskets make the mounting system extremely versatile. The detachable backplate simplifies modifications, and the "new-age" look is designed to fit into any type of setup. The pads are available at various retail music outlets throughout the U.S. or direct from Daz Designs. For further information, contact the manufacturer at 4715 W. El Segundo Boulevard #B, Hawthorne, California 90250, (213) 219-0033.

NEW PAISTE MODELS

Paiste recently announced the addition of several new products to its cymbal lines. Those include thin crash cymbals in the 3000 line, a 20" *Mellow China* in the 2000 series, a 20" *Power Ride* in the 1000 *Rude* Series, and 14" *Sound-Edge* hi-hats in both the 400 and 200 lines.

According to Greg Perry, National Sales Manager for Paiste, "The new 3000 Series thin crashes were developed for drummers who wanted more sensitive, delicate crash sounds in the 3000 line. Naturally, they

feature the same sensitivity and dynamic range that is characteristic of that series. The cymbals are available in 14" through 19" sizes. The other new models are being added to the existing lines due to the popular demand and heavy consumer interest in all the new Paiste products, and to broaden the sound choices at all performance levels."

For more information, contact your local Paiste dealer or write to Paiste America, Inc., 460 Atlas Street, Brea, California 92621.

PLAY-ALONG TAPES FOR CONTEMPORARY TUNES

A 20-song, two-cassette package of contemporary tunes—recorded so that the drums can be either isolated or eliminated from the track—is available from Play With The Pros. Featuring top Nashville session players (including drummer Eddie Bayers), the recordings are made in stereo with the drums in one channel and the rest of the music and vocals in the other. By adjusting the bal-

ance, the drums can be heard alone, heard with the band, or not heard at all, allowing the listener to play along with the tracks. (Versions for the isolations of guitar, bass, and keyboards are also available.) For further information on price and ordering procedures, contact Play With The Pros, P.O. Box 156, Dickson, Tennessee 37055.

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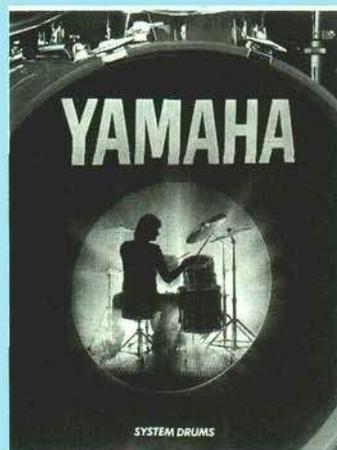
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THAT'S STICK RESPONSE THAT'S VERI-SONIC

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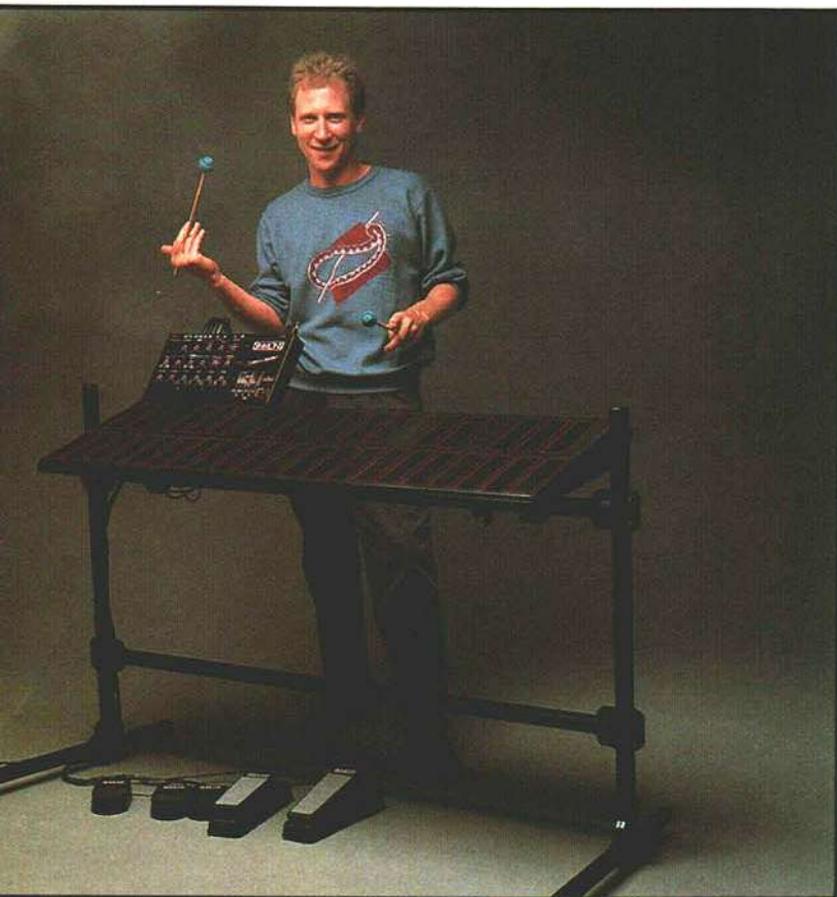
NEW YAMAHA DRUM CATALOG



