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January '96

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20th

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ISSUE

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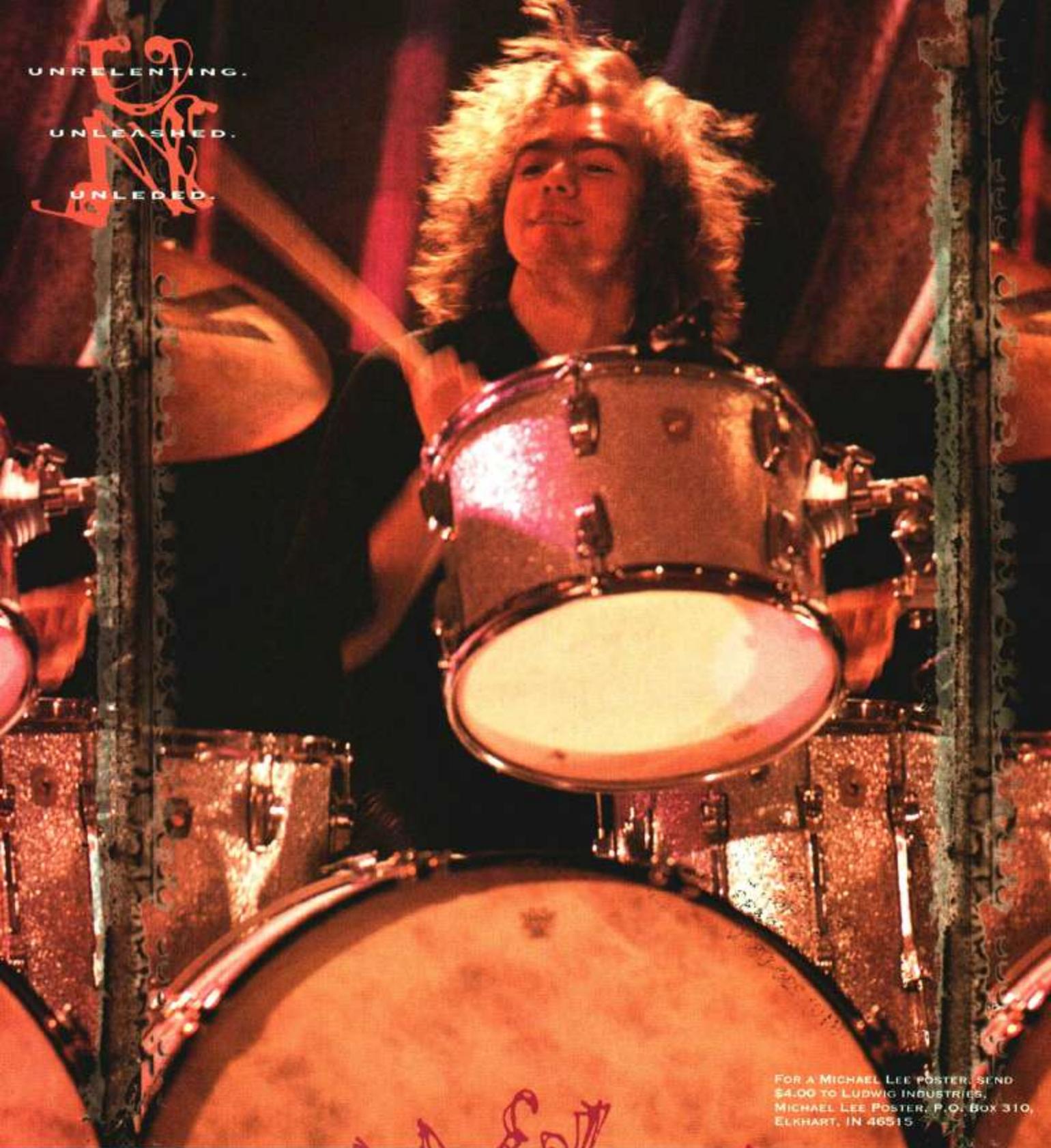


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He melded heavy and delicate like no other drummer before or since. No wonder fifteen years after his untimely passing in 1980, interest in all things Bonham has only grown. Bonzo lives, indeed.

by **T. Bruce Wittet**

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Win a one-of-a-kind John Bonham drum and cymbal setup
from Ludwig and Paiste!

21 Years Of MD



This issue marks the beginning of our twentieth consecutive year of publishing *MD*. Two decades ago, the very first 32-page issue of *Modern Drummer* was distributed to

a handful of music shops and about 1,500 hopeful subscribers who'd signed on before the first issue was even released. Since then, we've gone from a basement office with four over-worked employees to a full staff of professionals in a modern, 8,400-square-foot office building. We've watched *MD* grow from a meager print run of 3,000 copies to an international publication read by nearly a quarter of a million drummers each month in over seventy-five countries.

As I reflect on the nearly two hundred issues we've published, I'm quite proud of the enormous amount of information that's been passed along through our pages.

Hundreds of leading drummers have been interviewed, and a wealth of ideas and advice has been disseminated through our many column departments. We've reviewed and reported on thousands of new products, books, recordings, and videos, and done our best to address issues that concern drummers of all ages, at all playing levels, and in a variety of musical styles.

We lead this anniversary issue off with a tribute to the late John Bonham, certainly one of the most influential forces on the rock drumming scene. We felt T. Bruce Wittet's compelling portrait of this legendary player would be a great way to kick off our twentieth-anniversary celebration. We also thought it might be interesting to look back at some of the great players who have appeared on the cover of *Modern Drummer* over the years, and extract an assortment of their most memorable and inspirational comments. And what better way to celebrate a milestone in drum publishing than to take a glance at the evolution of our instrument as it grew over a

period of nine decades. *MD's* drum historian, Harry Cangany, takes us on the journey. Also, in keeping with an *MD* anniversary tradition, our "Gone But Not Forgotten" tribute honors many of the outstanding members of our fraternity who we've lost over the past twenty years, and whose contributions can never be ignored.

I must take a moment to acknowledge the hundreds of people who helped us reach the twenty-year mark. My thanks to all the manufacturers, the artists, the dealers who carry *MD*, our fabulous writers and photographers, and, of course, the best in-house staff anyone could wish for. Most of all, my sincere thanks to *you*, the loyal readers of *MD*. A devoted readership is the backbone of any publication, and we thank you for twenty years of support. I can assure you, we'll keep doing our very best to bring you the finest drum periodical we can each month. Hopefully, we can continue to inspire you to be the very best you can possibly be for the next twenty years.

RS

MODERN DRUMMER

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine



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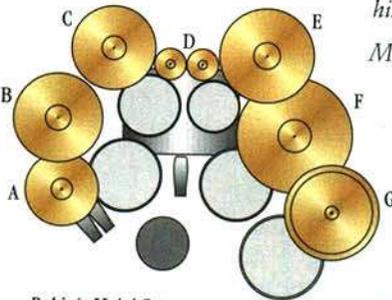
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BEEN THERE - DONE THAT... NOW ROBIN HITS BULLSEYE!



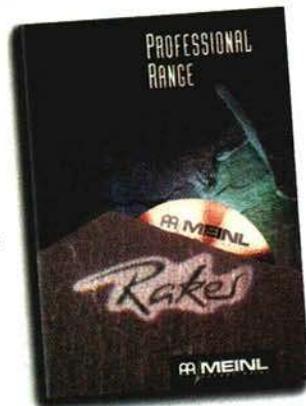
Robin DiMaggio, 24, has created an outstanding name for himself with his versatile playing in the studio, on tour, in clinics and at drum festivals. At the age of 17 he kicked off his career playing with Tracy Chapman. A year later he was touring for Paul McCartney. Since then he has worked with the likes of New Kids on the Block, All For One, Karen White, Chante More, El Debarge, Tony Braxton and Sexual Chocolate. Today Robin is known for his straightforward "in the pocket" playing, thanks to 11 years of Joe Porcaro's master teaching. Often called "the loop king" you can hear his street grooves on many of today's biggest Rap productions. We know his career will continue to take him a long way. After all, hasn't he already proven he's doing something right? Like his choice of cymbals - Meinl. The feel is there.



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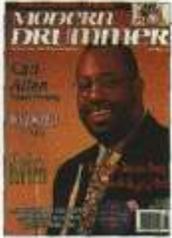


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MEINL
ROLAND MEINL

In celebration of MD's 20th Anniversary, the following artists offered comments regarding what the magazine has meant to them over the years.

CARL ALLEN



I've always said that communication is the basis of life. When communication breaks down, abnormality sets in. Checking out *Modern Drummer* every month makes me feel

like I'm still communicating with the drumming community. When I was younger, it was particularly enlightening to see that there were other drummers just like me—people who had gone through what I had. If you're a developing musician and a struggling artist, you often think your problems are unique. When you read articles about some of the things people have overcome, it's very uplifting. For me,

it's also very rewarding to see someone who had a story in the *Up & Coming* section in the '80s show up a few years later on the cover. I'm proud for them. I think we all share in that person's success. I had a cover story recently, and I'm still very moved to have been invited to do that. Here's wishing you another twenty years of successful drumming communication.

JESUS DIAZ

It was very exciting to be able to perform with Talking Drums at the 1994 *Modern Drummer* Festival Weekend, because it was the first time that percussionists were involved with drumsets. Not only was it an important step for me, but it also opened the door for other people to do what we did. So I congratulate *Modern Drummer* for your Festival efforts, as well as on publishing a great magazine.

DOANE PERRY

It's been wonderful to have a magazine devoted to the art of drumming—and thus to be able to look inside the minds of major drum artists over the last two decades. *MD* focuses on the techniques and artistry of drumming, which is not something that is addressed in interviews with bands in other magazines. I like to see if the image I have of a drummer—through the personality he or she projects on the drums—is reflected at all in the way he or she thinks. Sometimes it is, but other times I'm completely surprised.

I consider myself an eternal student of music. *MD* has been invaluable to me because of the many wonderful transcriptions and exercises that I have used from its pages. There's so much in every issue that I find interesting. The magazine has been fabulous in imparting information for all different levels. My thanks go to the editors and staff at *Modern Drummer* for

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DAVE ABRUZZESE

The obvious word to describe *Modern Drummer* is "informative." I never studied drums, so the information in *MD* was the only way I could blast through my wall of ignorance. I know a lot of people who get off on the charts in *MD*, but I never learned to read music. So for me, learning about the personal side of drummers and drumming—as well as the technical and technique information—has been great. There's always something in every issue that makes you say, "I never thought of that." Drums are a real personal instrument, and every drummer has something to offer. And what a thrill it was going into a newsstand and seeing my face on the cover for the first time. I remember just standing there thinking, "This is just unbelievable. Now all I have to do is play with Peter Gabriel and I can just stop."

DAVID GARIBALDI

Modern Drummer has been really positive for me because I've been involved with the magazine in some way for the better part of its existence. For several of the early years I wrote an article every month; for the past few years I've been writing four articles a year. This has really enabled me to explore a lot of different things, because I've had to come up with things to write about! *MD* is a great vehicle for teaching. I think it provides a service to drummers that is needed, and I'm pleased to be a part of the *MD* family.

DAN TOMLINSON

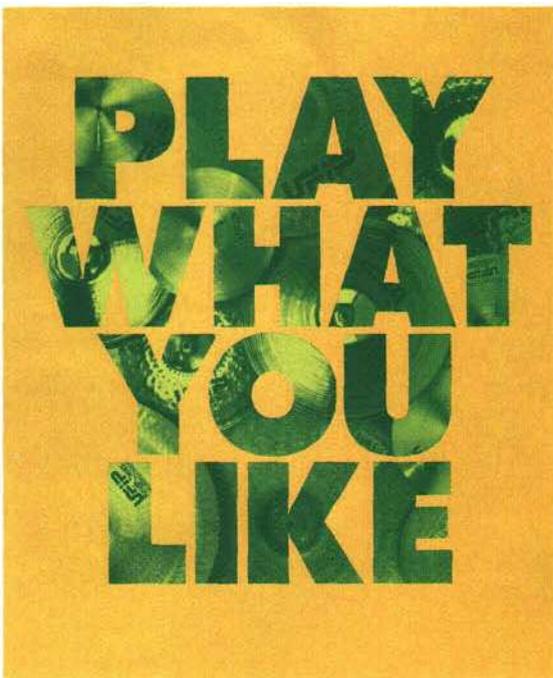
I've been reading *MD* since the second or third issue. It's been great to be able to look at all the different types of drummers—jazz, rock, fusion, Latin, or R&B—and to get a good glimpse into the type of life they have and the way they look at their music. Plus, one of my favorite things is the transcribed jazz solos. Keep 'em coming for another twenty years!

ROB AFFUSO

I hate to say it, but when I was a kid I didn't have much money, so I would go out to the local store every month and steal a copy of *MD*. The stories in there meant a lot to me; I was very impressionable. Even the ads were influential. (Phil Collins uses Sabian cymbals? *I'm* going to use Sabian cymbals.) When *Modern Drummer* did the feature with me, it was the equivalent of getting my first gold album. It was a landmark in my life and career. Congrats on your twentieth anniversary. (Oh, and by the way, I subscribe to the magazine now, so I don't have to steal it anymore!)

JIM KELTNER

I like reading about my peers—what they're up to and what they're thinking. But I also want to know who the up-and-comers are, what *they're* doing, and what *they* have to say. I believe that with the help of the readership, *Modern Drummer* will continue to hold our attention for at least another twenty years.



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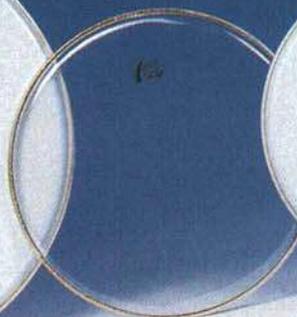
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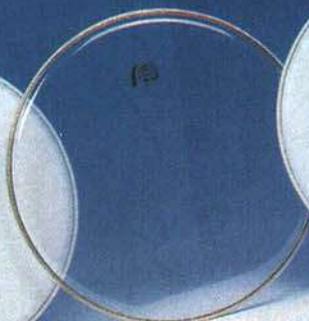
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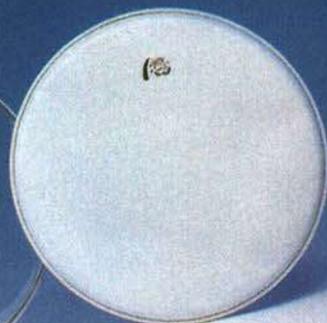
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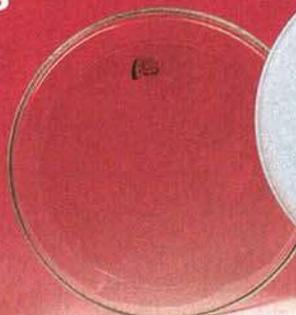
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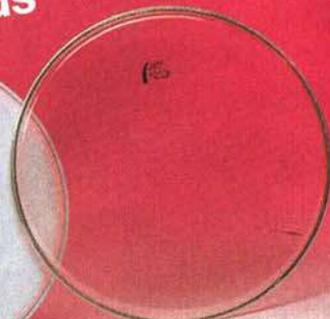
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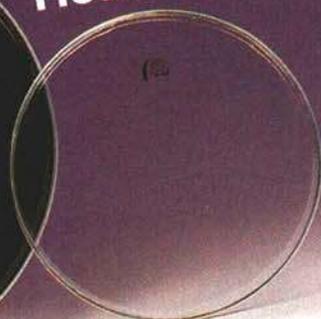


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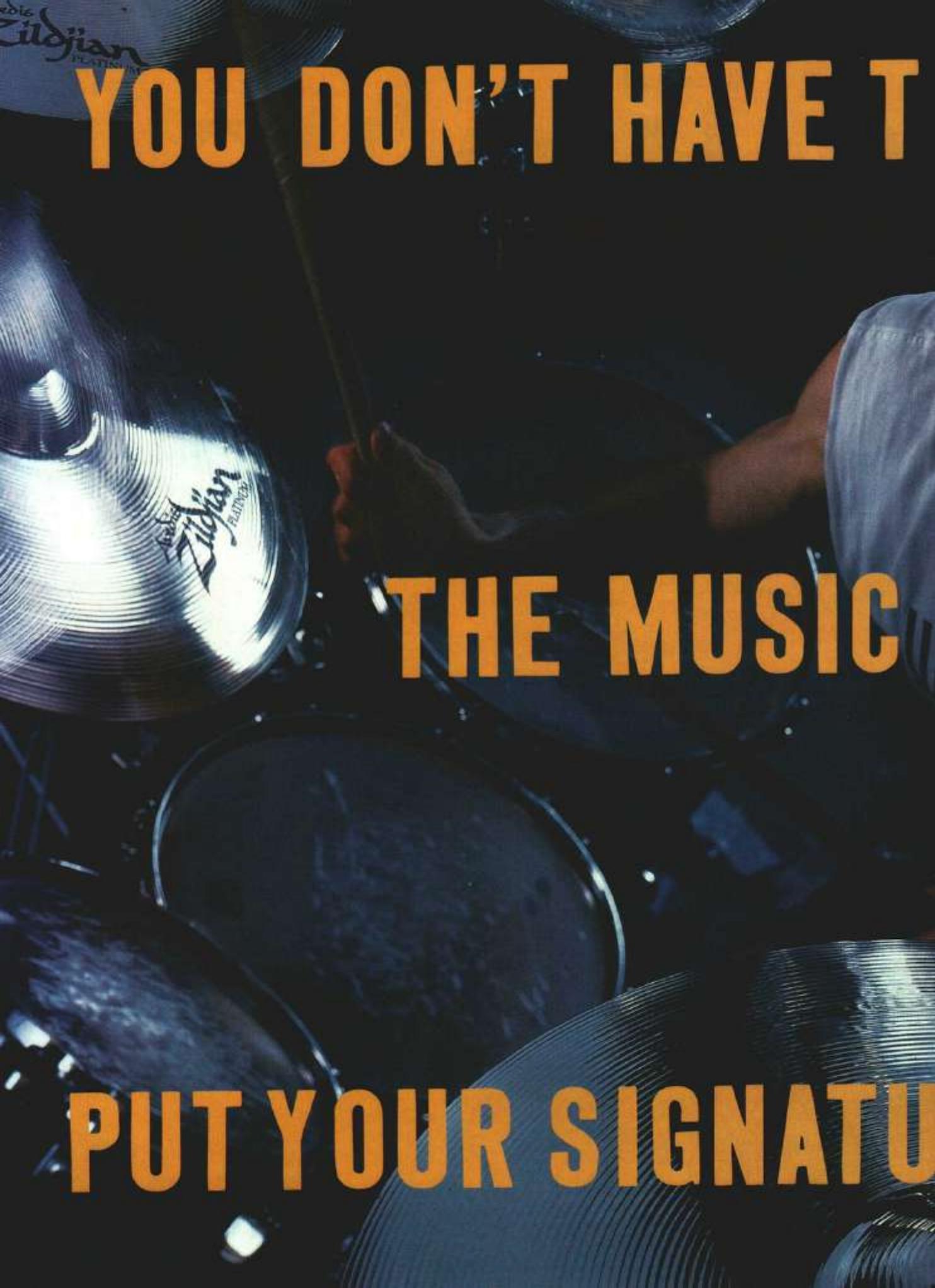
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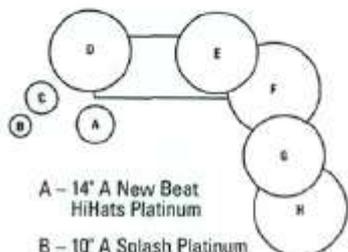
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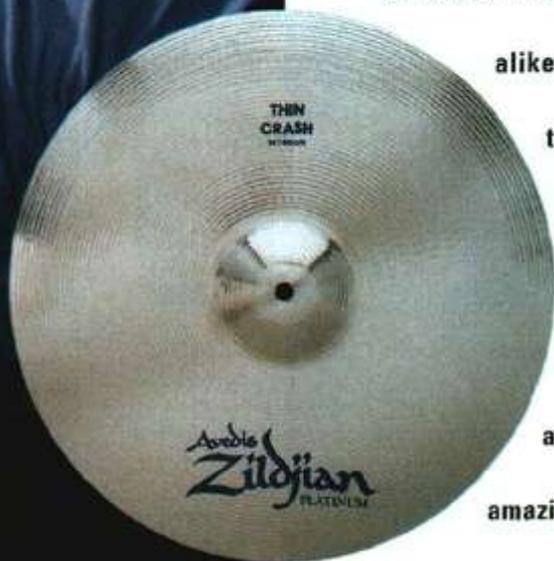
D - 19" A Rock Crash Platinum

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G - 19" A Rock Crash Platinum

H - 22" A China Boy Low



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Company Man Simon Kirke

For Simon Kirke, a member of Bad Company for twenty-one years, the release of *Company Of Strangers* feels much like a musical rebirth. "We've been headhunting for years, and we've finally got this classic Bad Company sound," Kirke says. "It's not that far removed from what we were doing fifteen, twenty years ago. To my thinking, Bad Company is back on course, which is just to play blues-based rock with the odd ballad thrown in.

"I've gone through some changes recording-wise," Simon explains. "In the first couple of years of the '90s, we did three albums that utilized what was then the new wave of recording, which entailed two or three takes. Then the producer would say, 'Okay, go out for an hour and we'll get everything tightened up.' What he actually did was edit the cuts, but we'd get strange fills—something I hadn't actually played. At one point I said, 'I don't really like this,' and he said, 'Don't worry, everybody does it.' Then I said, 'I'm not going to play to this damned click track.' He said, 'You must,' and I said, 'Do me a favor—we'll do one take with the click track and one without, and then you tell me what sounds best.' The one without sounded so much more uninhibited and free that we chose it. On this album, we just played and they recorded it. We may have done the lead vocals twice, and the guitar solos were overdubbed, but seventy-five percent of the album was done live.



Straight Ahead's Gayelynn McKinney

Gayelynn McKinney has been doing recent scattered gigs and jazz festivals with Straight Ahead, Atlantic Records' all-female jazz ensemble. "This band was probably looked upon as a gimmick," McKinney says, "filled with musicians who couldn't play. I heard some of those whispers. But once we put the records out and people saw us live, they realized this was not a joke.

"When you expect to gig out of Detroit, you have to know how to play," laughs Gayelynn, referring to their hometown. "They don't let you out unless you know how to play. My father was a bebop musician, so he had musicians like Max Roach coming through the house. I got a chance to meet a lot of different cats, and luckily they were always willing to give me information about how to play music. They would allow me to sit by them while they played, and I never had a problem being a female in that area. In school, however, it was different. They wanted to test me. But I always try to rise to a challenge."

For Gayelynn, one of those challenges is that Straight Ahead plays a wide variety of music. "I have to be able to adapt to several styles, which is no problem because I like to listen to all kinds of



music, my favorite being fusion/funk stuff. I grew up listening to swing because of my father and I love to play it. When I began to pay attention to different kinds of music, my 'jazz' became the fusion of Return To Forever, Chick Corea, Lenny White, and those kinds of bands. Lenny produced the first two records we did, so that was a thrill."

On their third and latest LP, *Dance Of The Forest*, Gayelynn is proud of her composition "Daddy's Song," dedicated, of course, to her father. "It was the first swing song I'd ever written, and it came out the way I heard it."

The group is currently in pre-production for an album that they will begin recording in February.

Robyn Flans

and one without, and then you tell me what sounds best.' The one without sounded so much more uninhibited and free that we chose it. On this album, we just played and they recorded it. We may have done the lead vocals twice, and the guitar solos were overdubbed, but seventy-five percent of the album was done live.

"The writing was shared between the five of us," Simon continues, "which is another reason it's so much closer to our hearts. The last three albums had been monopolized by the producer and lead singer. We wanted to get back to that classic sound that we had for seven or eight years, and we wanted to do it without a producer.

"I love the title track of the album," Kirke adds, "because it's a musical journey. It has peaks and valleys. There are quiet bits and then a raging guitar solo from Mick [Ralphs]. It also gave me a chance to stretch out on the drums. In the last verse, there's a little military thing that I like. I also love 'Little Martha,' a lovely little 3/4 thing. One of my songs that I like is the country ballad at the very end, 'Loving You Out Loud.' I must say I like all of the songs, but those three stick out."

At forty-five, Kirke says he keeps himself fit to handle the wear of the road. "I gave up drinking about three years ago, which really helped," he admits. "I play golf and do photography, as well as ride my Marley, which is on our tour truck. So I have other outlets, which makes touring comfortable for me. The bottom line is that a lot of traveling can be rough. You've got to hope that the time on stage is worth it all...and it is. Right now I'm very happy."

Robyn Flans

Jeff Hamilton

Definitely *His* Time

Last March, Jeff Hamilton left Ray Brown's trio to begin his own. "Ray and I had been playing together since 1978, when I first was in the L.A. 4," Hamilton explains. "Seventeen years is a long time. It was a very friendly parting, and I still work with him on other projects. It was just time to do my own projects. I've got some ideas I would like to embrace, which I couldn't do a hundred percent in the other bands I was playing with. I felt it was time to do some things on my own."

Hamilton was on the road with Brown for nearly nine months out of every year, but he hopes to strike a better balance with his own trio, and only be out for five or six months, which will allow him to do more clinics and studio work. Jeff says he enjoys working in the studio because he gets called to perform his own style. "For me," he says, "playing in the studio is not about, 'Can you sound like such and such today?' I don't play calfskin heads anymore, but for twenty years I did. They'd want that sound, so I'd take the calfskin

heads and the old cymbals in the studio.

"A few years ago I did the *Great Performances* video on PBS with Natalie Cole," Jeff continues, "as well as some work with Barbra Streisand in the studio and on her track with Frank Sinatra on the *Duets* album. I recently did a Dr. John big band recording and an Alaska Airlines big band commercial. I've done some source music in movies, like when they want a trio in the background, and I'll play brushes. It's a nice setup as far as studio work is concerned. I don't come home with headaches, and I'm happy I'm able to play the way I want to."

Jeff's first album, *Hamilton Time*, gained critical acclaim, and his second trio album is imminent. "It will be a continuation of the first, which was a mixture of straight-ahead swing, a couple of mojo, Bo Diddley-influenced beats, ballads, and maybe a samba thing where I do a hand feature again. That seemed to do well with the airplay last time, so that tells me to keep doing what I'm doing."

Robyn Flans

News...

David Garibaldi on Paul Hanson's overseas releases, which will hopefully be distributed in the U.S. soon. Garibaldi is also working live with Hanson.

Jesus Diaz is recording and playing live with Cespedes Con Juntos. Their recently released record is *Vivito Y Coleano (Alive And Kicking)*. Diaz is also working on his own record.

Carl Allen is working on music for a new record, which will be a tribute to drummers.

After two years off, **Rob Affuso** is back on the road with Skid Row, supporting their recent *Subhuman Race*.

Jack White played on Rodney Crowell's current project. He also did some recording with Steve Hunter, and he could be heard on a portion of the Judds' TV mini-series that aired last spring.

Doane Perry is in the midst of a world tour with Jethro Tull, supporting their current *Roots To Branches* album. Last spring he worked on Ian Anderson's solo instrumental album, *Divinities*. Doane also toured with Anderson, playing timpani, mallets, orchestral percussion, and keyboards. His outside work includes records with Steve Bailey (*Evolution*), Debra Holland, Martin Barre, Tommy Emmanuel's *The Journey*, and Paul Ventimiglia.

Ed Eblen is on four tracks of Byron Berline's current Sugarhill release, *Fiddle & The Song*. **Hal Blaine** is also on the record. Eblen can also be heard on Jill Holly's independent release, *Calling All Angels*.

Stuart Elliot working with Alan Parsons.

Billy Ward just got off the road with Chris Whitley. Billy recently recorded projects with George Russell and Bill Champlin.

Bruce Cox has been working with Donald Byrd, Sonny Rollins, Donald Harrison, and J.J. Johnson, as well as with his regular gig, the Fred Wesley band. Bruce also has a solo album in the works.

Brian Zsупnik is working with Peter Cetera.

Tom Grignon has been on tour with Clay Walker.

Ricky Sebastian is on new releases by Cornell Dupree (*Boppin' Blues*) and Charles Fambrough (*Blues At Bradleys*). He's also been on the road with Tania Maria, including gigs in Russia. Ricky also has a solo project in the works for Herbie Mann's Kokopelli Records, and he's currently on a three-month tour with Harry Belafonte.

Eleven's Slammin' Country Boy Greg Upchurch

Greg Upchurch listened to Eleven for the first time on a drive from Oklahoma to Los Angeles. He liked what he heard so much, he joined their fan club. Little did he know at the time that that would be the start of a story that is every budding musician's fantasy.

"I knew who they were when they walked into the store—I couldn't believe it," Upchurch says of Eleven's Alain Johannes and Natasha Schneider, whom he met while working at Guitar Center in Hollywood. "I had no idea Jack [Irons] had left the band. They said they already had another drummer, but they called a couple months later and asked me to audition."

Upchurch, who'd left his kit in Oklahoma, prepared for the tryout through four days of air-drumming. "I don't think I played better than anybody else who auditioned, but we had the vibe thing happening," the twenty-three-year-old says.

"I'm a real country boy, and they liked the idea of me just being a regular guy and hangin' out."

Irons had played drums on about half of Eleven's new record, *Thunk*, before leaving to join Pearl Jam. Soundgarden's Matt Cameron, who cut four tracks on the album after Irons' exit, caught one of Upchurch's early shows in Seattle.

"That was the biggest surprise, turning to my right and seeing Matt there watching me," Upchurch says. "It was kind of unnerving, but Matt gave me the thumbs up. He'd seen the audition tapes and helped pick out the new drummer. And he came up to me after the show and said I was the right guy for the job. That made me feel good."

For Upchurch, who studied jazz at the University of Central Oklahoma, falling into the gig with Eleven has been a life-affirming dream come true. "Before I moved out here I was at the point of questioning whether I wanted to keep bangin' my head against a wall, just to try to make a living at music. So this came at a perfect time in my life. But it's such a bizarre story. I was freakin' out when I told my friends about getting the gig, racking up \$300 phone bills back to Oklahoma. But word got around and now some of them are moving to L.A. and hoping for a miracle of their own."

Matt Peiken

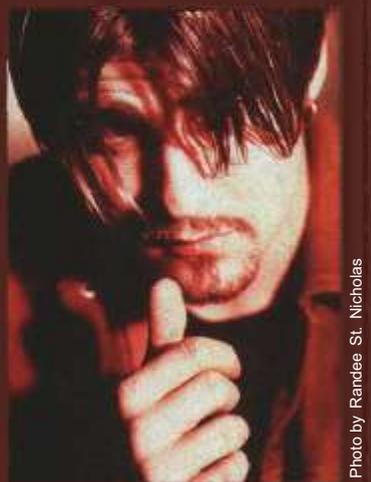


Photo by Randee St. Nicholas

We Couldn't Have Said

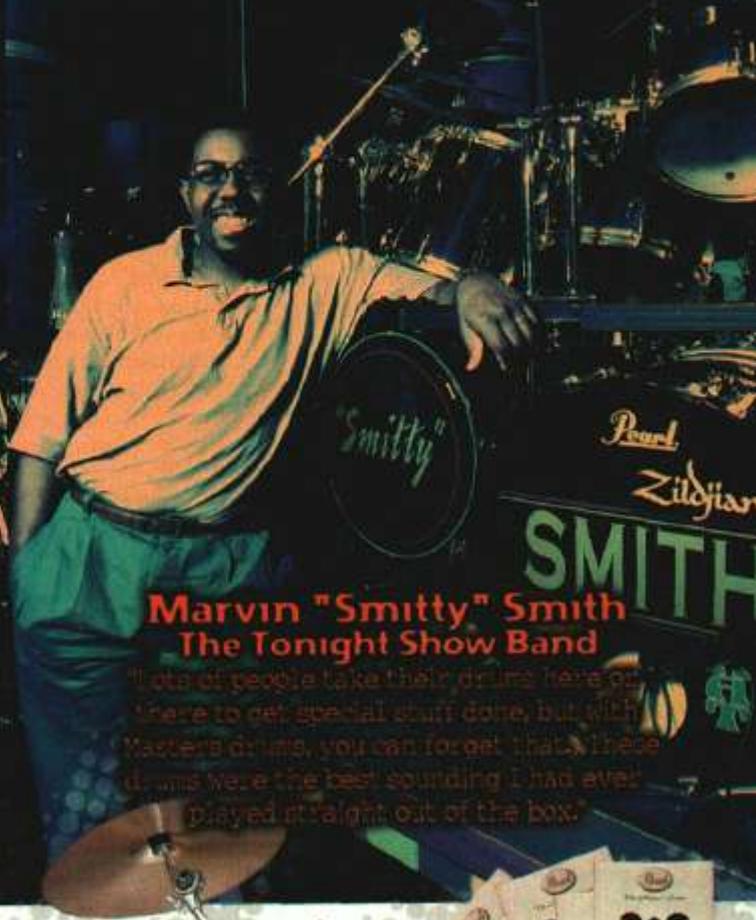


Tico Torres
Bon Jovi

Pearl

Pearl

"What really impresses me about these drums is how resonant they are. When I first heard them I remember thinking, 'now this is what great drums are supposed to sound like!'"



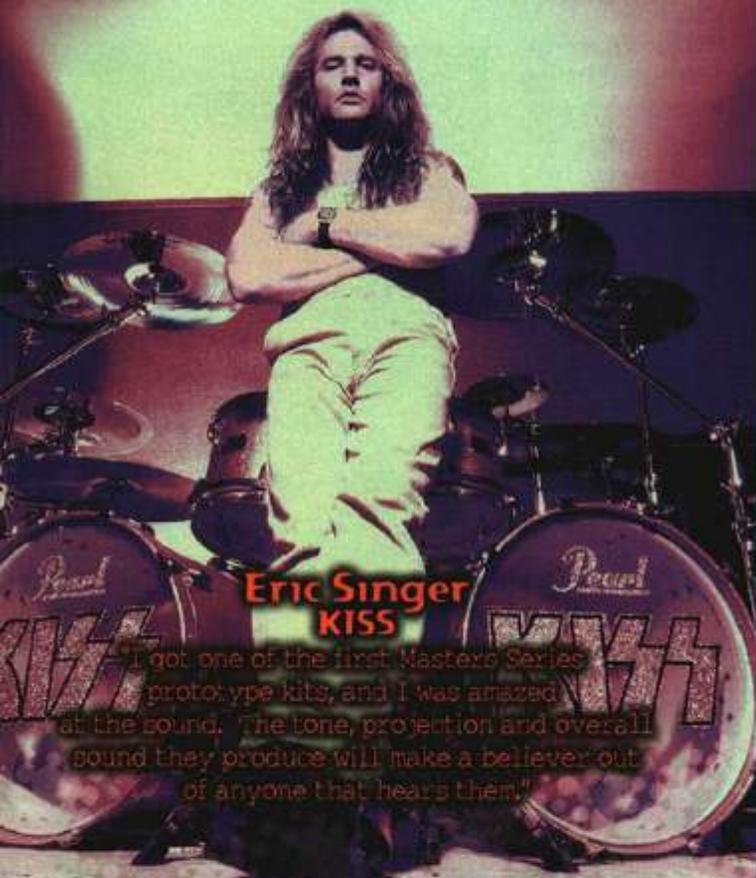
Marvin "Smitty" Smith
The Tonight Show Band

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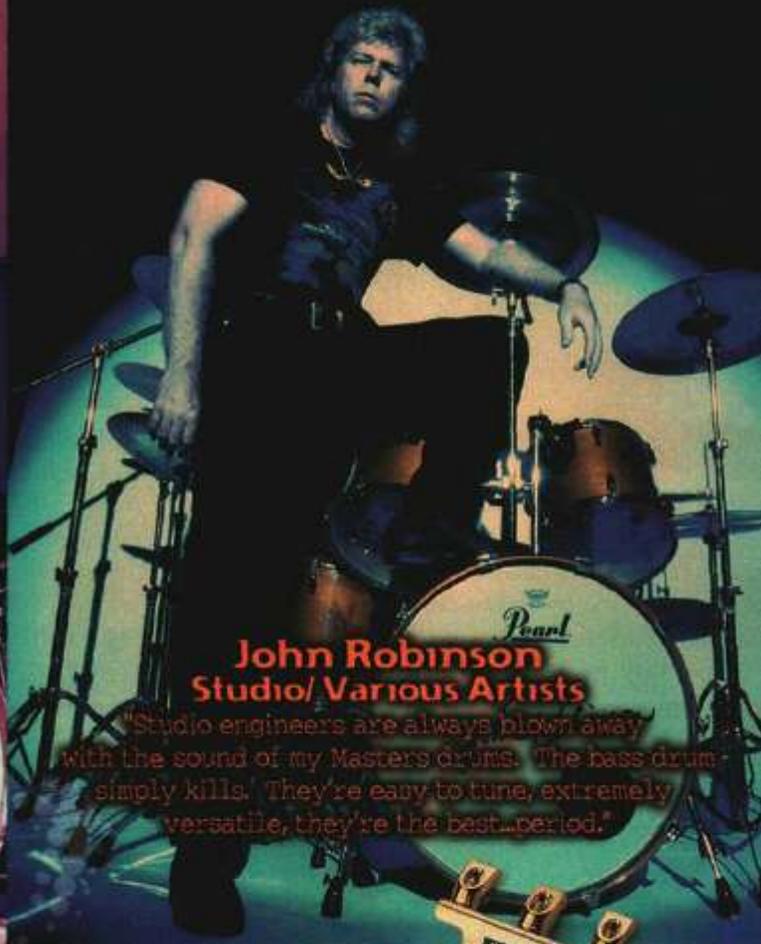
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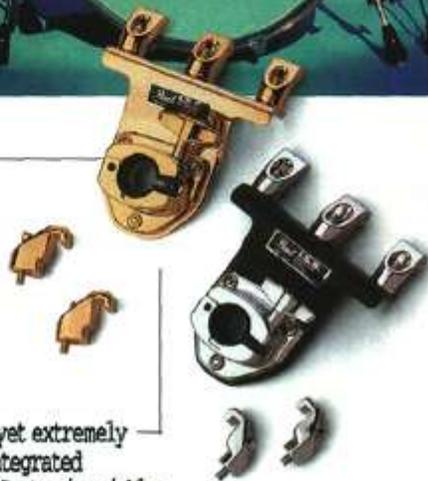
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Simon Phillips

Q I think you're the most phenomenal drummer on the planet—and a great inspiration to make me practice...hard! I noticed on your videos that your bass drum pedals have straps rather than chain linkages. Could you explain your choice of strap-drive pedals over the more common (and seemingly more popular) chain-drive models?

Will Barran
Yallambie, Victoria, Australia

A It's funny, but I used to use chain-drive pedals in 1976, when I had two Gretsch *Floating Action* pedals specially modified by Percussion Services in London. At that time we were really experimenting to find out the best and most robust way to do this modification.

I used those pedals until 1979, when I started playing Tama drums. I just felt at that time it would be good to use Tama pedals. After a couple of years Tama produced their own version of the Gretsch pedal, but with a strap—and I have to say I was really pleased when they did this, as I always preferred this pedal. This was the *HP30 Flexi-Flyer*.

The main difference, to me, is that with a chain-drive pedal the linkage tends to be a little noisy, and there is also more side-to-side play in the footplate when it's depressed. I find the strap version smoother. I now use modified (or should I say de-modified) versions of Tama's *Iron Cobra* pedal using *Flexi-Flyer* rocker pieces and straps.



Rick Malkin

Dave Abbruzzese

Q I loved your interview in the December 1993 issue. But I've wondered about something in it for a while. What are the white stickers that seem to go around in a circle on your front bass drum head in the photos? They look like rats!

Patrick Witherow
Rolla, MO

Q I think you're one of the most distinctive and talented drummers around, and I was happy to see you voted number three in the "Hard Rock" category of the 1995 *MD* Readers Poll. I already have every recording of yours that I can find, but did your early band Dr. Tongue ever release anything? If so, how can I get hold of it?

Matt Geiger
Ipswich, MA

A Before I offer my answers, I'd first like to thank everyone who voted me into the *MD* Readers Poll. I'm proud to be considered for such an honor. And thanks

also to Patrick and Matt for the kind words. Here are the answers:

Patrick: Yes! They *are* rats. The sound company that toured/tours with Pearl Jam is Rat Sound. Dave, Carrie, and Smitty from Rat were and still are quite an inspiration to me, and the rats on my kick drum head are my little tribute to them and their amazing system. This also explains the Rat sweatshirt I wore on the *MTV Unplugged* show.

Matt: No, Dr. Tongue didn't release anything. We barely had the money to live, much less record!

There may be a stray live bootleg somewhere, though. I've heard they exist, but I haven't heard them. At the moment I'm working very hard on the Green Romance Orchestra record. The music is finished

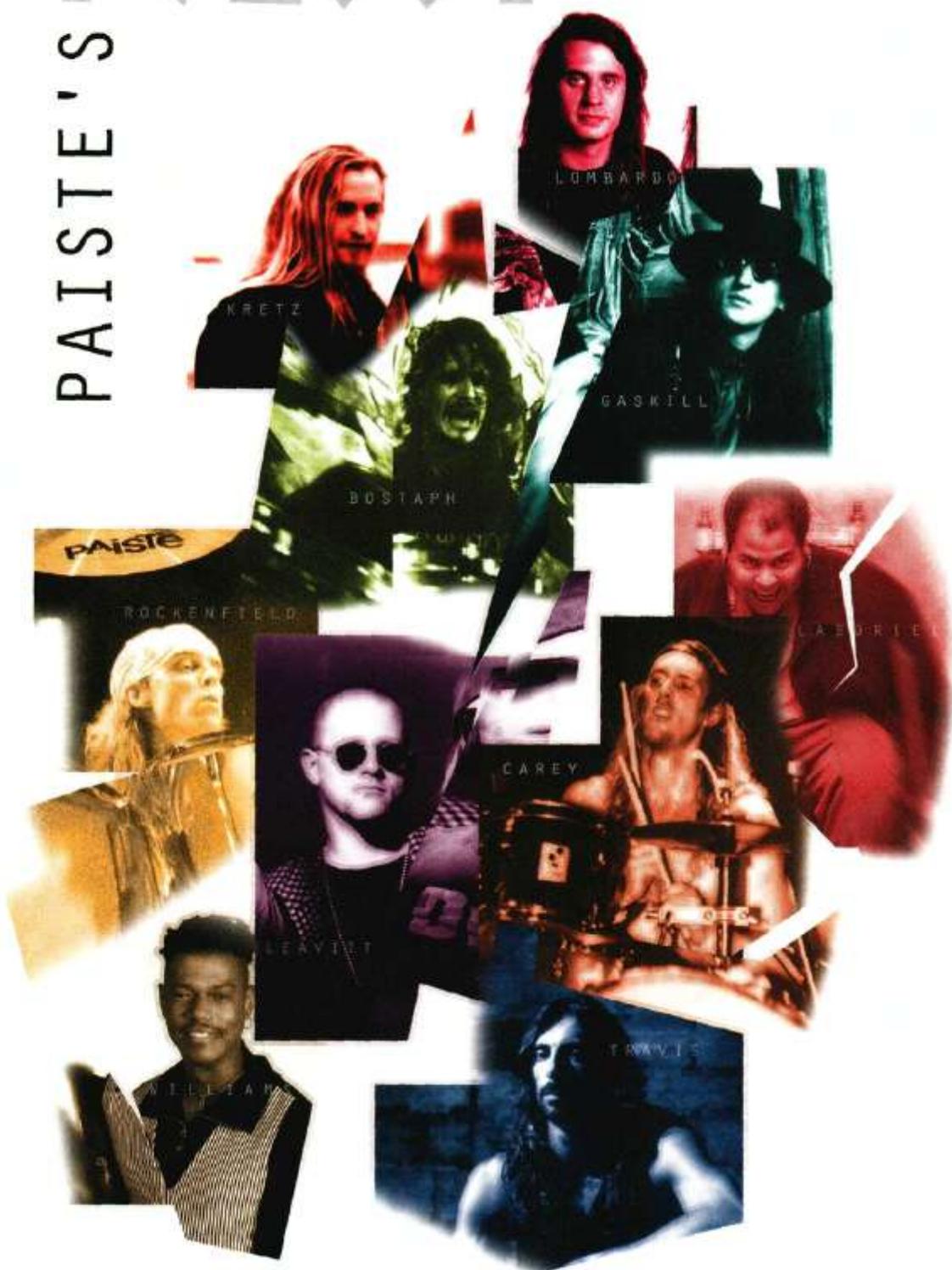
and we're working on the artwork. Between the new music, various other musical projects, and keeping up with my mail and e-mail, I'm very busy and very happy. Smiles still remain!



James Bland

GENERATION . . .

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Mark Zonder

I recently purchased *Inside Out* by Fates Warning after somebody told me how good the drummer was. I was so impressed I went right back out and bought *Perfect Symmetry* and *Parallels*. I love your style; it has pointed me into a fresh direction with new ideas for my own playing. Your playing compares to no one else's I've ever heard—with the possible exception of Mike Portnoy. I'd like to know your cymbal setup, and whether you keep your ride cymbals fairly close to your hi-hats. Also, do you play double bass or use a double pedal? And finally, I know your band has toured with Dream Theater; do you and Mike Portnoy practice together or swap ideas?

Tom Underwood
Palm Desert, CA

Thanks for your comments. I'm glad you appreciated the last three albums I've done. My cymbal setup has remained the same for the past several years. I use Zildjians including (from my left to my right) a 16" *China Boy* low, a 17" medium-thin crash, a 16" medium-thin crash, 12" *EFX* hi-hats, an 18" medium-thin crash, a 20" *Earth* ride, 13" *K/Z* hi-hats, a 10" *K* splash (inverted), an 18" *China Boy* high, and a 20" pang.

I play with my ride cymbal in the more or less traditional position on my right (mounted on the bass drum), and my main hi-hat in the equally traditional position on the left. The remote hi-hat that's also on the right side allows me to play some pretty quick patterns between that hi-hat and the ride. I use double bass drums rather than a double pedal because I prefer the sound of two bass drums rather than a single one played in two different places.

As far as "swapping ideas" with Mike Portnoy goes, even though we did an American and a European tour opening up for Dream Theater, there wasn't a lot of time for that—taking into account the travel from city to city, the setups, the soundchecks, and actually playing the shows. We certainly did talk, and both bands became good friends with each other. But there wasn't really time to sit down and play together.

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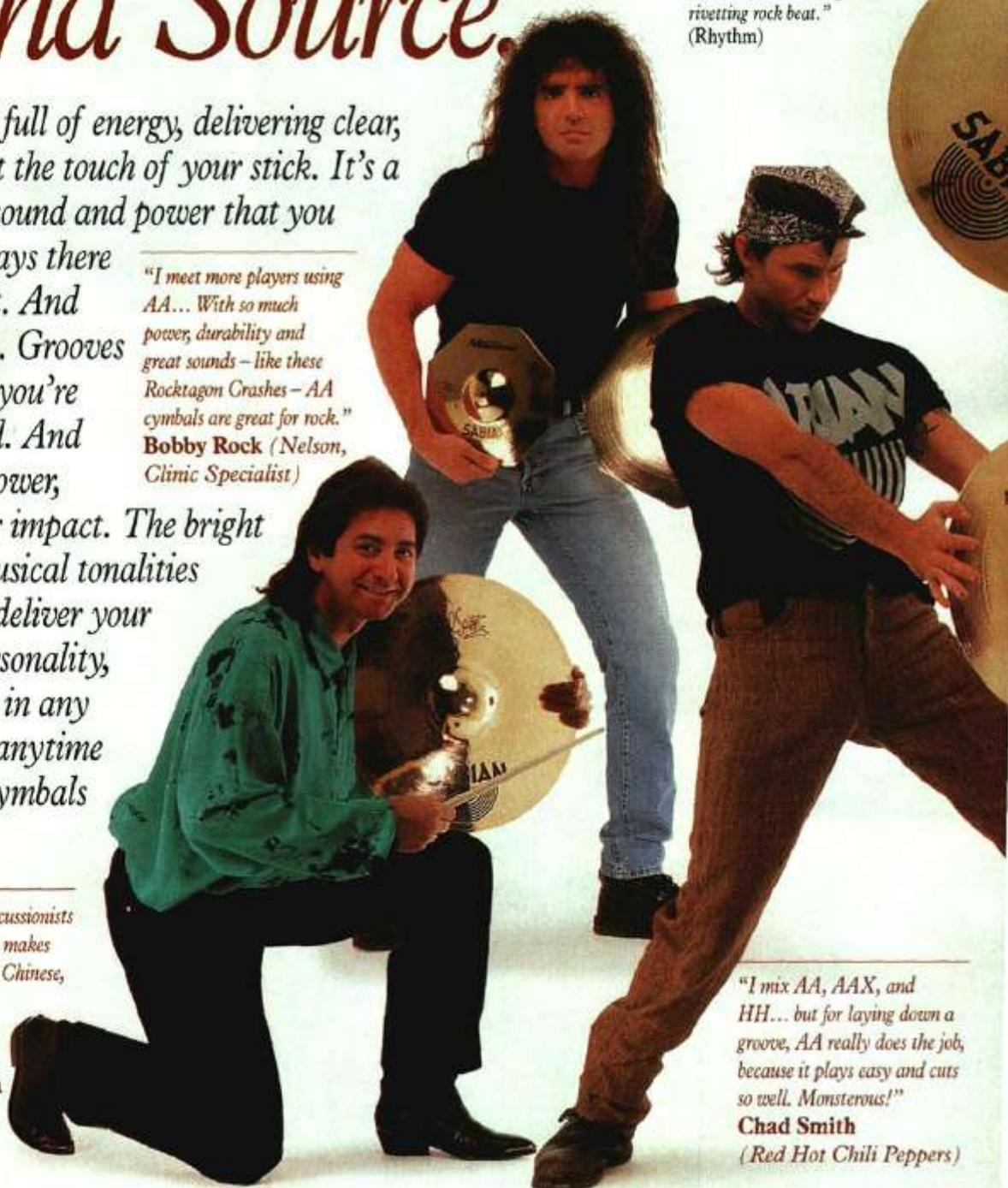
Bobby Rock *(Nelson, Clinic Specialist)*

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Chad Smith
(Red Hot Chili Peppers)



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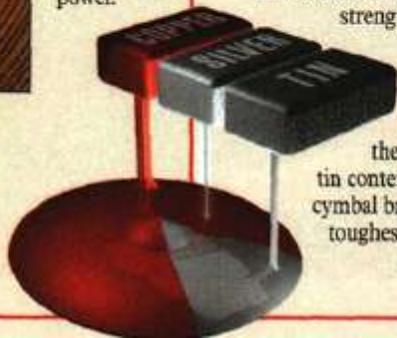
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Music Notation

Q I have a question regarding Rick Latham's "Back To Basics" article in the July '94 issue. On page 102, line 5 of the musical examples has notes with a diagonally slashed line through them. What does this mean?

Dave Rodway
New York, NY



A The lines indicate that those beats are to be played with a double stroke on the same hand (as in playing a roll). If both notes were actually written out (as 32nd notes placed within the overall 16th-note figure) one might mistakenly interpret them as to be played with alternating hands. The slash line is a music-writer's device that has developed over time to prevent this mistaken interpretation.

Remo Fiberskyn 3 Heads

Q In your July '95 issue Remo Belli said that he gave prototypes of Remo *Fiberskyn 3* heads to several name drummers, and that they really liked them. I purchased some of the heads and was not pleased with them on my toms—although I did like the way they sounded on my snare drum. I use Evans *Resonant* heads on the bottoms of all my toms, and apparently they aren't compatible with *Fiberskyn 3* batter heads. So my question is, what's the best bottom head to use with *Fiberskyn 3* heads to get the best sound?

Chuck Ankrom
Carroll, OH

A Remo's Steven Ettleson responds: "Before I make any recommendations, you should be aware that the sound of *F3* heads will not be as bright as that of *Ambassadors*, *Emperors*, or *Pinstripes* due to the polyspun-fibre lamination used to create the *F3s*. There are not as many 'highs,'

and the sound lacks the 'plastic-y' contact sound that many players have grown up with while using *Mylar* heads. The *F3* family of drumheads is very similar in sound and feel to calf heads of the past. Ironically, this is now a 'new' sound to most drummers.

"The artists who sampled the heads truly liked the sound and feel. They also stated that this was a great head for the *right application*. Please keep in mind that a single style or gauge of head is not really applicable to all gigs—much like a drummer's choice of cymbals or snare drum type. The entire sound and characteristic of a drumset changes when the heads are changed—after all, this is the only 'active' element of the instrument. The point is that *F3* heads will work for some folks and not for others, which is why we're continuing to develop many styles of films and heads.

"Now, to answer your specific question, I recommend clear *Ambassadors* or *Diplomats* on the bottom—tuned slightly higher in pitch than the batter. *F3s* will stretch a bit after installation and will need

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to be fine-tuned. As always, tuning is the key to the overall drum sound. If you are used to *Ambassadors* (or other heads of similar weight) you should use *Fiberskyn 3* heads with the *FD* designation. These are based on the Remo *Diplomat* combined with the polyspun-fibre and bonding agents—which creates a head with the feel of an *Ambassador*. In the same way, the *FA* is based on the *Ambassador* film, and thus is actually closer to an *Emperor* in weight and feel."

Odd-Time Texts

Q I've had a great deal of involvement with bands that write material in odd times, so I have no problem with the concept or even with playing in them. But I want to study the subject from a more theory-based angle rather than simply teaching myself. Could you list some books that would help me?

Rich Child
Manassas, VA

A We suggest *Even In The Odds* by Ralph Humphrey, *Odd Time Reading Text* by Louie Bellson and Gil Breines, and *Odd*

Times (book/cassette package) by Rod Morgenstein. These are major works that should be available in (or through) any major music store, drumshop, or percussion catalog.

