

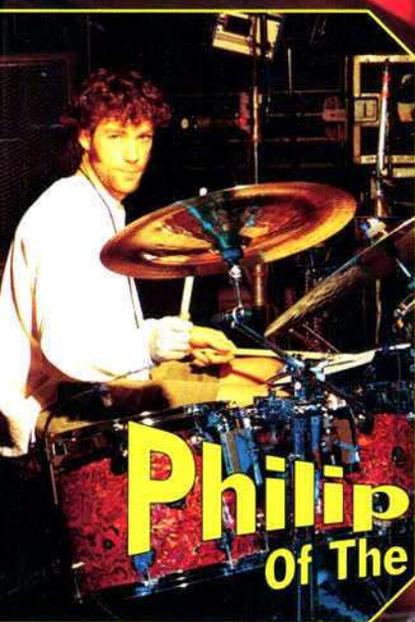
• MD'S 1996 READERS POLL RESULTS • INSIDE REGAL TIP •

MODERN DRUMMER[®]

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

July '96

▼ The Revolutionary Drumming Of
Joey Baron



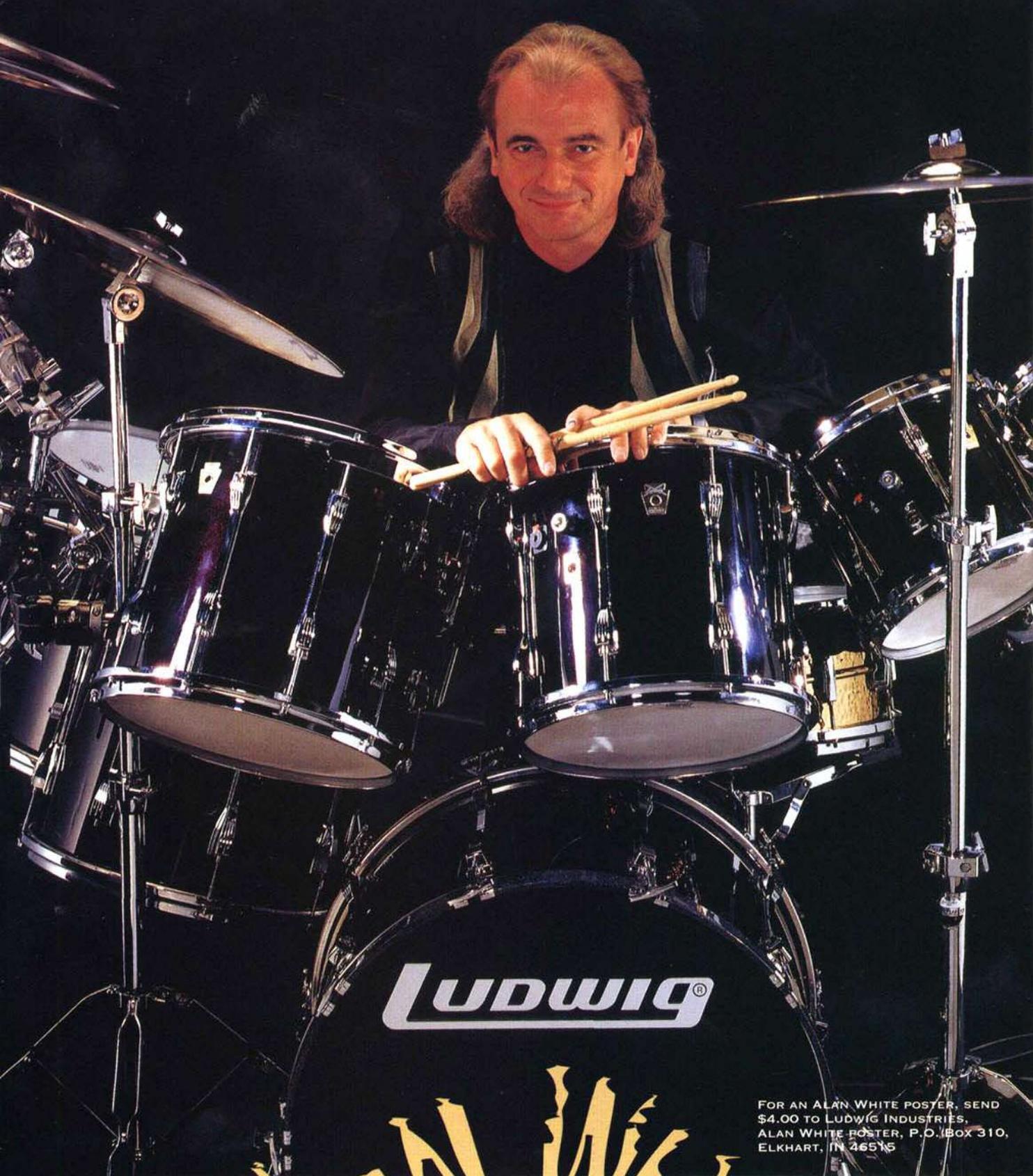
Philip Rhodes
Of The Gin Blossoms

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Modern Drummer Online



Last month I mentioned that *Modern Drummer Online*—our Internet connection to drummers around the world—was in the final stages of development.

This month, I'm delighted to report that our site is up and running.

MD Online is set up through Music Interactive, a virtual community of musicians, music suppliers, retailers, and publishers, all accessible from one site on the World Wide Web. Our editorial and art staffs, under the watchful eye of Web site director Kevin Kearns, have been working feverishly over the past several months to make *MD Online* a valuable addition to our print product. Let me offer

a brief overview.

Our online site will be updated every two weeks and will basically preview the upcoming issue of the magazine. An excerpt from one of the lead feature stories will be offered, along with an excerpt from a classic *MD* interview. Besides material from several of our educational departments, *MD Online* users will also be kept fully informed of the latest developments in the world of drums via our timely "News" department.

Another valuable aspect of *MD Online* is the "Talk To MD" section, where individuals can subscribe to the magazine and order back issues, books, and Drummer Ware. "Talk To MD" also offers access to our E-Mail Directory so that specific questions can be forwarded to an *MD* editor. We'll now be able to directly respond to some of your concerns, thereby opening a whole new line of communication between *MD* readers and editors.