Yamaha Music Corporation, USA, Drums, Guitars and Amplifier Division (DGA) is proud to announce the release of its newest drum catalog. The 50-page, four-color catalog features the complete line of Yamaha acoustic drums, electronic percussion systems, and drum hardware. The new cata-

log is available from all authorized Yamaha drum dealers, or can be ordered (at a postage and handling charge of \$3.00) from Yamaha Music Corporation, Drums, Guitars, Amplifiers Division, 6600 Orange-thorpe Avenue, Buena Park, California 90620.





Ed Mann

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“Xylophone, vibe, marimba, bells, log drum, chimes, squeeze drum, tabla, bell tree—the Silicon Mallet provides easy access to tuned and accessory percussion sounds and enough programming flexibility to design a wide range of user created voices, all playable from a single 36 note (expandable to 60 note) mallet keyboard.

The keyboard is highly sensitive and dynamic, controlling the overtone structure and volume of each note. This results in lively, responsive sounds, and gives the Silicon Mallet a natural feel. In addition, the pitch bend, modulation and sustain pedals allow for subtle nuances and increased flexibility in phrasing.

Using the Silicon Mallet as a MIDI control source, the percussionist can combine individual sounds and effects from other MIDI devices and create entirely new voices. The keyboard can be split at any position for the playing of multiple sounds such as a drum machine or sampler from one octave, and pitched percussion from the remainder of the instrument.

Having this extended range of sounds available chromatically from a single playing source has allowed me to condense my set up and provide orchestration that would be unthinkable in terms of acoustic instruments.

The Silicon Mallet is a musical breakthrough and a valuable sound and control source for all percussionists.”

Silicon Mallet

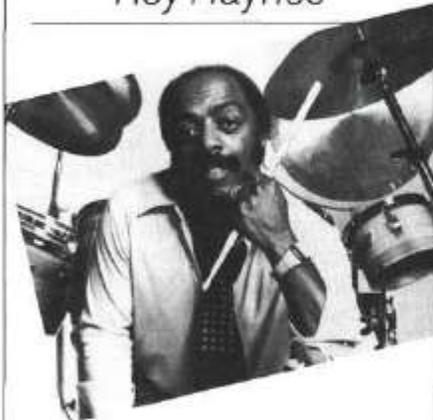
Ed Mann is an LA based percussionist and composer. He teaches percussion at CalArts, is a founding member of The Repercussion Unit, and is probably best known for his work with Frank Zappa.

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Profiles in Percussion

Roy Haynes

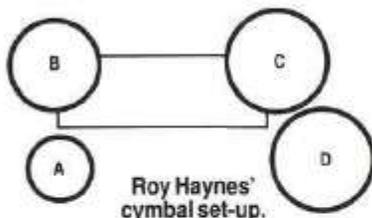


He is one of the most outstanding jazz drummers in the world. And his unique playing style helped to modernize the established method of playing drums in the jazz of the 60s. Today, Roy Haynes continues to challenge accepted concepts and innovate new approaches.

His contribution to music is best illustrated by mentioning the artists who chose Roy to play and record with them: Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Thelonius Monk, Sarah Vaughan, John Coltrane, Billie Holiday, Stan Getz, Sonny Rollins and Miles Davis.

Roy plays with some of today's great artists - Chick Corea and Pat Metheny. And also headlines his own group. He performs regularly at the most prestigious jazz festivals around the world.