11" Toms

Q Who makes 11" toms and 11" heads? I've seen 11" silencer pads in Tama's catalog and 11" RIMS from PureCussion, but I've never seen actual drums or heads in any major manufacturer's catalogs.

Jack Antonelli
Buffalo, NY

A From 1987 through 1992 Tama offered an 11" size in their *Artstar* and *Granstar* series. During those years Remo offered 11" heads to fit the drums, and PureCussion did the same with RIMS. However, the drum size never became popular, so the heads and RIMS had to be obtained by special order. This, in turn, contributed to the difficulty of using a drum of such a size, further reducing its popularity. The wide acceptance of a 2" size differential (8"/10"/12" or 10"/12"/14") for multiple rack toms finally

caused Tama to eliminate the 11" tom (and drum silencer pad) from the line.

Drum Covering Sources

Q Can you tell me of any suppliers of drum coverings? My old Tama *Imperialstars* could use a facelift.

GilpinLKC
via Internet

A Sources for drum covering materials include: A.F. Blaemire, 5208 Monte Bonito Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90041, (213) 256-0025; HQ Percussion Products, P.O. Box 430065, St. Louis, MO 63143, (314) 647-9009; Precision Drum Co., 151 California Rd., Yorktown Heights, NY 10598, (914) 962-4985; Sam Barnard Drum Coverings, 3971 N. 14th PL, Phoenix, AZ 85014, (602) 279-4041; Stewart-MacDonald's Drum Supply, 21 N. Shafer St., Athens, OH 45701, (614) 592-3021; and XL Specialty Percussion, 16335-5 Lima Rd., Hunteertown, IN 46748, (219) 637-5684.



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"So Who or What is Starclassic"

Aside from "where did you get that jacket?" it seems like that's the question I get asked most often these days...the next being, "I thought you play Tama."

"I do play Tama," I reply to somewhat puzzled looking faces.

You see...about ten years ago this renegade group of engineers/drummer types at Tama decided they wanted to create this kind of ultimate drum. A drum that was simple and traditional in its styling yet thoroughly modern in function. A real "modern classic," if you will.

After a number of years the project began to take on a life of its own. Eventually this group, convinced they were really onto something very special, ended up demanding its own place in the Tama ranks. And there marked the beginning of Starclassic.

Needless to say I was very pleased to be among the first to actually field test this new kit. In fact it was one of the later stage prototypes that was used to record the King Crimson VROOOM ep. Shortly after that I set out on the South American leg of King Crimson's pre-THRAX tour with another Starclassic kit, and from there on out, it's all I've been playing!

Now I'm certainly not one to ramble on endlessly about drum gear. I prefer to concentrate on the music. I know what I need and if it's anything less, then I don't want to be bothered. I like to be able to set them up, hit them, and know they're going to sound good...and not fall apart while I'm in the middle of a gig. Whether it's Royal Albert Hall in London, the Prix D'Ami in Buenos Aires or the Power Station in New York, Starclassic drums are drums that more than do the job. So there you have it.

...Bill Bruford

Starclassic

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P.J.L. Percussion produces two series of maple-shell drums said to offer two distinct sound concepts. The *Classics* line offers the full sound of a 5-ply shell with a 3-ply reinforcing hoop on toms and a 6-ply shell with a 3-ply hoop on bass drums. The *Contemporary* line features an 8-ply shell on toms and bass drums—which is said to produce a prominent fundamental note. Each shell is subject to P.J.L.'s resonance testing, where its resonant character is identified for a wide-open sound. Each bearing edge is hand-sanded and checked for accuracy, creating a smooth surface for the drumhead to unite with.

P.J.L. further states that the unique sound of their drums is created by the design of their solid brass lug—which is said to elimi-

nate the need for "insulators" and the packing of hollow lugs. The lugs are secured directly to the shell, which the company believes creates an instrument that resonates as one body. Drum interiors are sealed with a hand-rubbed oil finish "to enhance the warm characteristics of the maple shell."

P.J.L. drums are offered in fourteen stained, four opaque, and three covered finishes as standard, but custom finishes and hardware plating are available "to help the individual create a personal work of art." **P.J.L. Percussion, P.O. Box 1709, Greenwood Lake, NY 10925, tel/fax: (914) 477-9504.**

Impact Hardware Transport



Impact Industries recently introduced their *HT-1* Hardware Transport. The heavy-duty hand cart features welded square tubing and 8" pneumatic wheels with ball bearings, and is available with a hard-shell case or an *Impact II* padded bag. The case model measures 33" x 13" x 10" and is available with (\$277) or



**Under
The
Influence.**

When it comes to drumming, you may have noticed that the most influential players are always the ones who draw from the most influences. You know, different strokes from different folks. So why limit your listening to only a few kinds of "good" music when there's so many great ones around? According to power/punk/funk/rock drummer Chad Smith, developing your own style comes from constantly exposing yourself to other styles. "Steal from everybody," Chad says, "then make it your own. And who knows, one day other drummers may find themselves under your influence."

DRUMMING
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without (\$263) non-tear foam and with tie-down straps. The bag model (\$198) features 1200 denier waterproof foam-lined fabric, a hard-shell plastic insert, and tie downs. It also zips from the front or top and measures 37" x 12" x 10". **Impact Industries, Inc., 333 Plumer St., Wausau, WI 54403, (800) 342-1244, (715) 842-1651**

Porcaro Covers For Ethnic Percussion



Joe Porcaro has developed a line of soft cases for a variety of Latin, ethnic, and world percussion instruments. In addition to covering standard Latin instruments such as con-

gas, bongos, and timbales, Porcaro Covers are also available for tablas, djembes, pandieros, shekeres, cuicas, and batas—as well as for a variety of hand percussion and drum hardware. All covers feature top-quality materials and workmanship along with performance-proven, studio tested designs. Porcaro Covers are distributed by **Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030, tel: (805) 485-6999, fax: (805) 485-1334.**

Clevelander Snare Drums And Timpani Mallets



Clevelander offers custom-quality snare drums and field drums in two lines: The *Custom Professional* series features wood and solid brass shells, machined-brass

strainers, tubular lugs, and snare butt, and die-cast hoops. The *Standard Professional* series features the same shells, strainer, and butt, along with die-cast lugs and steel hoops. Both series are equipped with a unique combination snare system that allows the use of several separately tensionable snare materials simultaneously for increased sensitivity and clarity. Initially designed as symphonic instruments, Clevelander snares have found popularity among rock and pop musicians as well. Drums are currently being played by the Boston Symphony, the Boiling Air Force Base Band, and



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Chris Vrenna of Nine Inch Nails.

Cleveland also offers a complete line of timpani mallets in nine models, each offering a choice of bamboo or turned cherry wood handles. Bamboo-handled sticks are said to offer strength and lightness that create a focused and ringing sound. Cherry-wood-handled sticks have been designed to closely simulate the sound and feel of bamboo at a more affordable price. Both series of sticks use the same cores and felt for the heads.

Cleveland drums and sticks are designed by Paul Yancich, a world-renowned timpanist, clinician, and faculty member of the Cleveland Institute of Music. **Cleveland Drum Co., 1371 Oakridge Dr., Cleveland Heights, OH 44121, (216) 691-9152.**

New Afro Percussion Products



Afro Percussion has introduced several new percussion instruments and accessories. The *Stix-Free* (\$23.10) is a stick-less cow-



bell striker that features bolt-together construction for serviceability and silent operation. It's available in sizes for small and large bells. The *Afro Crasher* (\$40) features chrome-plated blades for improved sound and durability, and is available in four widths and pitches. Slash and China slash cym-



bals are now available in 8" (\$65) and 10" (\$69) sizes. The cymbals are machine hammered for consistency, pro sound, and durability; the China splashes are said to offer very quick decay and a complex sound. Afro also offers eleven models of cowbells—several of which are available with a raised ridge along the "spine" of the bells for more striking possibilities—at prices

ranging from \$22.50 to \$30.70, and a wide selection of hand-held and mountable agogo bells and triple cowbells priced from \$36 to \$109. **Pearl Corp., 549 Metroplex Dr., Nashville, TN 37211, tel: (615) 833-4477, fax: (615) 833-6242**

Chambers Video From KAT

KAT Inc. has recently released Dennis Chambers' second performance video for the company, called *Electric Grooves*. Dennis performs on the *trapKAT* pad controller, playing to the music of Tom Coster. The video features trademark grooves and solo spots from Dennis, presents the sounds of KAT's new CD ROM called *KAT KITS*, and carries a retail price of \$9.95. **KAT, Inc., 53 1st Ave., Chicopee, MA 01020, tel: (413) 594-7466, fax: (413) 592-7987.**

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Diamond Tip 3S Marching Stick

Diamond Tip drumsticks now offer a 3S drum corps/marching band hickory model measuring 16 1/2" long and .700" in diameter and fitted with an extra-large nylon *Diamond Tip*. The special tip design is said to produce "greater articulation, clarity, and projection on all types of field snare drums with a wide range of heads and tunings." JoPo Music, Inc., P.O. Box 4416, North Hollywood, CA 91617, tel: (818) 995-6208, fax: (818) 981-2487.



Rock Lock On Rhythm Tech DSTs



Rhythm Tech's popular *DST* (Drum Set Tambourine) will now be equipped with the company's *Rock Lock* mounting screw assembly, which incorporates a unique eyebolt-and-wingnut design that "eliminates slipping even in the heaviest of playing situations."

The *Rock Lock* is also claimed to improve the stability of the *DST* and the ease with which it can be put on and taken off of its mounting location. Rhythm Tech, 29 Beechwood Ave., New Rochelle, NY 10801, tel: (800) 726-2279, fax: (914) 636-6947.

Remo Djembek



Remo has combined the silhouettes of the West African djembe and the Middle Eastern doumbek to create a new instrument christened a *Djembek*. Measuring 20" x 10" and featuring an *Acousticon* shell, PreTuned *Fiberskyn 3* head, and a carrying strap, this "utility" drum can be played suspended between the legs, to the side (djembe style) or held in the lap and played with fingers (doumbek style). The *Djembek* is available in "Matisse" *FabriFinish* at a list price of \$125.

Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer St., North Hollywood, CA 91605, tel: (818) 983-2600, fax: (818) 503-0198.

Marty Hurley/John Woolen Rudimental Drumstick

Rudimental drumming specialists John Woolen and Marty Hurley have designed a rudimental drumstick in the tradition of Buck Soistman and Bill Reamer. The stick is similar to the "Walking Cane" stick used by the Phantom Regiment in the 1980s. The hickory stick, manufactured by Vic Firth, Inc., has a large back end. The extra weight on the back of the stick makes the front feel

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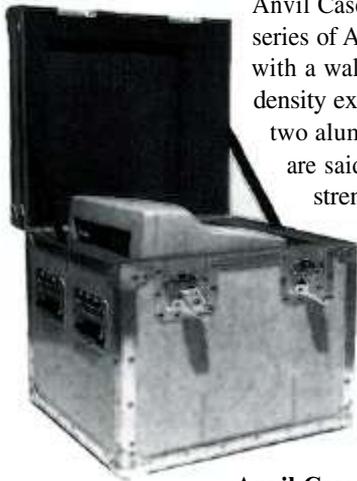
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lighter without sacrificing strength. (The large back end is also said to be great for backsticking.) The diameter is smaller than that of most marching sticks in order to increase control. The stick sells for \$8.50 per pair (plus \$4.50 shipping and handling), and is only available through **Rudimental Percussion Publications, P.O. Box 17163, Hattiesburg, MS 39404-7163.**

ArmorLite Cases From Anvil



Anvil Cases now offers the *ArmorLite* series of ATA-style cases. Constructed with a wall material composed of a low-density extruded polyethylene core with two aluminum skins, *ArmorLite* cases are said to exhibit an excellent strength-to-weight ratio. Fitted with aluminum hardware, the cases are claimed to offer the same durability and quality as Anvil's original ATA case, but are an average of 30% lighter in weight. This can reduce handling problems and shipping costs.

Anvil Cases, 15650 Salt Lake Avenue, City Of Industry, CA 91745, (800) 359-2684.

NetWell Pyramid Sound-proofing Panels

NetWell Noise Control has introduced a new design in acoustical foam sound-proofing panels called the *Pyramid*. This 2' x 2' acoustical panel is claimed to absorb up to 95% of the acoustical reverberation in any studio, rehearsal, or broadcast setting. Available in several colors and thicknesses, this open-cell polyurethane foam material is designed to treat unwanted sound and enhance room acoustics in a variety of settings, and may be applicable for drummers seeking to sound-proof practice rooms, rehearsal studios, stage areas, etc. Free catalogs and a printed price list, along with free samples of the product, are available, and no minimum order is required. Contact **NetWell Noise Control, 6125 Blue Circle Dr., Minnetonka, MN 55343, tel: (800) 638-9355, fax: (612) 939-9836.**



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Zendrum Improvements



Zendrum Corporation's *Zendrum Z-Series* touch-sensitive MIDI drum controllers have undergone several improvements. These include a firmware update that features global note-off, and the addition of a 1/4" input on the backplate for use with a standard electronic keyboard sustain pedal. These updates have been incorporated to make the *Zendrum* more compatible with both a wider range of MIDI-activated sound generators and the Aquila wireless MIDI transmitter. The company is also offering shoulder straps as well as soft-shell cases specially designed for the *Zendrum*. Priced at \$99.95, the padded, fleece-lined soft cases are made of durable cordura and include a large compartment for the *Zendrum* plus an external pocket for its power supply, MIDI converter, shoulder strap, and accessories. **Zendrum Corp., P.O. Box 15369, Atlanta, GA 30333, tel: (404) 874-6824, fax: (404) 425-0755**

Wincent Drumstick Rods And Practice Pads



Wincent is a Swedish company manufacturing drumstick "rods" (bundled dowels) and practice pads. The rods are made of high-quality birch dowels, in different combinations of 3-, 4-, 6-, and 8mm sizes. Several models feature larger center dowels surrounded by smaller dowels (in order to create the best balance of strength and flexibility); others feature three adjustable O-rings to control the "spread" of the dowels.

The Wincent *Granit Silent Pad* is a table-top practice pad made of black granite with a 111mm-diameter, 5mm-thick rubber playing surface. Also available is the *Kneepad*, a portable pad made of birch and gum rubber. The pad can be strapped to the drummer's knee for use anywhere, and can also be mounted on a stand or put on a table. For more information, contact **Wincent Produktion, Parkgatan 6 S-915 31 Robertsfors, Sweden, tel: Oil 46 934 149 50, fax: Oil 46 934 14940.**

Correction

In the October '95 *New And Notable* the item regarding Shelly's Cymbal Polish misspelled the name "Shelly." The company's phone number was also omitted; it is (805) 466-6700.









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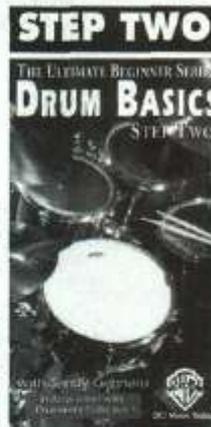
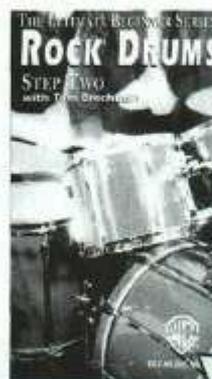
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Premier XPK Drumkit

This affordable beauty makes Premier a real contender in the entry-level market.

by Rick Van Horn

Premier has re-introduced their entry-level *APK/XPK* series, with new low-mass lugs and a new type of drumshell. We received the *XPK* version, which features beautiful stained finishes; the *APK* versions offer covered drums at slightly lower prices. Our test kit was the basic five-piece configuration: a 16x22 bass



drum, 10x12 and 11x13 rack toms, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 5 1/2x14 matching wood snare drum. (Other available packages in this series include a five- and six-piece "fusion" kit with different drum sizes and configurations.) The drums were finished in a deep turquoise stain that allowed the wood grain to show through. The hardware package included a snare stand, a straight cymbal stand, a hi-hat stand, and a bass drum pedal.

Shell Composition

The *APK/XPK* series now features shells composed of six cross-laminated plies: two inner and two outer plies of birch, with two plies of eucalyptus wood sandwiched in the middle. I have to admit that this is the first time I've heard of eucalyptus being used in drum construction; entry-level drums have traditionally used mahogany or the generically named "straight grain hardwood" for filler plies. But I'm no botanist, and I really don't care why Premier chose eucalyptus for this application. All I know is that the shells on our *XPK* test kit were well-constructed, reasonably light in weight, and extremely resonant. The inside of each shell was nicely sanded but not polished or lacquered, providing a natural reflectiveness to the drum sound.

Another feature of the shells that contributes to the sound of the kit is the fact that they are made slightly undersized. That is, a 12" shell is actually a few millimeters under 12" in outside diameter—so a 12" drumhead extends slightly over the edge, timpani-fashion. This helps maximize head response and also enhances the overall drum resonance. It's a very nice design touch to find on an entry-level kit. (A word of caution, however. Besides their undersized shells, Premier's heads are just slightly oversized—as compared to the heads of other brands—and their hoops are sized to correspond to those heads. When putting a Remo head on the bass drum, for example, I discovered that the bass drum hoop was actually slightly larger than the drumhead hoop. This isn't a major problem, but I had to be careful to center the hoop on the drumhead to avoid it "overlapping" the drumhead hoop on one side or the other.)

Appearance

This is a gorgeous drumset—and I don't mean "for an entry-level kit." These drums are gorgeous, *period*. The lacquer finish



on our test drums was deep and rich while revealing the beautiful grain of the wood shell. (Sapphire, rosewood, and amber stains are also available.) The chrome plating on the drum hardware (lugs, rims, tom brackets, and leg holders) was gleaming and lustrous. (I've always admired Premier's plating, which somehow seems more reflective than anyone else's.) The stands—which are undisguised holdovers from the period when Yamaha owned the company—feature chromed tubes and brushed-satin connections, tilters, etc. This gives them a look that's a little more pedestrian than the chrome on the kit, but is certainly not unattractive.

Certain elements of the kit were designed with both functionality and aesthetics in mind. For example, the long, "hi-tension" lugs previously featured on *APK/XPK* kits have been replaced by small, somewhat rounded lugs (reminiscent of, though smaller than, those on Premier's *Genista* series). The new lugs not only minimize the mass of metal on the shell (good for acoustics and for keeping weight down), they also maximize the amount of visible shell surface.

Another example of excellent form/function design is the key-operated tension rods on the bass drum. Purists may prefer to see old-fashioned T-rods in this application, but I like the cleaner look afforded by key-rods—not to mention that they make it *much* simpler to get a bass drum into and out of its case or bag without interfering with the tuning of the drum. (The bass drum also featured wood hoops stained to match the kit, which enhanced its overall appearance.)

Even a small detail like the butt plate on the snare strainer contributes to the overall look of the *XPK*: It's designed in a curving shape to relate to the lugs, and features a small slot to receive the end of the tape holding the snares (so that it doesn't just stick out from the side of the drum). A minor thing, yes—but a very nice touch, nonetheless.

Overall, the sheer beauty of this kit is one of its most attractive features (no pun intended), and adds a significant—if intangible—amount to its value. I've seen high-priced, custom-painted kits that didn't look as good as the "off-the-rack" *XPK* Premier sent to us for this review.

WHAT'S HOT

- extremely resonant shells
- appearance worthy of much more expensive drums
- top-quality tom mount and bass drum pedal
- lightweight yet functional stands

WHAT'S NOT

- bass drum spurs feature very tricky reversible tips
- standard five-piece kit includes only one cymbal stand

Sound

No matter how good a drumkit looks, of course, what's most important is how it *sounds*. The *XPK* sounds good. Very good, in fact.

The batter heads on the toms and bass drums were Premier's own *CL Extra* clear models (which are single-ply *Amhassador*-weight heads). The toms featured *CL Response* clear bottom heads (*Diplomat* weight): the bass drum was fitted with a solid black Premier logo head. The snare drum featured an *SD Heavy Duty* coated single-ply head with a white reinforcement dot.

When I played the drums with the factory-installed heads, I was impressed by the warmth and the depth of tone they produced. The bass drum especially had much more depth and power than I have come to expect from bass drums on entry-level drumsets. I played it first wide open, with no muffling whatsoever. Of course it was very boomy—but it really projected a lot of low end, and just sounded BIG. By employing a few traditional muffling methods, I was able to get any sound I wanted, from big and ballsy to very punchy and controlled. And this was all with a single-ply batter head. Switching to a twin-ply clear Remo *Emperor* reduced a bit of the attack sound while enhancing the low end even more. I appreciate a drum that responds well to different head combinations, and the *XPK* bass drum certainly did.

I was also impressed by the sustain of the toms—especially the floor tom. Sustain is not generally an exceptional acoustic quality in entry-level drums. Now, to be honest I have to say that the sustain of the rack toms was even greater when they were played *off* the kit than on. That is, clamping them on the tom mount tended to choke off some of the sustain. But this is a phenomenon that occurs with virtually *any* drums when they are mounted on a non-suspension system. To the credit of the *XPK* drums, when I fitted the 12" drum with a RIMS mount and *then* mounted it on the bass drum, it sang out with a much fuller voice. What this means is that the drums have a lot of headroom to offer. They sound fine when played on their own mount; if you could fit them with RIMS mounts at some time in the future they'd sound even better. (And if you can afford them now, RIMS are available on *XPK* drums—at extra cost—direct from Premier.)

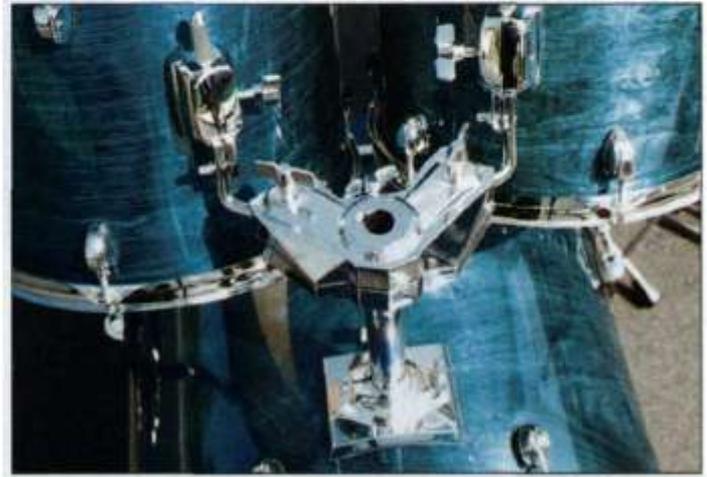
The snare drum came out of the box tuned pretty low, so I played it that way to begin with. The wood shell gave the drum a warm, round tonality, and the heavy, coated head with its reinforcement dot contributed a fairly flat attack sound. (Of course, the very thick, clear-plastic "doughnut" provided for ring control helped flatten the sound out, too.)

I prefer a higher, crisper snare sound, so I started cranking the tension on the top and bottom heads up—a little at a time, playing the drum as I did so. It was able to get up into a high, cracking range without sacrificing much snare response at all. And the drum still sounded nice and dry.

I'm also not fond of heads with dots, so I switched the batter head to a Remo *Amhassador* for test purposes. With that head the drum produced good attack, crisp response, and a good deal more ring and resonance than with the original Premier head. Whether anyone would want that additional resonance is a matter of personal taste, but it's nice to know that the drum is capable of producing it.

Hardware

Another aspect of the *XPK* that adds to its value is the fact that Premier has outfitted it with some hardware items found on its more expensive kits. For example, the double tom mount on the *XPK* is Premier's excellent *RokLok* model. It's a very efficient ball-and-socket system with L-arms that don't protrude into the drumshells. Besides offering terrific positioning adjustability, the tom mount has a hole in its center to accommodate a cymbal boom arm. No such arm comes with the kit initially, but it's nice to have this expansion option available for some time in the future when a splash cymbal, cowbell, or other percussion item might be desired.



The kit is also supplied with Premier's model 253 bass drum pedal. It's a high-quality, lightweight pedal that features a cammed chain-drive linkage. It played smoothly and quietly, and offered quick response.

The snare drum was equipped with the *642* lever-action throw-off—which features a simple, efficient design. I found it very easy to operate, and its diminutive size was perfectly consistent with the rest of the drum hardware on the kit.

I've already said that the Premier *3000* series stands that accompany the *XPK* are Yamaha-like in design. To be specific, they resemble Yamaha's *700* series stands. This is certainly not a negative comment; the design of those stands has proven durable and roadworthy over many years. Most people know that Yamaha owned Premier from late 1987 until December of 1992, so it shouldn't be surprising that proven Yamaha designs would be incorporated into the Premier line. And once the tooling was established, it would make little sense for Premier to change the designs simply because they are no longer owned by Yamaha. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

The stands all feature single-braced legs to keep weight (and cost) down, but they are more than sturdy enough to take what most drummers would dish out. I see single-braced stands as another asset of the *XPK*—especially if it is being considered as a first kit for a young and possibly diminutive player.

All of the stands functioned just fine in their various roles. The snare stand had plenty of adjustability and was solid under heavy playing, the cymbal stand had plenty of height range and a secure ratchet tilter, and the hi-hat operated smoothly and quietly. The hi-hat featured a dial-adjustable spring-tension system with a visible indicator. I found the spring fairly stiff; even at the lowest setting

there was more tension than I would be comfortable with. However, this is something that could work out a bit over time, or that could be affected by the weight of the top hi-hat cymbal. (It's also a matter of personal taste and how heavy one's foot is.)

I really have only two criticisms regarding the hardware on the XPK kit. The first is that although the bass drum spurs feature reversible tips (spike or rubber foot), the tips literally have to be detached from the legs, reversed, and then re-attached in order to make the switch. Beyond the fact that this is an inconvenient operation, no instruction comes with the kit as to how this is done—and believe me, it isn't obvious from looking at the spurs. It seems a minor thing, but if Premier is going to stay with this design, instructions should definitely be attached to the bass drums when the kits are shipped.

My other complaint with the hardware is that there is only one cymbal stand. I realize that Premier wants to keep the kit competitive in price, but offering just one stand on a five-piece kit is a false economy. A contemporary drumkit requires, at the very least,

one ride cymbal and one crash cymbal. So a drummer buying an XPK kit would be required to buy another cymbal stand anyway. Why not include it in the package? The stand lists individually for around \$90, and could probably be priced lower as part of a drumkit package, so it wouldn't add that much to the overall package price—and it would certainly make the kit more complete.

Conclusions

At a suggested retail price of \$1,595, the XPK as reviewed here is certainly competitive with other entry-level kits offering lacquer finishes. The kit is also available as a shell-pack—just the five drums and the double tom mount—at \$ 1.295, or with heavy-duty 4000 series hardware, including an additional cymbal boom stand, for \$1.795.

Excellent quality of construction, generous hardware appointments, and beautiful appearance make the XPK an exceptional value. Add to that an acoustic quality that any drummer could be proud of, and you have a winning combination.

Zildjian K Custom Dark Cymbals and Zil-Bels

Who knows what darkness lurks in Zildjian's newest cymbals?

by Rick Mattingly

I decided a couple of years ago that I wasn't going to covet any more cymbals. I've already got enough different types to cover any conceivable gig I'm likely to get called for. So I was going to stick with what I had, and those would constitute "my sound." That's not to say that I wouldn't continue to appreciate whatever

WHAT'S HOT

- 20" ride, 14" hi-hats, and 18" crash are extremely versatile
- better bells than most K's

WHAT'S NOT

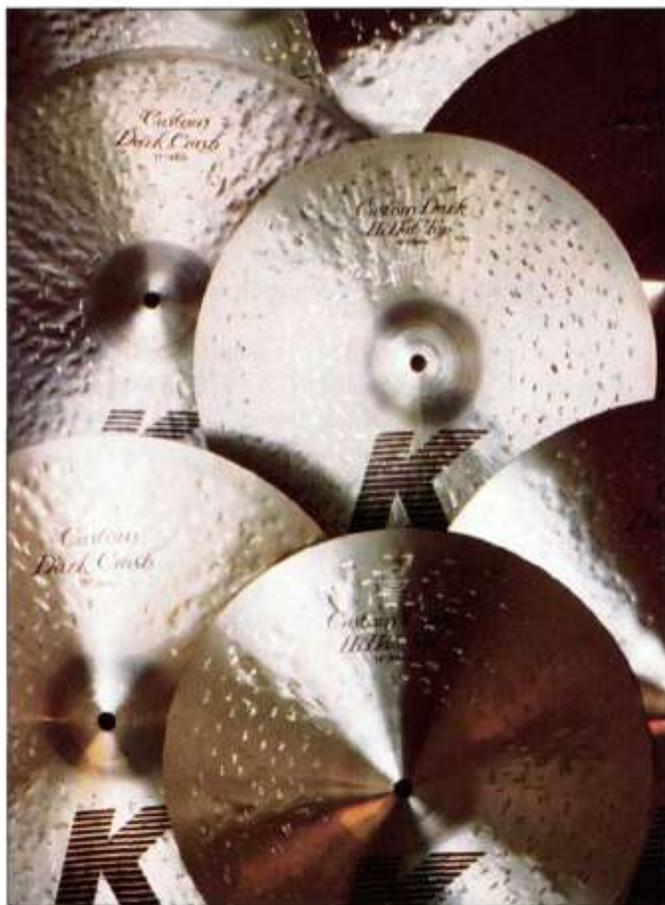
- 22" ride gets washy
- 16" crash lacks body

new cymbals came along and recognize their suitability for various situations—for other people. But for myself, I was going to remain loyal to the cymbals I already owned and get to know every nuance each one of them could produce, instead of being so quick to add yet another cymbal to my collection.

And then I played the new Zildjian K Custom Dark cymbals. So much for loyalty. Move over, guys—looks like the family is going to have to grow again.

Before going into the individual models, all of the K Custom Dark cymbals are on the thin side, which produces a lower pitch

and "darker" tonality than "standard" K equivalents. The cymbals are "custom" by virtue of a new hammering system: they feature jagged, rectangular marks that look as if they were created with glancing blows. Zildjian, of course, isn't about to explain the exact process, but whatever it is, it sure works.



Rides

With most cymbal types, different diameters produce very different cymbals, and while a particular style of cymbal might be available in two or three different diameters, one of the sizes will generally be considered the definitive model. In terms of the *K Custom Dark* rides, which are available in 20" and 22" sizes, the 20" model is the really special one.

Apparently that's not just my opinion. By the last day of the summer NAMM show (at which these cymbals were debuted) the 20" model was covered with so many stick marks that it hardly looked like a new cymbal anymore. Presumably, people just couldn't stop playing it.

That was certainly my experience. I was working out on the 20" long after I had played it enough to write the review—delighting in its perfect blend of definition and overtones. Played with an acorn-shaped wood-tip stick, the cymbal produced the dry click articulation characteristic of K-type cymbals. The overtones had enough of that "trashy" sound to also sound K-like—but not so many as to be muddy (which was a problem with a lot of the "old" K's from Istanbul). The cymbal was on the thin side, producing the type of low-pitched "dark" sound that would serve as a cushion for a band's sound more than it would cut through it.

The 22" had many of the same characteristics, but the overtones had more of a tendency to build and obscure some of the articulation. The pitch was also lower and verged on being "gong-y." It's by no means a bad cymbal, but one would have to be selective about when and where to use it.

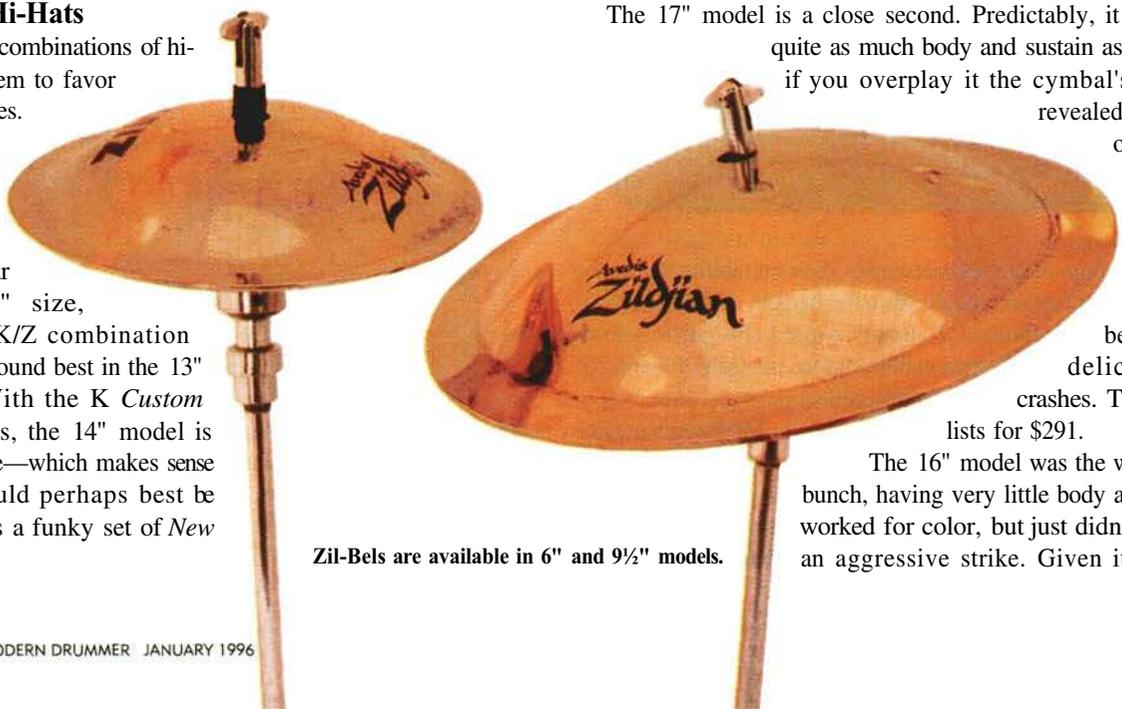
The 20" version, by contrast, could easily be used as the primary ride in a setup. Over the past few years I've almost always had more than one ride cymbal in my setup—one rich in overtones (sometimes with rivets) along with a drier one for more articulate playing. But I wouldn't be afraid to take a 20" *K Custom Dark* ride out by itself, since it is versatile enough to handle just about any situation.

One final observation: Both cymbals had brighter, clearer bells than the typical K-type cymbal, which adds to their versatility. The 20" *K Custom Dark* ride lists for \$356; the 22" version goes for \$423.

Hi-Hats

Different combinations of hi-hats also seem to favor different sizes.

Zildjian *New Beats* have always been more popular in the 14" size, while the *K/Z* combination seemed to sound best in the 13" version. With the *K Custom Dark* hi-hats, the 14" model is the ideal one—which makes sense since it could perhaps best be described as a funky set of *New Beats*.



Zil-Bels are available in 6" and 9½" models.

Like *New Beats*, the *K Custom Dark* hi-hats have a thinner top cymbal matched with a heavier bottom cymbal. It's not as big a difference as the *K/Z* combination, which produces a very sharp "chick" sound (when played with the hi-hat pedal) due to the extreme heaviness of the *Z* bottom. The *K Custom Dark* hi-hats have a slightly softer, fatter "chick" sound, enhanced by the lower, darker pitch. As with the ride, these hats will blend more than cut.

Played with a stick they have plenty of body when closed, and plenty of dark overtones for gutsy, funky "barks" when opened. They sounded downright rude (in a good sense) when played just slightly open in the position many describe as "sloshy."

The 13" *K Custom Dark* hi-hats are similar in nature, but the pitch is higher and they don't have as much body. For light jazz playing they could be excellent, but they don't stand up as well to heavier playing.

When I was first checking out the ride cymbals, I was playing them with the 13" *K Custom Dark* hi-hats (since I've been mostly using a couple of different 13" hi-hat models over the past few years). But when I switched to the 14" hats while I played the 20" ride, that's when the real magic happened. I had already decided that the 20" ride was a very special cymbal, but when I played it in combination with the 14" hats, it was like finding the perfect frame for an exquisite painting—one that makes an already impressive work of art come fully to life. I can't put it in words any better than that, but anyone who has ever stumbled on a magic combination of cymbals will know what I'm talking about. The 13" *K Custom Dark* hi-hats list for \$400; the 14" hats retail for \$446.

Crash Cymbals

Some crash cymbals really have to be, well, *crashed* in order to sound good. Touching them lightly with the tip of a stick doesn't accomplish very much. But sometimes we don't need a loud, explosive crash; we are looking more for a color than a climax.

Of the four *K Custom Dark* crash cymbals, the 18" is the best for accomplishing both goals. You can lay into it with the shoulder of a stick and get a powerful crash with good sustain and smooth decay—or you can flick it lightly with the tip and get a fat, over-tone-rich color. It lists for \$312.

The 17" model is a close second. Predictably, it doesn't have quite as much body and sustain as the 18", and if you overplay it the cymbal's thinness is revealed.

But in low- or medium-volume settings it explodes nicely, and it works beautifully for delicate "color" crashes. The 17" crash lists for \$291.

The 16" model was the weakest of the bunch, having very little body and sustain. It worked for color, but just didn't stand up to an aggressive strike. Given its dark tonal

quality, it didn't even work very well as a large splash. List price is \$267.

The 15" model, on the other hand, had a better ratio of pitch, body, and sustain. One would still have to be very careful about overplaying it, but its higher pitch allowed it to cut through better, and it could work well as a crash in low-volume settings or more of a splash in medium volumes. It lists for \$243.

Zil-Bels

Zildjian has also added two special-effects cymbals to the line: 6" and 9 1/2" *Zil-Bels*. These are essentially industrial-weight cymbal bells that verge on sounding like anvils. Besides their obvious suitability for aggressive, cutting, Latin-type bell patterns, the *Zil-Bels* can also be struck on their edges, producing sustained church-bell or chime-like tones. (You'll have to decide for yourself how applicable that is for your particular requirements.) These are more "metallic percussion instruments" than "cymbals," but they could certainly add some color to a drumkit setup. The 6" model lists for \$99, while the 9 1/2" *Zil-Bel* is \$130.



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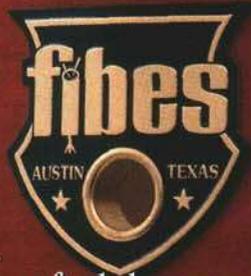
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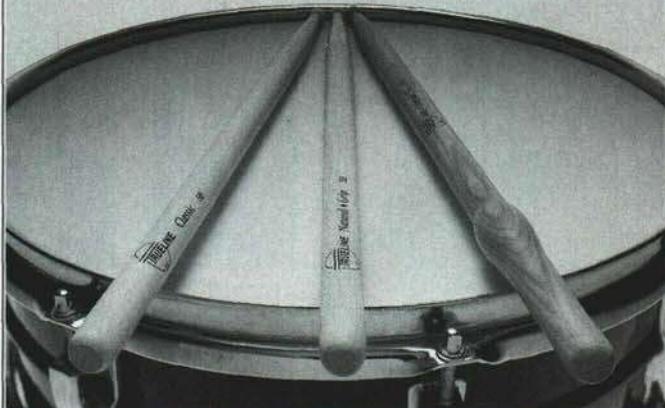
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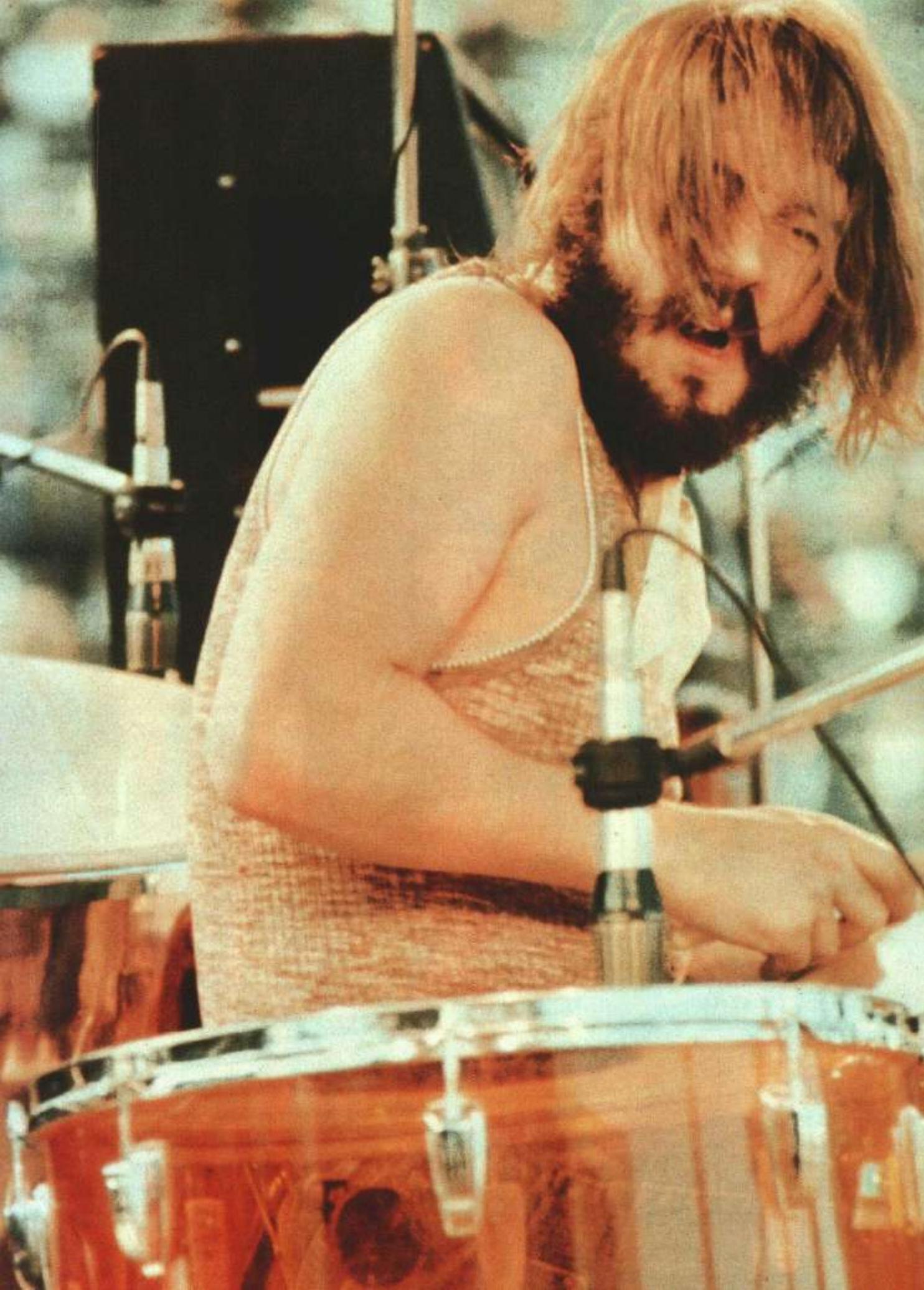
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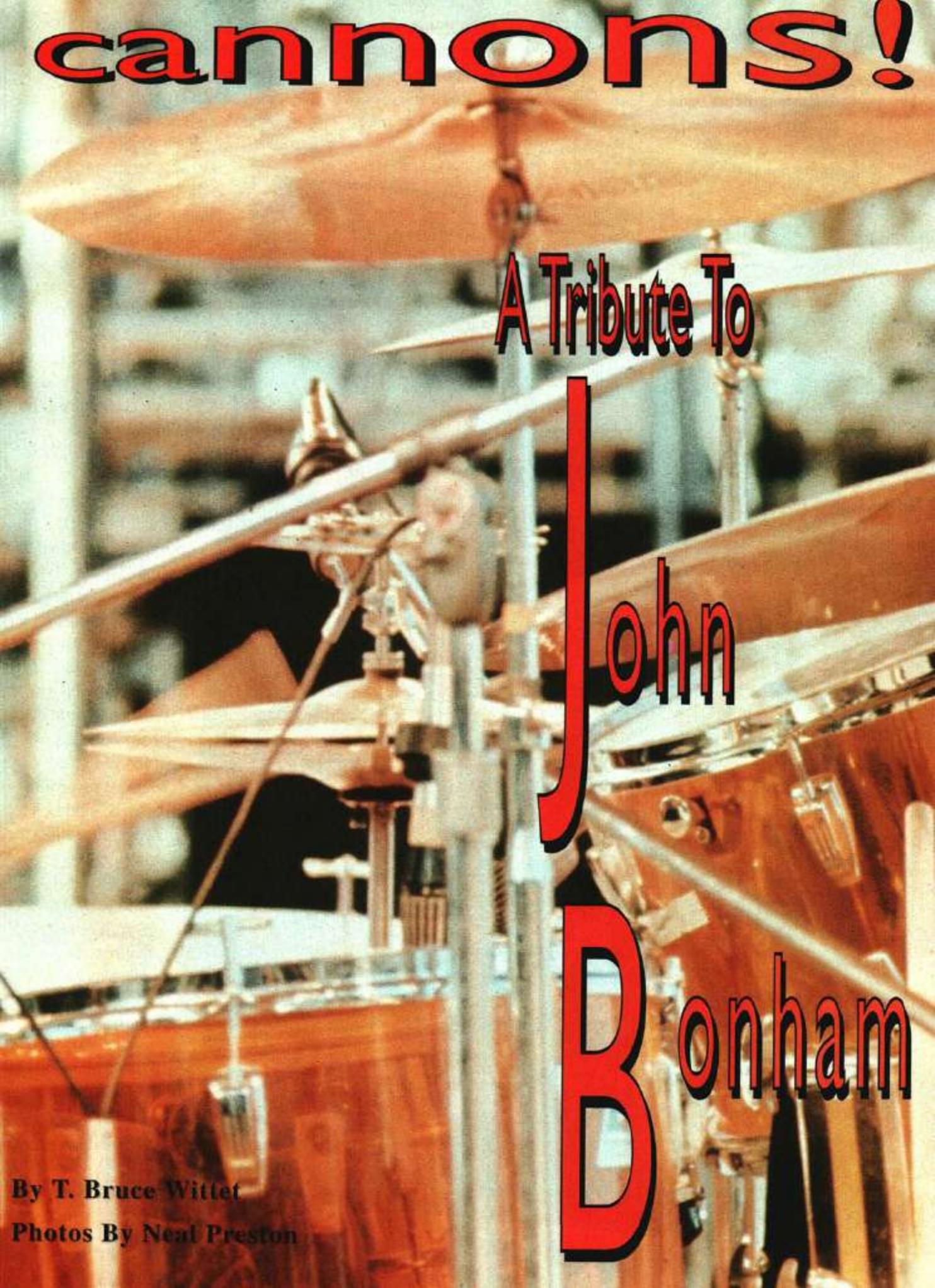
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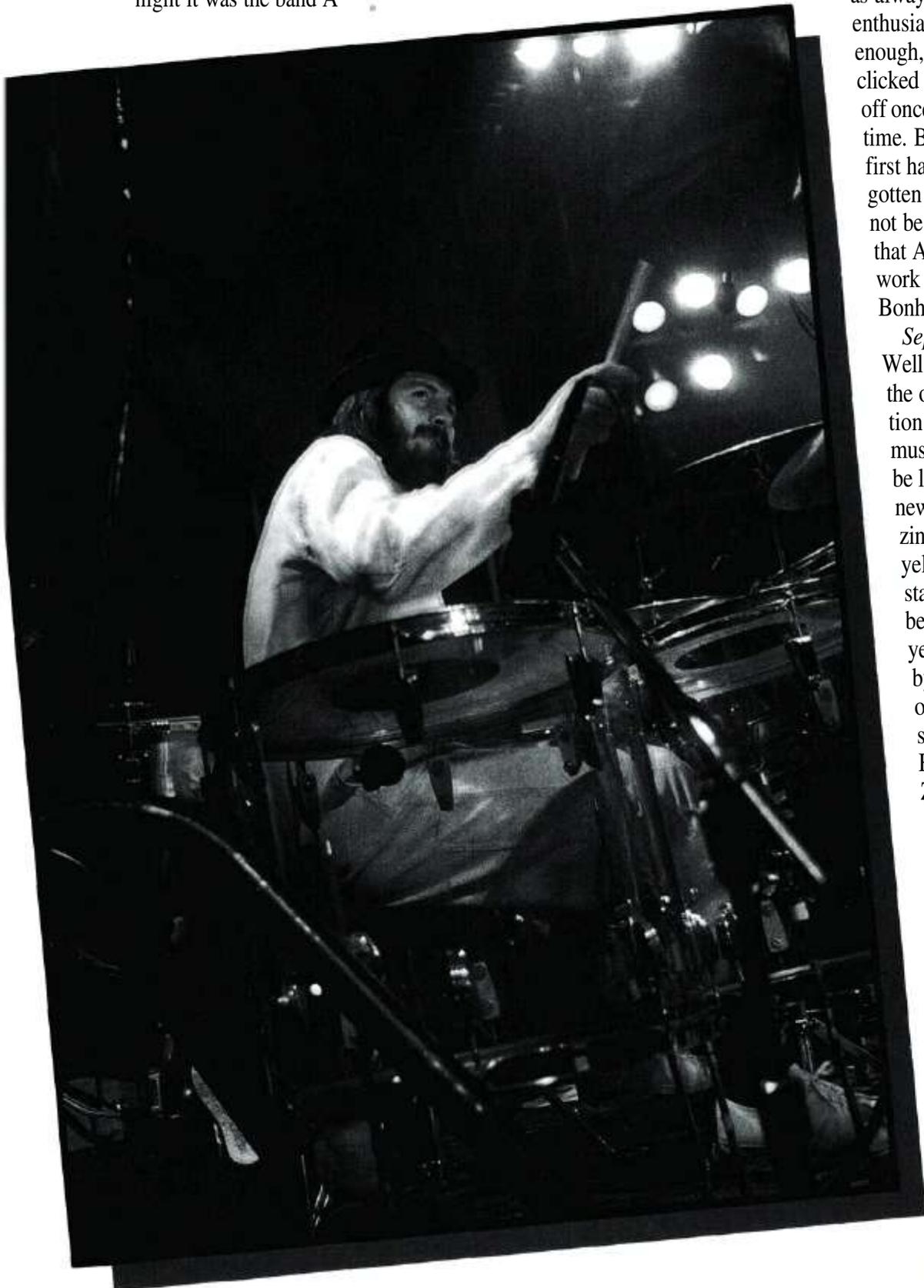
Photos By Neal Preston

September 13, 1966. Hertfordshire, England. The Top Spot Ballroom. Every band in Birmingham used to play there. On that night it was the band A

Way Of Life. Odd as it may sound, there was a traffic light on stage. "I kid you not," stresses the bass player on the date, Dave Pegg. "It would start off at green, and when it went to amber you

had ten seconds to turn the volume down, because if the light went to red, the electricity was automatically cut off." The group's eighteen-year-old drummer had trouble that night, as always, containing his enthusiasm and, sure enough, the dB meter clicked in. The power shut off once, then another time. By the end of the first half, the band had gotten the sack. It would not be the first occasion that A Way Of Life lost work on account of John Bonham.

September 13, 1973. Well into a new decade, the operating assumption was that rock music was *supposed* to be loud. On this day, a new *downbeat* magazine with a canary yellow cover hit the stands. Hard to believe that fully two years had whisked by since the release of the venerated song "Stairway To Heaven," and Led Zeppelin continued to delight with their latest LP, *Houses Of The Holy*. The songs had become richer in harmonic, rhythmic, and lyrical content, and besides, they created this *din*, harkening back to the Battle of Trafalgar—a favorite reference point, as

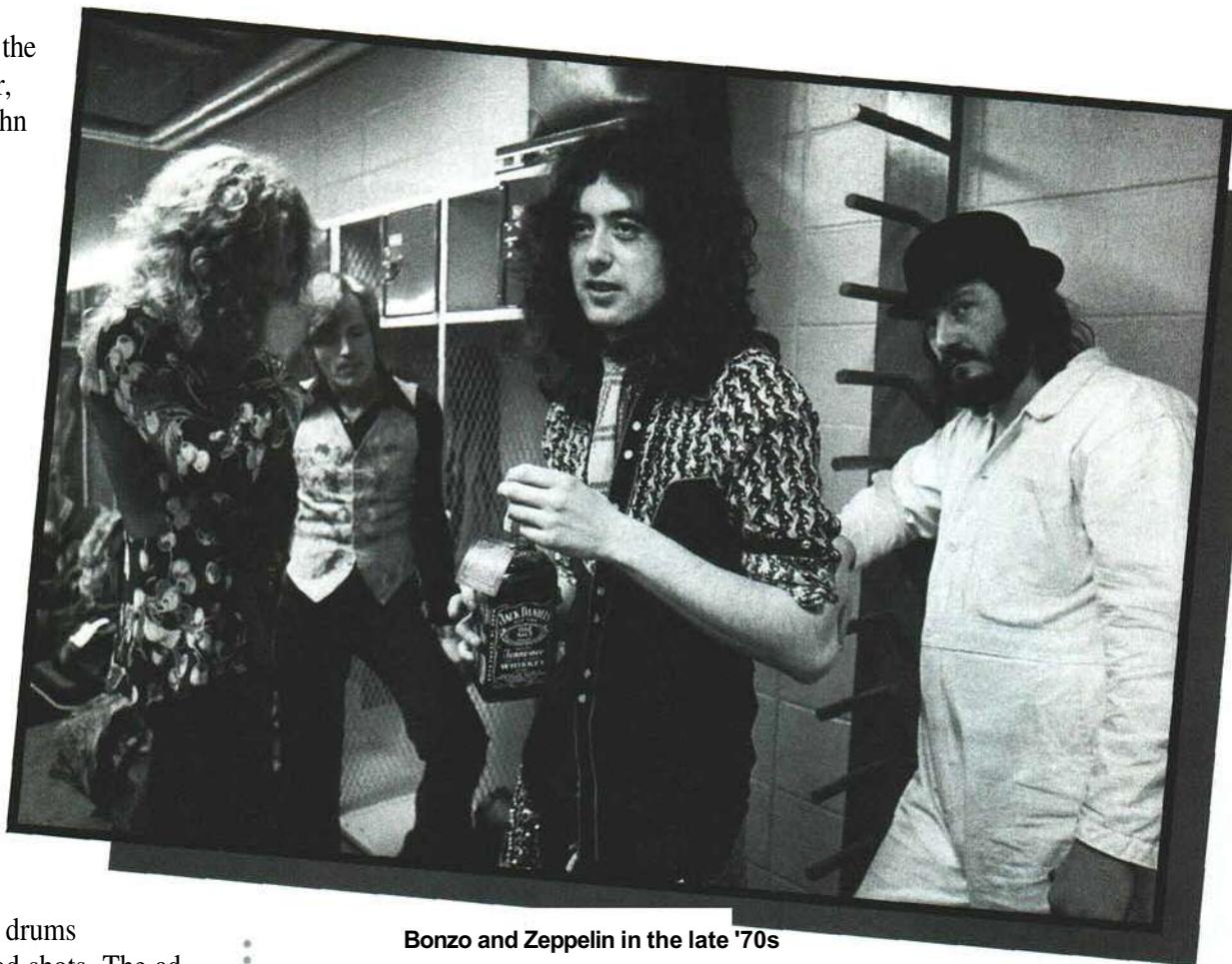


we shall see, for the group's drummer, the very same John Bonham.