Though the present *MD* site is certainly exciting, it's only the beginning of what we have in store for the future. For example, we'll soon have an Artist Reference Listing online so that users can find the issue of *MD* in which their favorite artist has appeared. We're also working on linking many drum industry manufacturers to our site so that you'll have immediate access to the latest products available. Soon, *MD* "Sound Files" will let you hear a selection of the drumming examples presented in the magazine. And online "Video Clips" will enable users to view certain artists in action.

Modern Drummer Online offers a whole new world to the serious player. We plan to keep it informative, educational, and entertaining, and we look forward to meeting you there. You can find us at <http://www.modrndrummer.com>.

MODERN DRUMMER

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine



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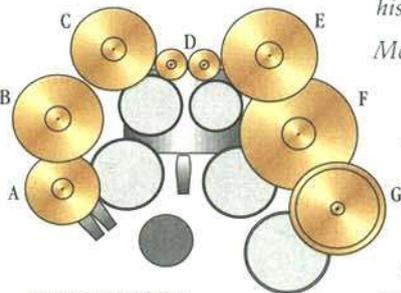
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BEEN THERE - DONE THAT... NOW ROBIN HITS BULLSEYE!

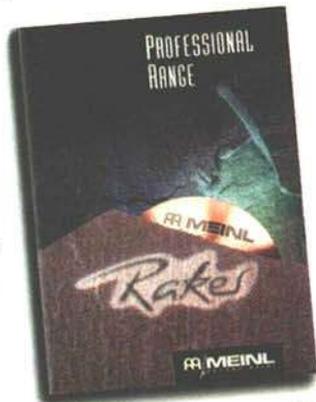


Robin DiMaggio, 24, has created an outstanding name for himself with his versatile playing in the studio, on tour, in clinics and at drum festivals. At the age of 17 he kicked off his career playing with Tracy Chapman. A year later he was touring for Paul McCartney. Since then he has worked with the 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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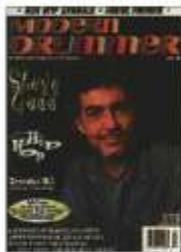
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STEVE GADD



I really enjoyed the interview with Steve Gadd in your April issue. We tend to forget that Steve's success was not because of his Mozambiques, ratabacues, and Bonham triplets, but because of his attitude and his ability to *just play whatever the music called for* (along with a great sense of time). Continued success to you, Steve. We love ya!