As a testimony to Roy's influence on music, the Boston Jazz Society set up the Roy Haynes Scholarship Fund in 1978 at the Berklee School of Music.



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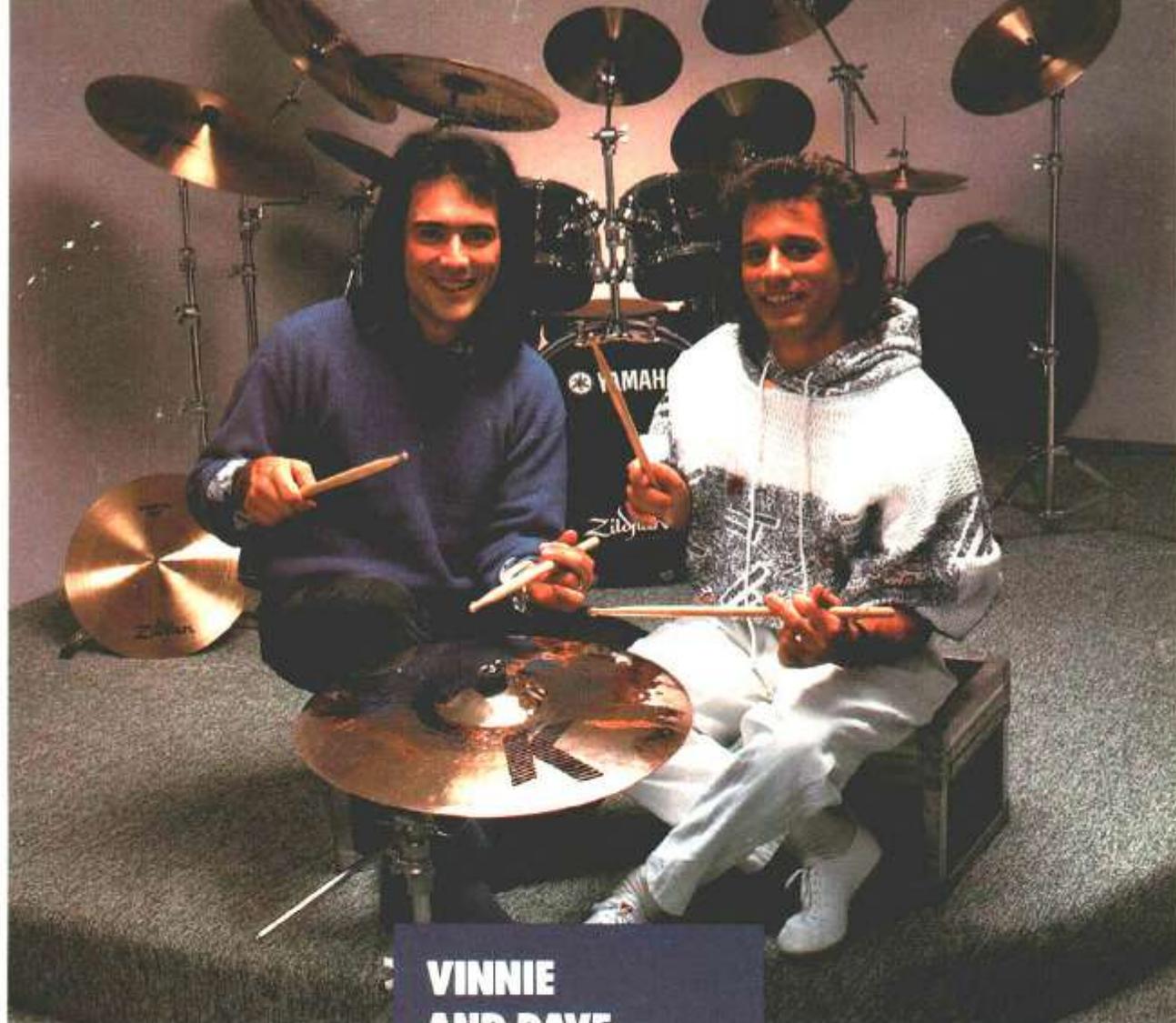
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At Zildjian, we listen to innovative artists like Vinnie Colaiuta and Dave Weckl. And turn their ideas into new sounds and new cymbals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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