Led Zeppelin could do no wrong. Both Thinking Man and Primitive Man were mobilized in its praise. Even the conservative drum companies stood up and took notice. The aforementioned *downbeat* carried a full page Ludwig ad, juxtaposing the company's new see-

through *Vistalite* drums with endorser head shots. The ad led with Carmine Appice, John Bonham, and Don Brewer—virtually the holy trilogy of endorsers at that time. The problem was that the face shown above the caption "John Bonham Led Zeppelin" (sic) was, in fact, none other than Led Zeppelin's guitarist, Jimmy Page! An honest mistake, it surely was, but indicative of the short shrift Mr. Bonham would receive throughout his career.

All water under the bridge now, but it's something I set out to address in 1982 when I began research for *MD*'s first feature article on Bonham (July 1984 issue). I can recall a sinking feeling.



Bonzo and Zeppelin in the late '70s

For one thing, although there was lots of bar talk about "power drumming," the loose, muffled tuning of the '70s was still much in evidence—a sloppily tuned snare drum being the antithesis of what Bonham stood for. And, although a good deal of reverence accompanied the spoken name of John Bonham, who had passed away a scant two years before, it began to look as if his lessons were lost—namely, we swallowed electronics hook, line, and sinker.

That grunting analog synth drum thing was just not Bonham's cup of tea. And, to add insult to injury, by the end of the decade there would be samples and ghostly

loops of those precious, larger-than-life drum beats John created.

But the electronics phenomenon burned out as quickly as it arrived, and when that wisp of smoke cleared, musicians yearned for the artists who made the sounds, and not vice versa. And so today, with the return of acoustic, pure performance, John Bonham's legacy is secure. It speaks to us: "Bring out one microphone, place it *here*, and you will hear the sound."

"Jimi Hendrix once said to Bonzo, 'Boy, you've got a right foot like a rabbit.'"

—Robert Plant

John Henry Bonham was born May 31, 1948 in Redditch, a country town near Birmingham, in the north of England. His father was a building contractor, and John, physically fit as he was, would often in his teens labor as a "brickie" on construction sites. His

first group, Terry Webb & the Spiders, was followed in 1966 by A Way Of Life. Dave Pegg, currently bassist for Jethro Tull and Fairport Convention, worked with John in several situations including that group. They'd play rhythm & blues and covers of Byrds and Cream tunes. Pegg remembers that employment opportunities for A Way Of Life declined

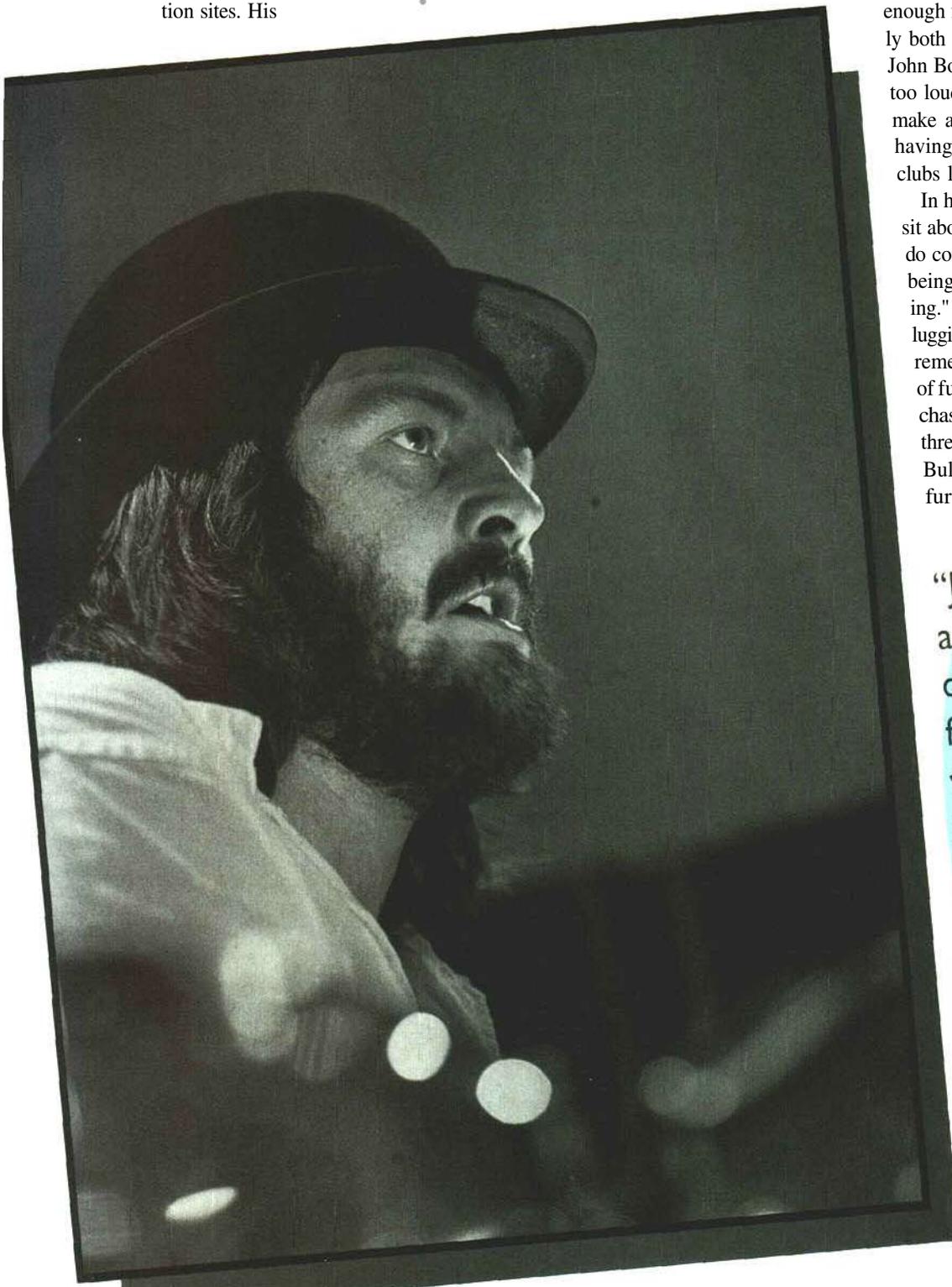
due to John being oppressively loud: "If you were in a band with Bonham you knew you'd never get booked back in those places again."

Cozy Powell, currently with Black Sabbath and veteran of the British music scene, corroborates his mate Bonham's dilemma: "He and I used to get banned from most of these night-clubs because we couldn't play quietly enough for the punters. So very quickly both of us got the reputation, 'not John Bonham or Cozy Powell, they're too loud!'" It became difficult to make a living around Birmingham, having exhausted the thirty or so clubs locally.

In his down time, John wouldn't sit about the house. He'd go out and do construction work, his specialty being what was called "hod carrying." A hod is a device used for lugging bricks up ladders. Pegg remembers selling Bonham a pair of fur boots (!) Dave had purchased in Scandinavia: "Literally three days later, I saw him at the Bull Ring Market, wearing these fur boots on the

"John invented a whole drumming style for himself, which was completely different from the way anybody else played, in terms of both sound and feel."

—Dave Pegg



building site, carrying bricks on this hod—the best boots in Birmingham at the time, and he was wearing them up and down a ladder!" Image was important for north country musicians, on stage and off.

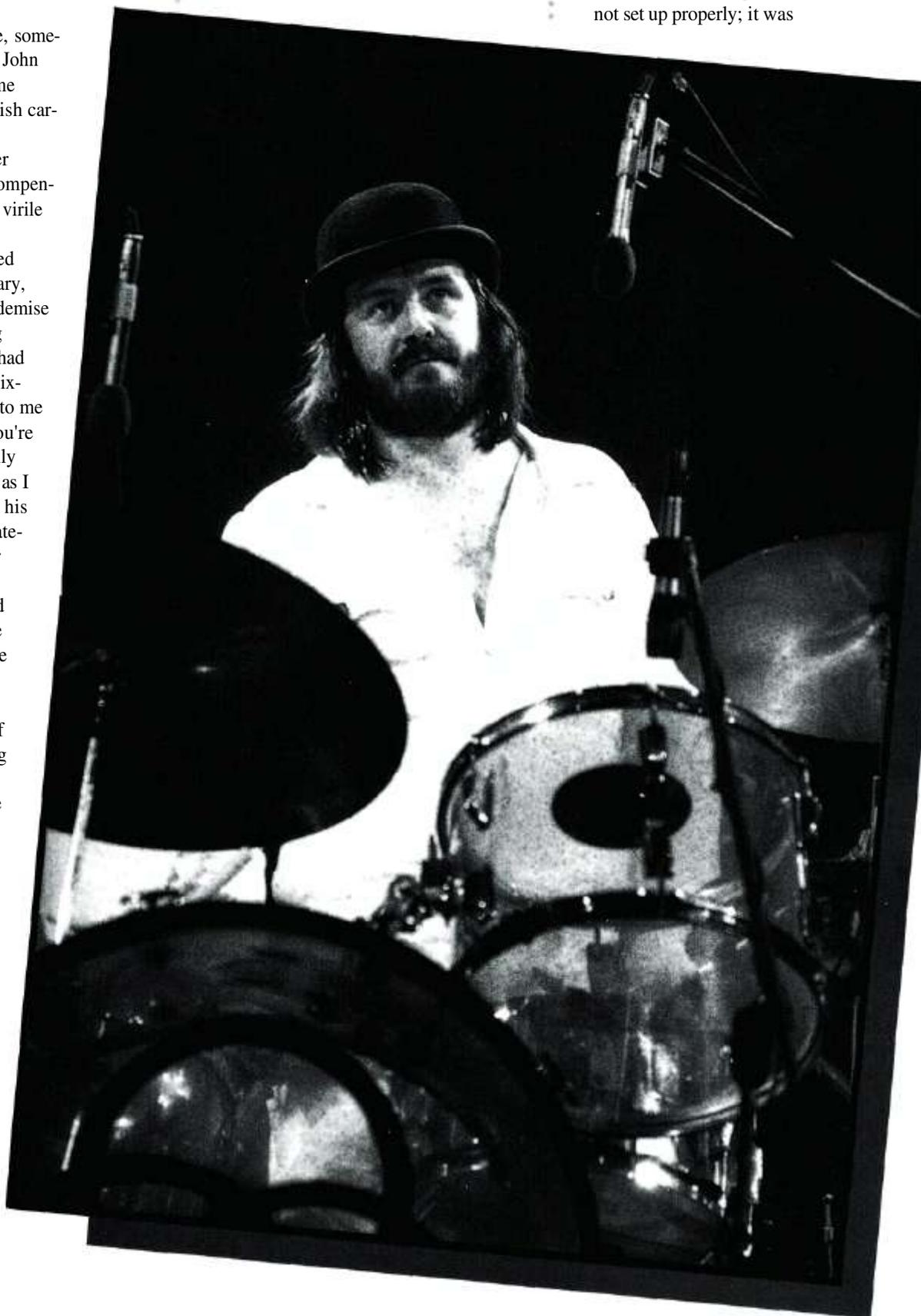
Speaking of image, somewhere along the line John acquired the nickname "Bonzo," after a British cartoon character. Who knows—perhaps later excesses were overcompensation for a less than virile moniker.

Robert Plant formed Band Of Joy in January, 1967, following the demise of the Crawling King Snakes, in which he had met Bonham at age sixteen: "John came up to me at a gig and said, 'You're alright, but you're only half as good a singer as I am a drummer,' with his usual sort of understatement. Because of our outgoing, gregarious natures, we terrorized other musicians if we didn't think they were any good. It wasn't hostile banter; it was the kind of good stuff between kids growing up among the same musicians. I think the whole thing about Bonzo and I was that we were always trying to prove something."

On one occasion, booked at The Belfry in Birmingham, Band Of Joy opened for Cozy Powell's band, the Youngbloods. Cozy will never forget that evening: "It's quite vivid, the

memory. I'd heard of John Bonham; being an up-and-coming drummer myself, you needed to know the competition. And I remember standing on the edge of the stage, waiting for

Robert Plant and John. I remember seeing a four-drum Ludwig kit. It was almost like it had been thrown onto the stage and not set up properly; it was



slightly skewed. I remember John walking on and starting to play, and my mouth sort of dropped open in disbelief at the power of the playing coming across the stage—and the technique! I've never, ever seen another drummer play quite the way he did." It must have been one potent display to awaken the beast in Cozy Powell: "I don't know: When you see a drummer who can really hit the drums hard, it's something that all of us as drummers, or people who love the drums, can relate to. And when you see somebody who almost destroys his drumkit with sheer power—when you actually *witness* it for the first time—it's quite awesome, really. Although I'd always played pretty heavy, after I saw him I mentally tuned myself to play even harder; it impressed me so much to watch him play."

Cozy and John became good pals and hung out around Birmingham. Cozy swears that "Bonham's whole idea of a good night would be to go and jam with various bands locally and demolish the drumkit. He used to really love that. I remember we went out several times and there were a couple of guys he didn't quite get on with too well. He'd say to me, 'Just watch me tonight, I'm going to totally demolish this drumkit.' Sure enough, he would."

Band Of Joy recorded six demos with Bonham on drums at New Regent Sound in London. According to Plant, "If you heard that, you would hear Led Zeppelin. The copy I've got, Bonzo's doing a lot of those drum figures and fills, which were quite popular at the time with drummers like Carmine Appice—all that kind of virtuoso drumming. It was like, 'Here I am, everybody; somebody get me in a *big* band, quick. I want to get away from Plant!'" Band Of Joy was one of Bonham's first opportunities to hold the drum chair in basically a trio format, and Plant remembers him "incorporating some of Ginger Baker's technique of counter-rhythms." The band fizzled and Plant joined up with Alexis Korner, while Bonham went off with American Tim Rose.

The rest is public record. Session guitarist Jimmy Page had joined the Yardbirds in their twilight years. For various reasons the group fell apart, leaving Page and manager Peter Grant with the rights to the popular name, but no personnel. They restocked the band with personal choices—

Plant first, then John Paul Jones, who had met Page on London session dates. Jones was eager for the opportunity, being somewhat weary of punching the clock as an arranger and performer in studios: "The sessions were two or three a day—three-hour sessions. You'd never know what you were going to walk into. They'd pass out the parts and count it in."

Jimmy Page was holding out for a drummer with facility and flash. Plant insisted that they venture up to Birmingham to check out Bonham, who was performing

with Tim Rose. Page made the journey and was immediately convinced.

All four finally gathered for a blow at a little rehearsal room in London. Common ground was the old twelve-bar blues "Train Kept A-Rolling." Silence, then nervous laughter followed. Something magical had occurred. The mix was perfect, although Plant recalls, "To me and Bonzo they were like senior citizens, Jimmy and Jonesy. They were that much older than us, and they knew which kind of cutlery to use. They were quite classy characters to two

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boys from the sticks." However, "when you start playing, it doesn't really matter where you come from."

This was proven on a tour to Scandinavia. Old contractual commitments done with, they entered the studio in December, 1968 as the New Yardbirds, and re-emerged in January, 1969 as Led Zeppelin.

What more might be said about Led Zeppelin? They had a great run at it. Never saturating the market, nor repeating themselves, they managed almost an album per

year of fresh material—and a movie, *The Song Remains The Same*, documenting a live performance in America.

Led Zeppelin took it from bone-crushing metal to whispered, elegant passages, enhanced with chamber strings. All this sat firmly on the founding premise, the blues. It just doesn't get much heavier than a Led Zeppelin slow blues. Listen to "Since I've Been Loving You," from *Led Zeppelin III*. The bass drum sound on that tune is one of the sweetest, most resonant things you've ever heard. Though not a proper blues in

the harmonic sense, this song embodies that rich tradition, and shows that there is no sin in omission. It has left space—space for languishing guitar riffs to define the turn-around, space for Robert Plant to demonstrate what he learned from Howlin' Wolf, space for the lush Hammond organ. Even when this tune builds, as it does considerably, nothing obscures that monstrous bass drum and snare drum. Jimmy Page, when re-mixing for the Zeppelin re-issue box set in 1990, made decisions that ensured that the drums, and even the ride cymbal, cut through with a punch and depth exceeding even the original version.

Here's another one: "No Quarter." For some reason, I prefer the live version from *The Song Remains The Same*. Here we have the compendium of John Bonham's talents. John Paul Jones gets us into the tune, suggesting the coming vocal line on quiet piano. Next, the signature bulldozer drum entrance, four notes placed to *stun*. This tendency to slice deeply had become Bonham's thing. An impressionistic passage follows in which John's use of the hi-hat shows the influence of Sly Stone (*Fresh*) and Tower Of Power: Sometimes his quick open and closed "barks" are accompanied by bass drum, sometimes not. Then, Bonham's swimming along effortlessly with these light funk grooves. When he does come down on the original grinding backbeat it's like an earthquake. The cymbal work is wonderful: The ride comes in at a neat spot, and you can hear a warm wash underneath the bead of the stick. And, when toms and cymbals are just not enough, he goes to the timpani and gong to his left and rear, respectively; never overdoing it. It's rare to find such finesse and, if it can be said, a degree of symphonic sensibility in such an archetypal metal dirge.

"Good Times Bad Times" sees John saluting Carmine Appice's pioneering bass drum triplets. Bonham's version features a gaping hole: The first of each group of three is missing, creating a marvelous, staggering gait. "Poor Tom," from the posthumous Zeppelin album *Coda*, features Bonham pulling off a totally convincing New Orleans shuffle, both hands on snare drum.

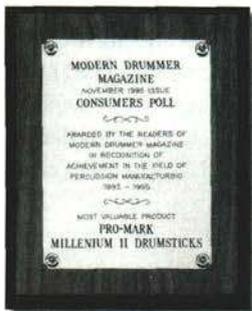
INFLUENCES,.....
Everyone near to Zeppelin in the old days cites Carmine Appice as both a good



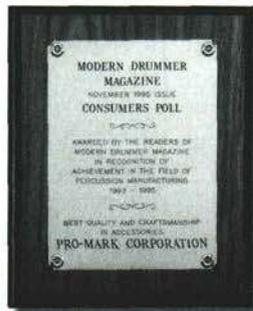
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friend of Bonham's and an important influence. The Vanilla Fudge shared billing with Zeppelin on the group's American tour. Robert remembers an incident in Edmonton, Canada. "It was a cow palace; you could smell the cow shit dried up underneath the plastic. I remember playing away in the middle of 'How Many More Times,' and I turned around, and Jonesy and Bonzo had switched in mid-beat for (Tim) Bogert and Carmine. It was very good fun."

Bonham had seen '70s fusion drummer Alphonse Mouzon perform and mentioned him often. He also took careful note of Bernard Purdie, as evidenced by the little grace notes that he appropriated for himself on "Fool In The Rain." Then there were drummers Jim Capaldi, Aynsley Dunbar, and "Frostie," who played with Lee Michaels in, basically, a keyboard and drums format.

To watch Bonham solo, one influence is immediately apparent: Buddy Rich. Plant recalls, "Buddy Rich was always a big deal for all of us. His personality, his attitude, and his playing were basically like ours, but he was twenty-eight years further on down the line. He played with such venom at times, and with such ease!"

Ginger Baker was an important influence as well. What Bonham got from Baker was a tribal approach to the toms, especially evident in "Moby Dick." Perhaps there's just a touch of legendary English jazz drummer Phil Seaman in there, too.

Oftentimes, Bonham would be more influenced by particular songs than by the drummers. John Paul Jones: "He really liked the James Brown stuff, all the Motown stuff, Al Green—very much so—and whoever the drummers were. John was a soul drummer, really." Plant would tend to agree: "By the time we'd gotten to *Physical Graffiti* or *Presence*, he'd gotten rid of all this [imitates sound of busy, rolling drums]. He'd thrown that away and was listening to Al Jackson with Willie Mitchell and Al Green. John had decided that less is more. 'I'm Gonna Crawl,' 'All Of My Love,' and 'In The Evening': If you listen to those, the drumming is very black."

As John Paul said, James Brown was a big influence, and perhaps it went the other way as well, at least on one occasion. Led Zeppelin was booked at the Newport Jazz



JOHN

Bonham

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—Dave Mattacks

Festival in 1970. James Brown was on the same bill. Jones remembers Bonham "had got up to do his sound check, and the three James Brown drummers had sidled over. They started looking around for the other drummers, because he sounded like what all three of them did, but there was only one of him! And they just stood around, with their jaws dropped. He was pretending not to notice them; he was showing off somewhat."

When I remarked to John Paul Jones about my being a sucker for a ballad, Jones offered, "So was Bonzo. What was that Motown group, the Stylistics? They'd do all these sweet ballads, and he knew all the words." Of course, slow tempos offer the most opportunity for the drums to swell and breathe. This is probably one reason Bonham "rated" another expert in the slow tempo—Fairport Convention's Dave Mattacks. Affirms John Paul Jones:

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"Bonzo always liked Dave Mattacks: rock solid, absolutely unmoveable, very economical, just doing exactly what was necessary but with great feel." Plant offered the same tribute: "Bonzo used to get on well with Mattacks, although a greater contradiction in personalities you couldn't find. They liked each other, and Bonzo didn't borrow from Dave Mattacks's style, but he was appreciative of him."

Dave Pegg recalls bringing Mattacks around to John Bonham's house in the

early days: "John had bought his son Jason a miniature Ludwig kit. Jason was sitting behind the kit—he was only about seven at the time—and he played 'Walk A While' [a Fairport tune from the LP *Full House*]. He got everything that Dave Mattacks was doing on the record. That's how much of a Dave Mattacks fan John was; he taught his son to play one of the tracks off the Fairport record. Obviously, the feeling was mutual."

STYLE

Guitarist Ry Cooder once described a "search for the *big note*." For a drummer, a bass drum capable of generating a whole note would be a good place to start; then a snare, which despite its sharp "crack" had actual duration. But the placement of those sounds is everything; John Paul Jones verified that they'd even talk it through when cutting tracks: "Behind the beat, yes. That's what we did. We could lay so far back we could just stop from falling over. That's how we both played, and that's how we both liked it."

Some of the most exciting Bonham work is found where he's hanging on for dear life, stranded in a flurry of good intentions—something to do with what Robert Plant once called "knitting." I asked him to clarify: "Knitting! [laughs] Sometimes he'd be so ambitious in creating a fill that his sticks would be entwined, as if creating a small cardigan, and they'd miss the skins altogether. You'd sometimes have to *wish* the snare was there!"

Veteran Atlantic Records engineer Tom Dowd disputes the common conception that Bonham was a bombastic drummer:

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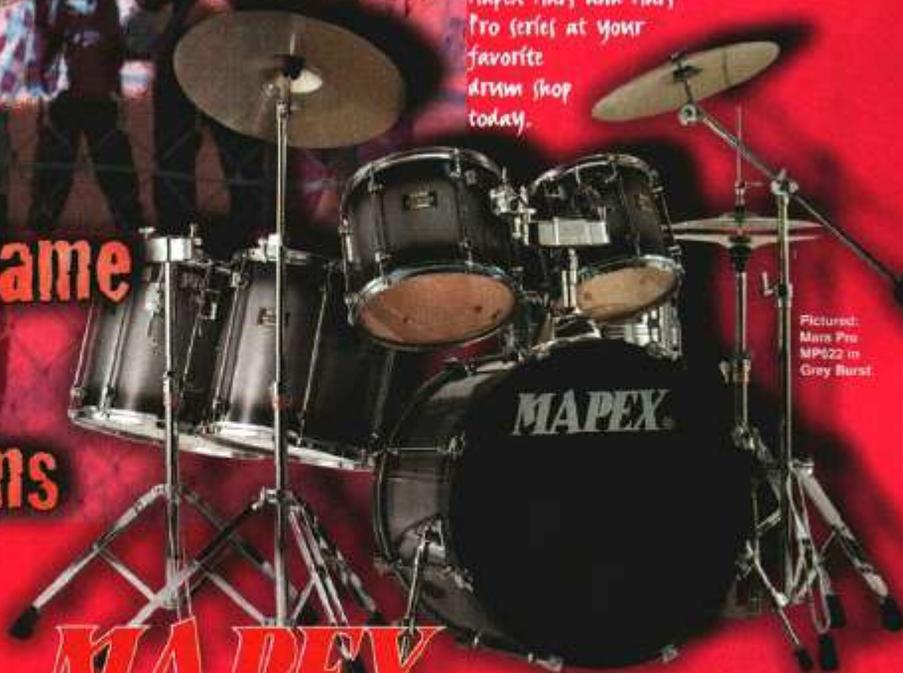


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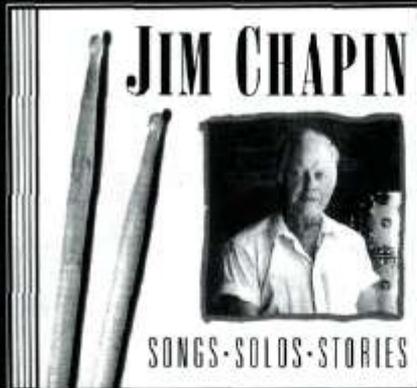
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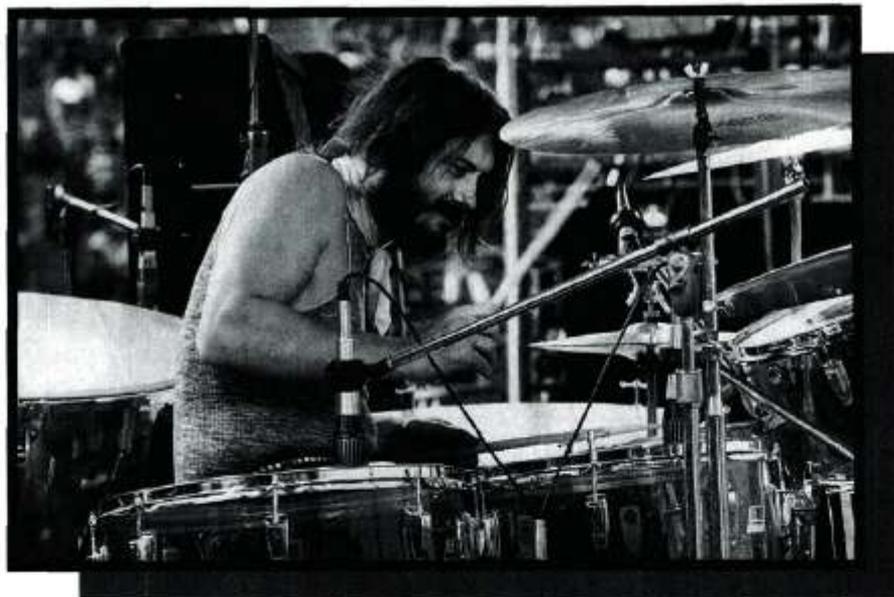
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Again, it goes back to laying back a little, leaving space.

Ultimately, John Bonham's drumming had everything to do with that kit with the 26" bass drum—and, paradoxically, much less than we'd think. Witness the following anecdote related by Dave Mattacks: "I can remember a visit to John's house. My recollection is a small drumkit set up beside

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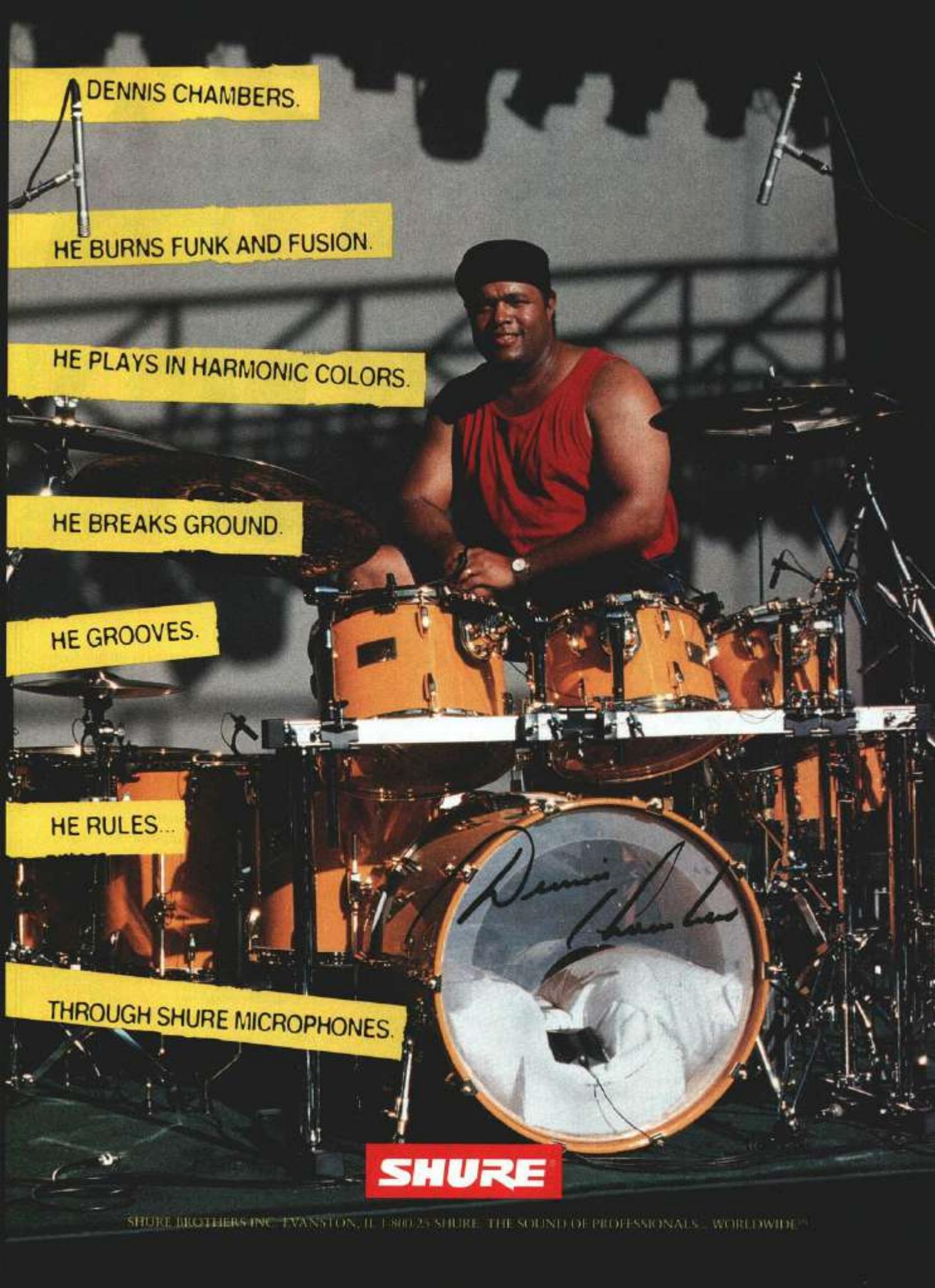
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the juke box. I remember asking John, 'How did you do that 9/8 thing on 'The Crunge'? I can't find where 1 is.' He sat down at that miniature drumkit, and it was *that* sound. *That* bass drum sound, *that* snare sound, *that* tom sound—out of an 18" bass drum, 4"-deep snare drum, and 12" and 14" toms. And I remember being half-amazed at *what* he played and half-amazed at the *sound* he was getting—the Zeppelin sound coming out of this little drumkit."

It's not just that Bonham hit the drums hard. It's that he hit them properly. The latter is the secret. Watch the old videos closely. Sometimes Bonham is raising his hand quite high, but the striking point—the point at which his hand snaps the stick to the head, and back—is quite near the drum. Tuned snug as they were, Bonham's drums did not require a huge wind-up in order to respond.

Engineer Eddie Kramer found the same thing: "He had the amazing ability to attack the drums and yet not seem to attack them physically. It was in the way he hit the drum, whether it was snare, toms, or foot."

KITS,

The Way Of Life and Band Of Joy kits were simple, four-drum glitter kits, in either champagne or silver sparkle, with a couple of cymbals. By the time Bonham first went out with Led Zeppelin, it was a green sparkle kit in slightly larger sizes. Carmine Appice was responsible for setting up John with a Ludwig endorsement, making the phone call himself.

Bonham obtained the mirror image of Carmine's Vanilla Fudge kit: two 26" bass drums, a 15" rack tom, and 16" and 18" floor toms in blond maple. However, Bonham would perform with only one bass drum; the guys in Led Zeppelin would not tolerate two bass drums. Fine for Ginger Baker, but not John! John Paul recalls seeing the kit in its original splendor at rehearsals: "He brought out two bass drums and I shouted at him, 'What am I going to play?' I told him that he could do all that with one foot anyway; why carry two of them around?" Similarly, Plant recalls: "He used to play with two bass drums sometimes at rehearsals, and when he'd go to the bathroom we'd steal one of them. Jimi Hendrix once said to him, 'Boy,

you've got a right foot like a rabbit.' And the thing is, if you can do it with one foot, in those days to get the two bass drums going you'd need two pedals, which meant losing the hi-hat. It just sounded like you were trying to sound dexterous rather than playing with the group."

For a while Bonham went with the trend to Ludwig's clear-shelled *Vistalite* series, and ended up with a stainless-steel kit. He stayed with Ludwig throughout his career, and 99% of the time used a standard alloy 400 series snare drum in a 6 1/2" depth sometimes with Gretsch 42-strand snares to fatten the sound. Similarly, he never budged from the configuration of one rack tom and two floor toms, a setup suggested by mentors Rich and Krupa.

Cymbals are an important part of John Bonham's sound, and he was capable of an exciting dynamic range with them. His choice of larger cymbals reflected a concern for projection and sustain. Also, the large sizes nodded to the old adage of using the proper-sized tool for the job. As with drums, John was loyal to one brand of cymbals—Paiste. First he used the *Giant Beat* series; these were, more or less, fore-

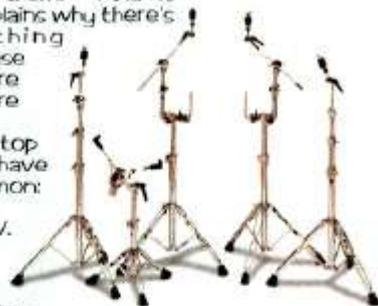
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runners of the 2002, but were made explicitly for cutting through amplified music.

Cozy Powell remembers consoling John on the discontinuation of that series: "We were disgusted when Paiste discontinued making them. In those days, Zildjian were all the rage. Not too many people would use Paiste, but John and I did because we couldn't break them. We went through Zildjians like there was no tomorrow, and we quite liked the sound of Paistes, as well. You could play them dynamically."

Both Cozy and John used 24" ride cymbals. The reasons for this monster were twofold: First, it had great power; second, it doubled as an explosive crash—the link between his crashes and the 38" symphonic gong he had suspended behind him. I queried Cozy on the choice of the large ride: "It's a big-sounding cymbal, which didn't work unless you hit it hard; I'm not talking about hitting it just for the sake of hitting it. It's hitting it hard by a drummer who plays hard. You get certain cymbals, as you know, which, if you hit them hard, the sound chokes, whereas with these particular cymbals you can hit them very hard with a big stick and it will sound great."

John's 2002 setup was comprised of a 24" ride, 15" *Sound Edge* hi-hats, a 16" crash to his left, an 18" crash to his right, and the gong to his rear. He rarely varied from that setup, except to position an additional crash to his left once in a while. Oh yes, and John Paul Jones saw him cleaning them lovingly, as he would his person: "He used to put his cymbals in the bath with soapy water. They would come up all shiny. He hit the cymbals hard, but he hit them right. He didn't really break a lot of things."

TUNING.....

Engineer Tom Dowd spent a good deal of time in England circa '66 on assignment with Atlantic Records. His view is that the higher tuning evident on certain records is a consequence of the English being "3,000 miles away, using the wrong instruments, and trying to sound like us." That is, "With regard to British drummers, they were still playing the Gene Krupa kit they saw with big bands. And they didn't understand that in the United States we'd gone to smaller bass drums or even a floor tom turned on its side and using it as a bass drum—and

we would take the front head off or put a hole in the head." Americans were employing different recording techniques—in particular, the practice of close-miking. The British were still using old "radio-style" techniques.

Eventually, the English drummers gravitated towards the American example. Take Ringo Starr: Originally he was tuning his drums in a manner that was right out of jazz. He had an open-ringing snare (check "Ticket To Ride") and a resonant, flappy bass drum, as the resurfaced *BBC Tapes* demonstrate. But gradually, probably out of a combination of changing recording techniques and the American trend to dryer sounds, Ringo started pitching his drums a lot lower and dampened, as did most drummers.

John Bonham, however, refused to switch. As a hard hitter, he knew that any increased sustain or resonance afforded by a lower tuning would be instantly lost if such a drum were struck with force. Mattacks was dealt this lesson while performing with Fairport at the Troubadour in Los Angeles. Bonzo was in town and insisted on having a go at his friend's kit:

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"That was a quantum step in learning about tuning *and perceived* sound. By then I had gotten into a lower tuning because of the availability of mic's. But at the Troubadour there were no mic's, and my drums were still lower. When John played my drums, there was very little distinction between my three toms. And although he was playing very hard, which does make a difference, my drums were way too low. The drums just sounded soggy. The snare drum sounded kind of 'medium' to me when I was playing it, but when he played it, it just sounded like pudding."

Bonham's drums were tensioned quite tightly, almost jazz-like. Engineer/producer Eddie Kramer recorded Bonham on several occasions. He describes Bonham's tuning as "concert in tonality. By that, I mean if you took a concert bass drum, you only have to touch it and it will resonate like crazy; Bonham's bass drum is the same basic thing, just scaled down. If you touched it gently, it would resonate like crazy; if you hit it hard with the right amount of attack and with a wood beater, it gave you the most incredible crack, plus a tremendous low-frequency 'oomph,' which is probably the secret of his bass drum sound."

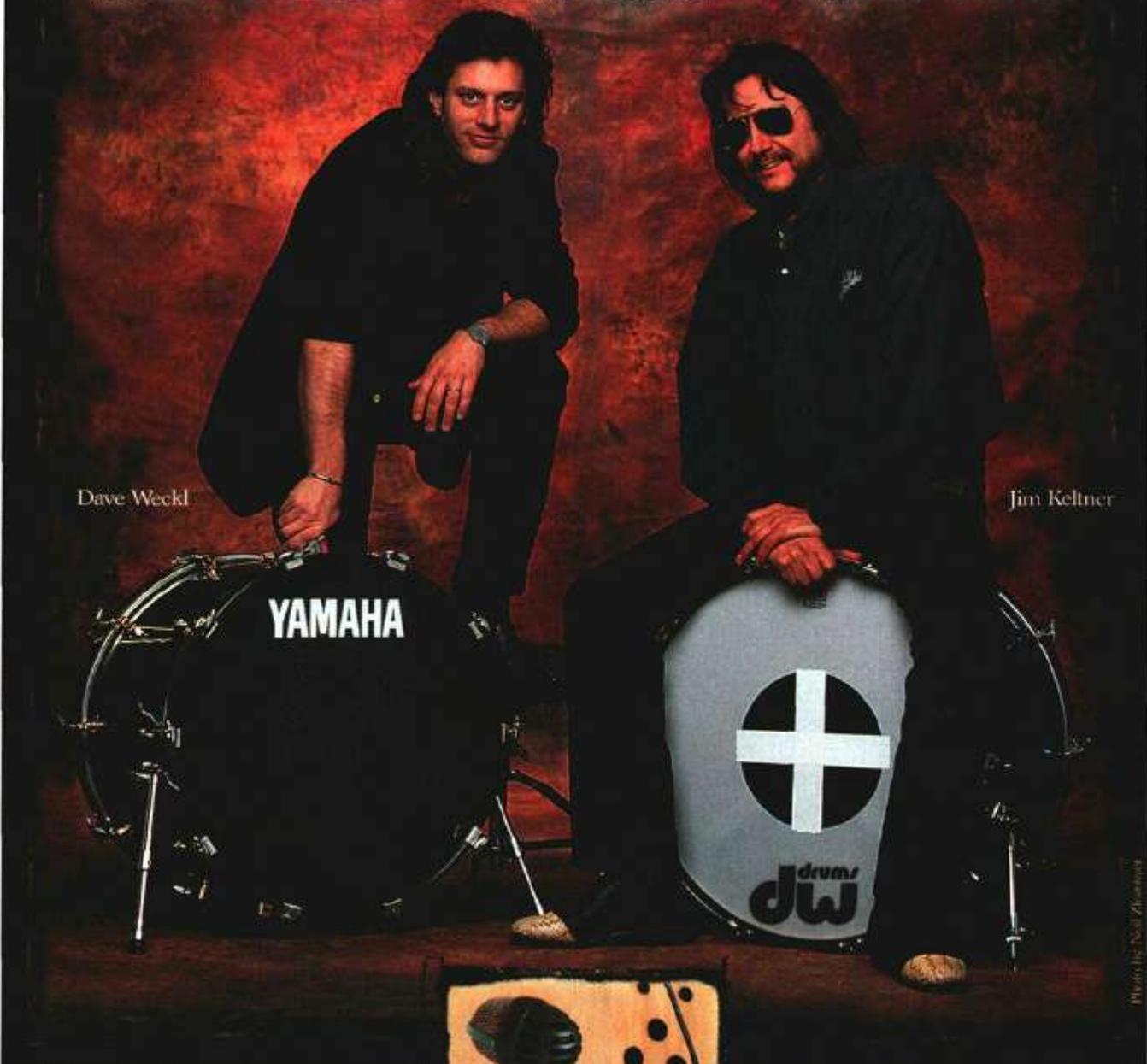
Jim Keltner remembers an occasion some twenty-six years back: "I was hanging around the Fillmore one afternoon with Jack Ranelli, the drummer from the Woody Herman Band. Backstage we saw Bonham's drums and commented on how big they were, and wondered who was going to be playing; nobody knew of Led Zeppelin at the time. I tapped on the bass drum, and it was so open-sounding with both heads on it. And the snare was a deep Ludwig 6 1/2x14 with tube lugs, an old one even for then, 1969. That night we were all watching. Bonham was so powerful, and his sound was so incredible. I remember thinking, 'Man, I wish I could tune my drums like that in the studio.' From that point on and for many years, he continued to amaze me with his sound and feel."

I remember photos of Bonham when he acquired his Ludwig stainless-steel kit. There was a good deal of talk in those times about the logic behind metal-shelled drums. Consensus used to be that those Ludwig drums were darn near unmanageable. Why? Because they were the drums with the high-end ring built in. Personally,

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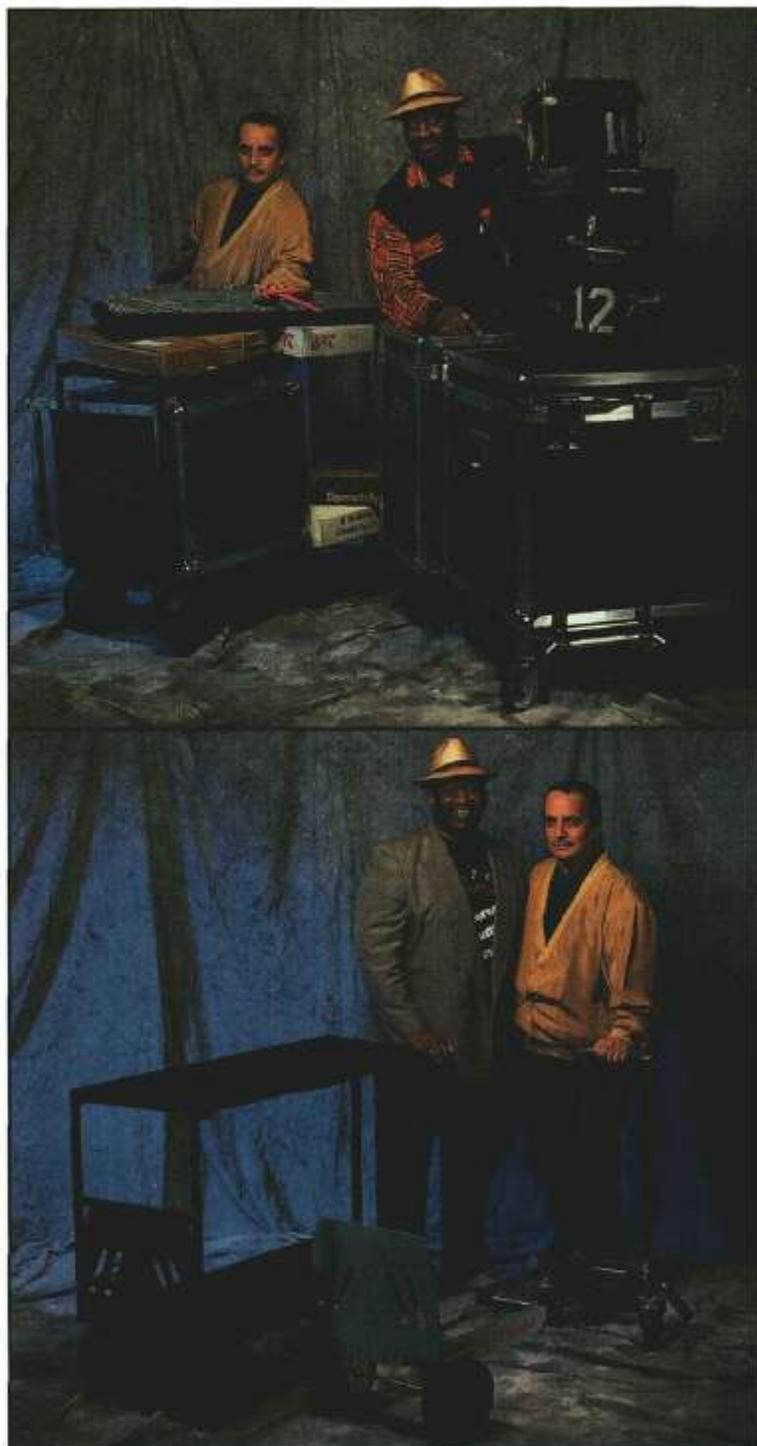
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I had no trouble with them but, frankly, I would have shuddered at the thought of cranking them to the bebop tension Bonham favored. Mattacks got a crack at John's stainless-steel kit: "I remember playing it, and the bass drum sounded like my rack tom! You know, it was like 'bing!' The snare drum was wide open, and just cranked up really tight. But it was that thing where, when *he* played it sounded great."

How did the guys in Zeppelin feel about John's various kits from a sonic point of view? John Paul Jones: "Some snares used to come through more. Often you'd find it sounded different the first night or two, but once he'd gotten it tuned up the way he liked it, it would sound like him again. He used to call them his 'cannons.'"

Robert Plant feels that John was better off with wood drums, but ultimately it didn't matter. "John changed drums, but he knew how to tune the kit and it always sounded great. He used to shout, at the top of his voice, '*Cannons!*' and I'd turn around and say, 'Fuck off.' He was exuberant, and his war cry would mean that he had gotten drums that sounded like the Battle of Trafalgar!"

What was it like to play with Bonham on stage? Jones: "I would stand at the front of the stage for the first number, but it wouldn't take me but a couple of minutes and then I'd be standing right next to the drums, where I would spend the rest of the set. It was a great feeling. It was nice to be bathed in this acoustic drum sound; you

wouldn't get the harshness of the monitors. Even with all the other stuff going on, you could still get a lot of direct, acoustical sound from the drums. I could feel the bass drum coming through; it sounded great on stage and it was really nice to stand next to! We used to work very closely on stage;

I had to hear his bass drum and he had to hear my bass, and we'd just lock 'em in really tight."

RECORDING BONHAM.....

John Bonham rarely made adjustments upon entering the studio—for example,

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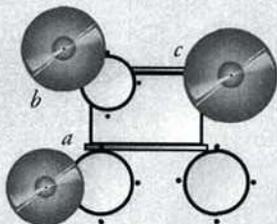
Alex's snare batter choice is a coated CS™ Controlled Sound head with Black Dot.

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yanking the front head from the kick, placing a wallet on the snare, or tuning the toms down. In fact, until the very end of his career, he recorded with both heads intact on the bass drum. Not until their last recording did he try sticking the mic' inside the bass drum. Jones has a vague memory of John using a soup plate as a template in order to cut a hole in the front head. However, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the John Bonham sound in the studio is simply an extension of his live sound, and features larger double-headed drums tuned way up and hit with considerable force.

In fact, Bonham's resistance to altering his approach in the studio got him off to a bad start. Dave Pegg recounts how John earned an ironic distinction: "There was a recording studio in Brum [Birmingham] called Zella/Ladbrooke, and the owner, Johnny Haines, declared Bonham to be 'unrecordable.' It went down in Birmingham musical history. At the time, Johnny's studio consisted of two Revox tape recorders and a tiny room. You'd get Bonzo in there and he just couldn't attenuate the machinery enough to get the tape *not* to go into distortion! That's how powerful it was! You couldn't put the mic's far enough away. Everything just went into the red. Bonzo wasn't into the technicality of all this; it was 'Oh, you bastard, I'll show you.' It was only a couple of years later that Led Zeppelin was Number 1, and the whole world was trying to get this 'unrecordable' drum sound!"

I asked Tom Dowd about Bonham and his druthers. "We talked about that nature of things. And Bonham told me about microphone placement. The way I do it, mate," he said, 'is I put a stick here, another stick on top of that,' and then putting the first stick on top of the second said, That's

where the microphone belongs, right there.' Then he put his earphones on—no other microphones on him—and he adjusted his playing until he heard what he wanted to hear from that one microphone. Now, if you decided that you wanted a little more of this or that, you could put it in, and if it

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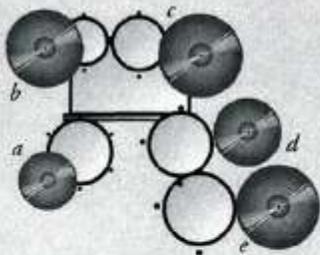
Chris McHugh has a head for drums.

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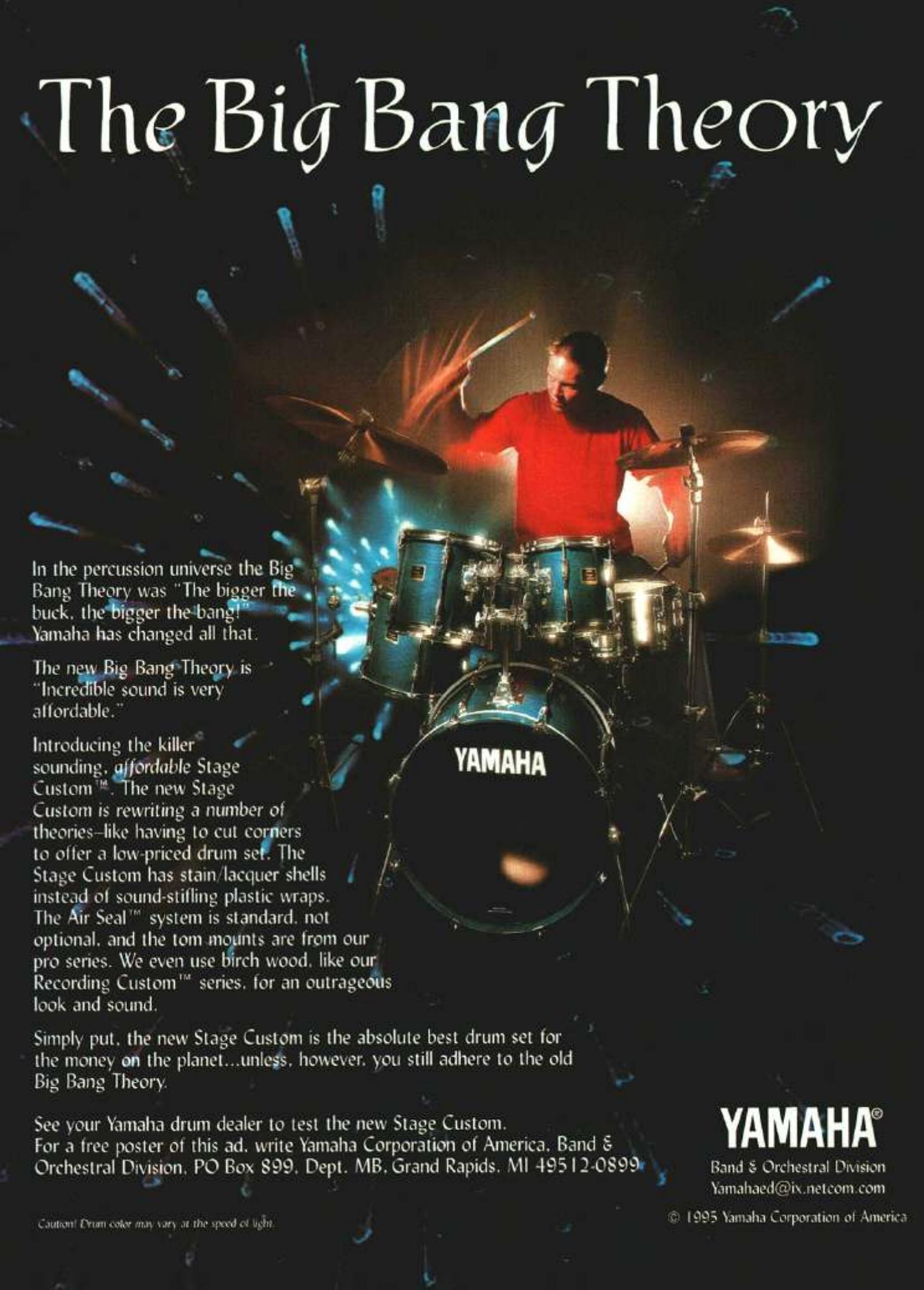
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didn't distract him he wouldn't be mad. But if you added something he didn't like, all of a sudden he'd kind of look at you and shake his head, like, 'Get that damned thing out of my ear!'" Eddie Kramer got a little hint of that wrath as well: "He always used to come and give me a big bear hug and say, 'You're going to give me a good sound today, aren't you?' in a kind of funny, threatening voice."

John Paul Jones agrees that if Bonham wanted, say, a louder snare drum in the mix, then he'd play it that way, off-the-floor. "He learned what to do in order to have the most reliable positioning. In reality, he was very easy to record, as I was after years of sessions: You had to present the engineers with the best sound possible. Basically, you could stick a microphone in front of either of us and it would sound good. I've got some old demos that were recorded on an old cassette recorder, just sitting on a table, and the drumming sounded incredible."

Jones reasoned that Bonham had spent more hours than he cared for "working with people who had microphones in very strange places and who didn't really know what sound came out of what drum. I think he was frustrated by engineers who would place mic's without listening first. I've seen him literally destroy—deservedly—some idiot engineer. He came in the box once after doing a blinding take, and the drums just sounded dreadful, and he said, 'I might just as well have left them in the cases.' He was very particular."

In the early days, the group recorded in London studios like Olympic, or on the road in little low-ceiling dungeons. John Paul Jones notes that "there wasn't the obsession with separation that there is these days; and of course the main track was always put down live. There was over-

dubbing afterwards. Everything would be set up in the middle of the studio, often in a long line, with screens between each of us—half screens, so that they actually just separated the instruments rather than the people. Jimmy and I would stand at the front, pretty close to Bonham, but the

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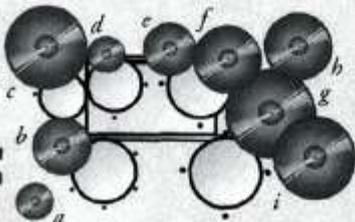
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amplifiers would be in a line. So, yes, there'd be drums leaking through the amps, and vice versa." Along with this leakage, another key factor was sometimes placing a couple of mic's about the room, the old notion being "distance makes depth."

Eddie Kramer would adapt this approach

to recording John Bonham, depending on the particular track. "We used three mic's on 'D'Yer Mak'er,' where the mic's were in the room, specifically placed, fairly distantly. His sound was so controlled, even though he was the loudest drummer I've ever recorded, that he didn't need any

attention to the finer close-miking techniques in that particular song, because of what he generated in the room—and he was in a room all by himself."

Similarly, Jones recounts a rather unusual recording configuration of one of the oft-cited Zeppelin favorites: "When The Levee Breaks—that's two mic's, one about ten feet above the drums, the other about twenty feet above the drums. It was in a big stairwell, in a big old house, and basically what you hear is what the bass drum sounded like. In a neighboring property that's what the drums would sound like!"

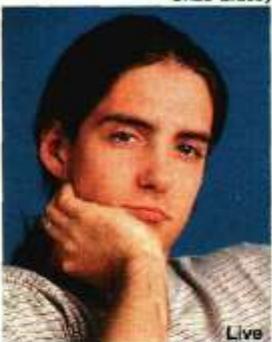
Dave Mattacks worked the same studios in Britain as Bonham did: "It was down to the way he hit the drums and the fact that the mic's weren't stuck up the nut box's [lug's] ass. It was down to mic's six, twelve, or however many feet away from him. The thing that separated him from his contemporaries, which John and I discussed, was the thing about the drumkit being *balanced*—not only from a tonal point of view but from a volume point of view. It was also his belief that cymbals shouldn't overpower the drums. One should be able to put one microphone in front of the set and it should work. In the '40s there weren't mic's all over. John came out of that way of thinking. The core was complete control and balance."

And if a glitch were to happen, so what! Dave Abbruzzese, former Pearl Jam drummer and a heavier player from the current crop of great drummers, puts it nicely: "I

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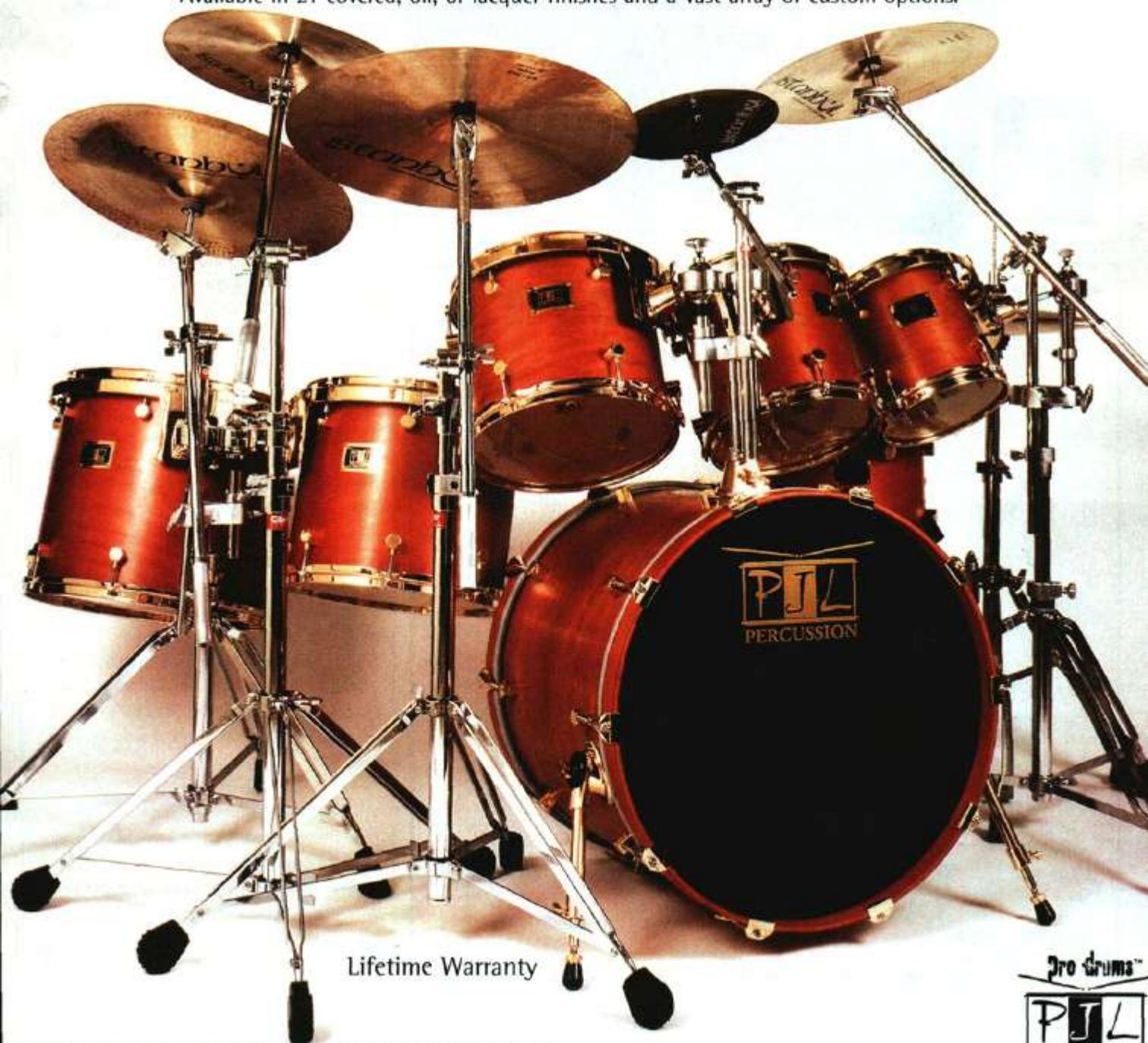
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remember when I first heard Bonham's bass drum pedal squeaking like crazy. It's the perfect imperfection of keeping music *real*. You don't have to gate everything and get rid of the buzzes. Hearing that bass drum pedal squeak was the greatest thing: You're actually in the room, you're actually *there*."

Well, John Bonham sure showed them, both at the Top Spot and at Zella/Ladbroke. He was one truly great drummer, nay musician. He *knew* what he was doing. Yes, says Pegg: "The great thing about John was that he invented a whole drumming style for himself, which was completely different from the way anybody else played, in terms of both sound and feel. He had that kind of ability when he was eighteen or nineteen. Anybody who was any good at playing music knew that he was unique, and that it was only a matter of time."

As incongruous as it sounds, John Bonham was insecure. He loved playing the drums, but he sometimes doubted his abilities. One of my sources revealed that George Harrison once rebuffed John to his face, with a line like, "The next time I'm demolishing a wall in my back garden, I'll give you a ring." John was hurt. And, contrary to what you'd think, he would get terrible stage fright from time to time, further evidence that he really did care. "It's true," Plant admits. "We were all like that. Even now, I'm concerned about creating something new."

In my research it was heartening to hear such unanimous praise from bandmates and accomplices. When John died in September of 1980, the victim of an alcohol binge, Led Zeppelin was felled. For the 1984 *MD* article, I said something to the effect that had John not succeeded in music, he'd be queuing for the train to Birmingham's factories. Let's sharpen that conclusion: John Bonham *had* to succeed. He just needed a couple of years to find a stage or two large enough to accommodate him.

To be sure, the likes of John Bonham will never pass this way again. We will long remember him for his thunderous yet delicate gift.

But, lest we forget, let us close our eyes, and repeat (not too softly)... *Cannons!*

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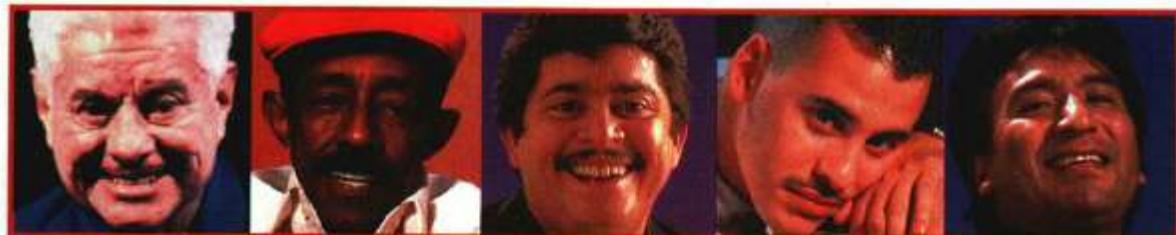
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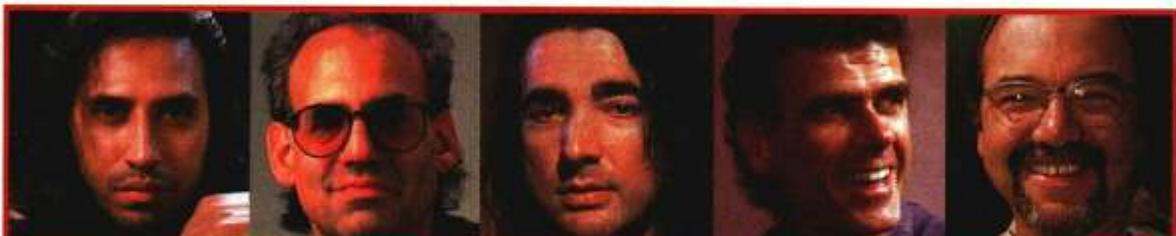
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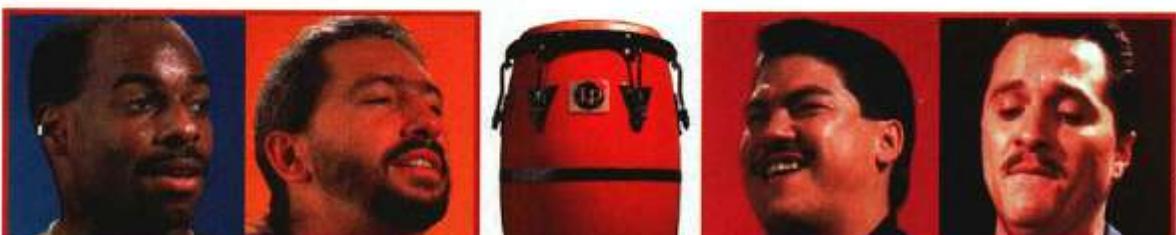
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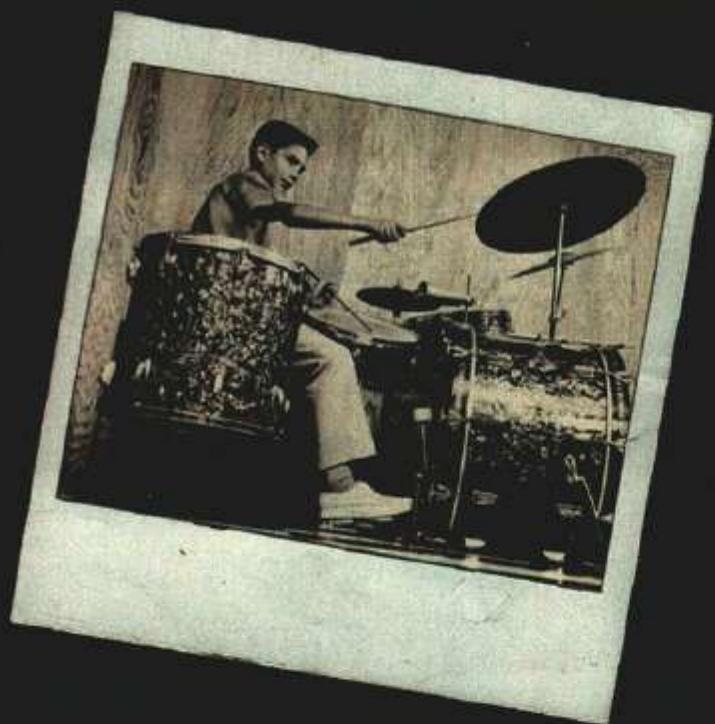
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Words From The Wise

Great Quotes From 20 Years Of MD

by William F. Miller

This issue of *Modern Drummer*—January 1996—marks *MD's* one-hundred-and-ninety-fourth. At an average of about one hundred and twenty pages per issue, it comes to a total of over *twenty thousand* pages of drumming information. That's a massive amount of educational material, a large percentage of which comes from in-depth interviews with the finest drummers ever to have picked up sticks.

As a special event to help celebrate *Modern Drummer's* twentieth anniversary this month, we've gone back and researched our feature articles with the most fascinating, accomplished drummers in history. What were their thoughts on drumming? How did they feel about themselves and their instrument? Does any of that "historical" information ring true today?

Research involved reading literally hundreds of pages of inter-

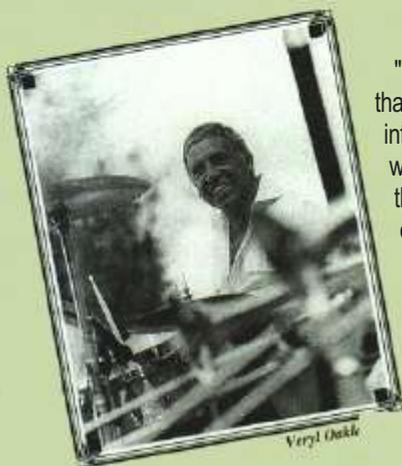
views, looking for the choicest "pearls of wisdom," quotes that would reveal the drummers' opinions and attitudes. What was found was enlightening, both in terms of the artist, and *especially* in regard to the art of drumming. These truly great players' words give us all a deeper appreciation of where we've been, where we're at, and where we're going.



Buddy Rich

"I think it's a fallacy that the harder you practice the better you get. You only get better by playing. You can sit around in the basement with a set of drums all day long and practice rudiments and try to develop speed, but until you start playing with a band, you

can't learn technique, you can't learn taste, and you can't learn how to play with a band and for a band."



"I consider every drummer that ever played before me an influence, in every way. There were so many individual styles thirty or forty years ago. Every drummer that had a name had a name because of his individual playing. He didn't sound like anybody else. So everybody that I ever listened to, in some form, influenced my taste."

"Never come on the job knowing what you're gonna do because it will become mechanical. You can't play the same thing tonight as you did last night. So, to come in with a set routine...it's something I've never believed in. It should depend on how you feel, because you play what you feel."

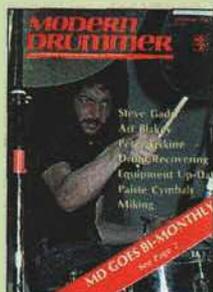


"I imagine that anybody who wants to strive for something different—looking to latch on to some "trick"—well, after they get through with the trick, they'll eventually get back to playing basic drums. So why go through all that other bullshit to get to what you're gonna do anyhow? Why not just get to it?"

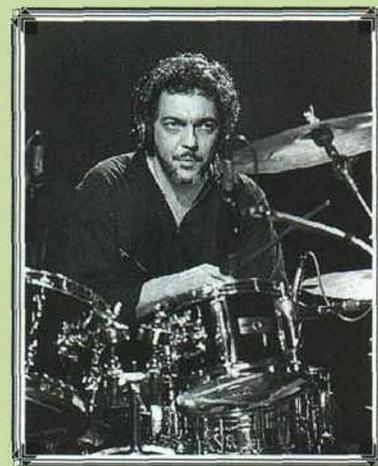
— January 1977

Steve Gadd

"I approach everything by listening *first*, and then finding something to play without going in thinking that I'm going to play something before I get there. The music guides you. You can't put your eyes before your ears. The key thing that tells you what's happening is listening."



"If I am an influence, I hope I'm a good one. But I don't play to be an influence on anyone. I feel a responsibility to the music I play. Let's say, being responsible to the music is the first step in accepting responsibility for people coming up."
— **October 1978**



Ebet Roberts

"There's a difference between keeping your chops in shape and being able to play the music. I could be playing for a month and never run into anything that requires a lot of technique. It might require that I play very simply. If you've got a lot of chops and you get bugged because the music doesn't require great chops, it's difficult to be open-minded about the music. You have to get beyond that wall you set up for yourself."



Veryl Oakland

"There's no secret; you just do the job. Your next job is based on what you did on the last one. In this business, it's word of mouth. You don't have managers and you're not going out hiring P.R. people to help you. It's honest. You get called for something, and if you do it, you might get called for something else. But you've got to do what you get called for. Let's not forget that you've got to do *that* before you get called for the next thing."

— **July 1983**

Bill Bruford

"God, I hate that session sound, so flat and middle range. Ever since Ringo Starr they've been doing it. Rock drummers are so damned conventional it's ridiculous. I like the sound of a highly tuned drum. On a slack tuned drum you lose all the finer notes."

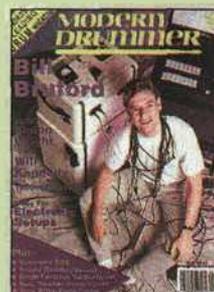


"I need to be more intuitive. I need to loosen up. I've got pretty far up the road with the precision thing. Like, Crimson would do an improvised thing and I'd do a "tick" on a block, and it just *couldn't* come out loose or imprecise."

"I like to think I have as much technique as I need. I find the feeling that a musician is holding back attractive. The feeling that something is there and could come out in little bits at any moment is quite attractive to me."

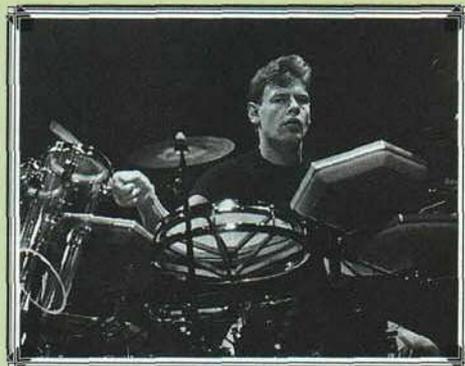
"Basically, work is its own reward. If you are into it, the work justifies itself. Your work and your playing will show you something about yourself. Work and learn. That's what I've been doing, and what I'll continue to do."

— **January/February 1979**

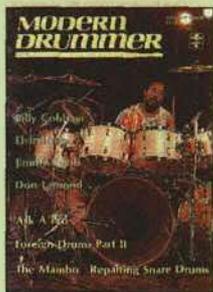


"There is enormous pressure on people like me, who are elected by people like you and your magazine, to be something special and come up with the goods. To be on the front cover, you must be able to deliver. 'You're the Big Cheese, so let's hear some hot shit on the drums!' It's very competitive; an awful lot has been done in drums and percussion in the past few years, and there are a lot of very good young musicians around. So I really feel the need to come up with something fresh—as a drummer, as a composer, and as a bandleader."

— **February 1989**



Paul Natkin



Billy Cobham

"I always thought it was a bit easier to play your ride cymbal and your hi-hat in the same general area. Therefore, it made me use my left hand a lot more than I would have if I had my ride cymbal over towards my right."

— August/September 1979

"The technical thing started to happen when I was in drum corps. That was my foundation. Rudiments started to happen. I feel that drummers need to know that stuff. A kid came up to me when I was in high school and said, 'Do you know how to play a paradiddle?' I knew how to play it, but I didn't know what it was called. He said, 'Well, play one.' I tried, but it didn't work. He played one, and I went home that night and worked. That little competitive thing started to happen right there. I practiced"



Tom Copi



"Playing melodically, as well as rhythmically, is very important to me. When I was developing, I wanted to be able to get around the set, in any direction, so I could

make a musical statement in any way. Now I like to do things where my hands move in totally opposite directions from one another. I can set up some interesting sound combinations on the drums this way."

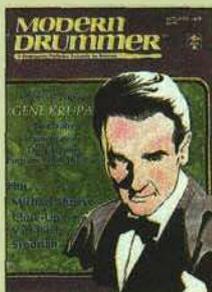
"I think the second you tell yourself you can't do something, you're not going to be able to. I'm not that way. I'll try something. I might fall flat, but if I don't try, it won't ever work."

- July 1986

Gene Krupa

"I'm happy that I succeeded in doing two things: I made the drummer a high-priced guy, and I was able to draw more people to jazz."

"Joining Benny Goodman's band was the greatest thrill of my life, an opportunity to play straight from the heart of jazz with a full band of top-notchers. I took the band as seriously as Benny did and worried all the time about each new man and how we were going over."



"Jazz is becoming too self-conscious. It's getting to be that guys are concentrating too much on what not to play instead of what to play...I always try to produce some sort of sound that will blend with what's going on."



"To me a drum solo must have substance and quality. Each one is something in itself. Before I begin, I try to have a good idea of what I'm going to play. And while I'm playing, I'll hum some sort of thing to myself. Even if it's only in raw form, such as boom-did-dee, boom-did-dee, boom-did-dee, boom, and then follow that with a rhythmic sound (which I try to hear inside of me before I play it) that will round out the phrase. Each syllable that I hum to myself is not only a separate beat, but also a separate sound."

— October/November 1979



Flash Studio



Neil Peart

"Any real person will not be moved by 35,000 people applauding him. If I go on in front of 35,000 people and play really well, then I feel satisfied when I come off the stage. If we're in front of a huge crowd and I have a bad night, I still can't help being

depressed. If I come off stage not having played well, I don't feel good. Adulation means nothing without self-respect."

— April/May 1980

"When constructing drum parts I have to be sensitive to the songs, of course. I don't just play what satisfies me. You'll never hear me making noise under a vocal part. There's a certain level of respect you have to have. But on the other hand, when it comes to a guitar solo section, for example, to us that section isn't a guitar solo, it's a *band* solo."



Andrew MacNaughton

"There are certain things about my playing that are just an honest reflection of me. I couldn't stop playing hard physically, because I love physical exertion in so many other areas of my life. And that actually came from drumming."



Rick Gould

"I always championed the values of musicianship and of drummers who could actually *play*. All of that mattered to me and always will. A few years back it seemed as if those things didn't matter anymore, and I felt undercut and genuinely worried. But with this new generation of drummers coming up, I can breathe a huge sigh of relief. Everything's all right!"

— February 1994

Louie Bellson

"The first time I ever utilized two bass drums was in 1946. I had the idea in 1938. I think one of the factors was coming from a musical family. My one sister, Mary, was an excellent tap dancer, so I had a certain amount of agility and ambidexterity, and I sat down one day and thought, 'How would it be to have another drum over there and still utilize the left hi-hat, but have another bass drum? Of course, in those days, when I first took it to various drum companies, they thought I was crazy. They weren't really saying, 'Get out of here kid,' but they were saying, 'Are you sure you want something like that, because that's not really what the guys are doing.'"

"It's up to the individual to keep up with the times. If you say to yourself that you are in the drumming field and constantly listen to records and go out and listen to players, you keep abreast with the times. If you want to just sit back and be lazy, then you're copping out."



Lissa Wales

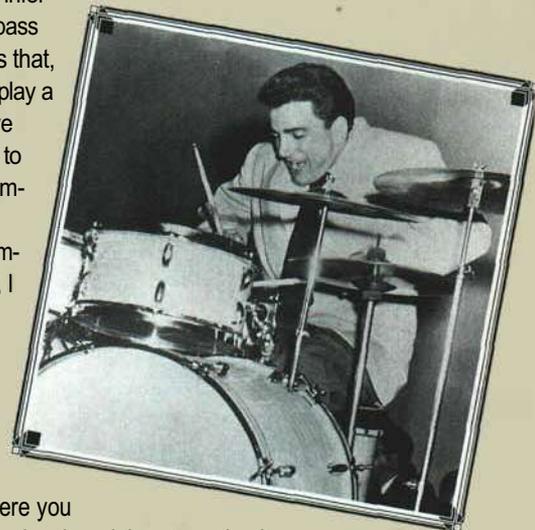


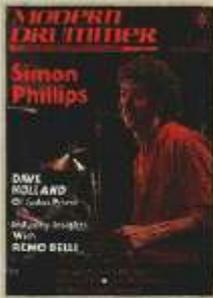
"Another bit of information I always pass on at my clinics is that, say you have to play a club and you have two or three sets to play. It's been common practice for years for the drummer to say, 'Gee, I know I'll be all right the first two sets, but I hope I don't run out of gas on the third.' The third set is the one where you really should have developed the strength—it should be the best one, actually. So psychologically, I make the third set as good as my first two. I disregard the word hard—I take it out of my vocabulary."

— October/November 1980

"Above all, once you have your hands and feet together, you have to go out and do what all the great players did: Get out there and *play*. Get that experience. Start paying dues. You always pay dues, and you never stop learning. That's the name of the game."

— January 1991





Simon Phillips

"To me, a drumkit with two kick drums is not a show thing. It looks pretty, but they have to be used. If I see a two kick drum setup I want to hear some nice double bass drum work."

— June 1981

I hope never to stop learning, and always to keep getting a bit better and keep coming up with ideas. That's the thing. It's alright being technically adept and playing really fast on a pair of kick drums, but it is adapting it so that you can come up with something new, saying to yourself, "Wow, I've never heard anything like that before."



— December 1986

Shelly Manne

"The main thing a drummer still needs to do is play time that *swings*. Spang-spang-a-lang is the hardest thing in the world to do. The time has to be alive, not be just good time. A metronome has good time."

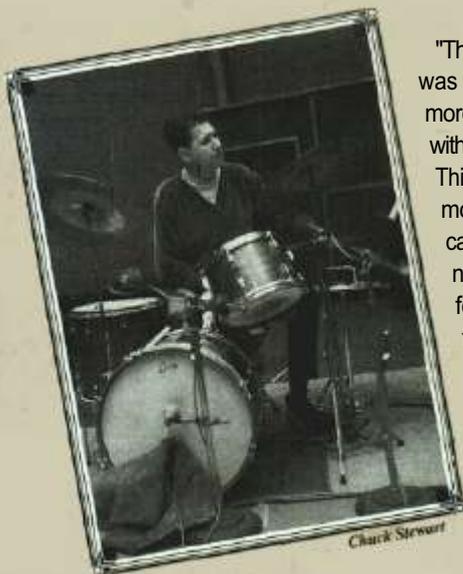


"Brush technique involves finding the stroke the way you want to perform it and then smoothing it, making it like silk, it's a different feel, almost a different body motion. It's a softening of your hands and your wrists to create the illusion of silk."

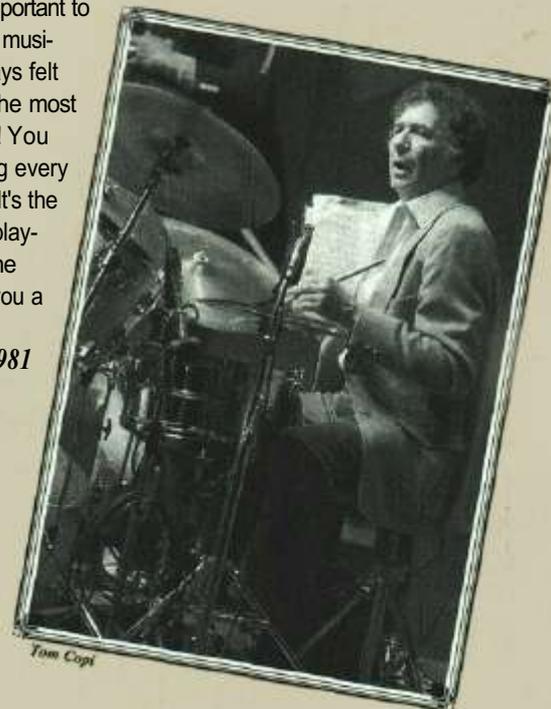
"It's more important to play with other musicians. I've always felt that playing is the most important thing! You learn something every time you play. It's the experience of playing that, over the years, makes you a good player."

— October 1981

"The West Coast style was characterized by cool, more subdued playing, with a relaxed swing feel. This style also drew off more traditional, classical concepts of harmony, counterpoint, and form, combined with the improvisational influences of bebop. I was the main drummer for those records and that concept."



Chuck Stewart



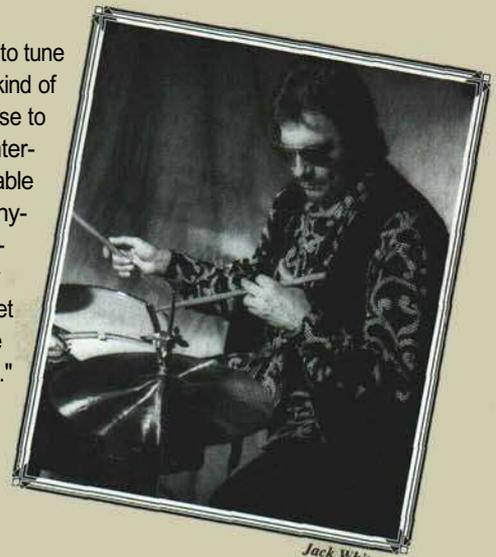
Tom Copi

Jim Keltner

"I practiced a lot, but mostly listened to records. Every time a new Miles or a Trane record would come out, I'd get it and we'd all sit around and check it out. I always wanted to *sound* like the drummers I heard more than I wanted to know *what* they played."



"I feel that I have to tune the drums to some kind of way that makes sense to me. I don't tune in intervals. It's too predictable for me. I don't like anything that is *that* predictable. I purposely screw up my drumset sometimes to create a change of attitude."
— November 1981



Jack White

"You talk to any studio player on either coast and they'll tell you pretty much the same thing. You've got to be in the right place at the right time. Obviously you have to be able to provide what's needed. You're working for producers when you're in the studio. They're either producing a film, a record, or a commercial, and it's those people that you work for. And attitude has as much to do with the studio as your playing ability."



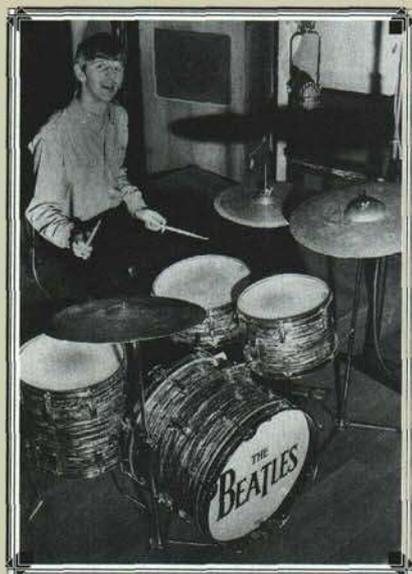
"I used to hate to hear session guys say, 'Okay, we're playing a country song, so play real simple and dumb.' Playing a country song and being convincing with it—whether in a recording studio or in a bar somewhere—takes as much musicality and soul as rock 'n' roll or any other kind of music, maybe even more."
— December 1991



Ringo Starr

"I was never really into drummers and I never did solos. I hated solos. I wanted to be the drummer *within* the band, not the frontman. The longest solo I ever did was thirteen bars."

"We never did it for the money; we did it for the playing. I mean, the money is very nice, but we were players first. As anyone will tell you, if we had wanted, we could have just carried on and made fortunes, but that was not our game. Our game was actually making music."



Dezo Hoffman LTD

"I can't do a roll to this day, and I hit with the left first, while most drummers do it with the right first. Mine might be strange in its way, but it was my style. I can't go around the kit, either. I can't go snare drum, top tom, middle tom, floor tom. I can go the other way, though. So all these things made up these so-called 'funny fills.' I came to America and met Keltner and people like that who were telling me they were sick of going in the studio, because they'd only been asked to play like me. So it was very good for my ego, and it turned out that I wasn't silly after all."



Ebet Roberts

"If I had to choose one thing in my life, it would always be the kit. There's still so much joy that comes out of playing. I'd hate it to ever get down to only one choice in life, but if it did, it would be just playing drums."

— December 1988

Max Roach

"I'm forever trying to do something else with whatever I've already been involved in. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. But at least you keep on trying, because if you get caught up in formulas that you know will work, it can stunt your creativity."

"I notice in the history books, when they talk about new trends and things that happened, they say 'This is the period of Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker; this is the period of Miles Davis; this is the period of Louis Armstrong. They never say anything about the drummers!

But, you know, for every one of those things, the reason that there was a change was because of rhythmic things."



Tom Coppi



"I do believe that the artists who have really taken the time to develop their craft and pursue the part of themselves that stands out in any situation, and that pursued their musical personality, I think they seem to last longer. They may not get rich overnight, but they last longer. Sometimes they *do* get rich overnight!"

— June 1982

"The drumset is the freshest instrument in the world of percussion because the player has to use all four limbs. With all the other percussion instruments, we just use our hands. But the drumset uses all the technique

that has been developed for playing drums with the hands, and having your feet in there adds other dimensions of technique. The variety on that set is amazing, and I'm just scratching the surface."

— August 1993



Tom Coppi

Philly Joe Jones

"Miles Davis was the only group I gave up New York to go out with. That was in '54, and it was my greatest experience in the music business. I don't think I'll ever be associated with four people like Miles, Trane, Red [Garland], and Paul [Chambers] again. That was like a factory. We were all learning from each other."



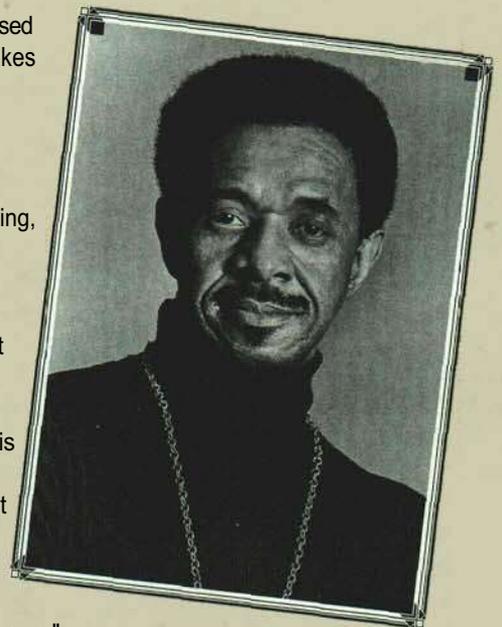
"You'd be surprised at how good it makes you feel when you send an audience home happy. I feel good when I hear people go out saying, 'Man, I really enjoyed myself tonight.' You might help somebody get through the next day, or even the next few days. It is profound fulfillment to know that you are contributing to someone's happiness—even your own."

"Our kind of music has never been dead. It has been pushed in the background a little bit, but after the people get tired of hearing all that noise, they still come back to us."

— February/March 1982



Tom Coppi



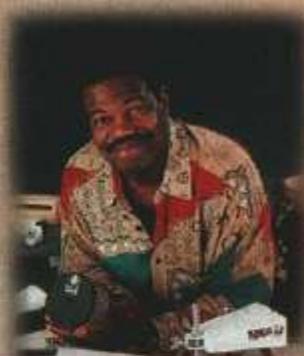
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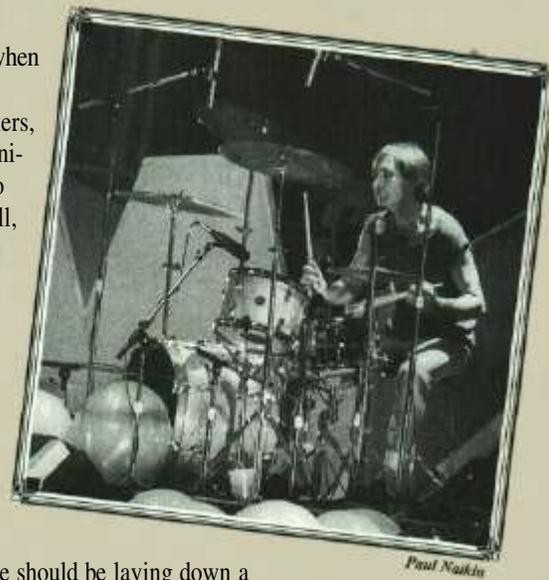
When You're Ready To Improve Your Sound



Charlie Watts

"I never thought that what I do is anything exceptional. It's basically what you're playing *to*, really. Al Jackson was probably ten times simpler than I am—if they call rock simple—but to me it isn't. To be able to play as *slow* as Al Jackson is almost impossible. As much as I love Joe Morello—he couldn't do what Al Jackson did."

"Usually when people speak about drummers, all great technicians come to mind. But still, as Max has * said, there's an art to simplicity. Nothing's worse than hearing a drummer playing all over the place when he should be laying down a groove."

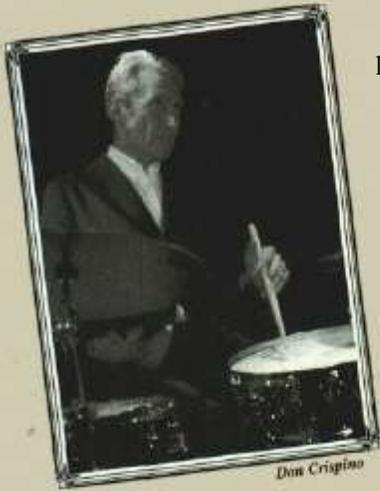


Paul Naikin

— August 1982

"To me, there's something lovely about just sittin' down at the drums and playing. It's not the noise they make, particularly; it's just the feeling you get from it. When you play a lovely cymbal, it's like having a conversation."

— February 1990



Don Crispino

"People say I play real loud. I don't, actually. I'm recorded loud and a lot of that is because we have good engineers. Mick knows what a good drum sound is as well, so that's part of the illusion really. I *can't* play loud. You can't play really loud if you play with a military [traditional] grip."

Vinnie Colaiuta

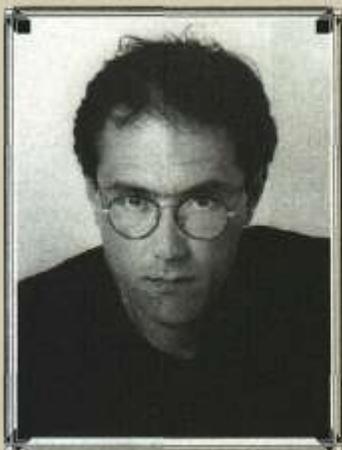


"I enjoy playing *good* music—it doesn't matter what the style is, as long as it's good. There are so many kinds of music that I dig and there are certain things that hit me emotionally, like the Beatles' song 'Martha My Dear,' which is probably my favorite tune. I dig the time on there. It's not a drum concerto or anything, but who gives a shit? It's a great piece of music and I could never play that, or anyone else, better than Ringo did."

"I just practice with as much patience as I can and enjoy it while I'm doing it. I was practicing eight hours a day, and one day I asked Billy Cobham how much he thought I should be practicing. He said not to think in terms of time. He said, even though you have something difficult to work on, enjoy it *while* you're doing it, instead of thinking how long it's going to take you to get it together."

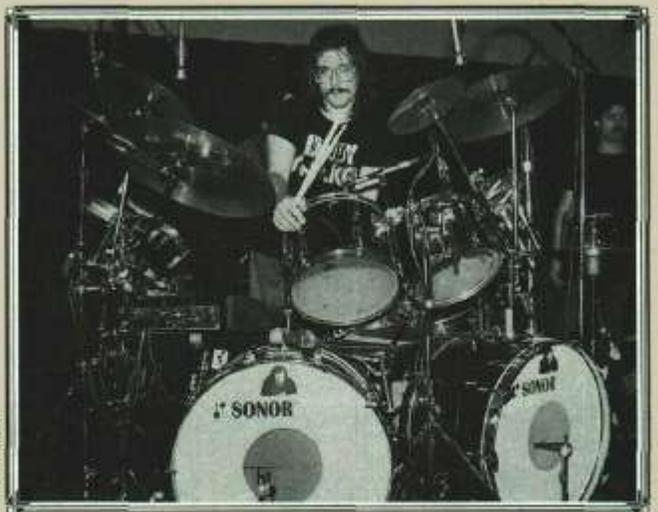
"You can't be everything; *nobody* is everything. You just do what you do, and you try to do that as well as you can. And if somebody doesn't like it, too bad." *

— October 1993



"It's really an admirable quality to see somebody who has a real shitty scene at home and his dog just died, and then he goes into the club and plays his ass off. You have to shut a lot of that [outside stuff] out. It's hard to do, but someone who can do it just has his concentration completely on the music."

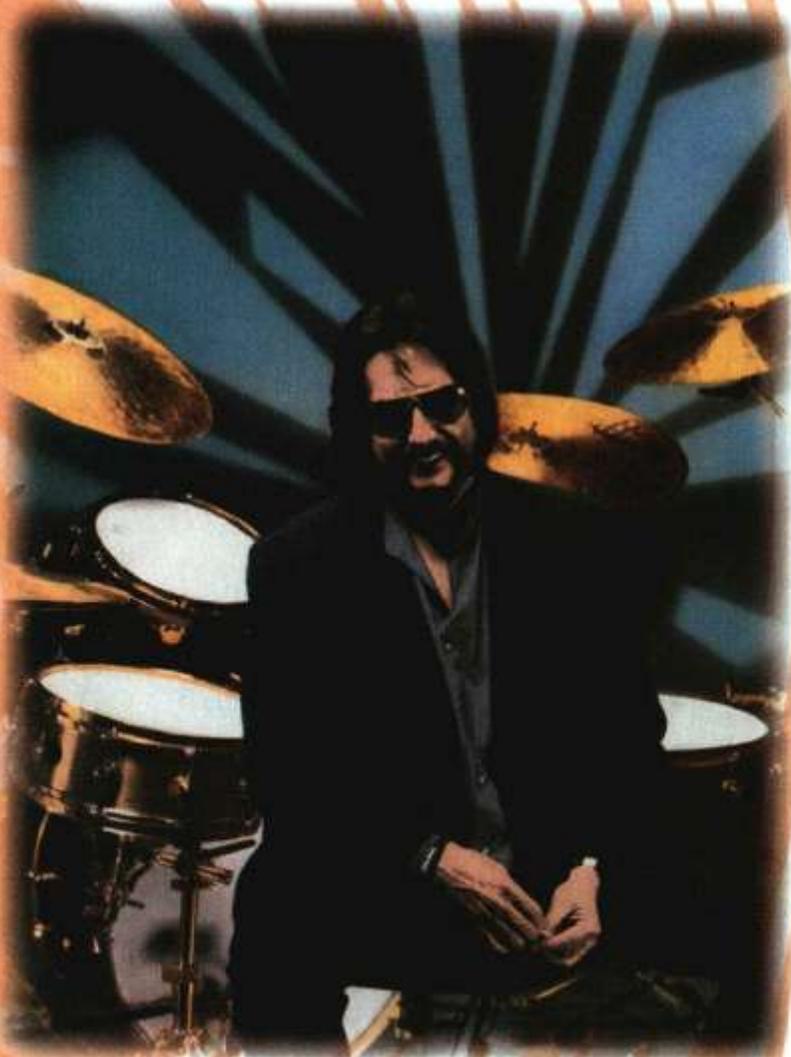
— November 1982



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Elvin Jones

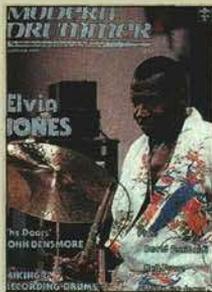
"I grew up with the old methods and learned them, and then I had to reject them. Not really reject, but rather I chose to use the parts of them that suited me, which isn't exactly a rejection. I think it's an improvement. It adds more responsibility to the drummer, but it also offers greater opportunities."

"The drumset *is* one instrument, and I would hasten to say that I take that as the basis for my whole approach to the drums. It is a single musical instrument of several components. Naturally, you've got tom-toms scattered around, and the snare drum is in front of you, and the bass drum is down there, and you have cymbals at different levels. But all in all, just as a piano is one instrument, a drumset is one instrument."

— December 1982



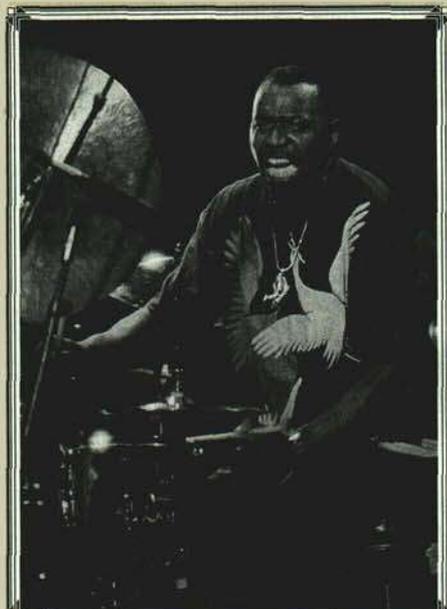
Joost Leijen



"I sort of grunt out certain accents of the melodies or ends of phrases or things like that. A lot of guys do it, but I guess my mouth is closer to the microphone than theirs, and it comes out on my records and everything else. I've gotten chastised a lot for that by my brother Hank. He's always saying, 'What the hell are you grunting for? Shut up.'"

"I think it's great fun to manipulate the instrument by trying different things and exploring all the possibilities. That can give one a great deal of gratification and self-confidence. I know that when I'm playing, I feel all things are possible. But it depends on the player's ability to control the instrument, and that's what requires study. You have to *practice*. It all goes back to that."

— May 1992

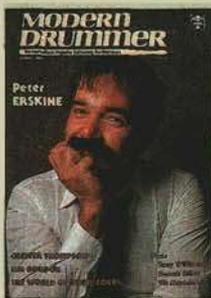


Peter Erskine

"You can hear from the music what kind of a person that drummer is. The amount of space, the sensitivity, which involves shading and touch, the way the music is propelled, how hard it swings or how gutsy it is—that's all reflective of a drummer's personality."

"When I first joined Weather Report, I had a 22" bass drum with a hole in the front head and a little bit of padding. I got a good dry sound, it was easy for the sound man, and it worked well. But then I switched to an 18", and had it tuned up fairly tight. I remember the first rehearsal after I did that, we went through a tune and Wayne [Shorter] turned around, smiling, and said, 'Definition! All *right!* Definition! There was this tone; the drum was speaking. If your drums have tone, they will cut through.'"

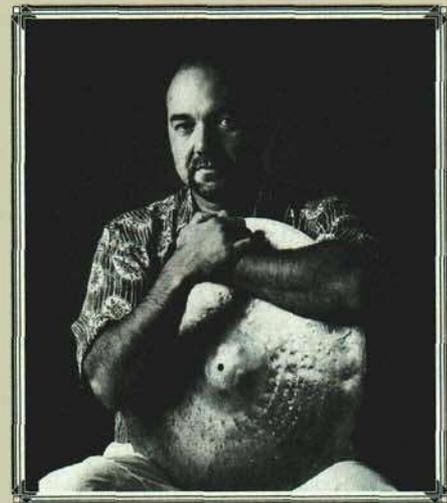
— January 1983



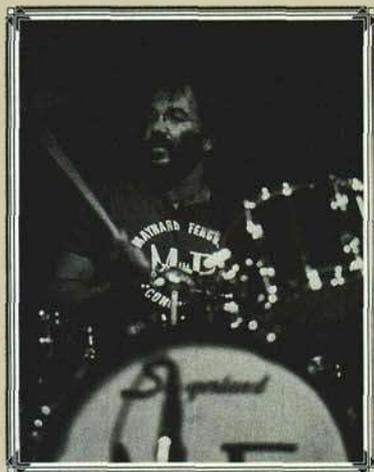
"I used to think that creative music making implied that I react to everything around me. But if you're not careful, you're commenting on everything that is played, which is one step away from Mickey-Mousing everyone else's ideas without contributing your own statements."

"When I was younger I felt the need to always leave a few fingerprints at the scene of the crime. But I can play a tune now and not feel that urge. Just the touch and the placement of the beat should reveal that it's me playing, and I don't otherwise feel that I have to call too much attention to it."

— November 1993



Shigeru Uchiyama



Tom Copi

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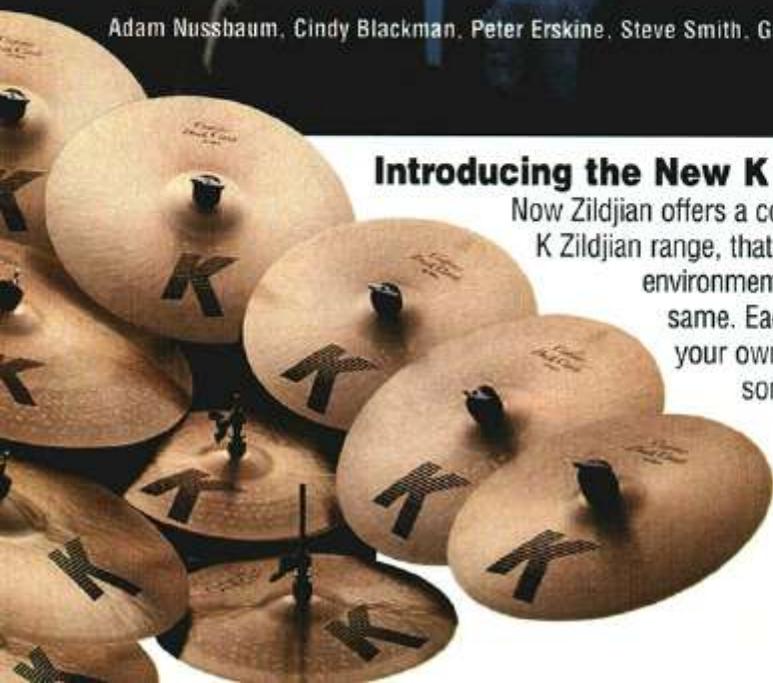
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Jeff Porcaro

"In this business, you have to put up with temperaments sometimes, but you should never have to put up with abuse. I've seen situations where it's a guy's first session, and a producer or artist destroys him in front of a lot of well-known musicians. And I've seen guys cry in the studio. People can get affected that way, but you can't let someone do that to you. They're just people, and you've got to put everybody in perspective."

"I just remember a time when in studio sessions nobody said anything. You didn't speak your mind; it was 'yes sir' and 'no sir' and you just did your stuff. We weren't brought up to be studio musicians. We were guys who played in power trios, rock 'n' rollers who happened to read and play Barbra Streisand dates too. So we were a bit radical and outrageous for the times."

Lissa Wales



"A helpful hint for anybody who is doing sessions, really the number one rule is, don't even be thinking about what you're going to do, or how people in the studio are going to look over and dig that you're doing a good



job. Try to be completely aware of the song; try to hear the song as many times as possible and play for the *song*—not for yourself or for the contractor or for whomever else."

— February 1983

"I can smooth out a screw-up real cleverly. You have to learn how to do that. When someone goes off into an over-the-bar thing and it's a great figure, I'll hear Vinnie immediately; his ears catch on to it, and he has the facility—the motor sense from the mind, to the muscle, to the technique—to go bam, just like reading a word. I don't, so I'll go for something, and I know from my first 16th note whether or not I've screwed up. But I'll cover it with something, and someone might say, 'Gee, that's exciting.' But it'll get me out of trouble, and I don't ever mess up the time."

— February 1988

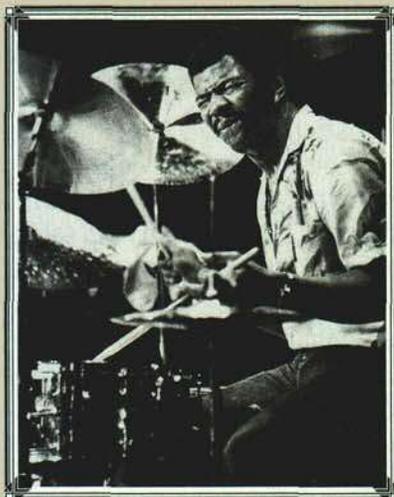
Jack DeJohnette

"Let's say I'm pursuing a reggae piece. I research reggae totally, because I know there are people who are going to check to see if I've done my homework. Even if I'm going to take the reggae feel outside of its normal context, I still want to pay respect to that feel, and show that I respect that type of music. As long as you take care to keep some kind of connection with that underlying tradition, you can communicate the extension of it."



"There are a certain number of people who get off on pyrotechnics. 'Hey man, did you hear that technique? He was really fast!' To them, that means mastery of something. And some people are satisfied with that. But when you couple that technique with feeling and emotion, that's something else."

— April 1983

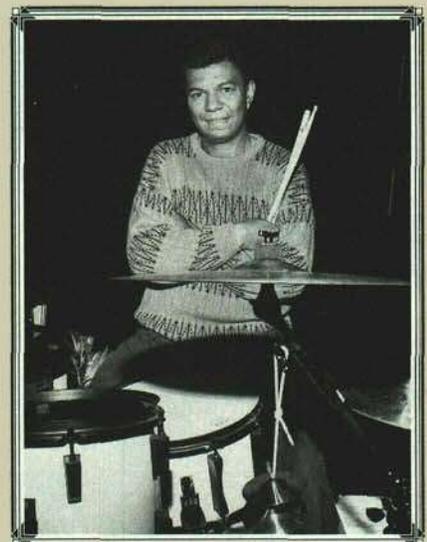


Veryl Oakland

"When you say you've been influenced by someone, it should mean that you took certain things from that person's style to help you find your own direction. It's a chain that goes on, and you can't avoid it. Nobody can come through here and say that they didn't come from somebody else."

"It's great to be able to hold a groove, because some things call for simplicity and that simplicity says it all. There is a time and place for everything. You have to use your intuition to know when to do something and when not to. Those are the things I especially learned from Miles."

— June 1995



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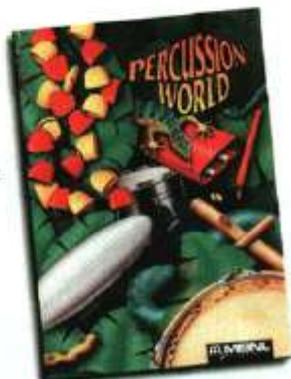


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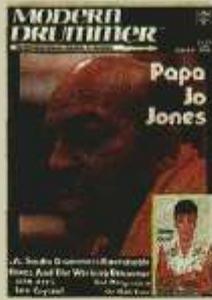


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Papa Jo Jones

"It takes a whole lot of living to do what we did. That's why I tell these little kids that came after us not to try to play like us, because that's impossible. We were having a conversation about our lives. You weren't there; you can't know what we were talking about."



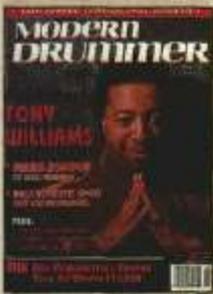
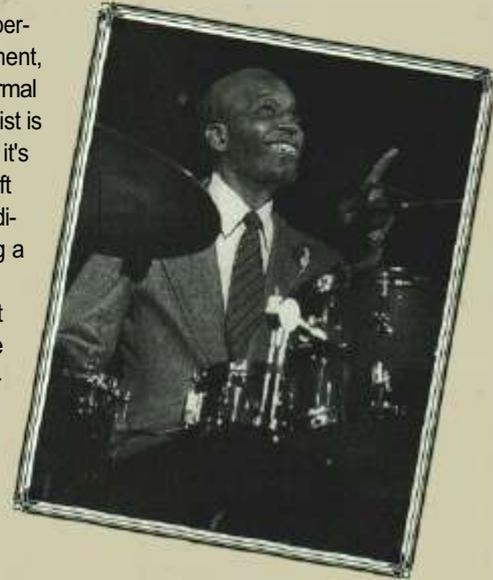
"There are three things you can do to jazz. Listen to it. Dance to it. Make love to it. If you can't do that, there is something wrong with it."

"You see, it takes two totally different kinds of control to play fast and to play slow. Each one has its own degree of difficulty. It's the difference between playing loud and soft. It demands control. See, the two words: *play* and *beat*. When it comes to percussion instruments, *you don't beat the drum; you play the drum.*"



"When an artist is performing on his instrument, he breathes in his normal fashion. When the artist is breathing improperly, it's like the audience is left with a little case of indigestion. It's like eating a meal in a hurry. *Not swinging* is like that. It leads to tension in the audience. It's a physical reaction that you give off."

— January 1984



Tony Williams

"Whatever style I play, *I play* the style rather than *attempt* to play. It's two different sounds. You can hear when jazz drummers *attempt* to play rock, or rock drummers *try* to play jazz. It's not quite there."

"I choose my cymbals in the same fashion that I tune my drums. I try to get the cymbals to sound good together as a group—homogeneous as a group—but individually they also sound distinctive, so that you know which cymbal I'm hitting. If you've heard that cymbal once and you hear it again, you know it must be *that* cymbal."

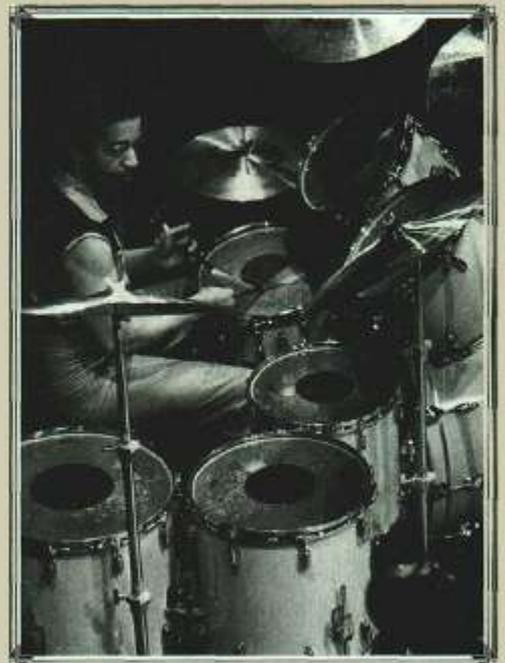
— June 1984



"Everyone has prejudices and fears. But anyone with experience knows that if you do take a couple of years to study something, several years later you will be very glad that you spent that amount of time improving yourself. Sometimes you don't realize how much good something has done you until years later."

"The drums are real important to me. Part of the character of what I've always tried to do is make the drums sound good to people. And that's why I play the way I play—to wake people up and make them think."

- July 1992



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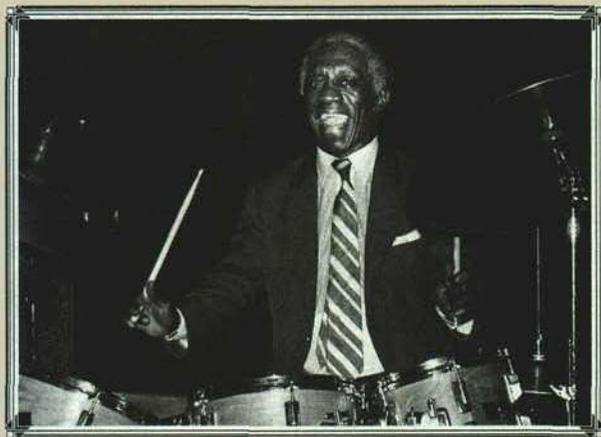
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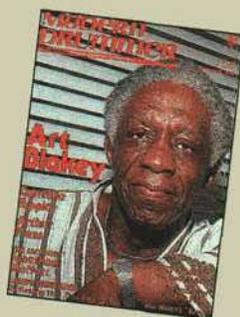
Art Blakey

"The drummer is supposed to play in the rhythm section. If drummers come out of there and start playing for themselves, then it's all lost."

"Freedom without discipline is chaos; you have to have some discipline. Everything that you do takes discipline. A lot of young drummers are real good: Their reflexes are good and everything, but will they be able to do that when they're seventy years old? Will they have enough discipline? Discipline means to *relax*: Can they relax? That's what it takes to play the drums."

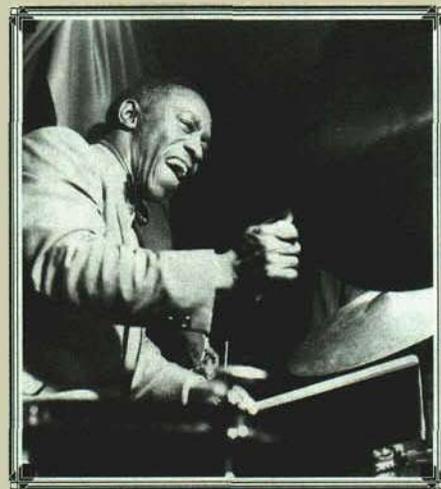


Bob Shams



"Sometimes, when cats are playing solos, I may not play the first chorus. Then on the second chorus, I come in with maybe just tom-toms, but no cymbals. On the third chorus, I bring in the hi-hats in 3/4 or 6/8; the bass drum is still moving all this time. Then I just make a roll *way late* and bring the cymbals in, and man, this makes such a difference in the color."

"And another thing that's always goofed me up is that, since so many of the great jazz musicians are black, they try to connect us up to Africa, but I'm an *American* black man. We ain't got no connection to Africa. I imagine some of my people come from Africa, but there are some Irish people in there, too, so I'm all messed up."
— September 1984



Francis Wolf

Terry Bozzio

"You have to keep projecting that you will be there. Whatever you dwell on long enough, use your powers of concentration on, dedicate yourself to, and persist at, you will bring to fruition. I suppose it's a Holdover from the early days when I practiced. There was nobody twisting my arm to practice eight hours a day. I just did it because that's what I wanted."

Life is a roller coaster, and any artist lives on that roller coaster. You just have to remember that when you're going down, all that momentum is going to send you back up to the next dizzying height. That's just the way it is."

— December 1984



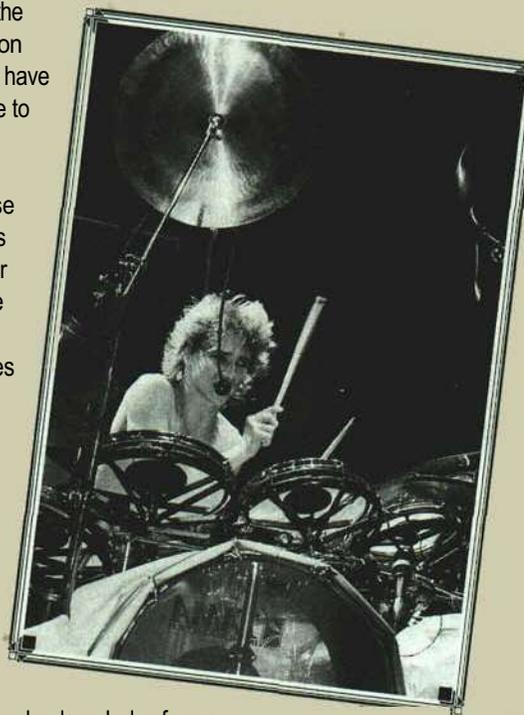
"I am one of the luckiest people on earth because I have something I love to do. I had been reading Joseph Campbell, whose wonderful words are, 'Follow your bliss.' That's the key to life: Whatever excites you, follow that. Most people don't have the guts to do it, or they don't recognize it when it happens."

"I know for myself that I just don't feel good unless I play for an hour a day. If I don't play for three days, I start to get antsy and feel out of kilter."

— July 1994



Jonathan Parkhurst Black



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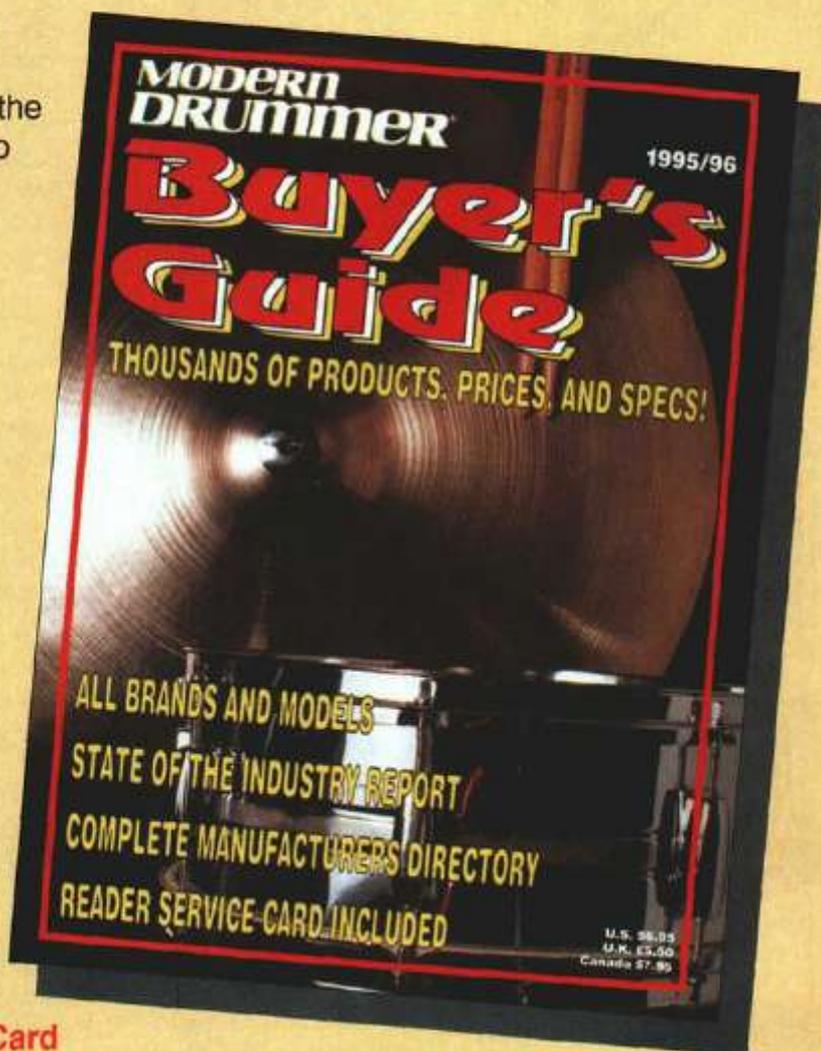
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Roy Haynes

"I've always had a different, personal way of doing things, like holding drumsticks. I have my own way of playing brushes; I wasn't taught, I just did it. I held them the way they felt most comfortable to me."



Tom Copi

"When I was with Bird [Charlie Parker] the drums seemed to play themselves. It's hard to describe it in words. You have to have lived through that time to know what it was about. But playing with him was like being born again. Each time we'd play, the music was more elevated."

"Broadway in 1949 was very exciting. We were dressed in those days, in our best suits and ties. We probably worked five or six sets per night, then we'd go eat someplace or hang out with some fine ladies. You could ride the subway late at night. That was what is known as the Golden Age. All I was thinking about was playing drums, how I could sound better and different from anyone else. It was a hell of a time."

"I was one of the first drummers to use very small snare and bass drums. One critic said, 'Roy Haynes has a small snare drum because he's a small guy.' That's so ridiculous. I got the small drums because I had a small sports car, and they fit in the trunk!"



— May 1991

Joe Morello



"My feeling is that technique is only a means to an end. It opens your mind more, you can express yourself more, and you *can* play more intricate things. But just for technique alone—just to see how fast you can play—that doesn't make any sense. In other words, technique is only good if you can use it musically."

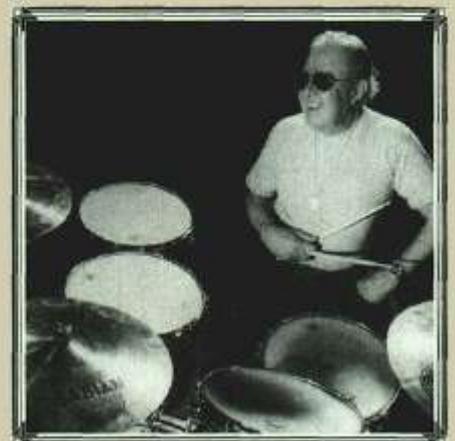
"I think I was born with drummers coming up with the 'I want to study with you' routine. I can never understand that, because I'm basically a performer, not a teacher, although some people think I am. It's nice to teach. It's rewarding to see kids start to bloom out and open their minds a little bit."



"What I see a lot in the younger players who are coming up is that they're more interested—especially the rock kids—in big drumkits, and they miss the idea of keeping time. That's one thing I stress all the time—always keeping the tempo steady. That's what it's all about."

"I get a lot of students who have studied with other teachers, and they come in very, very tight. This one particular approach that's being taught is this very tense fulcrum—squeezing the sticks and developing this muscle between the thumb and first finger. Drummers who have studied this for three or four years are so tight that they're almost crippled. One guy had developed tendinitis and had to have an operation on his left hand. That doesn't make any sense."

— November 1986



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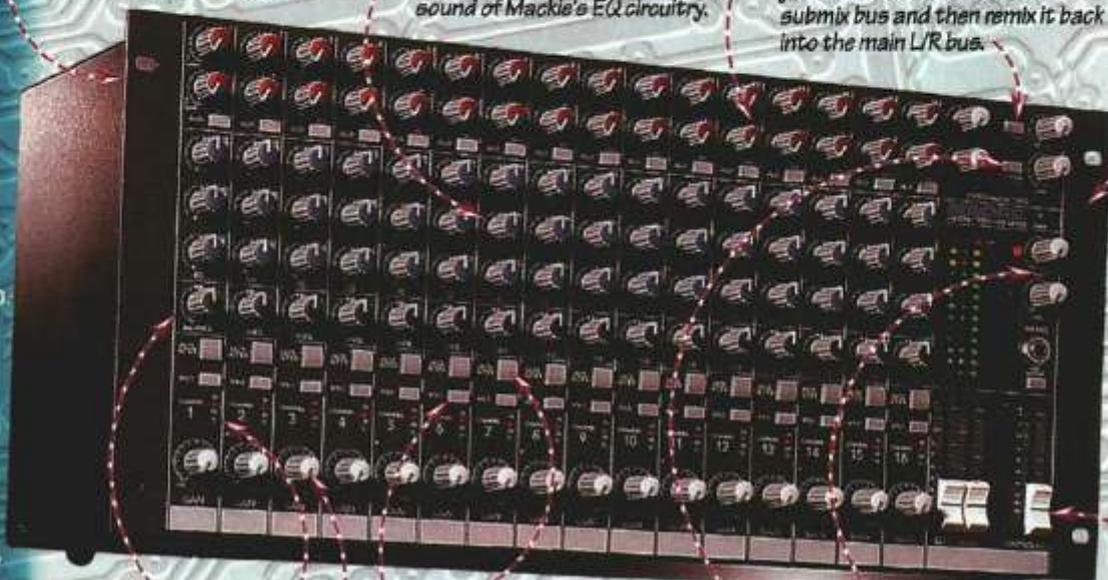
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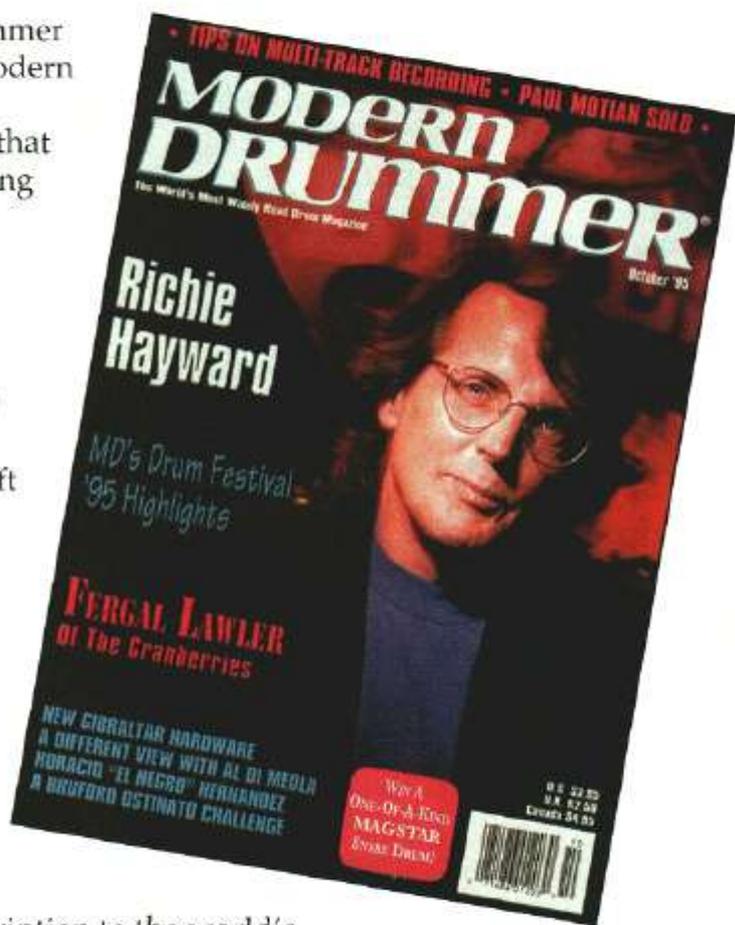
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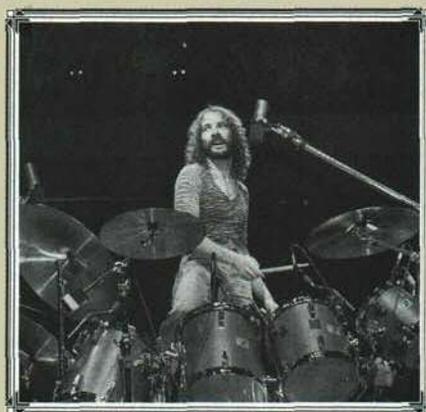
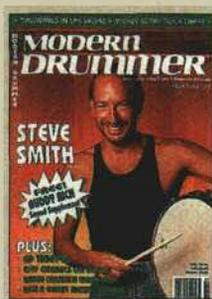


Steve Smith

"When I joined Journey, I had the time and a real need to practice, because I really needed to get a lot of new chops together. Those chops were not what I used to think chops were, which was playing fast and hard. At this point, the chops I needed were playing very slow and steady. Those weren't things that I had a good background in."

"I was trained from the hands down, and found out that music is built the opposite way. It's really built from the bottom up, so I had to practice a lot with my feet and get them under control without their following my hands. I would practice with my feet and then add the hands, just playing very simple things, like quarter notes or 8th notes."

— August 1986



Ebet Roberts

"I have noticed that throughout my development as a musician, from the time I was nine years old, I've always had people who were mentors, people who really gave me a lot of inspiration—and also, people who

really believed in my talent. I find that to be a really important aspect in the development of a player, especially regarding confidence. I notice that people who don't grow up with a mentor-type person sometimes struggle with a level of confidence."

"One of the things I enjoy about being a drummer is just the process of improving and practicing. I really enjoy practicing. I enjoy the process of getting there."

— February 1993



Lissa Wales



Dave Weckl

"Sometimes dynamics within a bar of music won't be making it. There's a certain degree of dynamics you have to find that will make the *motion* happen: whether one accent on the bass drum should be a little softer or perhaps certain notes should be outlined in a hi-hat 8th-note pattern. You have to find out what will make the pulse."

"There are only so many ways that a rhythm can be written. *Interpretation* is the key word here. The goal should be to make the written piece of music sound as if you're *not* reading it. The trick is not to think, 'I've got to read music now,' but rather to think, 'I've got to play music.'"

— October 1986

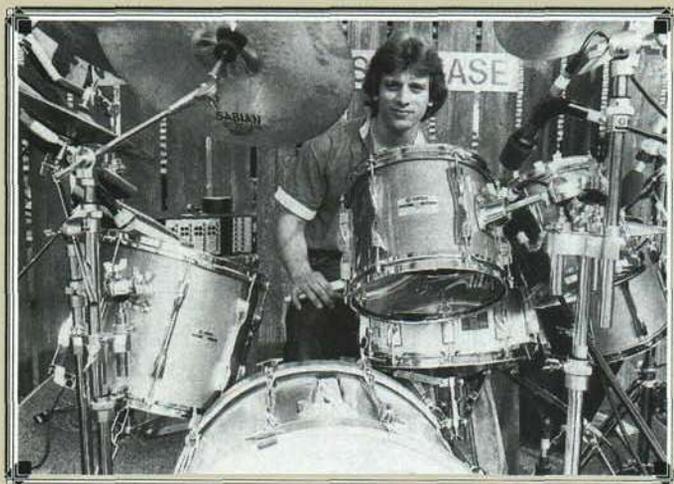


Lissa Wales

"The video camera is one of the greatest practice tools I've ever found. It's especially good on the road. I've been videotaping myself every night and then playing it back at the hotel. You can really learn a lot by watching yourself."

"I've never been terrified about being able to live up to any reputation. Because my whole thing is, number one, I don't think that much about the reputation, and number two, I just want to get better."

— September 1990



John Lee

Dennis Chambers

"A lot of people say it was a God-given talent, but I was always practicing. I would get up in the summertime and hop right on the drumkit and not stop until about sundown."

"I got the feeling that the single-stroke rolls and double-stroke rolls were really important to the drums, as far as soloing and stuff. I just practiced singles and doubles and tried to make them sound like one."

— May 1989

"When I'm playing matched grip, it's basically coming from power. If I'm playing anything that's kind of technical, I'll switch to a traditional grip. It's because I grew up playing those two different styles."

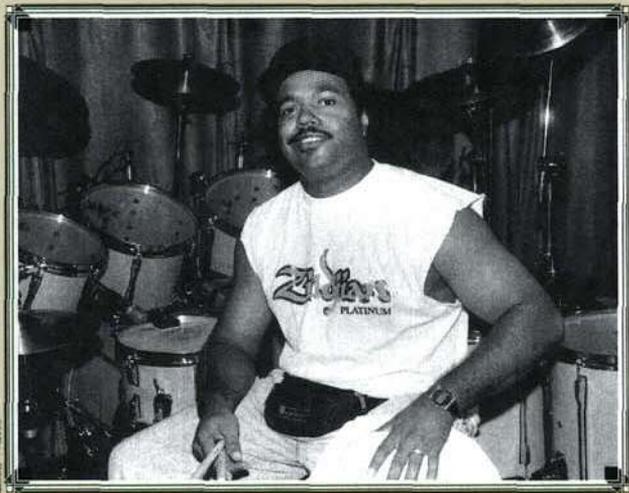


Ebet Roberts
Lissa Wales



"When I learned how to play, it was basically by listening to a lot of jazz, fusion, R&B, and soul music. I had no idea that a lot of guys were sort of specialized, like bebop drummers who were strictly into bebop. And I know some people who went through their whole career with blinders on. They were in their own little world. The rockers were into rock, the jazz guys were into jazz, and the Latin guys were into Latin. But because of the way I grew up listening to all kinds of music, I thought *that* was what it was about."

— September 1994



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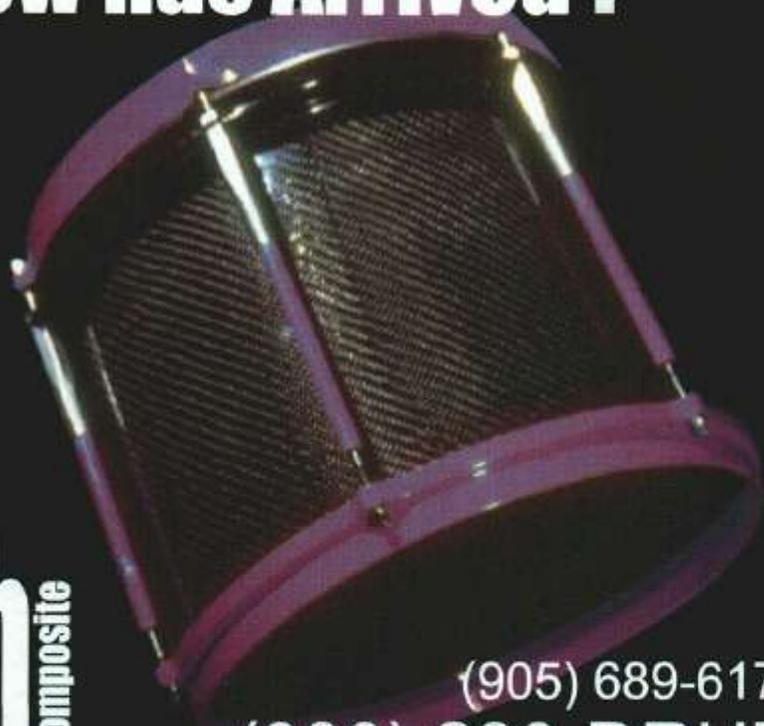
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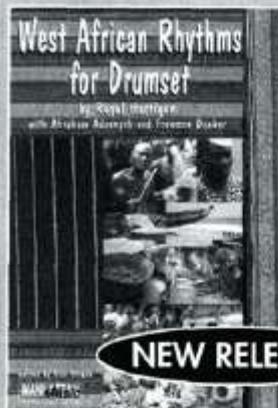


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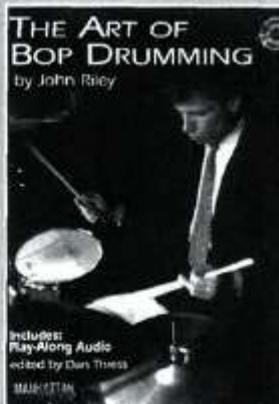
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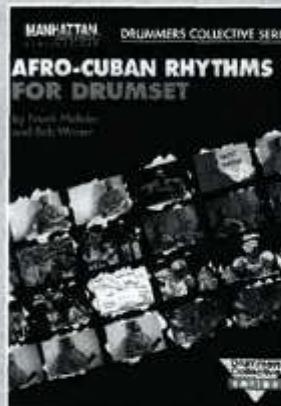


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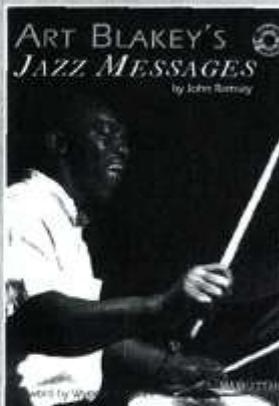


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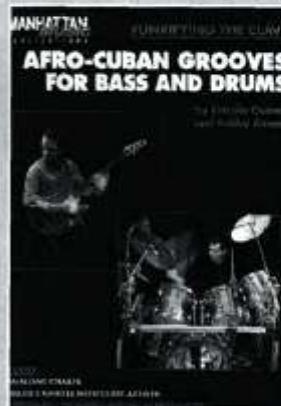


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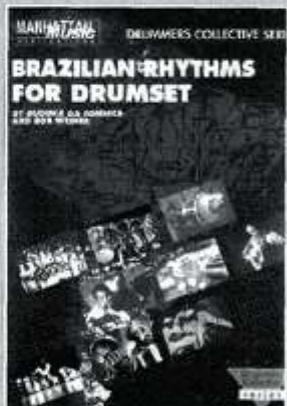
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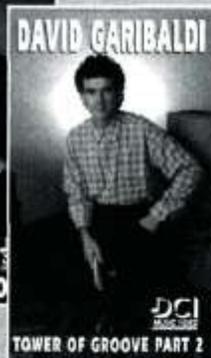
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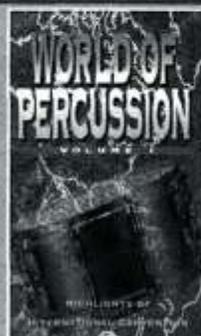


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The Evolution



The concept of a single drummer playing a multiple-drum setup was made possible by the introduction of the bass drum pedal. Ludwig's 1910 version wasn't the first, but it set the standard for practical, efficient pedals,

My wife's late grandfather, Robert W. Hadley, Sr., was an engineer. During the final months of his life, he looked back and marveled at the wonders of the twentieth century. In fewer than one hundred years, mankind had brought forth an astonishing list of accomplishments that overwhelmed the inventions of all other centuries combined. Bob talked to me about airplanes, medicines, space exploration, and computers. What he forgot to mention was drumsets. That, my friend, is evolution at its finest.



Sonny Greer's early drumkit was typical of the pre-1920s era.



This "Low Boy" pedal-operated cymbal-playing apparatus led to the modern-day hi-hat,



Gene Krupa is credited with motivating Slingerland to create tunable tom-toms in the mid-'30s.

Of The Drumset

By Harry Cangany

1900-1910

When Bob Hadley was in college in the early 1900s, bands and orchestras had two or three drummers each. One played the bass drum, one played the snare drum, and the third was the "utility man" who played cymbals, wood-blocks, and sound effects. But the need for all that personnel changed with the invention of one humble item: the bass drum pedal.

Henry Ford didn't invent the automobile, but many people think he did because he made the first *practical* car.

Likewise, William F. Ludwig, Sr. did not invent the bass drum pedal—but he did make the first *practical* model in 1910. Prior to that there were several pedals on the market. The most famous one was built by Leedy Manufacturing—and was composed of thirty-two separate parts! The design had a hinged footboard connected to a rod that held an upside-down beater. Bill Ludwig, Sr.—a theatrical pit drummer at the time—could get the Leedy pedal to play two beats to the bar, but not four. His livelihood depended on his playing, so he carved a wooden footboard and con-

nected it to an upright post to try to build speed into his bass-drum playing. Enough drummers heard about the pedal and showed interest in it to warrant getting Bill's brother-in-law, Robert Danly, involved. Danly—an engineer at International Harvester—got the pedal manufactured in steel. Bill and his brother Theo (as Ludwig & Ludwig) sold that pedal to thousands of drummers around the world before even better pedals were invented.

Another seemingly simple invention that helped make the drumset possible was the snare drum stand. Until 1899,



This "rail consolette" tom holder was created in the 1940s and lasted until the mid-'70s. It evolved from the "rails" or "consoles" that wrapped completely around bass drums in the '20s and '30s



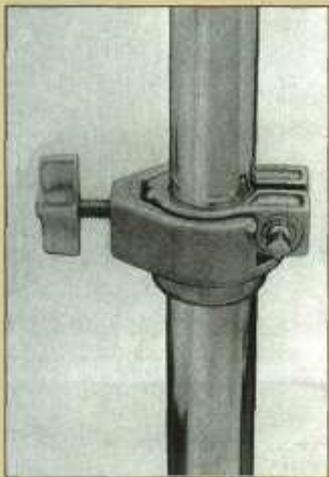
The influence of Ringo Starr and other pop drummers created an unprecedented demand for drumkits in the 1960s. Fortunately for drum manufacturers, the advent of the synthetic drumhead allowed them to meet that demand.



The Rogers Swiv-O-Matic system brought drum-mounting hardware into a whole new era in the late '60s.



Single-headed concert toms—such as those shown on this Gretsch kit—were extremely popular in the 1970s.



Rogers took hardware yet another step forward in the late 70s with their Memriloc system. The concept was adopted by virtually every drum company, and remains the basis for hardware design today.



The Synare drum synthesizer—introduced in 1978—was a forerunner of today's highly sophisticated electronic percussion equipment.



This late-'80s Pearl CZX kit featured "power toms"—large, deep rack toms that became popular during that decade.

when U.G. Leedy designed such a stand, drummers used chairs to hold up their drums—or hung them from their shoulders on slings.

Once practical pedals and snare stands became available, a single drummer could now do the work that three used to do. Thus was born the drumset—or "trap set," as it was initially called. But those early trap sets bore little resemblance to the drumkit as we know it today. The typical trap set of the period just prior to World War I consisted of a bass drum—usually 28" to 32" in diameter—and a snare drum tuned by means of thumbscrew rods.

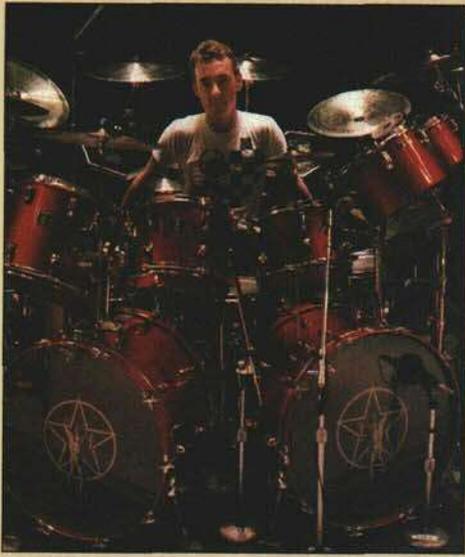
Suspended on those early single-tension bass drums were woodblocks and triangles, along with either an upside-down L-shaped crash cymbal arm or a hoop-mounted spring cymbal arm. On the former, a 12" to 17" thin cymbal would be suspended from a

leather strap. On the latter, the cymbal was fastened to the top of the spring so that the spring would absorb the blow. Many drummers also had a cymbal mounted to the hoop on the lower right side of the bass drum so that a metal beater attached to the pedal would strike the cymbal.

The next feature to gain popularity before World War I was the Chinese tom-tom. Typically with red-lacquered shells about 9" to 15" in diameter and 4" to 6" deep, the toms were not tunable. They had pigskin heads tacked on both top and bottom—often with decorative pictures painted on them. Pigskin was used because it was thick and could be tacked in place. (Tunable bass drums and snare drums used calfskin heads. Too thin to be tacked, they were wrapped around "flesh hoops" that fitted over the edges of the shells and were tensioned

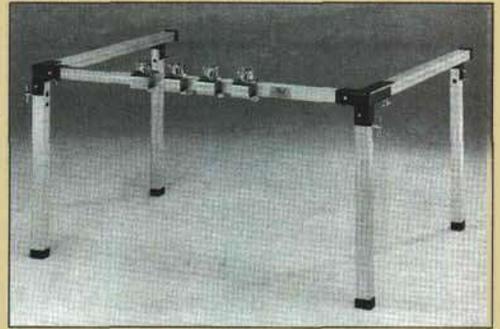


Perhaps the most significant hardware development of the '80s was the RIMS mounting system. Its suspension-mounting principle was another idea adopted by many other manufacturers in one form or another.



Neil Peart's 1984 kit literally surrounded him with drums, cymbals, and electronic equipment—representing the ultimate in multi-drum setups, which were popular at that time.

The Pearl DR1 (designed by Jeff Porcaro and Paul Jamieson and introduced in the mid-'80s) was the first "modern" drum rack. The concept, however, dated back to the "consoles" of the 1920s.



by the tuning rods on the drums.) Chinese tom-toms were attached initially with clamps and later with ratchet-adjustable holders. (Drum companies back then just *loved* clamps.)

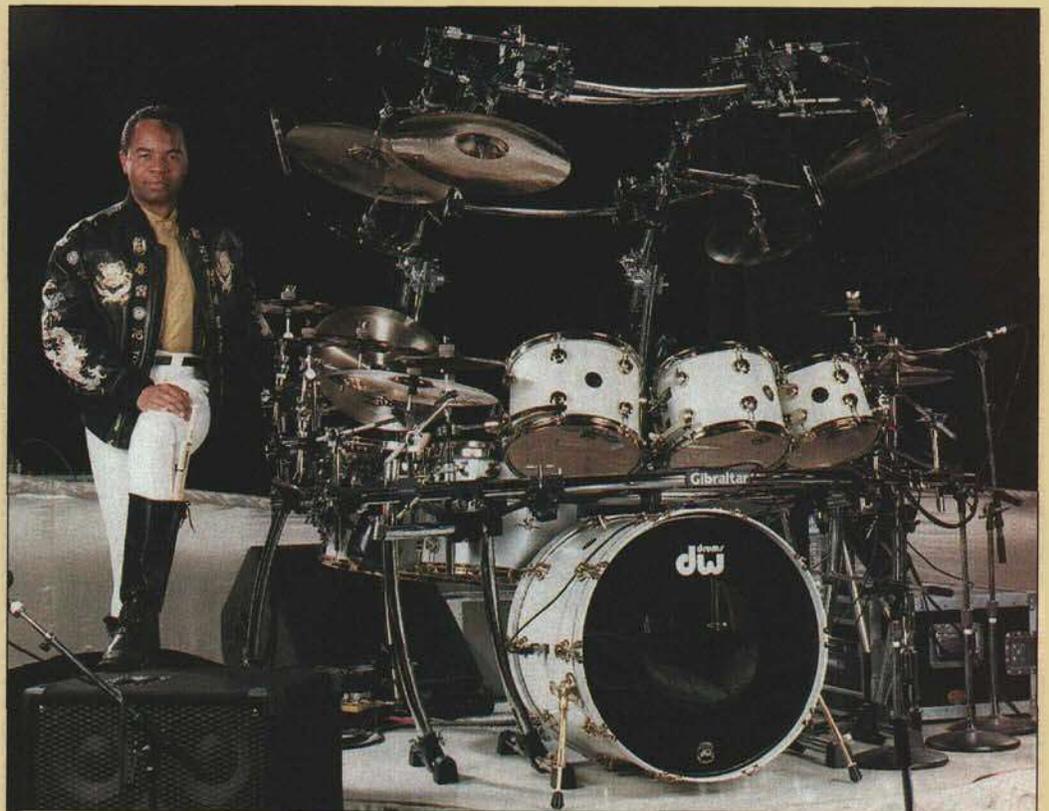
There were early attempts at tunable toms, but surprisingly the idea didn't catch on. In fact, it was not until around 1936 that the idea had a proponent with enough influence to make it happen. (More on that later.)

The '20s

The post-WW I years saw several improvements in drum-related designs. Leedy, for example, developed the first semi-self-aligning lugs and modern-style hoops. Meanwhile, Ludwig & Ludwig manufactured the best strainers in the industry.

By the mid-1920s, the Walberg & Auge company of Worcester, Massachusetts was supplying all the major drum companies with "sock cymbal" (named because it was played with the foot) or "low boy" (named for its foreshortened appearance)

Today's drumkits often feature custom components—especially snare drums, such as this Magstar drum with a Suraya segment shell,



Jonathan Moffett's kit represents the state-of-the-art in 1996: high-end drums, an elaborate rack, RIMS mounts on the toms, custom drum and hardware finishes, and multiple cymbals. Although it seems a far cry from Sonny Greer's diminutive setup, the two share one similarity: a proud owner.



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pedals. These were 12"- to 15"-high mechanisms that looked like a sawed-off version of the modern hi-hat stand. Each of these mechanisms brought two cymbals together when the pedal was depressed. The low boys used 10" cymbals with massive bells. It wasn't until several years later that jazz drummers (led, supposedly, by Jo Jones) wanted to be able to play the cymbals with both the hands and the feet, and the low boy was elevated to become the hi-hat.

Several companies also produced trap tables: flat boards attached to the bass drum, covered in felt, and designed to take clamps and holders for temple blocks and other aforementioned "traps." The advantage of the table was its flat surface—as opposed to the rounded surface of the bass drum shell. The tables were later expanded to have sides and legs that spanned the bass drum—much like our modern rack systems do. Leedy produced tacked-head tom-toms (called *Chee Foo* and available in 9x13, 12x14, and 16x16 sizes) that sat either in basket-like tripod stands (called cradles) or in big hoop holders in the sides of the expanded trap tables (then called "con-

soles").

The jazz drummer of the late '20s was a back-row timekeeper who might also have timpani and mallet instruments standing by. The best that he could hope for to help bring a little attention to himself was a snazzy finish on his trap set. Leedy led the way with pearl (*Pyralin*) finishes and brass hardware tinted gold. Ludwig & Ludwig countered first with *Ludwigold* (a gold sparkle stucco-like finish) and then with the *Deluxe* finish (which we have come to call the *Black Beauty* finish).

For the next ten years, the big American companies—Leedy, Ludwig & Ludwig, Slingerland, Duplex, and Gretsch—basically fought regional and national battles for market share. But by the mid-'30s, the demands of music again pushed invention forward.

The Mid-'30s

In 1936, drum superstar Gene Krupa wanted a particularly low tom-tom sound. So he convinced Slingerland to build tunable tom-toms. These drums had timpani T-rods on both the top and bottom heads

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Peter Erskine

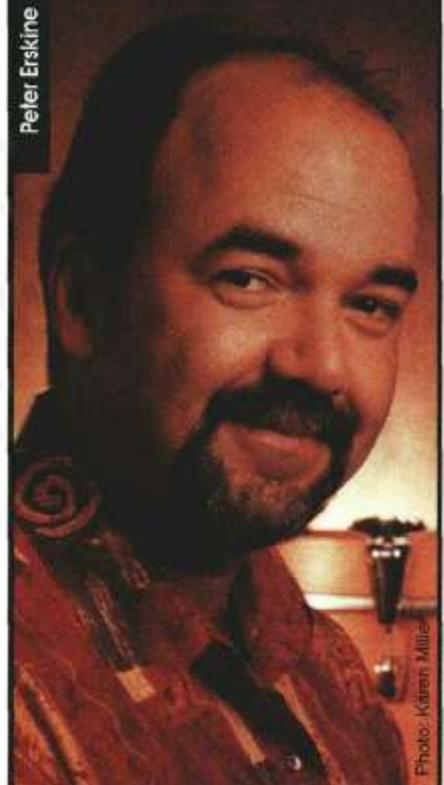


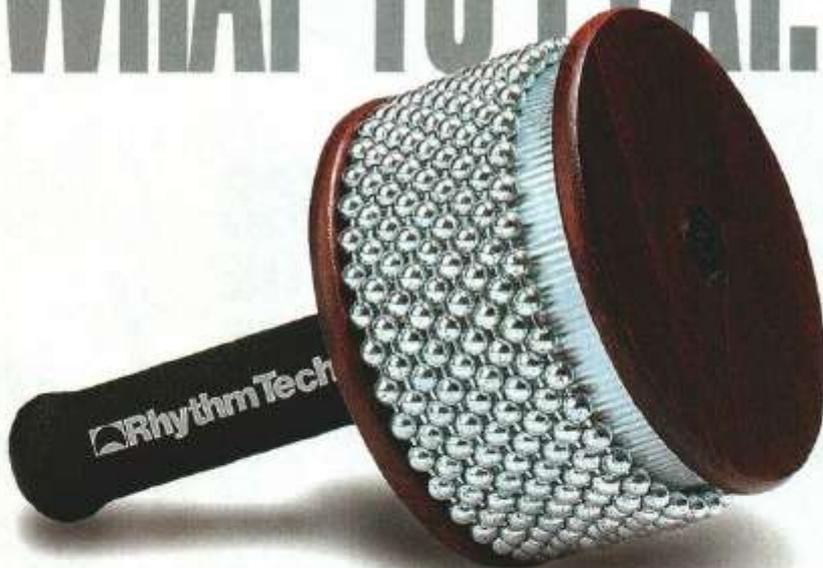
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(or sometimes just on the top, with tacked pigskin heads on the bottom). Not surprisingly, the sizes were 9x13, 12x14, and 16x16, following the norm set in the late '20s. The first series of Slingerland *Radio King* tom-toms had tube lugs and T-rods. But the number of flailing sticks that got caught in the T-rods led Slingerland to try key rods instead. When "Sing Sing Sing" hit the airwaves with Krupa's distinctive tom sound, Slingerland hit the big time—and Chinese toms were effectively discarded, never to be heard of again.

Krupa's drumming technique and showmanship brought the drummers of the world to center stage, and as a result Krupa's drumset configuration was the one to imitate for the next thirty years. That set the principle of a "package" kit, and to this day, most manufacturers follow the package format, with drums and all necessary stands coming together at a list or discount price.

Gene kept his cowbell and initially used his four cymbals for accents and crashes. But the next step in drumset evolution was to develop the ride cymbal, and to make

better holders and legs. If you view hardware that has survived from the 1930s, it often looks tinny, rusty, thin, and unattractive. But the goal then was to have lightweight stands and low-cost merchandise. Tom holders were usually simple ratchet attachments that clipped onto bass drum hoops or onto rails attached to the shells. Walberg & Auge led the way in the '30s with a shell-mount tom holder called the *Ray McKinley* model. Every drum company bought the idea eventually, and it came to be known generically as a "rail console-lette." The same situation occurred with shell-mount cymbal holders and tom-tom legs.

Looking back at any of these developments, it seems strange that it took so long to think of them. But again, the music brought out the players, and the players had to experiment with products in order to influence improvements in them. There is also the fact that many of the hardware items for all of the drum companies were supplied by Walberg & Auge—and they didn't seem to want to upgrade *anything*. For example, bass drum spurs were hoop-

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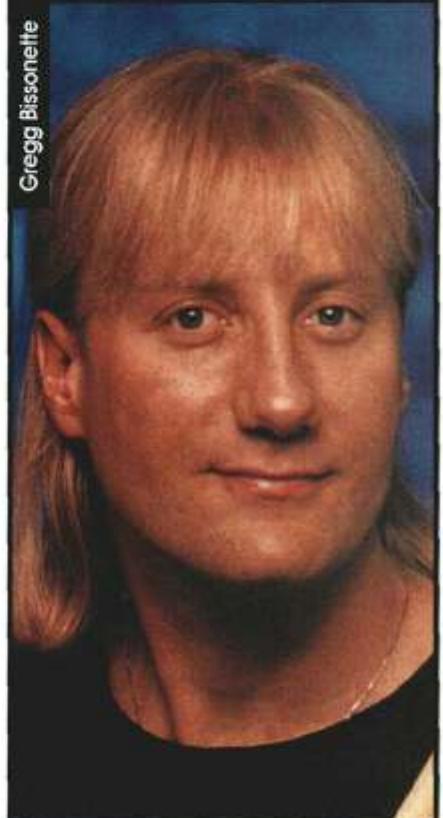
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mounted from the turn of the century until after World War II, when Gretsch introduced their disappearing spurs. Eventually all manufacturers copied that idea.

The '50s And '60s

Drum innovation—like virtually everything else—was halted during most of the 1940s owing to the Second World War. But industry came back with renewed vigor after the war, and drum manufacturing was no exception.

Perhaps the most important drumset innovation that occurred in this era was the advent of the synthetic drumhead. Invented by Marion "Chick" Evans in the mid-'50s (but made commercially viable by Remo Belli around 1957), the "plastic" drumhead made it possible for drum companies to meet the incredible demand for kits generated by the Beatles and other rock groups in the early '60s. (Previously, drum production had always been limited by the availability of high-quality calf hides for drumheads.) The heads could also withstand greater impact than their calfskin predecessors—facilitating the heavier playing

and greater volume that rock drumming required.

The 1950s and '60s also saw new lug designs and improved hardware from every major company. In addition, the number of plies used in drumshells increased—from three or four to five or six. Rogers came into its own and led the pack in research and development with a radically different series of holders known as the *Swiv-O-Matic* series. This family of products featured an egg-shaped ball-and-socket approach to everything. The initial design, by Joe Thompson, was introduced in 1959—and it influenced drum manufacturing for the next thirty years.

The 70s

The 1970s saw three major developments—two of which have had significant lasting effects. The first was the production of the "concert tom" or "melodic tom" set. Several companies introduced a number of new-sized tom-toms and drilled only the batter sides for lugs. Bass drums were also offered with only one head. The idea was to "open up" the drum for sound, and it

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was very popular for a while. (Many players who owned conventional drums simply took the bottom hoops, heads, and lugs off their drums to emulate the concert-drum look and sound.)

The second major '70s development was improved hardware, and Rogers again led the way. With their *Memriloc* series, the then-California-based company brought out 1"-tube stands with double and triple tom holders, a brushed look to hide fingerprints, and—most importantly—a special position-locking device. Today, every company has memory locks, but Rogers was the first. (The story has been handed down that Rogers forgot to patent their *Memrilocs*, which helped lead to the company's demise.)

Japanese drum companies made major inroads in the world market in the 1970s by developing their own heavy-duty hardware. (They also began building world-class shells.) The other American companies did not want to re-tool to build heavy stands, so they settled—at least initially—for a medium-weight type.

The third major innovation of the 1970s

was the advent of electronic percussion. Early devices like the *Syndrum* and *Synare* were toys compared to today's sophisticated sound sources, but they started the move toward alternative sounds intended to enhance those of acoustic drums.

The '80s

By 1980, tom-tom and bass drum shell depths were changing by the addition of an inch or two, creating what are now known as "power toms." At the same time, the RIMS (Resonance Isolation Mounting System) system was introduced. A major step forward, the suspension design of the RIMS system encouraged manufacturers to stop the needless drilling of holes into shells (and later spawned a wide variety of proprietary suspension-type mounting systems from most major drum companies). Of course, RIMS needed the strength of the better and heavier hardware that had recently been introduced.

The '80s also saw the rise of many fine new manufacturers. And as the drumset brands increased, so did the number of drums *in* drumsets. For years the average

player had four or five drums, with two to four cymbals. Ludwig had shown a seven-piece set in their catalogs from the '60s, and pioneered an eight-drum set (the famous *Octa-Plus*) in the '70s. But one day, much to the glee of the respective drum company sales departments, drummers wanted two or three of *everything*. Louie Bellson and Ray McKinley had played double-bass drumsets in the '40s—but they were the exception. Forty years later, two bass drums, three or four rack toms, two or more floor toms, and rows and rows of cymbals became "normal."

The other big '80s hit was the rebirth of the console mounting system—now called a "rack." A drummer could mount his or her multiple drums and cymbals on square or round bars and do without the tons of hardware formerly needed to make everything work.

Today

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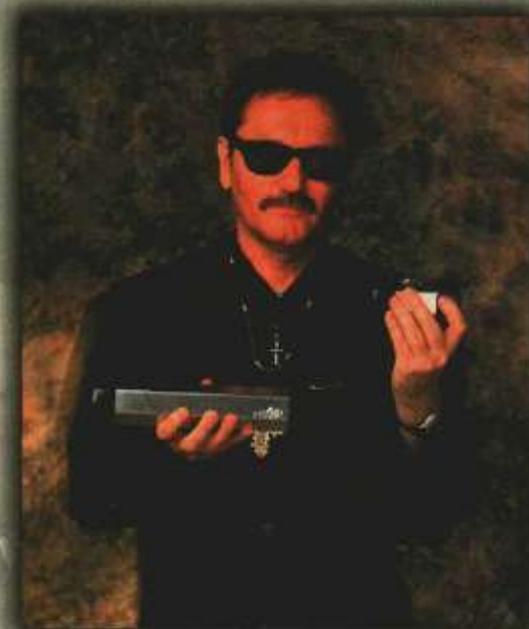
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Another trend today is a look to the past, with many drummers using vintage *Radio King*, *Black Beauty*, or *Broadway* snare drums as their drum of choice with a new drumkit. Still other drummers elect to use newer solid-shell or other custom-made snare drums to complement their kits. Personal tailoring of drum equipment—as

opposed to taking what comes "off the rack"—seems to be the way of the future.

Other than that, I have no visions to reveal. Just stay tuned to *Modern Drummer* and you'll see the future unfold as it happens. In the meantime, don't throw anything away!



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Gone But Not

These drumming artists and educators were lost to the drumming community in the years since Modern Drummer's first issue appeared in 1977. Each of these individuals added something unique to the drumming world.



Tom Copi

Ed Blackwell
(1927-1992)



Allison Perry

Art Blakey
(1919-1990)



John Bonham
(1947-1980)



Eric Carr
(1950-1991)



Sonny Greer
(1895-1982)



Papa Jo Jones
(1911-1985)



Philly Joe Jones
(1923-1985)

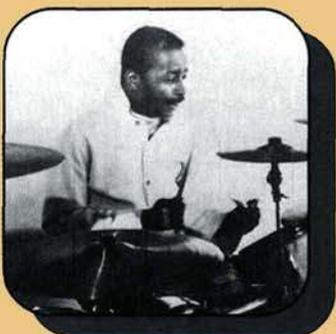


Tom Copi

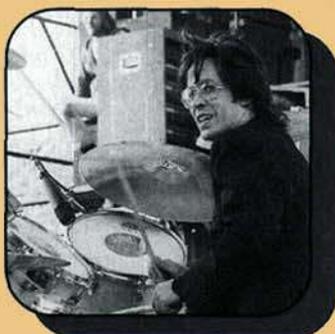
Connie Kay
(1927-1994)



Keith Moon
(1947-1978)



Sonny Payne
(1926-1979)



Lissa Wales

Jeff Porcaro
(1953-1992)



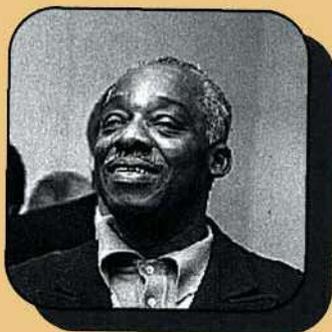
Veryl Oakland

Buddy Rich
(1917-1987)

Forgotten



Gary Chester
(1924-1987)



Kenny Clarke
(1914-1985)



Cozy Cole
(1906-1981)



Irv Cottler
(1920-1989)



Rick Mattingly

Mel Lewis
(1929-1990)



Larrie Londin
(1943-1992)

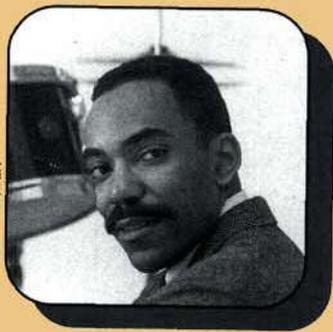


Rick Matkin

Shelly Manne
(1920-1984)



Ray McKinley
(1910-1995)



Chuck Stewart

Arthur Taylor
(1929-1995)



Chuck Stewart

Frederick Waits
(1943-1989)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mousey Alexander (1988) | Oliver Jackson (1994) |
| Carlton Barrett (1987) | Roy Knapp (1979) |
| Ray Bauduc (1988) | Bobby LaKind (1992) |
| Nick Ceroli (1985) | Frankie Malabe (1994) |
| Kenny Clare (1985) | Roberto Petaccia (1981) |
| Michael Clarke (1993) | Mickey Sheen (1987) |
| Al Duffy (1988) | Stanley Spector (1987) |
| Jerry Edmonton (1993) | Murray Spivack (1994) |
| Yogi Horton (1987) | Alvin Stoller (1992) |
| Phil Hulsey (1989) | Dennis Wilson (1983) |



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- 2) Your entry must be postmarked by January 1, 1996.
- 3) You may enter as many times as you wish, but each entry must be mailed individually.
- 4) Winner will be notified by telephone. Prizes include shipping costs.
- 5) Employees of Modern Drummer, Ludwig Drums, and Paiste Cymbals are ineligible.

Progressive Phrasing On Double Bass

by Ken Vogel

MUSIC KEY

The art of double bass drumming has advanced considerably in recent years. Many of today's top drummers are experimenting with and using a greater variety of rhythmic patterns on double bass, and rhythmic patterns played by other instrumentalists are often copied on the double bass in progressive music. Some of these rhythms create a "cross-rhythm" effect, and often suggest a feeling of 3/4, 3/8, 5/4, 5/8, etc. against a 4/4 feel.

The following exercises will aid in the development of this phrasing concept. Practice each exercise slowly at first. Start by counting each exercise, then be able to "feel" each pattern.

The double bass pattern in this exercise is phrased in 3/4. The pattern is repeated four times in three measures of 4/4.

In the following four exercises the double bass pattern is phrased in 3/8. The patterns are repeated eight times in three measures of 4/4.

The double bass phrasing in the next three exercises is 5/4. The patterns are repeated four times in five measures of 4/4.

The double bass pattern in the following exercise is phrased in 5/8. The pattern is repeated eight times in five measures of 4/4.



Crossovers: Part 2



by Rod Morgenstein

MUSIC KEY

Let's continue our study of crossovers beginning with examples 1 and 2, which consist of the right hand crossing over the left hand and the left hand crossing under. To facilitate the execution of example 2, make sure the right hand crosses over the left during the double

hits on the snare. And keep in mind that all exercises are to be played as alternating right/left single strokes, starting with the right hand.

Example 3 combines examples 1 and 2 into a two-measure pattern.

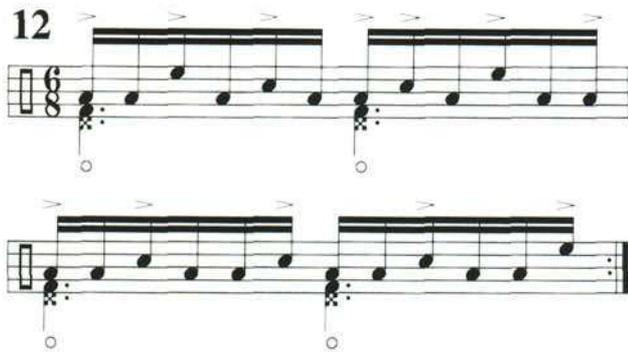
Examples 4 and 5 consist primarily of left-hand crossovers with example 6 combining these two.

Example 7 has the left hand crossing over with the right hand moving along underneath, while example 8 is strictly a right-hand crossover.

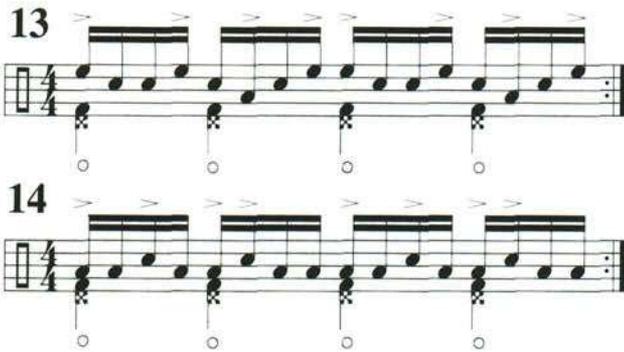
Example 9 combines examples 7 and 8 into a one-measure pattern.

Examples 10 and 11 are in 6/8 time. Example 10 uses a right-hand crossover, while example 11 adds the left hand crossing under.

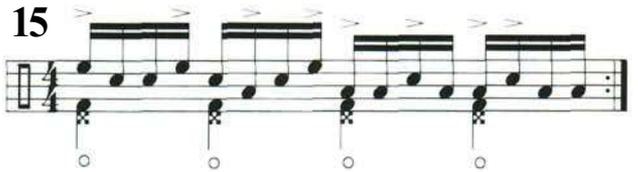
Example 12 combines examples 10 and 11 to become a two-measure pattern.



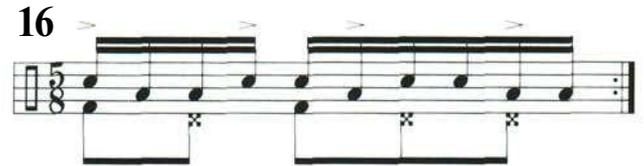
Example 13 has the left hand crossing over the floor tom and rack tom, while example 14 has the right hand crossing over and the left hand crossing under.



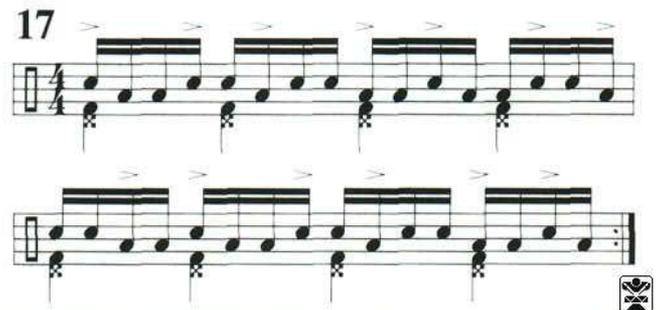
Example 15 combines exercises 13 and 14.



Example 16 is a tongue-twister of sorts in that both the right and left hands cross over *and* under. Begin with the right hand on the snare with the left hand underneath on the floor tom.



Example 17 adds to the challenge by superimposing the lick in example 16 over two measures of 4/4 time. The lick is played three complete times with two 16th notes at the end to finish the two-measure pattern.



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Philly Joe Jones: "Woody 'N You"

Transcribed by Steve Korn

MUSIC KEY

T.T.	Tom Tom	
S.D.	Snare Drum	X
F.T.	Floor Tom	
B.D.	Bass Drum	X
H.H.	Hi-Hat	X
w/foot	With Foot	X

X Rimshot

This month's *Drum Soloist* pays homage to the late, great Philly Joe Jones, featuring a solo he recorded on October 26, 1956 with Miles Davis. "Woody 'N You" is from *Relaxin' With The Miles Davis Quintet* (Prestige OJCCD-190-2), and is a nice taste of classic Philly Joe.

The tune itself is in an AABA form (8, 8, 8, 8), with the solo occurring over the last sixteen measures of the form. Philly Joe makes the most of this short spot, playing *musically*. He creates unique rhythmic phrases that expand over bar lines or that slightly change the listener's perspective of the time, phrases that sound hip to this day. And his ebullient time feel never waivers. Philly Joe Jones made the music happen with his own personal sound and style.

(All 8th notes are to be swung unless otherwise notated.)



$\text{♩} = 130$



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Dottie Dodgion

Forty Years Of Swinging

by William Minor

Dottie Dodgion started her jazz career singing with Charles Mingus. But she took up drumming in the early 1950s, and from that time on she played with everyone from Benny Goodman, Wild Bill Davison, Carl Fontana, and Ruby Braff to Marian McPartland, Gus Mancuso, the Al Cohn-Zoot Sims Quintet, and Melba Liston. Her father was also a drummer. But when Dottie—a warm, totally at-ease and open person with a smile that fully deserves the accolade "infectious"—is asked about his influence on her, she replies, "You know, he never showed me one lick." He did, however, buy her first full set, after she got stranded in Omaha at the age of seventeen.

"Seventeen"? Yup. Talking with Dottie is a bit like reading snatches of Jack Kerouac's *On The Road*. So let's back up a bit.

As a singer with her father's band and various others around San Francisco, Dottie had never really thought about playing the drums. Sometimes, if the drummer was late, she'd "play a little brushes on a magazine, thinking, 'My dad's a drummer, I'm supposed to be able to do this.' I actually didn't know I couldn't.

"Then I was singing on the road with Roscoe Ates," Dottie says. "He went across the line and spent everybody's bread. Frank Ross, with the Mary Kay Trio, was at the sister club of the one we were working. 'Look, Dottie,' he said, 'we'll get you to Springfield playing a little stand-up drums, and then back home. All you've got to do is play 'apple pie, apple pie, apple pie' [a phonetic description of the standard swing rhythm].' And *that* is how I



started playing drums, honest to God."

How did Dottie get from "apple pie" to a whole kit? "Drummers kept being late," Dottie replies. "We'd be in places where there was a snare drum, and maybe a hi-hat. This was really better for me because I didn't have to play an entire kit all at once. I had wanted to be a dancer at one point, and I was very good at basketball in school, so the coordination thing came easy for me. Like Buddy Rich, I felt like I was dancing behind my drums. Daddy didn't think I was a freak—he thought it was wonderful. So he went out and bought me my first set. I still have one ride cymbal from that kit. It originally had sizzles, but all of those rivets have since fallen out. But it still sizzles to this day. I swear, man, I can still hear it."

By this time Dottie was singing with Charles Mingus. "He actually wouldn't let me sing a single word," she relates. "It was *all* phonetics. He wrote a tune called 'The Gypsy,' and it was [she scats]

'bum-bilia-bum-bum-bilia-bum bam bilia..bum bay bilia-a-bee-bay bah!' We practiced five hours a day. I mean, talk about *listening*. Mingus was a hard taskmaster, and if you didn't want to practice you were out of the band. He set me up for timing, continuity, and really keeping the flow going. I didn't know it at the time, but all of that continuity was going into my ears—and it stayed that way."

Though self-taught, Dottie Dodgion could easily write a manual filled with useful advice for drummers, both young and old. Such information would probably be couched in her matchless style, rich with easy-to-retain aphorisms, one of which is "I'm my favorite drummer." Literally, it means that when singing (which she does on *Dottie Dodgion Sings*, a recent Arbors Records CD),

she prefers to be accompanied by herself on drums. By extension, however, in terms of "attitude" or self-confidence, it means that you've got to believe in yourself. In other words, be your own favorite drummer.

But Dottie would also remind musicians that "self-confidence" differs from "raw ego." She says, "When you bring *ego* to the bandstand, you're in trouble. Nobody's that slick. I've seen the pros—the best of them—trying to be "top cat" on the bandstand. But *they're* the ones who don't come off well, not the people they're playing with. When you get on the bandstand you have to *listen* to one another. That is *rule one*. You're not the only person up there.

"Flow is the key to jazz," Dottie continues. "One note into the next. When you start on that first note, never let your mind wander until the end of that tune. And whatever the tempo is, put a little *edge* on it. Make it swing. Whoever kicks that tempo off establishes where it is. And you don't deviate from that. If someone's trying to take away the time—that's a real amateur. You're not supposed to be a metronome, but you have to have *consistency* before you can be a drummer."

On playing ultra-fast tempos, Dottie advises: "Just think in *two*. I don't care *how* fast it is; just think in twos in your head. You're playing in fours, but you're thinking in two. Play *1* and *3*," Dottie says.

"The drummer in a big band is the workhorse. It's much more fun playing in small combos. I found that out early in life. In a big band, all those guys are leaning all over the drummer. They don't feel like really playing up to the time, and *you've* got to be *so* steady, all the time. It's a hard gig."

Dottie has an interesting outlook on drummers in general. For instance, although her personal preference is the "hard, cookin' swing" and "guttural" quality of Billy Higgins, Papa Jo Jones, and Philly Joe Jones, she appreciates musical variety. "Someone asked me once who my favorite drummer was," she says. "I said, 'Are you *kid-ding!* Each drummer has a different *flavor*.' But I do think a drummer has to be willing to take a chance—to risk something. This is what separates drummers like Philly Joe and Art Blakey from those who have to have it all figured out.

"On the other hand," she continues, laughing, "drummers are *all* a little crazy. It's just not *natural* to beat on something all the time."

It's been a long and winding road from Omaha and scat-singing with Charles Mingus to performing on the Garden Stage at the 1994 Monterey Jazz Festival (and the release of her first CD as a leader). But Dottie Dodgion is still perched behind a drumset, keeping impeccable time and smiling infectiously. However, today

she's somewhat more inclined to come down front and offer her precise and original vocal phrasing on a tune like "Time Heals Everything"—a show tune she transforms into an emotive jazz offering, both sad and wise in its compassion for those lost in love. Of course, when she did that at Monterey, another festival drummer named Vince Lateano slipped in behind her drums. Was she surprised?

"I was!" she replies. "I thought he was still doing his own stint at the Night Club. The funny part of it was: There were two other drummers there—drunk out of their minds—and I was avoiding them at all costs. So when I first heard a note, I thought, 'Oh *no*, one of those guys has jumped up here thinking he's going to *save* me. That's happened to me so many times. If I'm on a job and I go out front they think I need a drummer. But I'm singing a ballad and I don't *want* a drummer. But after Vince had played the first four bars I knew it was him. We've known each other for thirty years, and he's a beautiful soul.

He plays for the person—and there aren't many drummers who will *give it up*."

The 1994 Monterey Festival was the first time Dottie had tried singing from out front (rather than from the drums) in such a prominent venue. "I'm much more comfortable behind the drums," she says, "because I'm placing accents exactly where I want them. But it does divide me. I find that if I want to lay back on the note vocally, I still have to be aware of where I'm placing it with my right hand—so it doesn't free me up. Especially on the 'Time Heals Everything' ballad, I really wanted to be freed up for that."

Over the years, Dottie has "paid her dues"—including being teased or tested by other players with "something to prove." But her attitude remains cheerful, accepting, positive, and free of bitterness or rancor. One of her most frequently used expressions is, "Well, I can see where *he* [or *she*] is coming from." But she also has some great stories.

Appearing in Nice, France with Melba Liston, Dottie once ran into a noted trumpet player whom she'd met once in L.A. when she was filling in for drummer Frank Butler with Harold Land, Elmo Hope, and Leroy Vinegar. In Nice, "the guys" would get together each night to jam after concerts, getting up sets and choosing different personnel. The trumpet player invited Dottie to "come down and play a set." Dottie got excited, but the group she was placed with didn't please the man with the horn. So he replaced the bassist with Eddie Jones (from the Basie band), and called for a new pianist and drummer.

"I said, *No*," Dottie recounts. "And the trumpeter said, 'What?' I said, *No*," I replied. 'I went through the worst. Now I'm going to have at least one tune with the best bass player.' Is that *right?* the

"A lot of ladies take offense when people say, 'the girl,' but you can't let it get your blood boiling. If you let something like that get to you, you're letting your ego interfere."



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man with the horn replied. And he kicked off a tempo [Dottie smacks her hands together, lickety-split] and, boy, it was just flyin'. But I would have *died* before I let that tempo drop. If I ever had to pull one off in my life, that was *it*. Even Eddie Jones was starting to get tired. Billy Mitchell and Joe Newman were standing behind him and they said, 'Don't let her down now, Eddie; don't let her down now!' We finished that tune and I took the sticks and handed them to the other drummer, saying, 'Okay, *now* you can play.' It was the one thing that I ever got chesty about. I just felt insulted as hell. I don't feel that trumpet player should have dismissed me like that. After we were done, though, he laughed. He'd had trouble keeping up the tempo himself. He kicked it off too fast and was so worked up trying to *get me* that he was messing himself up."

Dottie has a "Benny Goodman story" with roots in Las Vegas and New York. Over the years, her husband Jerry played with five different Goodman bands. When he was with Benny at the Desert Inn, the "King of Swing" popped up at an after-hours jam session one night. Dottie had been sitting in, "playing some time." Benny played too, and he had a ball, and that was that—or so Dottie thought. The band opened at Basin Street East a short time after, and on Dottie's first day in New York she decided to go shopping before meeting Jerry at his rehearsal. She always carries her "flats"—her drumming slippers—in her purse, and when she arrived, thinking the rehearsal over, Goodman said, "Hey, Dottie, you got your shoes?" He had been trying out drummers that day—fourteen in all—and had not been happy with the crop that showed up.

"Well, I got up on the bandstand," says Dottie, "thinking we were just going to jam. We did a sextet number. Red Norvo was in that band, with Chuck Israels on bass. Zoot Sims, Buddy Childers, Carl Fontana, and Jerry were the horns. When we finished, Benny said, 'You start tonight.' I said, 'What?!' Then the manager comes over and he says, 'Well, we'll have to get you a blazer...and a skirt.' 'I can't play in a skirt!' But Benny said, 'No pants.' 'Benny,' I said, 'I can't do it.' 'No pants,' he insisted. 'Play in a skirt.'" A photographer took a picture of Dottie in which a generous portion of thigh was

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exposed. When she showed it to Benny, he said, "Okay then...coulattes."

Dottie had been weaned on Goodman's music since the age of nine. Her father loved Benny, and she used to sit on the edge of his bed in hotel rooms and listen to every note. "I knew all the charts already," she says, "and he hadn't changed a chart since 1937! But I was still nervous."

"By the time we got to 'Sing, Sing, Sing,'" Dottie says, "I had no chops left at all. But we got through it. I lasted about ten days. I know I didn't get fired because I couldn't make it musically. I got fired for a very strange reason. One night Benny forgot to introduce me. I was the only girl in the band, besides the singer, Maria Marshall. So the whole audience was saying, 'The drummer, the drummer!' So Benny says, 'Oh yeah: Dottie Dodgion.' Well, I got a standing ovation. Every other night he would say 'Dottie Dodgion' and they would clap for me—but not more than for *The King*. When I walked off the stage that night, the manager said, 'Bye' I said, 'What are you talking about?' And he said, 'He's not going to be able to take that.' I got my notice the next day." Gene Krupa had sent her roses on opening night. Later he told Dottie, "Remember, he's fired the *best*."

The message of some of her other stories is more direct, yet she delivers them all with the same "they're only human" sense of irony and good will. "People used to walk up while I was settin' up my drums and ask if I was doing it for my husband,"

she says. Once, Jerry was playing with the Thad Jones band in Italy. Dottie was standing beside him when Vittorio De Sica's son ran up, saying, "Jerry, I want you to meet this magnificent drummer." Hearing this, Jerry introduced his wife as a drummer also. De Sica's son gazed at her and then said, "Yeah, but this guy is a *real* drummer!" Indeed, even at the 1994 Monterey Jazz Festival, while Dottie was preparing for her set, a bystander was heard to say, "Oh, *she's* the drummer!" She must get sick of it, but Dottie just shrugs and smiles that winning smile.

"I quit getting indignant a long time ago," she says, "because that's ignorance on the person's part. There's no malice intended. As a rule, they're absolutely stunned—and I can understand that. A lot of ladies I've worked with would really take offense when people would say, '*the girl*,' and I understand where they were coming from. But you can't let it get your blood boiling, because you've got to get up on the bandstand. You gotta be cool and play your music. If you let something like that get through to you, you're letting your ego interfere."

Dottie feels she was lucky having been brought up with "the pros"—people who would hire her because they knew she could *play*. But she admits that even some of them "weren't so hot for hiring a girl. It was *the balls of the band*, man, and that was an insult to the guys." Billy Butterfield's manager wouldn't hire her

because she was a woman, saying, "No broad's gonna be on our band, not on *drums*." Dottie admires pianist Marian McPartland, who fought her own battles within this almost exclusively male profession. She and Marian "hit it off," and Dottie worked in a trio with the pianist and then-eighteen-year-old bassist Eddie Gomez. "People would say really dumb things about *women on the bandstand*" Dottie says. "Marian could have let it bother her, but she didn't at all. If someone came up and said something *really* ridiculous, she'd say, 'Fuck off, Ducks!'—and she didn't care who was listening."

Dottie claims that she knew from the start that her love for the music was going to save her from much hardship. Happily married, she wasn't looking "to come on to the cats"; she was truly looking *to play*. When musicians got tired of drummers who were "stepping all over" the music, who were just "showin' off their wares and not groovin' the others," they appreciated the fact that she just played "time," was not interested in solos, and truly *listened*. "That got me a lot of jobs," she says. "They hired me because I could swing and because I could play time. Didn't make any difference being a woman."

"You can't tell lies about the music on the bandstand," Dottie continues. "There's no gender up there. When they *do* let you sit in, you'd better be able to produce. You'd better be ready to play the music."



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Akira Jimbo

Japanese Fusion Ace

by Greg Siegel

In the United States, the name "Akira Jimbo" might be familiar to a number of contemporary-jazz fans and among professional jazz musicians. But in his home country of Japan, Akira is practically a household name. Indeed, the thirty-six-year-old drummer is something of a musical phenomenon in Japan—a jazz idol whose pristine technique, impeccable time, and supremely musical approach serve as inspiration to thousands of aspiring drummers.

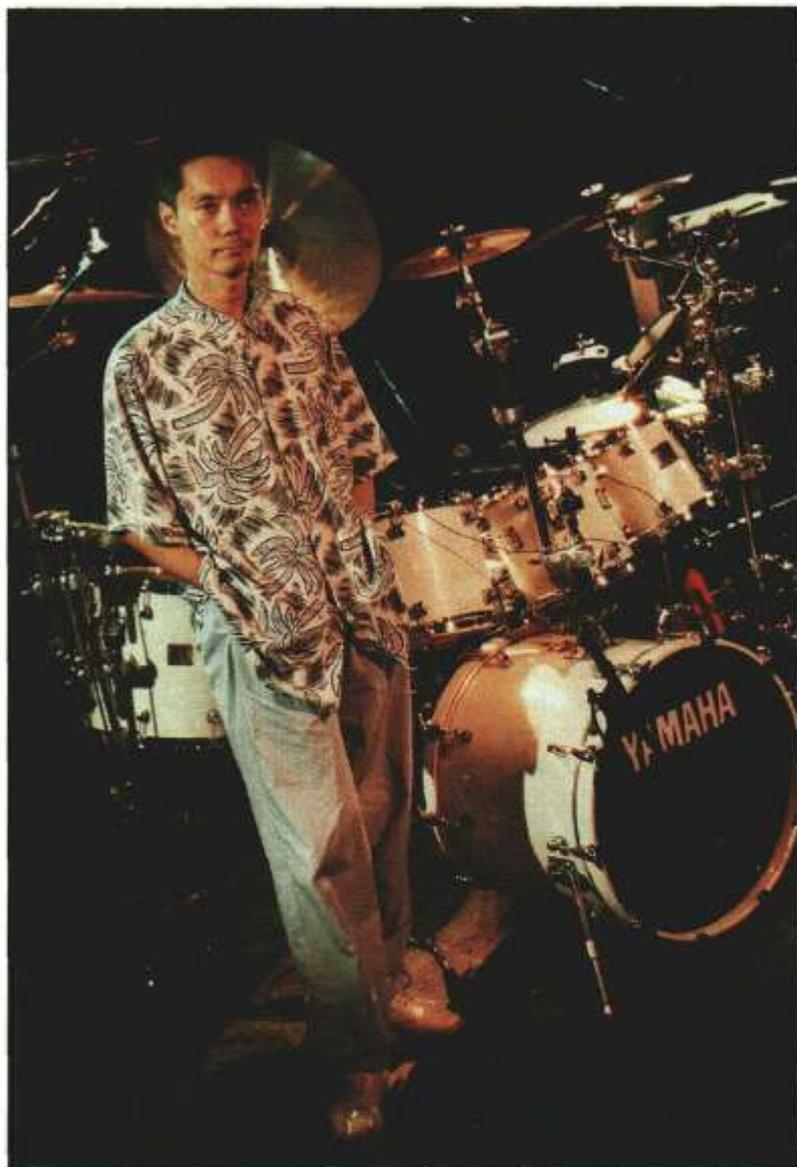
Of course, it wasn't always that way. In fact, Jimbo picked up the sticks later in life than most. "I started playing drums in high school, when I was seventeen years old," he recalls. "Normally someone my age would start as a rock drummer—and I like rock music—but the first music to attract me was jazz. My father was a bass player—kind of in between amateur and professional. He loved jazz and he played a lot of jazz records in our house when I was growing up."

Those records had an obvious impact on the young Akira. By the time he was in college (at Keio University in Tokyo) he was honing his chops in the school's eighteen-piece big band—swinging to the strains of Count Basie and Duke Ellington.

Strange as it may seem for a drummer who today possesses such incredible technique, Jimbo never received traditional instruction during his formative years. "In my generation," he explains, "not many people played the drums. I learned by ear, because there were no good drum schools in Japan—although now it's becoming more popular."

At the same time that Akira was plying his trade as a big-band rhythmist, a brand-new musical import was rapidly becoming all the rage in Japan: jazz fusion. Jimbo was all ears. "I was very interested in bands like the Brecker Brothers, Tower Of Power, Weather Report, and Return To Forever," he says, smiling. "I also listened to Steve Gadd a lot. His style is kind of rudimental, so I learned technical things from his playing. Listening is very good training."

In 1977 something happened that changed Jimbo's life—and his fortunes. At a contest sponsored by Yamaha Music, Jimbo met bassist extraordinaire Tetsuo Sakurai. A few years later Sakurai asked Akira to join his band, Casiopea. "I was still in school when I got into Casiopea," he remembers, "so I was a professional musician at the same time I was a college student." But Jimbo could only juggle the two disparate roles for so long (even though by his own admission he "didn't study that much"), and he soon gave up any



plans to become a lawyer. "Before I met Tetsuo," Akira recalls, "I liked to play drums, but I didn't think I could be a professional drummer."

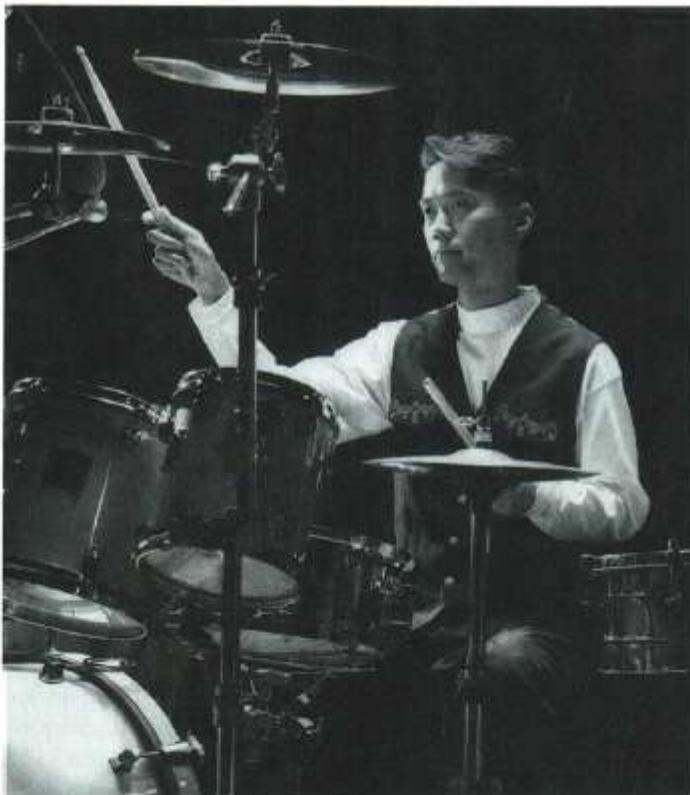
He was mistaken. While Akira was a full-time member of Casiopea (from 1980 to 1990) the band released over a dozen albums, toured the world three times, and garnered enough critical praise to last a lifetime.

What's more, the band collaborated with such top talents as Le Ritenour, Don Grusin, Nathan East, Djavan, and even Jimbo's long-time hero Harvey Mason. "I was so nervous," he says with a chuckle, "because he's like a drum god for me." Although he occasionally suggested that the musicians exercise more restraint ("At the time Casiopea was a very *busy* band," Jimbo admits), Mason never

turned dictatorial. "He didn't insist that I play like this or that," says Jimbo. "He's a nice person, and he created a good atmosphere, which helped us relax."

By 1990, the rhythm section of the renowned ensemble was ready to explore novel avenues of sonic discovery. "Tetsuo and I left because we wanted to find a new musical direction and a new opportunity," he explains, "so we formed Shambara—a pop band with a vocalist. Shambara made one album and then broke up."

Although Shambara was not the hit that Casiopea was, Jimbo looks back on the experience as an invaluable growth period: "I learned how to direct a vocalist. Before, I mainly played instrumental music, so it was a totally new experiment for me." In addition, Jimbo learned how to tailor his drumming to fit the more mainstream sensibilities of pop audiences. "Pop music is more groove-oriented," he says. "I like to play a lot of notes, and I like to



play grooves. It's fun both ways."

Following the dissolution of Shambara, Jimbo and Sakurai formed Jimsaku—a band that broke new ground for the pair by incorporating the diverse rhythms and timbres of world music. Moreover, the new alliance allowed Jimbo, who had learned recorder, piano, and guitar as a child, to nurture his other great passion: composing. "I think it's important for a drummer to be able to compose," he says. "It provides a greater understanding of the music, and it allows for a wider variety of approaches. Melody and harmony are important elements in music, so it's better to understand them."

From the release of his first solo album in 1986 to his most recent venture, *Panama Man*, writing music has been a vital form of expression for the multi-talented instrumentalist. "I compose and I play drums," he says, flatly. "I need to do both. I write a new tune almost every day, and I prac-

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tice the drums every day. I can keep a mental balance that way."

In recent years, Jimbo has parlayed both his knowledge of musical theory and his skill as a percussionist into inventive compositions for the drumkit. In his first instructional video, *Metamorphosis* (so named because "metamorphosis means changing, and the possibilities of the drum instrument are changing"), Jimbo successfully demonstrates how MIDI triggering systems can be combined with electronic and acoustic drums to produce truly enlightening results. "I've tried all the electronic drums," he says, "Syndrums, Simmons, Roland, and Yamaha. I want to be *with* the technology; I don't want to ignore it. I love the acoustic drums—that's my first instrument—but the drum trigger system is totally different; it's a much more player-friendly instrument."

Jimbo's maiden voyage into the world of instructional video is compelling for other reasons, too. Unlike most others of its kind, *Metamorphosis* skews heavily toward performance, with only a few minutes devoted to step-by-step applications of the paradiddle. "I learned drumming from my ear, not from a book or a teacher," he insists. "If I wanted to play certain of my heroes' licks, I'd *listen* to them. Training your ear—that's the most important thing for learn-

"Some drummers are always thinking about their timing or how they're going to play the next section. Too much thinking, too much thinking."



ing drums.

"Technique is very important too," Akira continues, "but technique is like a vocabulary. You have to combine the words when you speak if you want to tell people something. If people listen to good music a lot they will learn how to play—not by reading a drum book or watching a technical video."

For Jimbo, playing the drums isn't merely a physical activity; it's a spiritual one. "In Japan, drumming is a way to communicate with

God," Jimbo enthuses. "I don't think about that consciously, but I *do feel* something. Even though I grew up listening to Western music, my way of thinking about the drums is probably a little bit different from the people in America and Europe."

In the end, Jimbo's drumming philosophy is based on the rich rewards of personal satisfaction and the ineffable bliss of spiritual harmony. "Some drummers are always thinking about their timing or how they're going to play the next section. Too much thinking, too much thinking," admonishes Jimbo. "You must think about time and technical things when you *practice*. But when you play music, please don't think." He pauses for a moment. "Just have fun."



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Denzil Best

by Burt Korall

Denzil Da Costa Best was a stylistic hybrid. Born in 1917, he came to the drums late, bringing, with him a highly musical approach that stemmed from his earlier experiences as a trumpeter, pianist, and bassist. Best's unflinching instinct for doing the right thing at the right time—with jazz giants like Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, George Shearing, and Artie Shaw—added surprise and uniformly good feeling to his performances.

An adaptable, open-minded musician, Best utilized elements particular to the tradition of jazz drumming—such as pulsation, an unbroken flow, a sense of development and form, and unity within a performance. He combined these things with what he felt was relevant and meaningful in the initial phases of modern jazz.

Best was very much a team player. He thought and functioned as part of the rhythm section, whatever the size of the group. He supported other players, making everyone sound good by allowing his colleagues' inspiration and style to meld with his own—leading to mutually comfortable and satisfying musical conclusions.

Best made a notable contribution to jazz as a trumpeter, as a drummer, and as a composer. But his life was filled with health problems, accidents, and hard luck. As one sage put it, "If he didn't have hard luck, he wouldn't have had any luck at all."

A member of a West Indian family from Barbados, Best moved to New York City as a youngster. He studied piano for a number of years, and his father (a part-time tuba and bass player) encouraged him to become a professional pianist. But Best found the trumpet most suitable to his needs, and he worked after school to earn the money to buy one. Because his father disapproved of his choice of instrument, Best practiced while his dad was out of the house. He progressed rapidly and began to work professionally shortly after getting out of school. Soon he began writing material. He had learned about harmony as a piano student, and he made a habit of jotting down what he "heard" in his head. Ideas kept occurring to him.

Best was at the center of the turbulence created by the changes taking place in jazz in the early 1940s. He played trumpet or piano in the company of such bop pioneers as pianist-composer Thelonious Monk, trumpeter Joe Guy, and drummer Kenny Clarke. The usually taciturn Monk had a special feeling for Best's trumpet work, describing it as "outstanding and containing lots of ideas."

Suddenly, at twenty-four, Best was beset for the first time with



the sort of hard luck that would bedevil him throughout his life: He became ill with tuberculosis. He was warned by his uncle, a doctor, that he would be dead in ten years if he continued to play his horn.

Life and music are curiously dependent on timing. Success at both are a matter of placement—you have to be at the right place at the right time with the right people. Before giving up his horn, Best gigged as a pianist and bassist and subbed on drums with Joe Gordon's New York band. He also spent a few months as a drummer with a group of musicians led by Saxie Payne. He turned to the drums and seriously applied himself, beginning in 1943. Within nine months he was playing in Ben Webster's band on 52nd Street, after which he toured Canada with Coleman Hawkins. It was the start of a whole new career.

Stan Levey (himself an important figure in jazz drumming history) said of Best: "Denzil was one of the first guys I heard after immigrating to New York from Philly early in 1944. He was with Coleman Hawkins on 52nd Street. Thelonious Monk was in Hawk's group. So was tenor sax legend Don Byas, trumpeters Benny Harris or Vic Coulson, and Eddie "Basie" Robinson, the bass player. You should have heard that rhythm section! They would cook so deeply into the beat, the bandstand would actually seem to levitate. Denzil swung you off the bandstand without ever overplaying. He would lay it in on that Chinese cymbal, and the intensity—not the vol-

ume—would progressively build.

"A swinger—not a bomb-dropper—with a good sound and a sense for what was musical, he could take a band and move it. He didn't play like Max Roach, as so many of us did. Denzil had his own way of doing things. He'd give a band a great foundation and strengthen it as he went along.

"One of Best's inventions was an adroit form of independence that made the beat undeniable. He'd play the dotted 8th and 16th rhythm (with a triplet feel) on the hi-hat or the Chinese cymbal with his right hand and four beats to the bar on the snare drum with his left. It would really get things going. Before long, a lot of guys started doing that.

"I got to know Denzil very well. I used to come into the club every night and stand right behind the bandstand to check him out. He would explain anything you asked about his work. I'd say, Why do you do this or that? and he'd tell me. He was a reserved kind of guy, but very open and nice.

"Denzil never studied. It was a matter of natural talent with him. Though he had limited technique, he made what he did work for him. His solos were confidential, subtle—never exhibitionistic. Musicians tuned him in. They appreciated his conception and the way he made the music better. What he played was *right*—you know, the punishment fit the crime."

Best kept improving. Before going with the George Shearing Quintet in 1949, Best worked briefly with Illinois Jacquet's small band, subbing for Shadow Wilson. He gigged and recorded with other interesting players as well. An accepted member of the advanced group of musicians who gave the modern jazz of the 1940s character and quality, he was flexible, adaptable, and anxious to involve himself in situations that were challenging—such as a Scandinavian tour with bassist Chubby Jackson. "Denzil came to Scandinavia with my group in 1947," recalls Jackson. We had wonderful musicians in the band: Terry Gibbs [vibes], Conte Candoli [trumpet], Frankie Socolow [tenor saxophone], Lou Levy [piano]. They were very much into modern jazz. We were the first bebop band to play in Sweden and Denmark—maybe in all of Europe.

"Denzil fell right in with what was going on. He was a cooker and was quite hip—shaping the music, going with the straight-ahead feeling of the band, playing all those

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8th notes and fast-moving things. The way Lou Levy substituted chords at the piano made the rhythm section sound a bit different. But Denzil just sat there and played time. He didn't get too cute, or do that stop-and-go thing, like the early bebop drummers. I never really dug that; it's like breathing fast then stopping to get a glass of seltzer. But I didn't have to say anything. Denzil allowed the music to filter through him and just responded to the boppish environment in the most appropriate way—and without doing anything that wasn't basic to his own conception.

"As the bass player in the band and another primary source of rhythm, I got into the team concept with Denzil. I liked his combination of brushes and sticks, explosions and *quiet*, and the way he played time. Because of the diversity of his musical background, he had become intimate with time and how to play it in a variety of circumstances. He put his own stuff into the music, but he was very aware that you have to respect the leader's wishes and what the music is trying to say as well."

Don Schlitten, a highly knowledgeable jazz producer, brought out some of Chubby Jackson's material—recorded originally in December of 1947—on his Xanadu label in 1975. The LP, titled *Bebop Revisited Volume 1—Dexter Gordon/Fats Navarro/Chubby Jackson*, finds Denzil Best prodding and probing with his left hand while keeping fluent time with his right. Best's sound on the drumset is notable for its balance, stability, and quiet intensity. He controls the instrument and the music without being obtrusive, communicating with the players and, ultimately, with the listeners as well.

The rhythmic urgency increases as each interpretation—aside from the one ballad in the set—proceeds. Try "Crown Pilots,"

"Boomsie," and "Dee Dee's Dance," a Best composition. The quality of the band and its drummer are instantly apparent.

Best finally gained international recognition through his work with George Shearing—an experience that began for Best prior to the formation of the renowned Quintet. I recall going to the opening of the Shearing *Quartet* at the Clique on Broadway in 1948. Best was with the group, which also included classic modern jazz clarinetist Buddy DeFranco and bassist John Levy.

George Shearing had this to say about that evening and the years beyond: "We appeared opposite Machito's band at the Clique. It made me wonder how four musicians could stand up to that storm of Latin jazz. But somehow we did. Denzil played a lot of brushes with the group. He certainly was one of the brush kings.

"When the Quartet broke up, critic Leonard Feather suggested that we keep the rhythm section the same when we recorded in 1949 with the Quintet for Discovery. Margie Hyams came into the group on vibraphone, and Chuck Wayne joined us on guitar. And before long, the Quintet was happening. We had hit records, and better and better bookings.

"I loved Denzil's playing. He was the perfect drummer for the Quintet and my musical outlook at the time. He did an absolutely marvelous job. Denzil stayed with me for a couple of years [1949-52]. He had an alcohol problem. He left and came back. A wonderful musician and a sweet guy, Denzil could surprise you. At a party given by my road manager, he called out chord changes while the music was playing. It seemed unusual for a drummer to do that. But he had a well-rounded musical background.

"Getting down to essences: I think his time and ability as a brush

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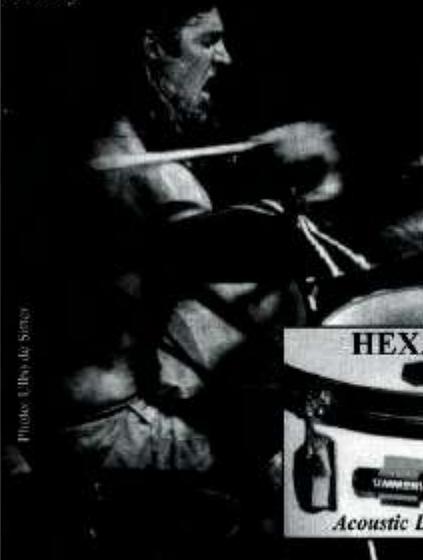
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player were memorable. And *he* was a very nice man."

Like Jo Jones, Denzil Best had a great flair for playing brushes *provocatively*, bringing consistency and a delicious sense of thrust to the beat. Best provided these things for Shearing right from the outset—the Quintet's first recording date on January 31, 1949.

To get an idea what the Best of the brushes sounds like, sample the results of that initial session by the group, notably "Cottonop" and "Moon Over Miami"—indeed, most of the entire second side of the LP, *George Shearing, So Rare* (Savoy). Hearing these recordings again evokes for me a picture of Best, with a bit of a smile on his face, sitting up straight yet comfortably, gracefully moving the wire brushes in circles, up and down and across the snare drum. Without Denzil Best, the Shearing Quintet would have lacked a crucial characteristic that made for both musicality and commercial impact.

Unfortunately, Best's brush work with the Shearing Quintet only partially mirrored his multiple abilities. The quiet pulsation and rhythmic identity he brought to the Shearing sound—a voicing of piano, vibes, and guitar—had little to do with who he really was. Because he was a wide-ranging composer and a drummer equipped to do a variety of things, he felt somewhat unfulfilled. This made for a feeling of depression.

Don't misunderstand, Shearing didn't purposely lock the drummer in; he played a number of Best compositions and gave him the freedom to play as he would. But Best couldn't break away from the manner of performance that he had helped popularize.

That old devil hard luck reappeared in 1952, when Best fractured both legs in an auto accident. Following a lengthy recuperation, he

returned to action in 1954 with Artie Shaw's new, updated Gramercy Five. Denzil was the kind of drummer Shaw favored. He stayed out of the way and allowed the music to develop—helping it along in his typically musical, understated manner, and stylistically adjusting to each musician and to the overall contemporary stance of the group.

Best moved on to the Erroll Garner Trio, where he used his artful performance with brushes to advantage. He remained with the dynamic, historical pianist for two years (1956-57).

In 1957, Best developed calcium deposits in his wrists. It affected his performances to a certain extent, playing havoc with his flexibility and ability to play fast tempos. "But you wouldn't have known he had any difficulty," says bassist Phil Leshin. "We were with pianist Lee Evans at The Left Bank in New York for nine months in 1957. I took the job with Lee because I wanted to work with Denzil. He talked about his illness but it didn't seem to inhibit him at all—at least while I was working with him.

"Playing with Denzil was a wonderful experience. It was exciting; he kept things on a very high level. I learned a lot from him. He taught me 'stumbling'—8th notes and triplets leading into the first beat of the bar. Only a few bassists—Ray Brown, for example—were doing it back then.

"Because Lee Evans had phenomenal technique, we programmed fast things in almost every set—pianists with great chops tend to like to play 'up,' to show off their ability. Denzil had no trouble whatever. With brushes he was a delight; with sticks he played lightly and easily on the cymbal. His taste was remarkable, and he always swung."

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Denzil Best's last years were not easy. He was troubled by a variety of things but continued on, working intermittently with singers Nina Simone and Eartha Kitt, trombonist Tyree Glenn, Ben Webster, and others. Bassist John Levy relates: "His life and playing began to get away from him after we both left George Shearing. Denzil's biggest problem was his frustration about not being able to fully express himself as a musician. He did more drinking than was necessary, to compensate for his feeling of depression about that and his physical problems. Yet when I look back at his career, it's quite clear he accomplished a great deal. He was an excellent musician. I loved working with him. We grooved. We both liked to play behind people. We listened carefully to the Shearing soloists and changed our way of playing to suit each one. Denzil was essentially an accompanist.

"Denzil was highly respected by all the musicians. They liked to play with him because he provided what was needed. And, as everyone will tell you, he was such a nice person."

Best died on May 25, 1965 at Roosevelt Hospital in New York City. He had col-

lapsed the day before in midtown Manhattan—according to some, right outside The Copper Rail, a musician's hang-out—fracturing his skull in the fall. His streak of hard luck played itself out to the end of the line. However, like most important musicians, he remains with us via recordings. His compositions—"Move," "We" (a.k.a. "Allen's Alley"), "Bemsha Swing," "Dee Dee's Dance," and "Nothing But D. Best"—are still performed and recorded. In the past, they have challenged, on recordings, the capacities of Shearing, Miles Davis ("Move" was the centerpiece of Davis's historical *Birth Of The Cool* album on Capitol), Thelonious Monk, Chubby Jackson, and Don Lanphere, among many others.

Denzil Best's assets as a drummer are those of an artist on intimate terms with music and its possibilities. Listen to the LPs or CDs he is on; they tell his story very well. You might learn, in the process, what a drummer can do for music, while seeming to do little or nothing. Best offers a cogent lesson in discretion, selflessness, and quiet control.



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Herbie Hancock

by Robin Tolleson

Dis Is Da Drum isn't a drumming album per se, but it's certainly about rhythms and sounds.

"Drums are the perfect symbol for rhythm, but in this case I'm stretching the point even further and using drums to represent the rhythm of life," says Herbie Hancock. "The connection I was making was between the use of African folk rhythms and hip-hop rhythms, and in this case it's one example of a larger vision that I have—which is to combine music from different cultures to create something new."

There enters percussionist (and co-producer) Bill Summers, an original member of Hancock's 1970s Headhunters group and owner of a bachelor of arts degree in ethnomusicology, with emphasis on West African music. "I was able to depend on Bill's expertise in that area," says Hancock. Part of the charm of *Dis Is Da Drum* is the blending to traditional African instruments and folk rhythms with state-of-the-art technology.

The Chicago-born Hancock, who played on nineteen albums with Miles Davis as well as on sessions with the likes of Donald Byrd, Freddie Hubbard, Wayne Shorter, Wes Montgomery, and Quincy Jones, has always had a curiosity for music technology. In the '70s he had one of Roger Linn's prototype drum machines at his studio; in 1973 he used the Arp Odyssey to turn "Chameleon" into an instrumental AM radio hit and high school marching band staple; and his Grammy-winning 1983 album *Future Shock* was one of the first fusions of street sounds and jazz. And on 1988's *Perfect Machine*, Hancock etched out "drums" on a Fairlight computer.

"I know most of the people who started the innovations, because I was around before they were," Hancock laughs. "I was in a position to be able to experiment with some of those devices, and offer suggestions. I'm very much attracted to the cutting edge of technology, but on most of my records you don't find drum machines. Even on this record, we used sampled loops of drums—we didn't use drum machines. Once we figured out what the form was going



to be and how we wanted to do it, we replaced most of the loops with a live drummer playing the same kind of beat. Sometimes we'd have a drummer play live and we'd loop that, rather than use something we bought from the store. By and large, the drumming you hear on the record is live drumming."

Hancock and Summers glued their rhythm tracks together using loops and pieces of beats played by drummers Will Kennedy (Yellowjackets), Ken Strong, and Guy Eckstine, along with sequencing, sampling, and loops by Will "Roc" Griffin. Besides Summers and his arsenal of shekeres, congas, bells, jun jun, and djembe, the album features the percussion talents of Airtio and Munyungo Jackson, and bata drummers Lazaro Galarraga and Nengue Hernandez. "The drummers weren't recorded together," Hancock says. "They may be on the same track, but we recorded them at different times. Sometimes we combined bits and pieces of what each one did to make the drum track. We started from scratch and made our own rules for this album."

Herbie Hancock has played with some of the greatest drummers on the planet, from the 1963 Miles Davis band with Tony Williams, to his African jazz group with Billy Hart, to his funk-fusion outfits with Harvey Mason, Mike Clark, and James Levi, to the *Dis Is Da Drum* band he took to Europe with Terri Lyne

Carrington. Hancock's 1980 *Mr. Hands* album alone features Williams, Mason, Ndugu Chancler, Summers, Alphonse Mouzon, and Sheila E. Hancock was pleased to share insights about several of his drummers.

Tony Williams: "Tony is a phenomenon. Not only does he have wonderful technique, but his sense of musicality is really unparalleled, and there's a natural structure to what he does that sounds totally inspired at every moment. He's full of surprises, but he's able to pull it off every time without a hitch. And he writes great tunes. I've seen him study on planes, on buses, and in cars. I'll be sleeping and he'll have out a book and music paper and he'll be writing tunes or studying this or that. He's a hard worker—a very dedicated master who is also a student."

Harvey Mason: "Harvey is an all-around drummer: He's funky and he can swing. He's a master and an innovator in all the areas in which he plays. He's always coming up with new ways to express a particular genre.

For example, the beat that he came up with for 'Chameleon' on the *HeadHunters* album was a totally new thing. Nobody had played that before, and very few drummers can actually play it because it's something that they're not used to. He can invent new things like that (which aren't part of anyone's repertoire), and he'll pull it off as though he's been playing it for quite some time. He's got the independence and confidence to be able to do that."

Billy Hart: "Billy is an amazing drummer. There's something solemn about the way he plays—a depth that kind of reaches your soul. Yet at the same time he plays with great fire and energy. He was the perfect drummer for the Mwandishi band that I had in the early '70s, because on one hand he was able to utilize more straight-ahead jazz beats, and on the other hand we very often would break the time down and not have any meter. We'd be playing out of tempo and Billy could make it sound like there was a certain kind of momentum going. It could be faster or slower depending on how he played—without his actually playing a particular beat or emphasizing a tempo at all. And I love the dynamics he plays with."

James Levi: "James has this rolling kind of beat that's smooth and easy, but relentless. It's constantly swinging and constantly funky. He's not the kind of drummer who depends on technique in order for his music to be viable. He can stick with something that's very basic, and it provides a bed that's so comfortable for the other musicians to ride on."

Alphonse Mouzon: "I enjoyed playing with Alphonse because he had a sprinkling of many things that gave him a very special style. One of the areas that he became famous for in the beginning was fusion. Later on he came up with tunes and albums that had a more dance-oriented character to them. So he could play in the

pocket and swing, and he could also play a more high-energy kind of fusion style. That meant that he could pull any of these rabbits out of a hat when he wanted to."

Ndugu Chancler: "Ndugu is another extremely versatile drummer. He plays with a lot of fire, and he always knows what to do to fill out the music so that everything is complete. And he's very dependable when it comes to setting up the next phrase or idea. It's very comfortable playing with him because he provides those signposts that always let you know where you are if you get lost, or if you get too carried away. He sees the whole picture."

Mike Clark: "I met Mike through Paul Jackson, the bass player. They had been friends for many years in Oakland, so he knew that whole style of playing. It was interesting that when I broke up the *Headhunters* band, all Mike wanted to do was play straight-ahead jazz. He didn't want to play funk anymore. So he went to

New York, and everybody asked him to play that kind of Oakland funk style. He refused—so he didn't work for a

long time. Finally, guys started calling him for jazz gigs, and now it's not a problem anymore. He's a great jazz drummer—and he hasn't lost any of the stuff that he brought from Oakland. So now he's totally free to do both, and he does. The solo he played on the album *Thrust*, on the song 'Actual Proof,' is one of the best drum solos on any of my albums. So many people have remarked about that solo, saying, 'Incredible.'"

Terri Lyne Carrington: "Terri has learned so much from playing straight-ahead jazz, black contemporary music, rock, and TV show music. She has the kind of experience that makes her very dependable. You can depend on her to know how to set up the different sections, to provide a way of playing each of the passages that sets them apart from each other so that they all have their own individual character. It means that when you go from one section of a piece to another section they don't always sound the same. They have their own kind of sound, which is really refreshing. She can swing her ass off playing straight-ahead jazz, she can play fusion—she can play anything. I recently did a concert in Aspen, Colorado with Terri and John Patitucci—just playing some straight-ahead tunes—and she was *burning*. Most of the playing that I've done with her has been in the area of instrumental dance music. We put a band together for *Dis Is Da Drum* to tour Europe and Japan, and she just nailed the stuff right away. She knew exactly what was required. She was the first person that I suggested for the tour."

"I'm very much attracted to the cutting edge of technology, but on most of my records you don't find drum machines."



Soloing From Your Soul

by Trilok Gurtu

Having to play a drum solo can be a terrifying experience. You're exposed, with all of the good and bad aspects of your playing on display for all to see and hear. Over the years I've played solos in many different contexts, and while I feel a *bit* more comfortable in that situation now, there are still moments of doubt. However, I do have a few thoughts on the subject that have helped me that I would like to share with you.

First of all, just what does the word "solo" mean? The specific term describes someone who is alone. It doesn't mean "someone to be featured." So a solo to me is about one person *featuring* the music. I think of a solo as a part of the total picture of the music. The music is a chain, and the solo is simply a link in that chain.

I try to keep a "music first" attitude when it comes to soloing. By this I mean that I'm not trying to show off. Good soloing is not about showing your technique. That's a totally wrong concept for

me. If you want to play a solo to show off, you're probably more interested in getting lots of dates, not in making music.

Inevitably what happens with a drummer who is "soloing to impress" is that he or she will play their pre-planned "licks." There's nothing wrong with having those musical crutches that you've played before, but I try not to use them *all* the time. They may just be a launching point for something else. But for a lot of drummers licks are like having money in a bank account—when you don't have anything you take them out!

A similar topic to playing licks while soloing is repetition. I used to say that I would do anything to avoid repeating myself while soloing. But I've gotten to a point now where I want to stay open to any musical ideas, and if that means repeating an idea over and over, or referring back to one later, I think that it's okay. Sometimes there are things that sound so nice when you repeat them, and that repetition creates a certain mood. It's like African or Brazilian music, where you repeat a pattern in order to create a momentum and an energy. If you change it too fast you can lose the intensity.

One thing I do as a soloist to help me avoid playing set licks or repeating myself (when I don't want to) is thinking of myself as a composer. This is *very* important to my soloing. As I solo I try to compose a piece right there on the spot in front of the audience. For me, soloing is a quest. I have to open myself up to the moment. I'm "in the moment" with instruments around me, and I'm trying to create a piece of music. You have to be loose and open to what's going on—you have to be loose with the music. Sometimes it flows and comes easily, and sometimes nothing happens and you have to work at it. But your total focus should be on creating a piece of music.

So how do you compose a good piece of music with an audience glaring down at you? The main thing is to relax. Let the audience wait. It takes confidence to do it, but the only way to really focus is to be relaxed. And when you're relaxed, the audience relaxes and



gets into what you're doing. Why hold on to that tension in your playing? What's going to happen to you if you play badly or make a mistake? We're not talking life or death here. Music never says, "If you don't play well I'm going to kick your ass." *I'll* do the ass kicking!

"I don't want my soloing to be like, 'Hey, check me out. I'm the best.' If I did that I'd have to go to a psychiatrist!"



Being relaxed while soloing—and playing in general—allows you to play with a certain amount of space. You know when you hear an inexperienced musician, because he or she tries to play everything they know in the first ten seconds. I relate the idea of leaving space to a concept from tabla called "beshkar." The best way to describe it is that they are like the foundational notes that you can play. You begin simply and build from there. That is the same attitude I have toward my drumset playing: Wait, hold back, let it come, *relax*.

Confidence is a big part of effective soloing. And by confidence I don't mean you're going up there to be a show-off. Before I play I always think, "Look, this is as good as I am right now. Whatever I know I am confident about. Whatever I don't know I can't worry about." It's self-acceptance.

Another idea you might want to consider when soloing is just how long your solo is. I never predetermine how long I'm going to play. There are nights when things are happening so much and I feel so creative that I can extend my solos. But there are other times when I'll cut my solos short if I'm not able to say what I want to on the instrument or if it's not coming. If it's not happening and I know it, I'm not going to force it. If you force it the music will not be successful and it won't move the audience.

Speaking of the audience, I've found that there's an interesting relationship between the soloist and the audience. On one level the soloist should be totally engrossed in what he or she is playing, and yet on another level the soloist is also working with the reaction he or she gets from the audience. It gets back to the idea of being totally open to the environment so that you can take the music deeper. And I've found this to be true whether I was performing in front of twenty people or two thousand.

"Capturing" an audience can be a difficult thing to do as a soloist. I think that if you play—with a lot of depth—and you are willing to open yourself up to the audience through what you play—you can totally bring them in to what you are doing. And when they are "in" with you it's such a satisfying feeling. You can take your composition anywhere you want. I've played solos where the audience was so focused on what I was playing that you

could hear a pin drop when I brought the volume down. That is satisfying.

Part of being able to reach the audience involves being honest with them and the music. By this I mean that what you play and how you play it is coming from your heart and not displayed in a way that is overdone. I try to avoid flamboyance and big gestures unless what I'm trying to create really calls for it. I want to be honest with the audience, and I want to set up a good relationship between them and me.

Sometimes when I'm performing with my group I'll talk to the audience, joke with them, and just try to connect with them so they will see that we are one. I don't want my soloing to be like, "Hey, check me out. I'm the best. Please like me." If I did that I'd have to go to a psychiatrist!

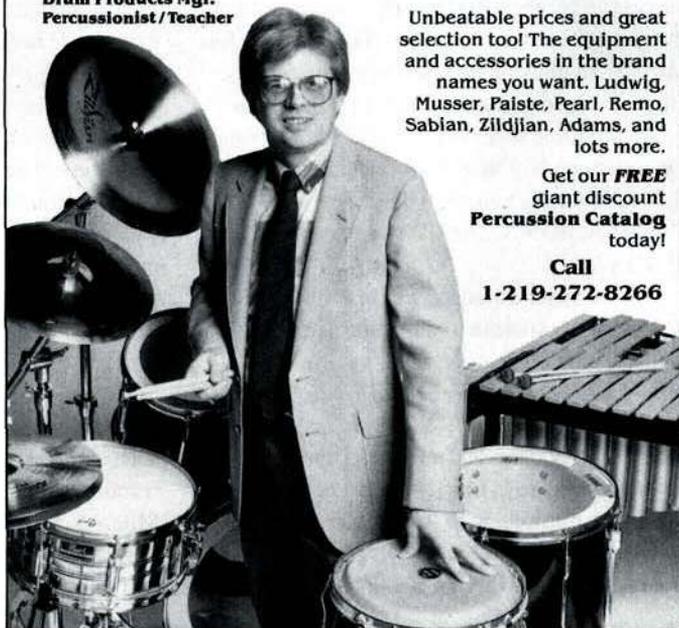
A lot of people have asked me what instrument is at my core. They think that because I originally studied tabla I have a different perspective on drumming. To be honest, I don't think that way at all. The instrument that is at my core is my *heart*. It's how much I really love the music, that's what is really my "core." The specific instrument I play is only the vehicle I use to state what I want to say at that moment. I think of my instruments as my friends, but I have to play from my heart. It's the only way for me, and I think it's the way that truly works best.

Hear Trilok Gurtu's excellent playing (and soloing) on his recent CMP release, *Believe*.



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Larry Imbordino

Larry Imbordino is the drummer for Rush Hour, an electric jazz group that enjoyed moderate success in 1988 with a record called *Bumper To Bumper*. Unfortunately, just as that success was developing, the record company folded. To make matters worse, shortly thereafter Larry was stricken with lymphoma, a form of cancer.

"I mention my illness only to indicate my strong will to provide the world with my music," says Larry. "I've been beating cancer regularly over the past eight years, but I've had to deal with other obstacles in the pursuit of musical success—like the fact that electric jazz doesn't generate the kind of financial return that pop music



does. But I'm confident in my ability as a drummer, composer, and keyboardist. And the personnel in our band is world-class. We've persevered."

Larry's own perseverance has involved alternating periods of remis-

sion and relapse, and various forms of chemical and surgical therapy. Through it all he has maintained his determination to make Rush Hour a success. After their first record company folded, the group toured the Midwest—developing a following and pitching themselves to other labels. But nothing solid materialized, so in 1994 the group produced their own CD, called *Autobahn*. On the strength of that effort (including exceptional drumming by Larry) they were signed by Fahrenheit records. The CD was released in July of last year.

Larry's major influence was his father: "He was my first exposure to the drums and to jazz, as well as being my teacher. But I've also been influenced by Mssrs. Weckl, Colaiuta, Chambers, Ameen, Cobham, Paice, Williams...and a million others." Larry plays and endorses Pearl drums.

"My goals," says Larry, "are to keep on recording and performing with Rush Hour, to be a great dad and husband, and to go on loving life, my friends, and—especially—the drums!"

Steven Gomes

Florida's Steven Gomes began his twenty-year drumming career in a rock band, followed by a ten-piece showband with horns. In the years since, he's played R&B, Motown, jazz, Latin, funk, rock, and "new" country music. In the latter field he recently completed a 200-plus-date tour of the U.S. and Canada with the Infield Band. The group opened for such artists as Terry McBride and Clinton Gregory, and regularly performed for audiences of between five hundred and a thousand people. A tape of Steven's playing with the group displays

his grasp of the country/pop style, along with lots of enthusiasm and energy.

At the moment Steven is working with Nashville's Dave & Treva



& the Heartland Band. That group is currently playing originals and covers in top clubs and casinos across the country while showcasing for record labels at the same time. "And in between road trips," adds Larry, "I

free-lance at home in Ft. Myers—including work with a funk/R&B band called Mario Infanti & the Linguine Brothers." He does all this playing on either a natural maple Pearl kit or an ebony Yamaha *Recording Custom* kit, with Sabian cymbals, a Gibraltar rack, and Pearl, Yamaha, and Tama hardware.

"I want to continue working with musicians determined to be a part of the very competitive music business," says Steven. "My goals are to record and tour with a nationally known act. Eventually I'd also like to teach and to own a drumshop."

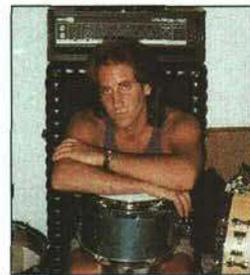
Ron Nihoff

Versatility is twenty-four-year-old Ron Nihoff's major musical attribute. With experience in funk, R&B, swing, rock, and fusion playing, influences ranging from Roy Haynes to Vinnie Colaiuta, and study with Joe Bonadio and Jim Chapin, Ron has been well-prepared for the various gigs he's held. And variety is the word, since he's backed such "vintage" artists as Bobby Lewis, the Earls, and the Drifters, recorded with dance, new age, and pop acts, and is currently recording and performing with a rock act called Trial Mile. That group has opened shows for Foreigner, Warrant, and Firehouse along with playing local radio and television

shows. Additional gigs in the New York Tri-State area and a private teaching practice round out Ron's busy schedule.

Variety also figures into the equipment Ron uses. Depending on the size of the gig and the musical application, he plays either a Yamaha *RTC* kit, a Premier kit, or a jazz kit made by Ferrara Custom Drums. No matter what the gear, Ron's demo tape reveals him to be a player with outstanding technique and musical taste.

"I enjoy the challenge of playing various styles of music," says Ron. "My goals are to continue to expand my studio work, to network with various musicians in a variety of styles, to continue to be a student of drumming—and to land the Letterman gig!"

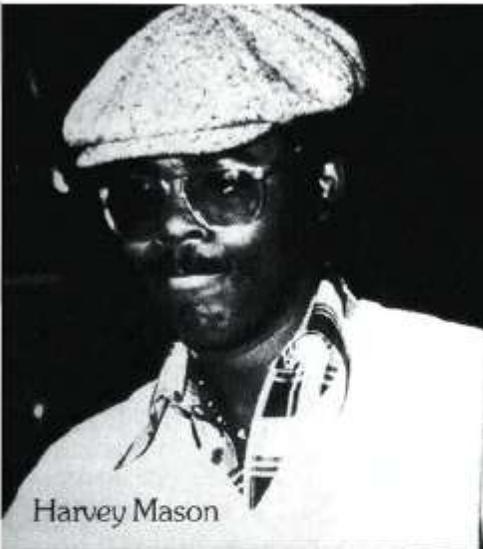


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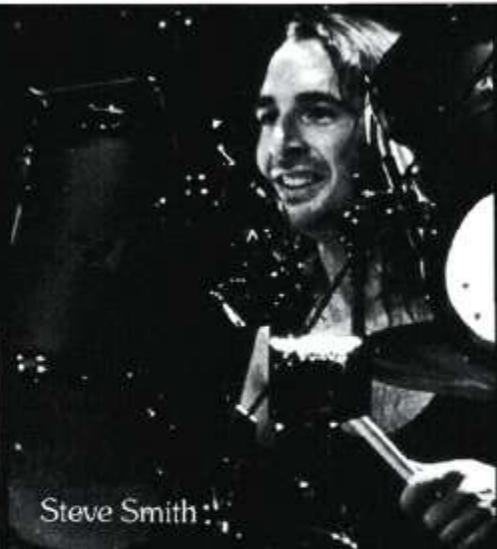
should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, free-lance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what

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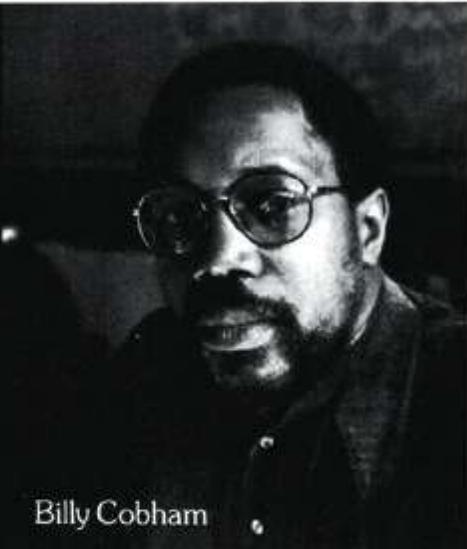




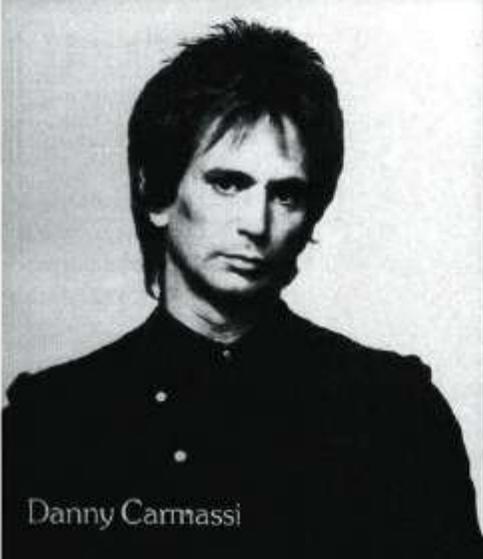
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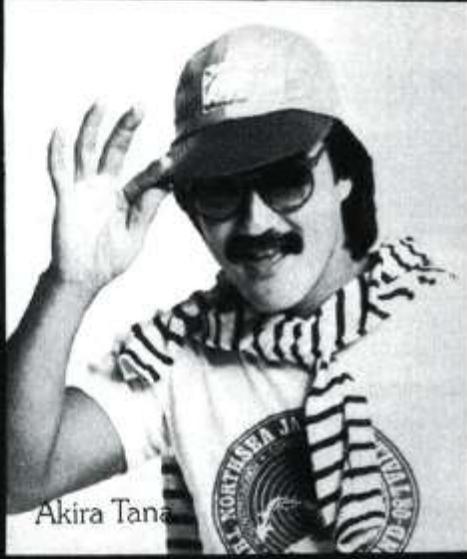


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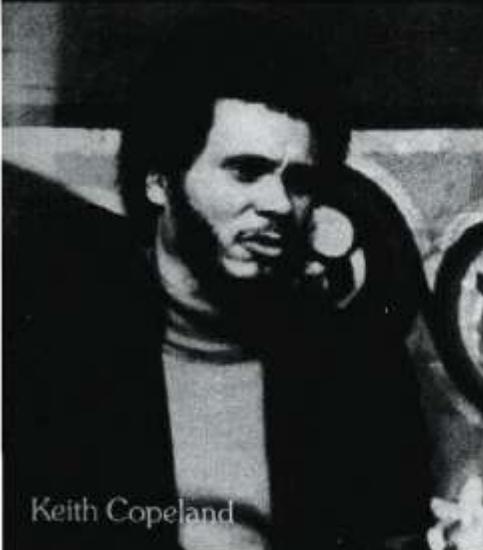


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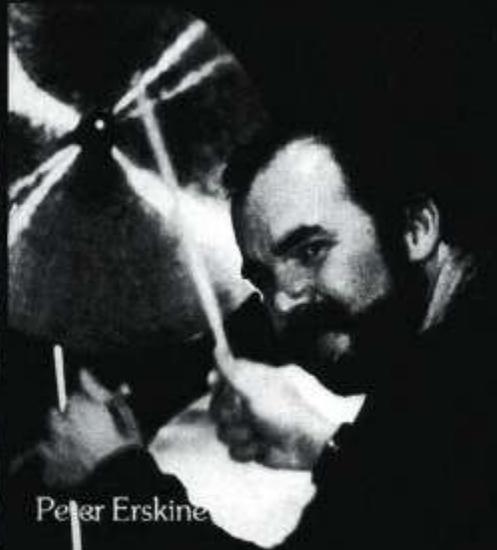
“What do these great artists have in common?”



Akira Tana



Keith Copeland



Peter Erskine

They all make time with my sticks.”



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Freddie Gruber

A Passion For Teaching

by Ian Wallace

Every once in a while there emerges in certain fields personalities who are generally considered to be "one of a kind." In sports you have Babe Ruth, Joe Montana, and Michael Jordan. In science, Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking. In comedy, W.C. Fields and Charlie Chaplin. In music, Igor Stravinsky and Charlie Parker. As for drumming, Tony Williams and Buddy Rich.

Freddie Gruber is also a "one of a kind." Once referred to by best friend Buddy Rich as "none of a kind," Freddie is regarded by many of today's top drummers as one of the world's greatest drum teachers. All one has to do is look at who has consulted with him in the past five years to see this to be true. Dave Weckl, Peter Erskine, Steve Smith, Adam Nussbaum, Neil Peart, Anton Fig, Kenny Aronoff, Richie Garcia, Gregg Bissonette, Clayton Cameron, Rod Morgenstein, and Jim Keltner have all at one time or another studied with Freddie.

But just who is this Freddie Gruber?

Now in his sixties, Freddie looks some fifteen years younger. When talking about the drums, he seems to be around twelve or thirteen.

A native New Yorker, Freddie began his playing career as a teenager sometime in the 1940s. He studied with the greats,

including Henry Adler, Freddie Albright, Mo Goldenberg, and Joe Springer, a piano player who worked with Gene Krupa and Billie Holiday.

When Freddie was nineteen, Barry Ulanov wrote an article in *Metronome* magazine entitled "The Shape Of Drums To Come," talking about Freddie's polyrhythmic interpretations, which were

conceptually far ahead of anything else at that time.

Hanging out on 52nd Street during the '40s and early '50s, Freddie watched and listened. He sat in behind Billie Holiday, and played in a little-known big band that never got beyond the rehearsal stage, but that included such players as Charlie Parker, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, and Red Rodney.

As his reputation grew, Gruber appeared in ads for the Leedy Drum company, and in 1949 took the drum chair with Buddy DeFranco. In the early '50s he roomed with Philly Joe Jones. On one occasion, the two were practicing together on drum pads as Kenny Clarke looked on amused, waiting for these young "door slammers" to finish so he could demonstrate

how it was *really* done.

Freddie learned from many legendary drummers, including Billy Gladstone, who saw something in Freddie. Gladstone was kind enough to show him his approach to the snare drum.

Freddie practiced with Cozy Cole and many others of the drumming fraternity—some of them, according to Freddie, potential greats who fell by the wayside and eventually disappeared into obscurity.



Lissa Wales

"I discovered that there was all this information that had been passed down, and yet there was so very little *life* being breathed into it. Information is only as good as how well it is implemented."



Gruber was one of those who was averse to the spotlight, and in May 1955 bad habits and ill health forced him to move out of New York City and toward the sunnier climes of Los Angeles. Unfortunately, he reached the West Coast about a year and a half later!

And so it was that in 1957, newly arrived in Los Angeles, fortune smiled on Gruber. Walking down Sunset on his way for a haircut, the drummer reached Vine and literally bumped into Shelly Manne, who, looking quizzically at Freddie, exclaimed, "I thought you were dead!" Whereupon Shelly set him up with a union card and a job. According to Freddie he made an effort to conform, but the music was too straight for him. Freddie's boredom led to pranks, a giant drumstick gag being the last straw. He was soon fired and went underground, playing after-hours clubs.

Around that time, Charlie Perry, the drum educator and entrepreneur, called from New York, saying that he felt a system of teaching and playing that Freddie had developed worked, and, "When are you coming back?" Freddie replied, "Forget it! I'm not coming back. And besides, I'll never teach!"



Buddy and Freddie: a lifelong friendship

Well, as they say, "It's an ill wind..." because in those after-hours joints, drummers hearing Freddie play began to ask questions like, "How do you do...?" Pretty soon, contrary to his statement to Charlie Perry, Freddie began teaching in the kitchens of the clubs between sets. One thing led to another, and gradually he established a small clientele.

Gruber moved his operation to the daytime, teaching on pads by the side of a public pool. Chuck Glave, a student of his at that time, remembers the "pool" sessions: "Freddie used to line up four or five of us at the edge of the pool with drum pads. He would then start swimming laps, and when he would return to our side of the pool he would tell us what to play, before heading off again across the pool!"

Pretty soon Freddie was getting results. Some of the drummers he

was teaching started working with bandleaders like Red Norvo, Lionel Hampton, and Ray Charles. One drummer from the first batch he taught was John Guerin. All along drummers came to him solely by word of mouth. He never advertised, and he never had a phone service—or even a business card!

Gruber's methods at this time were pretty haphazard. A typical teaching "day" could go

on into the night—and very often until the following afternoon. He tells of one instance when a student arrived for a lesson on a Monday, and on the following Saturday the student's wife turned up with his clothes and a rollaway bed, telling him that he might as well divorce her and get married to Freddie! (Chuck Glave later admitted that *he* was the overzealous student!)

Another problem was that Freddie was teaching the guys to play "far out," and consequently very few of them acquired paying gigs. In fact, according to Freddie, more of his students ended up in the asylum than on the bandstand! But gradually, as the '60s rolled around, he decided to turn his attention to equipping drummers with the tools needed to enable them to find work in the music business, so he concentrated on rock music as well as jazz. It worked. His students began getting good jobs with people like Glen Campbell, Mac Davis, Johnny Rivers, Neil Sedaka, Sammy Davis, Ike & Tina Turner, the Righteous Brothers, and later Donny & Marie Osmond, Joe Cocker, and Al Jarreau.

In the mid-'60s Terry Gibbs asked Freddie to teach at his music store. This allowed Freddie to develop the beginnings of an approach, which would enable him to "formalize" his teaching. Many of the youngsters who came out of that situation began to win state rudimental championships, and pretty soon Freddie's guys were working in groups, big bands, TV, movies, jazz, and pop. In fact, his students have covered pretty much the entire

range of the music industry. Some of those students around this time were Mike Baird, John Hernandez (Oingo Boingo), and Nick Vincent.

And yet from the '50s to the present day Freddie kept his anonymity. Why? "Because," he says, "it meant freedom. It meant never having to punch a clock." It meant that he could remain the free spirit he had always been. But as the '80s rolled around, the thought continued to nag him, "Do I really know what I'm



Gruber, a 1948 Leedy & Ludwig endorser



Buddy, Papa Jo Jones, and Gruber

doing?"

Freddie discussed his doubts with his friend Buddy Rich. "I was always saying to Buddy, 'I don't really know what I'm doing.' And finally one day Buddy replied, 'Do I? The bottom line is does it *work!* You know, it's about time you took responsibility for *what* you are and not *who* you are. And anyway, nobody gives a damn—especially you! All your life two pieces of wood have kept you out of a Mobil gas station or the electric chair. It's time to give something back. Why don't you get out there and start attending some of those percussion get-togethers, like PASIC?"

Freddie took Buddy's advice. It was enough to tell him that he could contribute something. "I discovered that there was all this information that had been passed down, and yet there was so very little *life* being breathed into it. Information is only as good as how well it is implemented. For example, what does another displaced 16th note have to do with the feeling of, say, James Brown?" As Freddie says, "We have arrived at the digital world, leaving our spirit and our souls behind. We originally thumped on things for communication. It was first a language. Then it moved into self-expression, personalizing who and what we are about—*art*, as

Lissa Wales



Pupil Ian Wallace with Gruber

opposed to the 'business' of music. And yet that is the third step, today's step, packaging what the artist does and selling it.

"I feel it!" Freddie shouts. "That's what my teaching is about. It can't come from the mind to the gut, it has to come from the gut to the mind, and at that point you define what occurred. Maybe that part is not necessary for everybody, but for some types it is.

"This is how my teaching has evolved. At first in the '50s and early '60s it was conceptual as it related to jazz, then at Terry Gibbs' music store it became rudimental. In the '60s and '70s I gave them what they wanted—technique, as in chops—as opposed to the real thing: facility, the ability to implement the making of music.

"During the '70s I was involved with Don Ellis, the trumpet player and big band leader, teaching him drums for the purpose of learning to play his own charts. He liked to play drums with his band. He said to me, 'Freddie, why don't you write a book?' And I would always say to him, 'Don't you understand? The books you use to teach with you're using as an excuse for the book in your head.' I said that I re-tailor the books for each individual I'm

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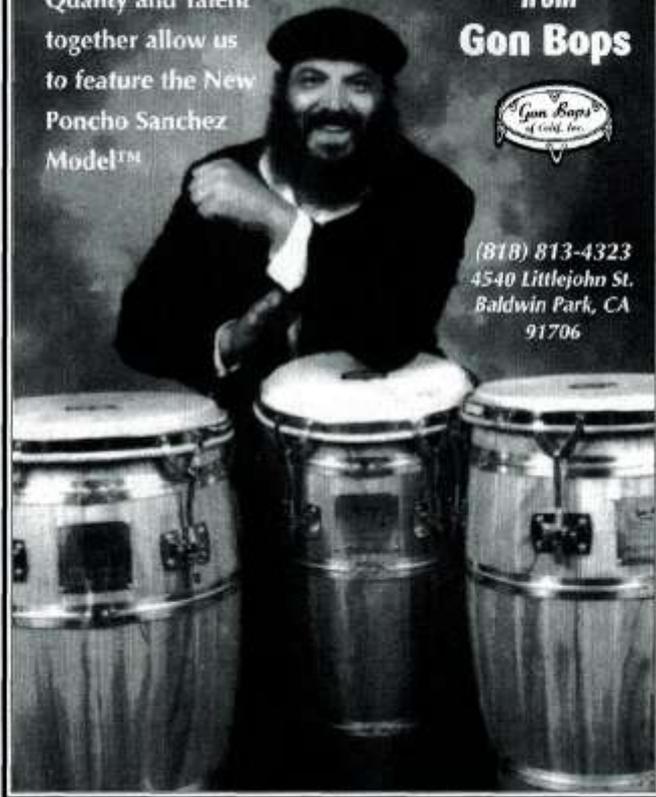
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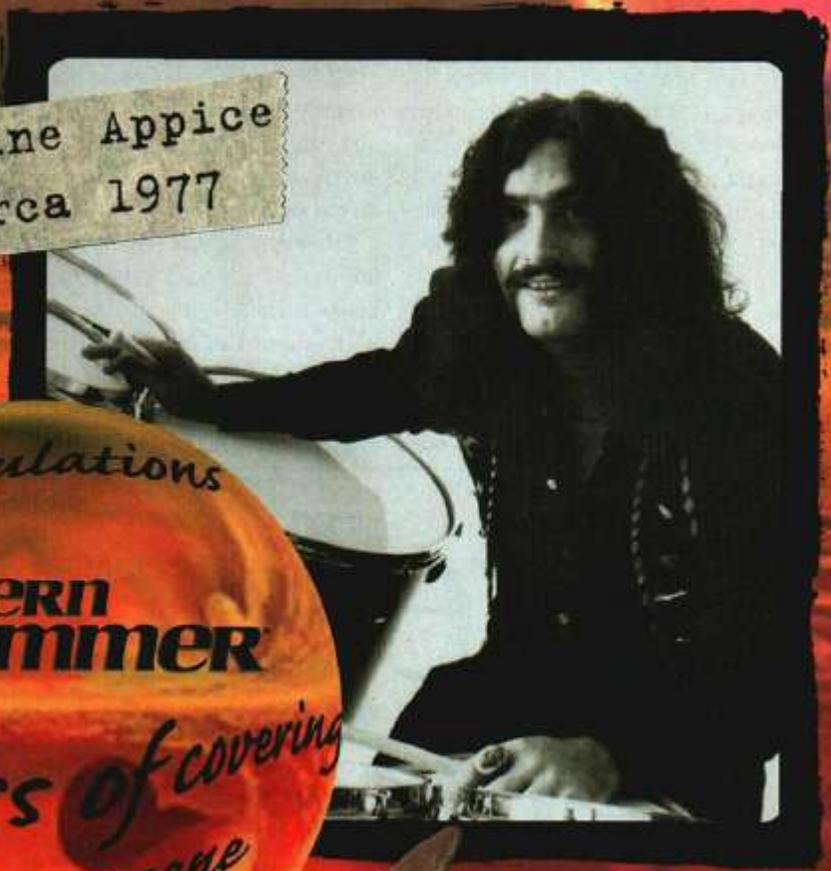
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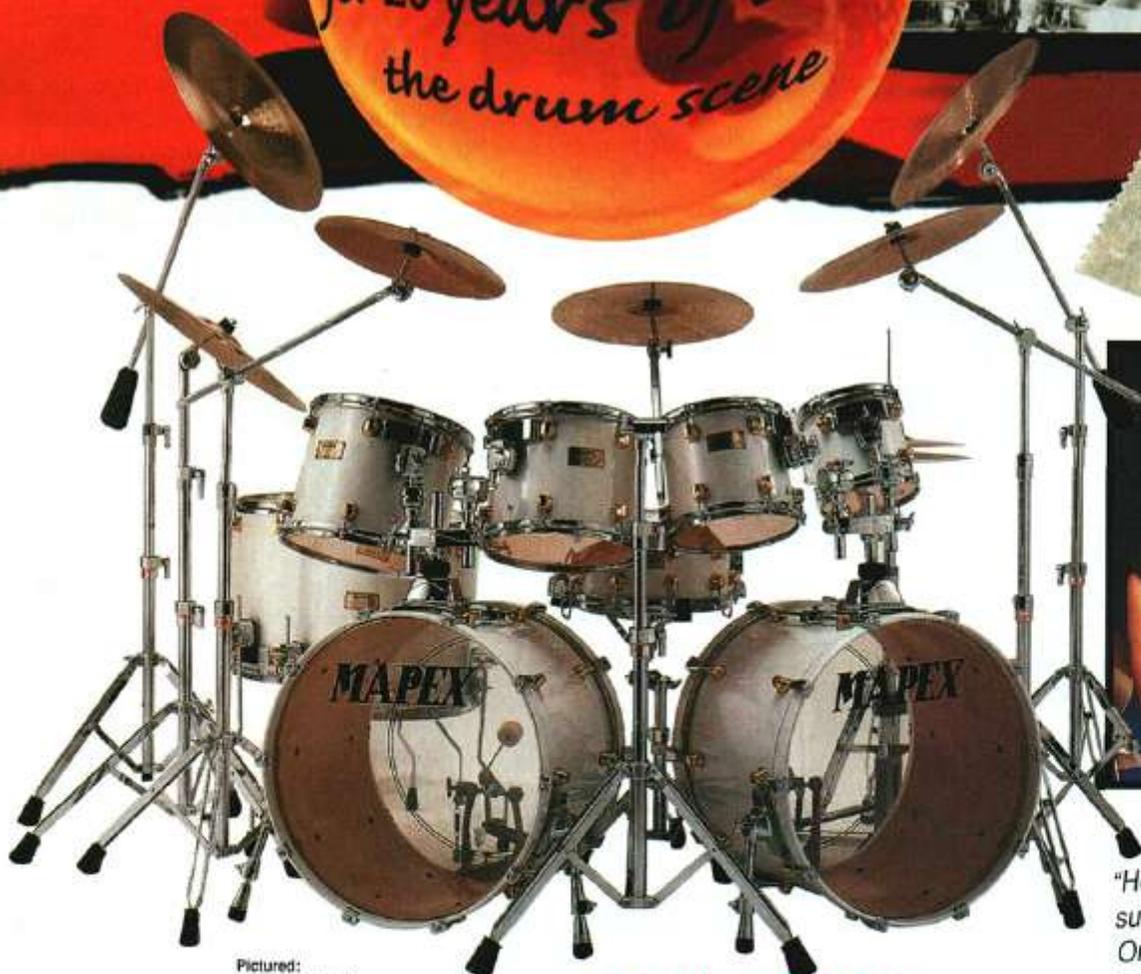
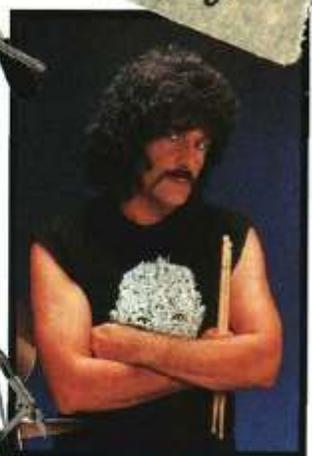


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working with, so one book wouldn't work for everybody—one size does not fit all.

"So during that period I became more acquainted with drum literature," he continues, "and my own approach evolved around what was available, to arrive at the objectives I wished to attain, dependent on the individual I was working with.

"During the '80s it evolved into a gel of everything I ever taught, and I learned how to use wonderful literature—like Ralph Humphrey's book, which is literally a work of art, as are Gary Chaffee's books—but

again using them in my own way.

"It would be pointless to approach such material if you didn't know where a quarter note (as in pulse) was. In other words, if the pulse doesn't dance, put the book back on the shelf.

"However, at this point in time," Freddie admits, "I no longer utilize any of the books because of the quality of the players with whom I'm involved. I just work on the approach. Now that I'm starting to do clinics and master classes for Zildjian—and for DW, which I have been part owner

of since its inception with my student Don Lombardi—I intend to use this same approach.

"Prior to the untimely death of my best friend, Buddy Rich, we were going to do a video for DCI, but unfortunately it wasn't to be. However, it looks like finally this may come to pass—the breakdown of Buddy's approach to the drumset. Plus, I'm going to do my own video."

My own experience with Freddie began in 1987, thanks to Jim Keltner. I'd just finished a grueling fourteen-month tour with Jackson Browne. When you have been away for such a long period of time, and you finally arrive back home, it seems that everyone has forgotten you existed. All the record producers and jingle companies that you worked for before you went away seem to be using someone else. So I found myself at a loose end, feeling washed up and generally disillusioned with "the biz."

After twenty-something years, I had a successful career, and yet, being self-taught, I felt I had reached my limit. I couldn't "teach" myself any more. I was jaded. I thought that, with all this free time on my hands, it would be good to finally study with a teacher. But who?

I aired my frustrations to Jim: "I need a teacher, but after all this time it has to be the right teacher." Without hesitation, Jim said that I should go to Freddie. Jim called him to make an appointment for me.

I parked my car on a Hollywood side street just a block from Melrose, walked up to the door of a dimly lit Spanish-style house, and rang the bell. An old, rather portly, balding gentleman answered the door. "Freddie?" I said, thinking, "Surely not!" "In the back," he replied, and motioned for me to go through. Reaching the end of the musty front room, I opened a door, descended a couple of steps, and surveyed my surroundings.

I was in a long, thin room that seemed to be filled with a lot of papers. At the end of the room in front of a small bed was a drumkit. Seated at the drums looking very awkward and rather nervous was a boy in his teens, with one of the worst looking haircuts I'd ever seen. On his right, seated next to the floor tom, was an older man wearing large glasses, with a cigarette firmly attached to his right hand. This I took to be Freddie Gruber.

"Ian?" The voice rode on a wave of

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smoke. "Take a seat, I'm running a bit behind." I soon learned that this was the understatement of the century.

I sat and watched. I noticed two things—one, that the kid on the drums seemed to have absolutely no coordination whatsoever, and two, that taking into account these supposedly insurmountable odds, Freddie was completely involved and extremely animated and enthusiastic. After about fifteen minutes had elapsed, the thought occurred to me that if anyone could teach this kid to play, it had to be Freddie. This was not the type of teacher who sits still looking off into space with a bored expression on his face, repeatedly looking at his watch. Freddie was *totally involved*. I knew at that moment that Keltner had sent me to the right place.

We went to eat at a Chinese restaurant, and Freddie asked me why I wanted to see him. "You're obviously doing well, you're successful, you're making a living. What is it you're looking for?"

I told him that I felt that I'd gone as far as I could and that I intended to play the drums, God willing, for the rest of my life. So there wasn't anywhere to go for me but

forward.

I guess I must have said the right things, because he agreed to take me on—on condition, he said, that he didn't mess up my ability to make a living, and that if he saw anything "strange" happening with my hands or if they started to hurt, that would be it.

Well, on the contrary, after only a few lessons my hands (and feet) started to feel great. What had been difficult before was now becoming effortless—and not only that, I felt my concept was changing and my feel was improving. But most of all, watching Freddie dance around the room describing some abstract idea, and observing his unbound love for the drums, gave me back the enthusiasm that I had originally had as a young kid first starting out—that simple desire to just play, which I had lost somewhere along the way. It had returned, and now, seven years later, it's still there just as strong as ever. In fact, thanks to Freddie, it just continues to get stronger and stronger.

As Peter Erskine once said, Freddie is a national treasure. He is my Dad in America, and I love him dearly.

I'm not the only one. I asked six of today's great drummers—Steve Smith, Peter Erskine, Adam Nussbaum, Dave Weckl, Jim Keltner, and Anton Fig—to describe what it is that they think makes Freddie so special. Here's what they said.

Steve Smith

"When I see Fred I feel like Luke Skywalker going to see Yoda. The guy has been around a long time, and he's seen and heard it all. He always gives me just the right piece of the puzzle that I need at that moment to help make my drumming more musical and physically/technically easier.

"Fred's gifts are his power of observation and his deeply intuitive understanding of the inner workings of the body's physiology and how that applies to musical, relaxed, effortless playing. This makes him unique in that many teachers adhere to a singular technical method. Fred is tuned into all *possible* methods through an understanding of the universal principles of motion—natural laws that govern any and all body movement. With this concept Fred will notice exactly what you need at that moment to improve the principles you are

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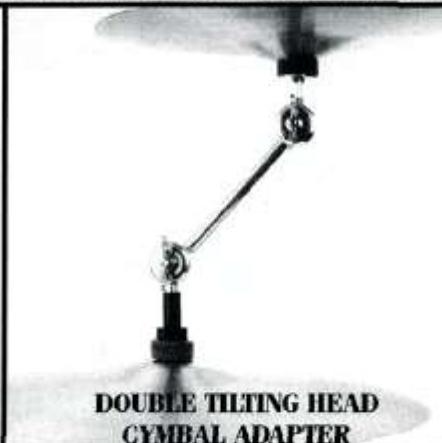
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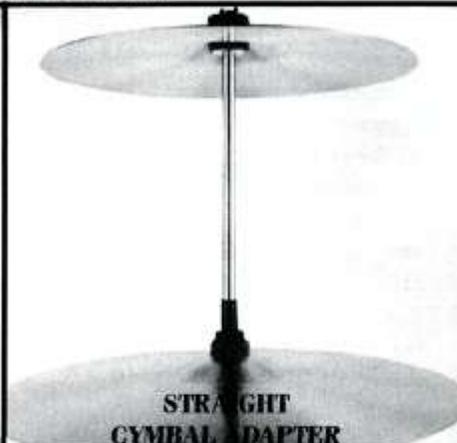
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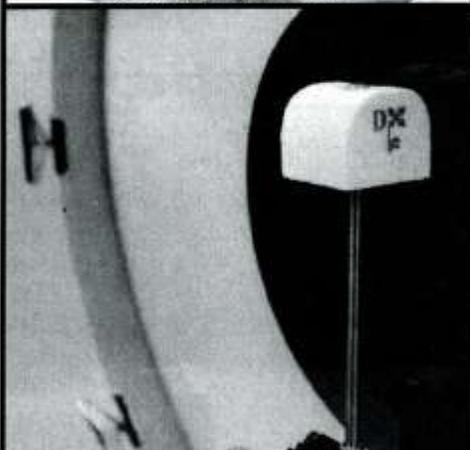
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already using—or introduce you to a new one if that is appropriate—so you can take your next step forward in your musical development. Thanks, Freddie."

Peter Erskine

"Freddie Gruber is a gift to drumming and the drumming community. The greatest thing about Freddie is that he can—through his honesty, enthusiasm, expertise, and passion—help a drummer (young or old, experienced or novice) sense that all things are indeed possible. There is no finer quality that a teacher can possess. I am grateful for the things he has shown me, and for the time and insights he has shared."

Adam Nussbaum

"In pursuit of one's goals in music, you're dealing with many processes. Ideally, the objective for me is to be 'one' with the instrument—an open channel where ideas and feelings can just flow out,



Freddie and friends: Bissonette, Gottlieb, Smith, and Appice

as freely as possible, with no obstacles. Freddie, with his profound knowledge and amazing insight, has helped me become more physically aware of what's happening with my body and the instrument.

"One of his many talents has been to help me optimize what I have and what other options are available. He's really opened me up. I'm just beginning to scratch the surface. Thank you, Freddie!"

Dave Weckl

"Studying with Freddie is like studying with every great jazz drummer both past and present, all at the same time. In one lesson he'll refer to Philly Joe having done something this way, Tony something like this, Roy Haynes with this approach, and Buddy—especially Buddy—like this. It is his knowledge of what Buddy did that attracted me to Freddie in the first place. He uses these and other great players to exemplify what he's trying to teach.

"Although the basis of his teaching approach (for me anyway) is technical, by implementing the rules of not impeding natural body movement and using the 'action/reaction' approach, the end result is not to play from a technical standpoint. After only four lessons with him, I've already noticed a big difference as I head towards *my* end result. Hopefully, that result will be to play whatever I want at any volume, with little effort, a big sound, and most importantly, a great *feel!*"

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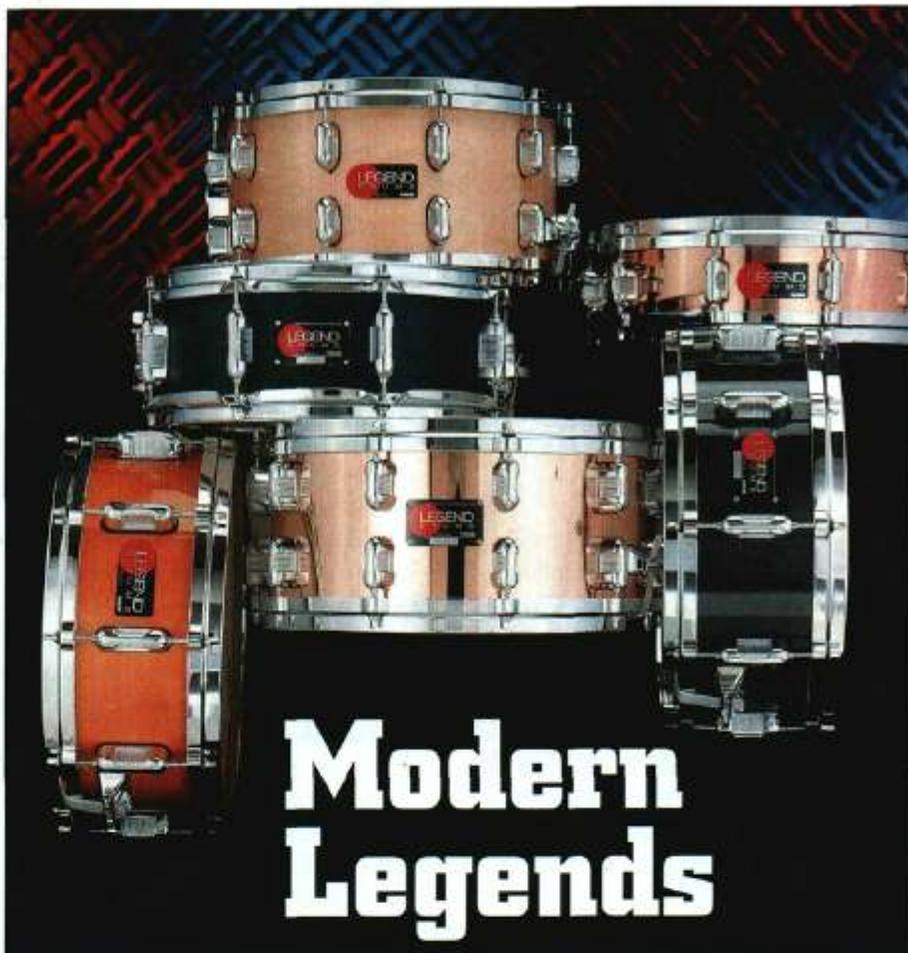
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KANSAS	Kansas City	Kansas City Drumworks	913-477-0936
KENTUCKY	Louisville	Man's Music	502-893-3304
LOUISIANA	Baton Rouge	Ziegler Music	514-923-0760
	Kenner	Fraser's Drum Center	504-466-8484
MAINE	Portland	Taylor Music Company	207-229-3410
	Portland	Portland Percussion	207-775-2230
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	Farmington	Percussion World	313-543-7020
	Flint	Bill Schaffer's Drum Shop	313-235-8825
	Garden City	Trailbl' Drum Shop	313-225-0140
	Grand Rapids	RJ Drum	616-243-7867
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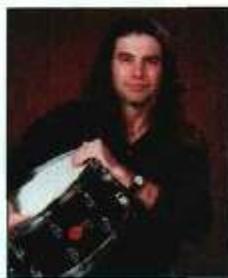


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"You must meet Freddie so that you can join with the rest of us in trying to figure out just what in the world we're going to do with him. With much love and respect, Freddie, from your friend Jim."

Anton Fig

"For the past few decades Freddie has been many things to many drummers. He has no 'set way' of guiding individuals, but he is somehow able to draw the music through you and help you play what you want to say.

"I recently began a 'journey with Freddie.' His concept of 'creating an action and then allowing the reaction to take place,' so that the flow may continue, both

on a physical and emotional level, has set off a chain reaction in me.

"I find I am balanced at the drums from my trunk—my limbs are like pistons. Because I am balanced my playing is more relaxed and *centered*—so I hear the time better and thus have more time to do everything, which gives the music a good feel. This creates a better groove, and when I can hear the groove well it makes playing a lot of fun. And happy playing makes for good music.

"I am looking forward to learning a lot more about 'life, physics, and music' on my continuing journey with Freddie."

Finally, I asked Freddie if there was one salient point of advice he could give to today's young drummers.

"When you are playing with others, *listen, feel, and respond*, and as to the lifelong process of learning—*imitate, assimilate, and then innovate.*"



Drummer's Crossword Answers

(from page 178)

ACROSS

1. Abbruzzese
4. London
6. Ali
7. Acuna
11. Bonzo
12. Emperor
14. paradiddle
15. Joe (Franco)
16. Jaimoe
20. Phillips
23. Krupa
25. Aja
26. Jim
27. Stubblefield
30. Cooley
31. Adler
32. Reed
34. polyrhythms
37. Weckl
39. Rich
41. Manne
42. Best
43. Lewis
44. Cobham
45. Catlett
46. Morello

DOWN

2. Bill (Bruford)
3. Seraphine
5. Fishman
8. Colaiuta
9. Jordan
10. Collins
13. Moon
17. Sheila
18. Bauduc
19. Smitty
21. Lombardo
22. PASIC
24. Philly
28. Bellson
29. Blaine
33. Emergency
35. Roach
36. Moeller
38. Kretz
40. Peart

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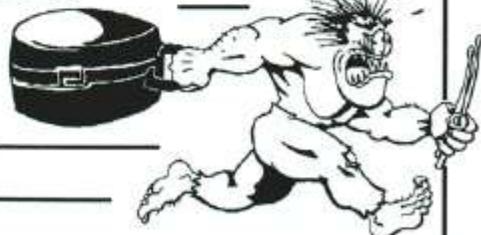
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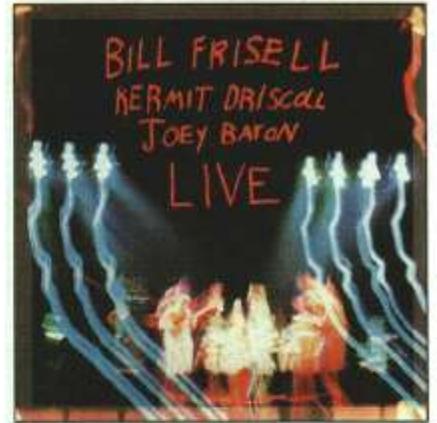
Live
(Gramavision GCD 79504)



Joey Baron: dr
Bill Frisell: gtr
Kermit Driscoll: bs

Destined for the Guitar Gods Top 100 List, this live 1991 set from Spain captures Frisell redefining his instrument. There's a direct hot wire from his id to his fingers. Somehow, the music manages to come off simultaneously as stream-of-consciousness and carefully chiseled.

Joey Baron's skewed, pointillistic drumming unfolds with compositional determination every bar of the way, reinforcing the ensemble, suggesting ideas, making the music his *own*. Here's an imaginary experiment: Isolate Baron's tracks, and his parts might intermittently sound "free"; restore the tracks, and it's amazing how purposeful and sympathetic all of his notes are.



Packing more surprises and wild innovation into one cut than most bands yield in a whole CD, this trio-of-one-mind delivers thrills, humor, smarts, and passion. Let's not limit them with the "jazz" label; this is one hundred percent guaranteed, cliché-free, modern improvisational music.

Jeff Potter

HAJI'S KITCHEN

(Shrapnel SH-1083-2)



Rob Stankiewicz: dr
Eddie Ellis: vcl
Eddie Hear, Brett Stine: gtr
Derek Blakely: bs

Straight-time isn't necessarily snooze-time in metal music. But anybody stuck for ideas should listen to Rob Stankiewicz, who never wastes a chance to put creative, refreshing spins on his band's mono-thought song structures.

Much like White Zombie, Haji's Kitchen hammers you with unflinching rhythms and relentless riffs. So Stankiewicz has taken it upon himself to break things up, using two-handed ride work and crisp exchanges between the hands and feet to keep your ears at attention.

Stankiewicz brings a deliber-

ate approach to nearly everything he plays; it's clear he worked out many of his parts before going into the studio. But that does nothing to sap the energy. Stankiewicz uses the whole kit in his rhythmic base, lacing even the verses of a song with interesting patterns. And although his parts sometimes come off as semi-solos, such as on the intro to "Symptoms," they enhance rather than detract from the music.

The bottom line, of course, is the music. And though it may be Haji's Kitchen, it's Stankiewicz's recipe for rhythm that makes it tasteful. (*Shrapnel Records, P.O. Box P, Novato, CA 94948.*)

Matt Peiken

JERRY KALAF

Trio Music
(Sea Breeze SB-3018)



Jerry Kalaf: dr
Rich Eames: pno
Tom Warrington, Eric Ajaye: bs

That drummer/composer Jerry Kalaf has devoted his career to the quiet environment of the piano trio is nearly as remarkable as the consummate good taste with which he has

done so. Inspired by Bill Evans and influenced by such disciples as Burton, Corea, Jarrett, and Towner, Kalaf works from



an eminently solid platform.

"Living In The Past" opens the album with a patient, hymn-like melody that would have gone straight to Manfred Eicher's heart. Drums are all but inaudible until a soft cymbal roll ushers in the final bars of the chorus. "ISM," the brief lone unaccompanied drum solo, sings with clear tone, fluid technique, and a welcome absence of bronze. "Eddie's Bounce" is a "Rhythm" tune in memory of dancer Eddie Brown (Kalaf's L.A.-based group is called the Jazz Tap Ensemble) and features a neat switch to sticks where you can hear the wood resonate against a sparkling cymbal. The cinematic "Ballad For Bonnie," with some of Dave Brubeck's orchestral sweep, leads to a

modal "Folk Song" and typically taut but unrestrained accompaniment of a bass solo. Kalaf's press rolls and one-chorus breaks in "Reunion Blues" are like his liner notes: concise and perfectly narrative.

Prescription for peace in the home: trade two or more pairs of 5Bs for a copy of *Trio Music*. (*Sea Breeze Records, P.O. Box 11267, Glendale, CA 91226-7267.*)

Hal Howland

311

(Capricorn 42041)



Chad Sexton: dr, perc
Nicholas Hexum: vcl
Count SA: vcl, scratches
Tim Mahoney: gtr
P. Nut: bs

After two self-released albums and relentless touring, 311 puts Omaha, Nebraska on the musical map with its cross

of Chili Peppers funk, Helmet rock, and street-culture hip-hop. Of course, 311 hasn't cornered the market on this mix. So the group's challenge here is making its signature legibly stand out on the page. And in large part, 311 succeeds.

Chad Sexton carries a quiet confidence in his drumming, easily moving from shuffles and R&B to funk and straight-out rock. In fact, it almost comes off too effortless. Though the band is all over the stylistic spectrum, Sexton rarely accommodates the sweeping changes in the music—either in the sound of his drums or how he plays them.

The "poppy" quality in his snare works well in a hip-hop vein, but gets lost whenever the guitarists turn on the crunch. And while that could have been taken care of to some degree at the mixing stage, changing snares at opportune times would have made a world of difference. Sexton, who shines with ghost notes and other subtleties, could also use a heavier hand when the band straps on its Helmet. Still, as a whole, 311 comes off energetic and genuine in any direction it explores.

Matt Peiken

DAVE BARGERON QUARTET

Barge Burns...Slide Flies (Mapleshade 02832)



Kenwood Dennard: dr
Dave Bargeron: tbn
Larry Willis: pno
Steve Novosel: bs

Big-toned Dave "Barge" Bargeron has recorded with artists from Miles Davis to Mick Jagger. As a hired-gun

trombonist he's a busy man in New York as well as one of the handful of bottom-Buddhas who can swing a tuba. Barge's range and speed can be startling, but there's no showboat-



ing; it's his soulful sound and lucid ideas that make the music. And his ballad playing is downright gorgeous. A long overdue disc, this first solo effort also illuminates his fine composing skills.

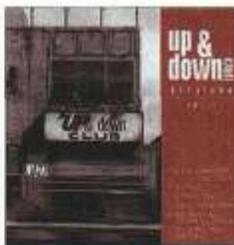
Since their days together with Gil Evans and Jaco, Barge and Kenwood Dennard have enjoyed an ongoing musical brotherhood. By choice, the recording process for this session was defiantly low-tech, allowing a raw, spontaneous club gig sound and feel. This is a great setting to hear Kenwood rip with a straight-ahead quartet. Listen to how he digs in on the uptempo bopper "B.R.A.V.O." with a fierce last-day-on-earth drive, elegantly ushers "Holley's Song" through an extra-slow tempo, and injects hip Latin grooves into "Mexicali Pose." Although listeners can check out Kenwood on an increasing number of high-profile discs, this session truly captures the sweat flying off his sticks. (Mapleshade Electronics, 2301 Crane Highway, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772, [301] 627-0525)

Jeff Potter

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Up & Down Club Sessions, Vol. 1 & 2

(Prawn Song/Mammoth MR0103/4)



San Francisco's Up & Down Club has fostered some of the best talent currently working the West Coast hip-hop jazz scene. In 1994 the club sold out an initial pressing of *Up & Down Club Sessions, Volume 1*, and Mammoth Records has reissued that one, along with a new, second volume. Disc One features blossoming drummer Jay Lane (Sausage, Weir/Wasserman) doing triple duty on powerhouse funk with the Charlie Hunter Trio, Alphabet Soup, and The Dry Look.

Jazz great Eddie Marshall is the unofficial godfather of the hip-hop scene. He lays down a crisp pocket with his own hip-hop jazz crew here, then powers saxman Kenny Brooks with strength and a loose, giving feel. Jim Kassis plays a jazzy hand here with the Will Bernard Trio—he also plays creative rock around the Bay with the Paul Durham Band.

Josh Jones has displayed his chops and concepts with Peter Apfelbaum's Hieroglyphics Ensemble and Don Cherry, and proves to be a uniquely versatile player. On *Volume 1* he leads his jazz ensemble on two tracks, while *Volume 2* cele-

brates his talents leading jazz, funk, Latin, and hip-hop units. It's pretty amazing to think that the same drummer is playing all this stuff. Jones never sacrifices creativity and openness for routine. And since his different groups play the Up & Down club about four times a week, it's an accurate assessment of what might be heard there on any given night.

Robin Tolleson

ALLOY ORCHESTRA

Lonesome (BIB BS 2014-2)



Ken Winokur: perc
Terry Donahue: perc, vcl, acdn
Caleb Sampson: syn

The nineteen short pieces on this CD constitute a new score for the Alloy Orchestra assembled for recent showings of the 1928 silent film *Lonesome*, a simple love story based in Manhattan and at the Coney Island amusement park. Commanding a large battery of metal objects, drums, cymbals, and sound effects, the Orchestra does a good job of depicting the action, fulfilling such titles as "City Awakes," "Factory," "At The Beach," and "Fortune Teller." The music is concerned less with the flavor of the period than with the spirit of the story: Old tunes and dance styles mix with harmonies that reflect such mod-

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

MICKEY CURRY's deep, groovin' lilt helps R&B/blues singer/guitarist Colin James' self-titled album feel *real* good (Elektra). Berklee faculty member and bandleader JON HAZILLA shows formidable chops and swing on his fine trio CD, *The Bitter Moon* (Cadence Jazz), featuring Ray Drummond on bass and James Williams on piano. The Flaming Lips' STEVEN DROZD always finds a clever way to fill (and leave) space; the Lips' new one, *Clouds Taste Metallic* (Warner Bros.), features his latest excursions. Twenty-two-year-old singer/songwriter/drummer MATT MAHAFFEY, who goes by the name Self, has just released *Subliminal Plastic Motives* (Zoo/Spongebath), a very strong alterna-pop CD proving that this hot drummer is also a very hot leader.

RATING SCALE

- ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ Excellent
- ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ Very Good
- ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ Good
- ⊕ ⊕ Fair
- ⊕ Poor

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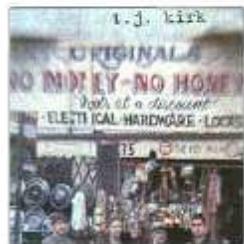
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ern influences as Menotti and Lloyd Webber. You wonder how much more evocative the score might sound performed on the orchestral instruments Caleb Sampson's keyboards imitate (about as successfully as did the grand Wurlitzer theater organs of the day)—and even whether the Orchestra's busy performance might be more engaging than the film itself. But the capable musicians exhibit humor, historical acumen, and sympathy for their characters (the dark beauty of "Lost," with its ethereal synthesizers and pounding drums, announces a gentle finale wherein a glockenspiel is dubbed charmingly onto a scratched phonograph record). Whether this score stands up as abstract music depends on your appetite for percussive bagatelles. (*BIB Records, P.O. Box 41606, Somerville, MA 02144.*)

Hal Howland

T.J. KIRK

(Warner Brothers 9 45885)



Scott Amendola: dr, perc
Will Bernard, John Schott: gtr
Charlie Hunter: 8-string gtr, bs

This band had to change its name from James T. Kirk to T.J. Kirk after getting pressure from the estate of Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry. But the group's concept has never changed—they play only the music of James Brown, Raasaan Roland Kirk, and Thelonious Monk, and they're making a splash in jazz-funk circles. Eight-string guitarist Charlie Hunter plays a somewhat more dutiful bass part here, allowing guitarists Schott and Bernard most of the melodic frosting, and letting drummer Scott Amendola show off his best grooves.

Amendola evidently received

some very good training at Berklee. Here he covers a gaudy repertoire of music, pulling in different influences to mix effectively in the eclectic compositional pool. He gives Monk's "Bemsha Swing" a New Orleans fusion groove, rapping on the rim of the snare at one point. On his brief solo he's precise and funny, and always right in the pocket. The group gives Kirk's "Serenade To A Cuckoo" a fuzak treatment, but Monk's "Shuffle Boil" rocks. The band's irreverence is appealing on "Humph," and their medley of Brown's "I Got To Move" and Monk's "In Walked Bud" might be in your face, but you like it. The finale is like the soundtrack to an R. Crumb cartoon, and brings the proceedings to a riotous conclusion. Much more than a novelty act, these guys really play.

Robin Tolleson

BOOKS

WEST AFRICAN RHYTHMS FOR DRUMSET

by Royal Hartigan, Abraham Adzenyah, and Freeman Donkor
(Manhattan Music)

\$24.95 (book and CD)



This excellent book and CD set teaches one to play several West African rhythms on drumset, including the Sikyi, Adowa, and Atom rhythms of the Ashanti people and the Gahu rhythms of the Ewe people. Of course, in Africa these rhythms are not typically played on drumset, so each section begins with a chart showing the specific rhythm broken down into the different patterns played on traditional African drums and bells. All the patterns are demonstrated on the CD, with each instrument added one at a time until a full ensemble is playing. The book then shows a number of ways to distribute the different rhythmic components around the drumset using sticks, brushes, and hands, with representative examples demonstrated on the CD. African Highlife and funk variations are also explored.

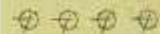
What's really fun is playing the drumset variations along with the full-ensemble version on the CD—although at first it can be pretty challenging. African phrases don't always start on the downbeat of a measure, and there is quite a bit happening at once.

There a lot of material contained in this package that would help increase one's rhythmic sophistication and command of the drumset as well as provide a great deal of inspiration and fun. The text is especially informative taking much of the mystery out of rhythms that have fascinated drummers for many years.

VIDEOS

POLICE

Outlandos To Synchronicities:
A History Of The Police Live!
(Polygram Video)



\$19.95, 84 minutes

Like so many pop phenoms, the Police hit the world with heaven-sent timing. Born at the dawn of the video age, yet with enough talent and charisma to transcend its limitations, the trio helped popularize punk and reggae through memorable pop tunes. Using concert footage here instead of label-produced videos makes for a gritty, documentary feel. From small, early gigs in England (where they debut "Message In A Bottle") to a sold-out house at Atlanta's Omni in 1983 (the *Synchronicity* tour), *Live!* shows the band's musical growth and their personal conflicts. Interviews with present-day Sting, Copeland, and Summers are interspersed within the footage, placing everything in historical relief.

The Police were a startling live band from the git-go, with Copeland's ska-infused juggernaut wailing away in hyper speed. In one stage clip, Summers angrily yells to Copeland, "Too fast!"

and often he's right Copeland wears gloves to protect his hands from the onslaught of pummeling rim-clicks, displaced rock-ska grooves, mighty, over-the-bar-line cymbal crescendos.

One highlight is from a 1982 show in Galeshead England Playing "Walking On The Moon" and "Demolition Man," the trio augments their sound with a horn section and keyboards, turning! extended space jams into dub workouts that sound like James Brown funk meets acid-rock.

Backstage clips show a band at odds with itself Sarcasm and criticism rule the hour, Sting and Summers even getting into a fistfight one train trip, "Did I think Sting was a asks Copeland "You bet I did "

By the time the Police hit the Omni, they're smooth, powerful group delivering hits But gone are the reckless energy and the smiles The group looks weary, and not long after, they the plug on recording and touring.

This video excellently chronicles a group who not only broke stylistic ground and wrote great pop songs, but who were admired for their stunning musicality and technique In retrospect, "the Police seem like noble warriors from a lost age

Ken Micallef

Note To Independent Artists And Record Companies

Readers often call the offices of *Modern Drummer* in the hope of tracking down items reviewed in *Critique*, but sometimes we can't help them because we are not given sufficient information initially. So please include all contact information when submitting items to *Critique*, especially phone numbers. Thanks.



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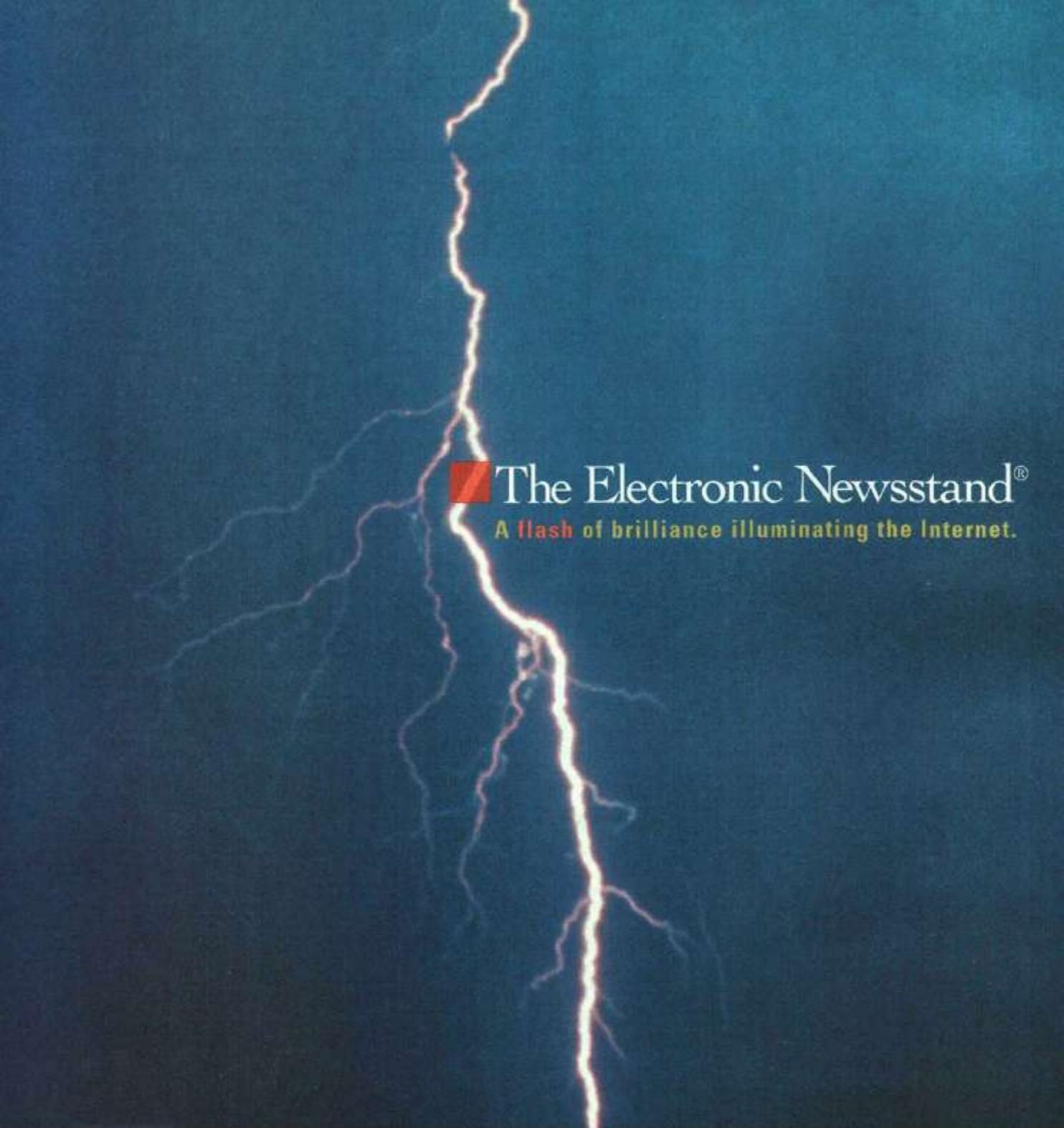
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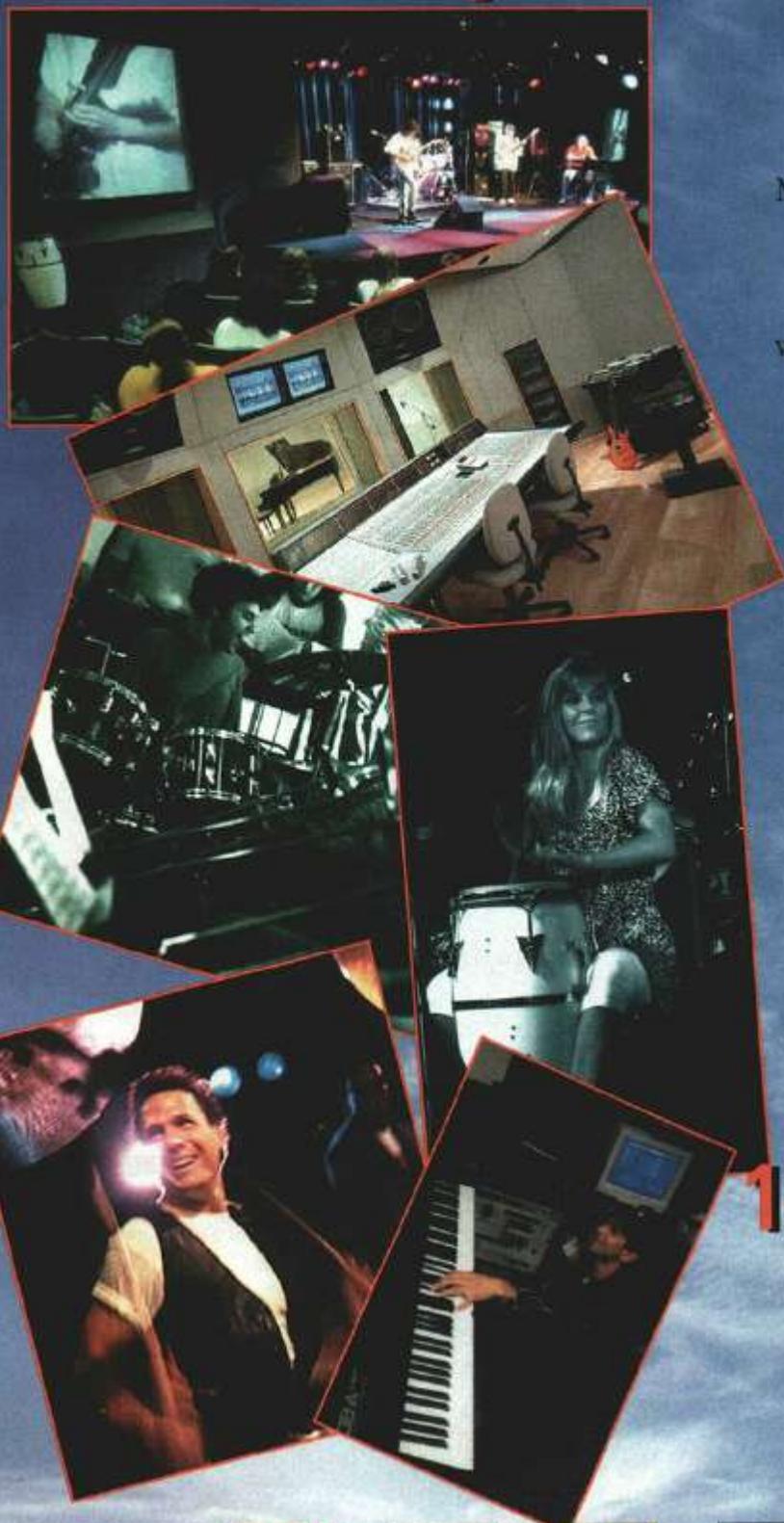
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The Drummer's Studio Survival Guide: Part 10 Communication

by Mark Parsons

Like any other creative activity involving more than one person, success in the studio depends on *proper communication*. Stripped to its essentials, this consists of two elements. The first is making sure that the picture in your head is the same as the picture in the other participants' heads. The second is making sure that what you have to say doesn't get lost in how you say it. Think of these concepts as *message* and *delivery*, and be aware that they're *both* vital to getting ideas across. One without the other is worthless.

Who's In Charge?

The answer to this question will go a long way toward determining how you communicate and who you communicate with. If your band is fortunate enough to get a big-budget deal with a major label, the record company will almost certainly insist that there be an experienced producer at the helm to see to it that the label gets a master tape of acceptable quality and that it gets done on time and within budget. If you get called to play on someone else's project, there may also be a producer involved—and even if there isn't you'll still be working under the direction of whoever's paying you (probably the artist). In all of these cases someone else has the final say, and your communication skills will be used primarily in determining what they want and making sure they're satisfied with the result.

However, in most band demos, songwriter demos, self-produced records, and independent label releases (i.e., the majority of *all* recordings) there is no "official" producer. While the engineer will be the one recording the music, you will be (or *should* be) the one responsible for making the creative decisions about your music: what parts you play, how you play them, and the overall feel and sound of your drum tracks. Congratulations—you've just become a producer, and a large part of that job involves communication.

Getting Sounds

The job begins the moment you walk into the studio and start setting up your kit. Even if it's your project and you're footing some or all of the bill, you can't introduce yourself to the engineer by saying, "I'm the drummer and I'm here to ensure that you make my drums sound great!" Both the message and the delivery are way off the mark. First of all, arrogance will get you absolutely nowhere. The engineer, whether a highly paid pro or a "pro-



ject studio" amateur, undoubtedly takes as much pride in his work as you do in yours, and you'll kill your chances of a good working relationship if you come off as demeaning and insulting. Also consider that his idea of a "great drum sound" may be vastly different from yours.

Descriptive phrases can help, but remember that one person's "bright" can be another person's "harsh." Recorded examples of drum sounds you like can also be helpful tools in getting ideas across, but keep in mind that the drumset on your favorite CD isn't your set, it wasn't played by you, and it wasn't recorded in this room with this equipment. Probably your best bet is to get the best acoustic sound possible from your kit (see last month's installment) and explain that you'd like the sound on tape to match this sound as much as possible. There will still be some discrepancies, because microphones don't work the same way as our ears, and they'll be placed in locations you'd never choose to listen to a drumset from. But this will at least get you and the engineer on the same page. We'll cover ways to suggest improvements in a minute.

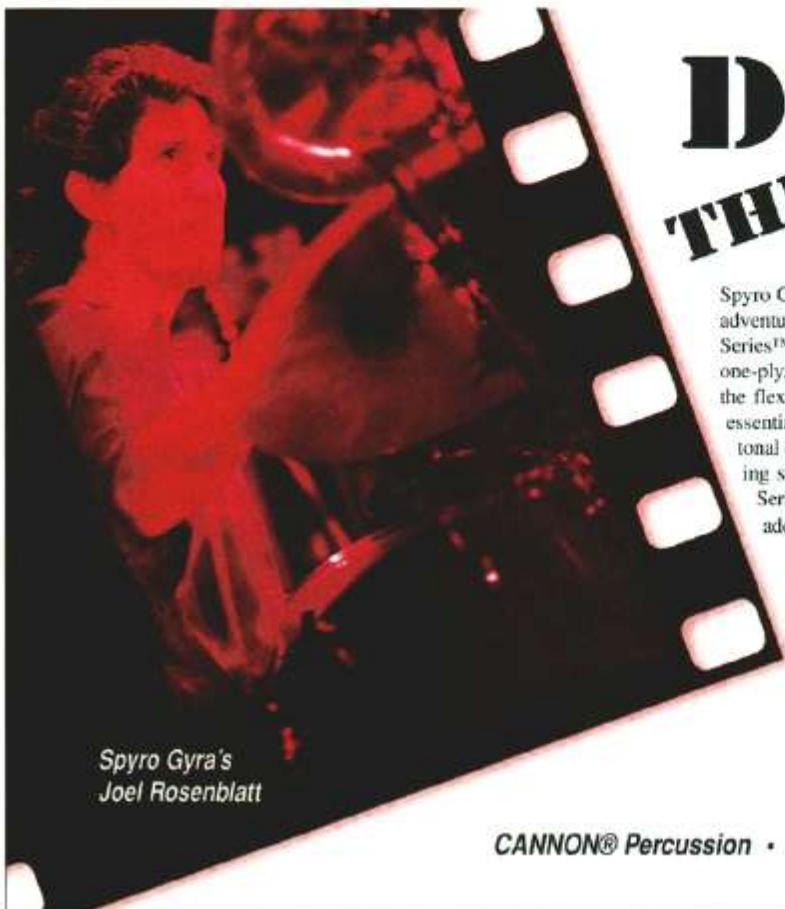
"You can't introduce yourself to the engineer by saying, I'm the drummer and I'm here to ensure that you make my drums sound great!"



When they initially start "getting sounds" on your drumset, some engineers will focus on individual pieces of your kit rather than on the drumset *as a whole*. Gregg Bissonette has an attitude he brings to the studio that helps him establish a rapport with the engineer—while reinforcing the fact that the drumset is an integral instrument. As he's setting up his kit he'll chat with the engineer about his drums, politely explaining that he likes to get a full, wide-open sound with lots of attack and sustain from his kit, and that he likes his recorded drum sound to mimic his live sound as much as possible. Then he'll demonstrate by example.

"One of the key things," says Gregg, "is that you *play* while you're tuning and the engineer's miking your drums. You can ask him to hang out and listen to what your drums sound like in the

room, because more than anything you want your drums to sound true-to-life. A good engineer will usually sit and listen to you play. Instead of trying to impress him, the best thing to do is just to play real solid time and hit all the drums and cymbals. This lets him hear how everything blends together."



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Gregg continues, "I guess I got kind of burned on engineers saying, 'Let me hear your kick drum' and then going boom...boom...boom...for ten minutes. They often got so caught up in the sound of that kick drum that they'd forget what it was going to sound like when the snare and toms were in too. That's why I like to play a real straight beat, hitting all the stuff on my set. That way they'll know it's supposed to sound like a *complete* kit."

Communication Hardware

Hearing: When you start tracking you'll hear the other musicians (and yourself) via a monitor mix fed to a pair of headphones. It's important to the overall feel of the music that you have a good monitor mix, so ask for what you need in the phones. Just be reasonable. While most large studios have a different headphone mix available for each musician, in some smaller studios everyone has to live with the same mix. When this is the case try to avoid what engineers call the "more me" syndrome, in which each musician demands to hear more of themselves in the mix. (The same thing can happen—with disastrous results—during the final mix of your recording, which we'll discuss next month.)

You're not necessarily looking for a balanced, musical mix in your phones—you're simply looking for whatever it takes to help you through the song. I don't generally need a lot of drums in my phones; there's always some leakage (even with closed-ear designs), and besides, I know what *I'm* playing. I'm more concerned with hearing what the *other* folks are doing. I like to have bass, rhythm guitar, and a guide vocal, along with some kick and

sometimes a little snare. If I'm sharing a mix I usually let the other players decide what they want, then if I need more drums I'll pull one of the cups off my ear a little. In cases where you *do* have your own mix, there's no law that says the whole band has to be in your headphones. If it's particularly important that you lock in with a certain instrument, boost it to the exclusion of the others. By the same token, if something's throwing your timing off, pull it down in the mix.

Seeing: Almost as important as good hearing is good *seeing*. If you can, try to have an unimpeded line of sight between yourself and the other players. (It'll help tighten things up.) If you're using a studio with a drum booth, you may want to try putting the guitar amp in the booth instead, then setting the drums up in the main room with the other players standing around you. Done properly, this will give you just as much isolation and much better eye contact. In lieu of this, I've used video monitors a couple of times. They're better than no visual communication at all, but nothing beats everyone playing in the same room when you're trying to capture that "band vibe."

Talking: During the session the engineer and other folks in the control room will communicate with you over the *talkback mic'*, a small microphone on the console that can be assigned to various busses (such as the headphone send or the multitrack tape). When the talkback is switched on, the control room speakers are automatically muted (to prevent feedback)—so you have to wait until the person speaking is finished before you can reply. (If I'm engineering and I'm happy with the sound coming over the speakers, I'll usually put on some phones and leave the talkback permanent-



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ly open, allowing continuous conversation between the control room and the studio. You may wish to give this a try; it seems to help with the flow of ideas.)

The talkback is also used to "slate" songs. The engineer will assign the mic' to the tape and say (for example) "Blues in E, take 2..." so the proper take can quickly be identified on playback. At this point you count off the song. To make sure everyone has a solid feel for the tempo, I like to click quarter notes on my sticks for a bar or two before I count, and (assuming the tune starts on 1) I'll leave off saying the "four" so there's a nice quiet pause prior to the music starting (making it easier to edit later). *Always* count, even if the song is started by a single instrument. You never know if you're going to want to re-do the intro later or add another part, and having a clear count will make life a lot easier if such needs arise.

In The Control Room

When you finish the first take, you'll probably go into the control room to hear what it sounds like. What should you be listening for during that initial playback? Not a finished product, for one thing. Your tracks will probably be flat and dry (no reverb or EQ), but that's okay as long as the basic tone is good. With a little experience you'll soon be able to tell if that short, very dry "snap" of your close-miked snare will sound good once it's got some ambience and equalization on it. But if you have any doubts, ask the engineer to add some processing to it during playback (*not* when recording) to give you a preview of how it will sound in the final mix.

The other big thing to listen for, obviously, is the *musicality* of the take. It's easy to get hung up on the Sonics, but no matter how good things sound production-wise, don't go on to the next step unless everything's also correct musically. Listen with a critical ear for things like tempo fluctuations, timing errors, dynamic inconsistencies, and that all-important but indefinable *groove*.

So what do you do and say when you *don't* like what you're hearing in the control room? Welcome to that other part of a producer's job....

Problem Solving

In a certain light, making a recording is nothing more than overcoming a series of challenges: rehearsing the material, getting your equipment in shape, miking your drums correctly, playing with sensitivity and dynamics, capturing the sound correctly on tape, constructing a good-sounding mix, etc. You can hit a snag at any stage during the process, and when you do, the success of the project will ride on your ability to get back on track with a minimum amount of damage done in terms of time, money, and attitude.

Speaking of attitude, this has been said before, but it can't be over-emphasized: A positive attitude is essential to the success of your recording. This doesn't mean being a "yes man," it means addressing problems quickly in a helpful, non-threatening manner. (Remember that when things aren't going perfectly, the "delivery" aspect of communication becomes more important than ever!) Here are some tips to help you "be a problem solver instead of a problem" in the studio.

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Concentrate on finding a solution rather than fixing blame.

Example: During playback you notice that the guitar slowing down during part of the song, causing things to sound sloppy. You could look at the guitarist and say, "Hey, man—you were really dragging during the bridge." Or you could try addressing the group as a whole with "Let's try it again, and this time let's concentrate on keeping the tempo steady through the bridge. I think we might have slowed down a little on the last take."

The first method will alienate the guitar player for the rest of the session, waste time, create a bad vibe amongst everyone, and (if you're insecure) make you feel superior for about thirty seconds. The second method will achieve what's best for the *music*—quickly and without pointing fingers. (Does it really matter whose fault it was?)

Make suggestions for improvement rather than negative comments. If you're unhappy with the sound of your bass drum, you could tell the engineer, "You know, my kick sure sounds like mud," or you could say, "The drums sound pretty good overall, but I'd like to see what the kick would sound like with more beater attack. Can we try that?" I'll leave it to you to decide which would be more productive.

Be aware of the difference between energy and tension. Energy is a positive feeling resulting from the excitement and challenge of attempting to do something new and creative. Tension is a negative emotion coming from anger, guilt, or fear of failure. The differences are pretty clear-cut, but the real key lies in converting tension into creative energy. Let's say your tracking

session is almost over but you'd really like another take of the last song, just in case. This sort of pressure has the potential to create tension, especially if you say something like, "We've only got time for one more take. Let's do it again, and don't anybody blow it!" On the other hand, you could turn the situation around with something like, "We've already got a good take of this in the can, so let's have fun with it this time. Let's close our eyes and pretend we're on stage, and just kick it out like we did at the club last week."

While the first method *may* get you through the song safely, I'd bet my hi-hats it won't provide any moments of inspired musical creation. The second approach, however, just might get you that killer take you've been looking for. And even if it doesn't, you've ended on a positive note with everyone looking forward to completing the project.

I'd like to close with a final thought, which can be summed up as: **Have big ears! Listen** to the other players, not just when they're playing, but when they're talking. When someone puts forth an idea—even one you think is unsuitable—listen carefully, consider it seriously, and above all, don't quash it before giving it a chance. First of all, when you summarily reject an idea at the outset you're not just quashing one idea, you're quashing that person's willingness to ever offer up another idea. And second, remember: This is art, not science. There is usually more than one right answer.

Happy drumming!



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1995 DCI World Championship Report

by Lauren Vogel Weiss

The 1995 Drum Corps International World Championships (held in Buffalo, New York) began on August 7 with the Division III Preliminary contest and ended August 12 with the World Championship contest (better known as "DCI Finals"). Seventy-two corps, from Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, performed at Rich Stadium (home of the Buffalo Bills professional football team) throughout the week.

Forty-one Division III corps (with up to sixty members) competed on Monday, August 7, with seven corps advancing to Tuesday night's finals. **Academic Musicale**, from Sherbrooke, Quebec, won the Division III title with a score of 95.5 (8.6 in drums). They performed music from the movie *Empire Of The Sun*.

Thirteen Division II corps (averaging eighty members) competed on Tuesday morning, with the top five corps advancing to that evening's finals. **Pioneer**, from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, successfully defended their 1994 crown by scoring a 95.4 (9.1 in drums) to win the Division II title. Their entertaining program of "Shades Of The Emerald Isle" featured Irish and Celtic music. The drum line used several bodhrans (Irish hand drums) throughout the show.

Individual and Ensemble contests were held on Wednesday, August 9 on the University of Buffalo North Campus in Amherst. Individual percussion awards went to snare drummer **Jeffrey Queen** (Blue Knights, 98.0), who won for the second year in a row, multi-tenor drummer Sean Vega (Blue Devils, 94.0), keyboard player **Makiko Makigawa** (Santa Clara Vanguard, 97.0), timpanist **Justin Preece** (Phantom Regiment, 98.0), and multi-percussionist **Vicki Kaliami** (Cavaliers, 98.0). The percussion ensemble award (97.0) went to the **Santa Clara Vanguard**. The best cymbal ensemble came from **Magic of Orlando** (97.0). And the **Santa Clara Vanguard** won the best bass drum ensemble title (97.0) for the second year in a row.

Thursday's Open Class Quarterfinals saw eighteen open class corps and the top five Division II/III corps compete, with the top seventeen corps advancing to the Open Class Semifinals on Friday night. The "top twelve" corps advanced to finals on Saturday night, leaving the **Blue Knights** of Denver, Colorado in the "unlucky 13th" position. Falling from seventh place in 1994, they finished six-tenths of a point behind the twelfth-place corps in prelims with a score of 81.3 (although they finished sixth in drums with a 9.2). Other corps not advancing to finals were the **Troopers** of Casper, Wyoming, who scored an 80.7 (7.6 in drums) for 14th place; the **Velvet Knights** of Anaheim, California, who placed 15th with a 74.7 (8.4 in drums); the **Boston Crusaders** of Boston, Massachusetts, who scored a 74.4 (7.1 in drums) for 16th; and **Southwind** from Montgomery, Alabama, who rounded out the seventeen semifinalists with a score of 71.9 (6.9 in drums). (The Velvet Knights did something unusual in their entertaining "Harlequin Carnival" program: In their drum solo *of Afrika* by Airtro, the entire corps used percussion instruments to create the largest drum line of the night.)

The finals offered an evening of intense competition among outstanding contenders, but when it was over the **Cavaliers** of Rosemont, Illinois had won their second World Championship with a score of 98.3. (They also won in 1992.) The Cavaliers drum line, under the direction of Brian Mason, scored a 9.9 (out of a possible 10 points) to win the Percussion Performance caption. They also won both General Effect captions (music and visual) and both Ensemble captions (music and visual).

The Cavaliers performed selections from Gustav Holst's *The Planets*. During the opener of "Mars," the snare line played on red drums (to represent the "Red Planet") before switching back to the black pearl finish



The DCI 1995 world champion Cavaliers drum line

that matched the rest of the drum line. The three marimba players in the pit used some intricate six-mallet technique in "Jupiter."

The **Cadets of Bergen County**, from Bergenfield, New Jersey, placed second with a 97.2 (9.7 in drums). Their program, set around a two-day period in 1942, was entitled "An American Quintet" featuring music by John Williams, including excerpts from *The Reivers*, *Born On The 4th Of July*, and *Far And Away*. One of the show's highlights ("Swing, Swing, Swing" from the film *1941*) featured seven drumsets and a fascinating bass drum feature. It was intriguing to watch the corps march around various lamp posts, park benches, and trees placed on the field to capture the feeling of the World War II era. The Cadets ended with an emotional Iwo Jima Memorial scene. They were awarded the first "Spirit of Disney" award (\$4,000 cash) for creativity and entertainment.

The **Blue Devils** ended their previously undefeated season by finishing in third place with a score of 96.7 (9.3 in drums). Their theme of "Carpe Noctem" (Seize The Night) was a dark approach to their traditional jazz program. The Devils played a blend of Latin jazz and symphonic wind literature, including Vince Mendoza's *Buleria*, Maynard Ferguson's arrangement of Jay Chattaway's *Conquistador*, Rick Tail's *No Heroes*, Johnny Richards' *Commencement*, Michel Camilo's *Caribe*, Chick Corea's *Day Danse*, and several movements from James Sochinski's *The Legend Of Alcobaga*. There were many screechy, percussive sounds emanating from the pit, and the snare line moved down to the front sideline to play a hot lick on tom-toms.

The **Madison Scouts** of Madison, Wisconsin finished in fourth place with a score of 95.4 (with a .1 penalty and a 9.1 in drums). The Scouts performed a crowd-pleasing Latin/jazz show featuring the music of *El Toro Caliente* (an arrangement of six bullfight themes), Joaquin Rodrigo's *Concierto De Aranjuez*, *La Danza Pasillo* (with a drum solo by Jeff Moore and Taras Nahirniak) and Bill Holman's *Malaga*. The snare line did a lot of ride cymbal work—and the cymbal toss during the drum solo was amazing!

The **Phantom Regiment**, from Rockford/Loves Park, Illinois, debuted a new uniform (in black) for their program

"Adventures Under A Darkened Sky," featuring music of Sergei Rachmaninoff. They scored 94.1 to place fifth (and a 9.4 in drums for a third-place percussion finish). Purple drums gave the battery a distinct look, and the pit was full of metallic percussion sounds. Drum Major Roderick Saunders was also chosen as "Best Drum Major" of the Championships.

The **Santa Clara Vanguard** of Santa Clara, California placed sixth with a score of 91.9 (9.2 in drums). Their program, "Not The Nutcracker," was based on

Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*—even though at times the music was unrecognizable. From spinning pinwheel disks to plastic tubes played with paddles (a la Blue Man Group), the Vanguard emphasized a fantasy interpretation of the music.

Scoring an 89.5 (8.1 in drums) for seventh place were the **Bluecoats** of Canton, Ohio. Their theme of "Homefront: 1945" celebrated the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. They told their story to a combination of '40s standards and two original compositions by percussion

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arranger Bruce McConnell entitled *Shippin' Out* and *Newsreel* (*News From The Front*). From re-creating the classic *Life* photo of a sailor kissing a nurse on V-J Day to the emotional presentation of an American flag to a GI widow, the Bluecoats reached out to the audience in a special way. And the whole corps (especially the drums) captured the spirit of the big band era on Benny Goodman's "Sing, Sing, Sing."

The **Classmen**, from Toledo, Ohio, scored an 88.2 (8.3 in drums) to finish eighth. They offered a modern interpretation of serious classical pieces by Beethoven and Bach—including a gospel/jazz rendition of Bach's *A Mighty Fortress* for a closer. From a single cymbal twirled in the opener to a mass cymbal toss, the percussion section kept busy throughout the show.

The **Colts** of Dubuque, Iowa placed ninth with a score of 86.3 (8.2 in drums) playing the music of Stephen Sondheim's *Sunday In The Park With George*. From the fanfare overture to the finale, the corps projected their emotions through their music. The keyboard players in the pit achieved some nice effects utilizing mallet dampening techniques, and the snare line played with their hands (not sticks) during "Children And Art."

The **Crossmen**, from Newark, Delaware, scored an 85.1 (8.7 in drums) to finish tenth, performing Samuel Barber's *The School For Scandal* and the second and third movements of Alfred Reed's *Symphony For Brass And Percussion*. Their drum solo featured ten bass drums and a twenty-person cymbal line, and their strong drum line finished seventh overall.

The only new member to DCI's "Top Twelve" this year was **Carolina Crown** of Charlotte, North Carolina, who scored an 82.8 (8.5 in drums) to take eleventh place. The show, titled "Stormworks," featured music from the movie *The Abyss*, Stephen Melillo's *Stormworks*, Enya's *Watermark*, and an original composition by brass arranger Marty McCartt called *The Storm*. The percussionists in the pit did their part to create the mood by playing thundersheets and rainsticks. Their drum line finished in an impressive eighth place.

The last finalist was **Magic of Orlando**, from Orlando, Florida, scoring an 82.4 (7.9 in drums) for twelfth place. Their unique pro-

gram of "Danse Animale" explored the creatures of our planet, from animals to humans.

The Saturday evening competition began with performances by Academic Musicale and Pioneer. The final exhibition was by St. Joe's of Batavia alumni corps, who offered a selection of past drum corps favorites, including *Bully*, *Battle Hymn Of The Republic*, *Hey Big Spender*, *Lassus Trombones*, and *Auld Lang Syne*.

Absent again this year from competitive drum & bugle corps was the **Star of Indiana**, from Bloomington, Indiana (who continue to tour with the Canadian Brass in a special production of "An Evening Of Brass Theatre") and the **Freelancers**, from Sacramento, California (who were inactive for the 1995 season).

Next season will bring a new twist to the DCI World Championships, which will be held in the Citrus Bowl in Orlando, Florida. DCI and Walt Disney World will work together to promote this week of musical competition August 12-17, 1996. Parades and drum corps performances will be featured all week throughout the Magic Kingdom. Individual and Ensemble competitions will be held at EPCOT. For more information on drum & bugle corps, please contact DCI at P.O. Box 548, Lombard, IL 60148-4527 or call (708) 495-9866. (And watch future issues of *Modern Drummer* for upcoming articles on the "behind the scenes" action in today's drum & bugle corps activity.)

Pearl "One Millionth Export" Promotion

In celebration of the one millionth *Export* drum sold, Pearl is giving away an *EX022D-50DW Export* drumset (suggested retail price: \$1,599). The kit features a 16x22 bass drum, 10x10, 10x12, and 12x14 hanging toms, a 6 1/2x14 chrome snare, a *P-780* foot pedal, and a boom stand, a cymbal stand, a snare stand, and a hi-hat stand all from Pearl's *850* series. Finished in cardinal red, the set will include a special one-of-a-kind bass drum head commemorating this event. The drawing is open to the public, and no pur-

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In further celebration, Pearl is giving away a *D-680* drum throne free with every *Export* set purchased between November 1, 1995 and December 31, 1995. This \$89-value throne features a 12"-diameter vinyl cushion with Pearl logo, 1"-diameter seat post, and single-braced legs. It adjusts from 19 1/2" to 25 1/4" high in 1 1/8" increments, making it equally applicable to youngsters and adults. Redemption coupons are obtainable at authorized Pearl dealers. Fill out the coupon at the time of drumset purchase and mail it with a copy of your proof of purchase to Pearl (postmarked no later than January 31, 1996), and the company will send a free throne directly to you.

MD Opens New Corporate Offices



Modern Drummer Publications, publishers of *Modern Drummer* magazine and *Drum Business* (a bi-monthly publication for drum retailers) recently celebrated the grand opening of its new corporate offices.

The custom-built, 8,400-square-foot office building is located in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, roughly fifteen miles west of New York City. Along with fourteen individual offices for the administrative, advertising, editorial, and art department staffs, the new complex includes a reception area, shipping & receiving room, research library, computer room, photo studio, product testing area, staff lounge, and conference room.

"Our new offices will help us gain a great deal in terms of efficiency and productivity," said *MD* president/publisher Ron Spagnardi. "Along with the continued publication of *Modern Drummer*, *Drum Business*, and educational items for drummers through our Book Division, we now have ample room to accommodate the staff we'll need for the wealth of new projects we've planned for the future."

D'Addario Acquires Evans Drumheads

J. D'Addario & Company, Inc. of Farmingdale, New York has acquired Evans Products, makers of Evans drumheads. D'Addario—a well-known manufacturer and distributor in the music industry—plans to concentrate their sales efforts by utilizing their domestic and export distribution networks, while marketing campaigns help educate retailers and consumers about Evans' line of quality percussion accessories.

Bob Beals, former owner and president of Evans Products, will be staying on as a product development and marketing consultant, and can still be reached at the company's Dodge City, Kansas office. However, effective immediately, all orders, correspondence, and remittances for Evans products should be forwarded to **J. D'Addario & Company, Inc., 595 Smith Street, P.O. Box 290, Farmingdale, NY 11735.**



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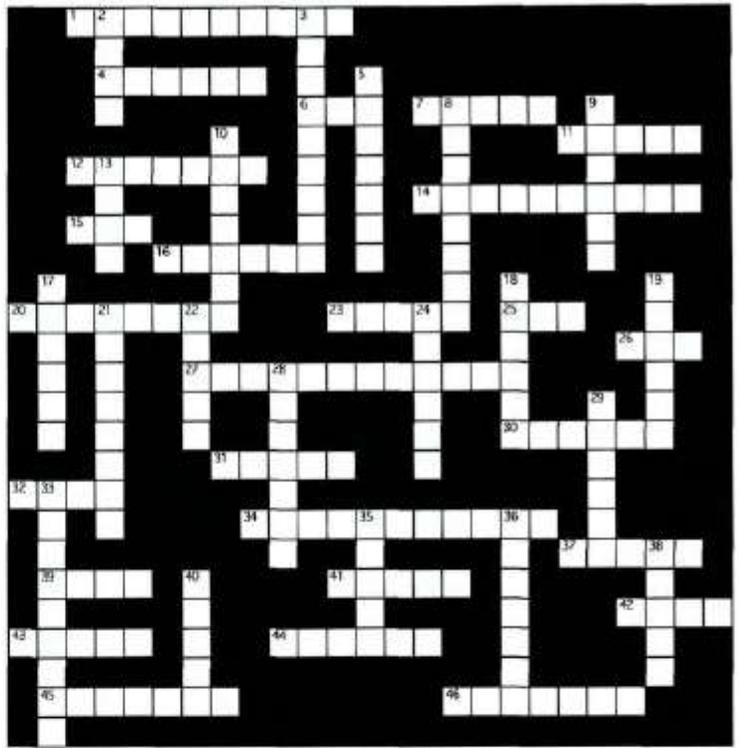
NOTHING SOUNDS LIKE A BRADY

A Drummer's Crossword Puzzle

by William F. Miller

Thumb through any periodical on just about any topic—travel, fishing, biking, even television viewing (the venerable *TV Guide*)—and you'll see a crossword puzzle. But who wants to figure out a puzzle about fly-fishing, sprockets, or *Baywatch's* newest bim? (Well....) If they can have a crossword puzzle, we drummers certainly can!

For those of you who like brain teasers, here's a little quiz of your drumming knowledge, covering "name" players, facts, and simple terminology. Put down your sticks, pick up a pencil, and see how much of this crossword puzzle you can figure out. (The answers appear on page 156.)



ACROSS

1. former Pearl of a player
4. Nashville studio great
6. paired with Elvin for Coltrane
7. played through *Heavy Weather*
11. Bonham nickname
12. two-ply ruler
14. RLRR LRL
15. double bass author (first name)
16. half of the Allmans' drum section
20. Townshend and Toto too!
23. "Sing, Sing, Sing"
25. Gadd's continent
26. L.A.'s Keltner
27. give this drummer some
30. Noble &...
31. Guns N' Roses ex
32. *Syncopation* scribe
34. many Magadinis
37. former Elektric drummer
39. *Satisfied Customer*

41. west coast "Cool School" giant
42. Beatles beatkeeper
43. "Alley Oop" drummer
44. "One Word" soloist
45. Big Sid
46. happy to "Take 5"

DOWN

2. Crimson's *One Of A Kind* (first name)
3. former "Windy City" drummer
5. phishy player
8. Shut Up 'N' Play Yer Drums
9. early Letterman drummer
10. "In The Air Tonight"
13. Who Are You?
17. E drummer/percussionist
18. "Big Noise From Winnetka"

19. current Leno great
21. he has a strong GRIP
22. international percussion convention
24. *Milestones* drummer
28. "Skin Deep" soloist

29. the '60s hitmaker
33. Tony in trouble
35. he also waltzes
36. Chapin's favorite stroke
38. STP's drummer
40. "Tom Sawyer"'s professor

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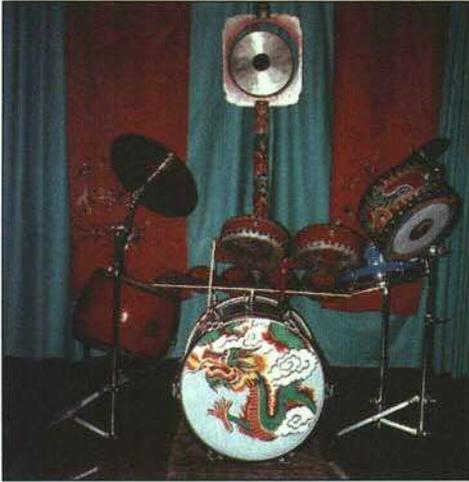
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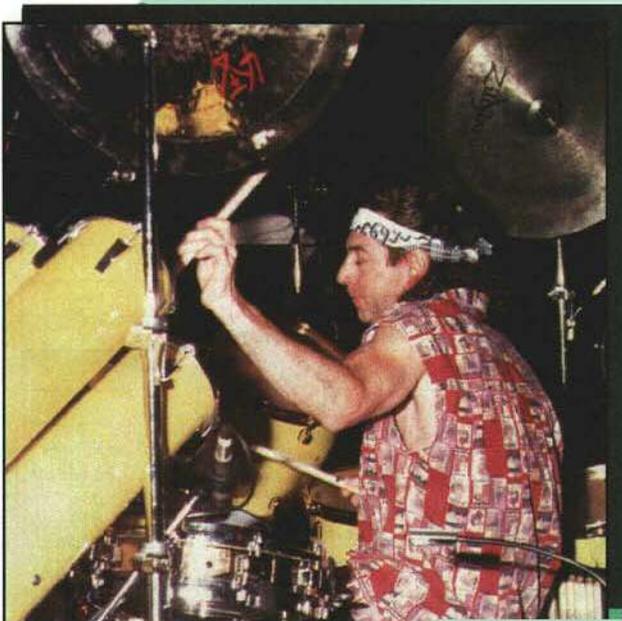
PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.



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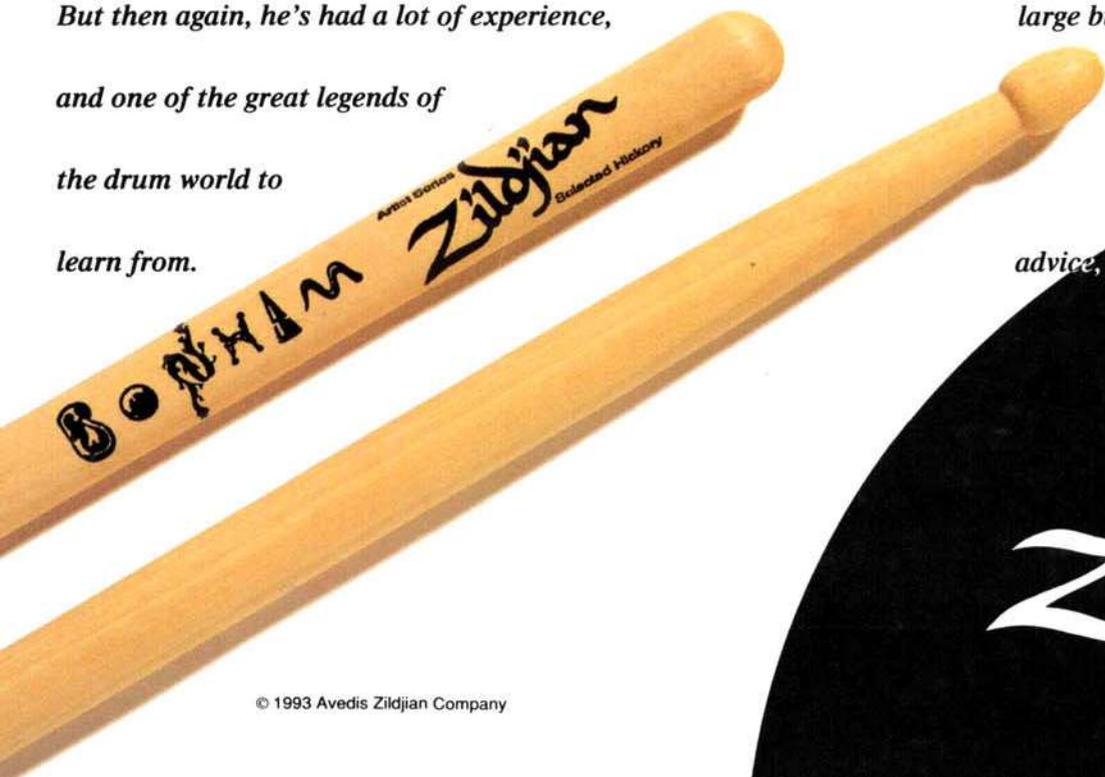
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