Dave Giacone
East Northport, NY

JEFF BERLIN

Thank you for the interesting interview with Jeff Berlin [*A Different View*, April '96 *MD*]. It contained one inaccuracy, however. You cited Jeff's stint with Yes in 1989 as a fill-in for Chris Squire. Yes wasn't touring in 1989. Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman, Howe *was*, and it is *this* tour that Berlin alludes to (and on which he filled in for the ailing Tony Levin). His performance is captured on the CD (and laserdisc) *An Evening Of Yes Music Plus*.

Tomas Howie
West Chazy, NY

RESPONSE TO VINCE

As a long-time reader of *MD* I've read many letters from your readers complaining about which artists you choose to include in your magazine. Vince Williams' letter in your April '96 issue has inspired me to finally write in response. I think Vince misses the point on several levels. First, to complain about the quantity of retrospective articles in an issue celebrating twenty years of publication is hardly fair. And the balance of coverage contained in any regular *MD* issue makes Vince's first complaints moot.

As far as the drummers that Vince suggested covering go, I seem to recall a 1994

article on Chad Gracey—long before Live was huge—and another 1994 story on Jimmy Chamberlin. The April '96 issue carried a piece on Brendan Hill (which Vince was demanding), and I imagine that a Carter Beauford profile is not far off. I would say to Vince that *his* is the narrow viewpoint. His short list of drummers to cover suggests to me that maybe he should consider broadening his musical horizons past the MTV playlist. I think *MD* does an excellent job covering the art of drumming, modern or otherwise.

Donn Deniston
via Internet

p.s. A quick look at your Advisory Board does support Vince's argument, though. How about some new names on the board?

No matter who's to be on the cover—be it a "dead guy" or an obscure drummer—I look forward to my copy of *Modern Drummer*. Maybe some of the older subscribers have read earlier interviews, but I haven't. I'm only sixteen, so I can't remember when Bonham was still alive, nor could I buy a copy of his first *MD* tribute issue—now sold out. That leaves me knowing practically nothing about one of the greatest influences in drumming—except for the January '96 *MD*. The Simon Phillips issue [Feb. '96] was also a great treat. I had read his '86 interview, but it was about time he got another cover—especially in light of his recent track record: Los Lobotomys, Toto, and his solo album. Reading about "obscure" drummers is also a great benefit offered by the magazine. I get a chance to hear about a talent that I might otherwise not have encountered.

Now, I am a *huge* fan of Carter Beauford, and I can't wait till he gets his much-deserved cover. Beauford is a tremendous drummer, and I know he'll get his chance. To people like Vince Williams I say, just be patient—and think about those of us who haven't had the opportunity to learn about drummers we should know about.

Sean McDermott
via Internet

ALAN DAWSON

I was saddened by the passing of Alan Dawson on February 23. I was privileged to have studied with Alan, and I keep remembering his smile—which was the first thing you would notice when you went to see him play. It was a smile that radiated a joy and love of playing that will always remain with me. It was the same smile that I remember as he'd say, "That was pretty good, Bob...except that on the second beat of the third measure of the fifth line you played a ruff instead of a flam."

Alan inspired me to do better than I thought I could—not just as a drummer, but in many areas of my life. Perhaps that is the greatest gift a teacher can ever bestow upon a student. I will miss him terribly, and I will always be grateful to have had the opportunity to study with him.

Robert Buonfiglio
via Internet

Editor's note: Modern Drummer's In Memoriam tribute to Alan Dawson appears on page 122 of this issue.

FEMALE DRUMMERS ROUND TABLE REDUX



Robyn Flans is usually a very good writer and interviewer. I've enjoyed many of her articles in *MD*. However, she lost her focus with the "Female Drummers Round Table" in your March issue. I

wanted to hear what those drummers had to say about music—not *just* about being females in a male-dominated world. Every time one of the women spoke of music, Flans would cut her short and bring the interview back to "women's issues." I agree that such issues are part of the female drummers' experience and should be addressed. But they are not their only experience. Flans did a disservice to the women being interviewed and to the readers of *Modern Drummer*.

If all round table discussions are to be moderated with such a personal slant (ver-

RICK'S ADVANCED CYMBAL STUDIES

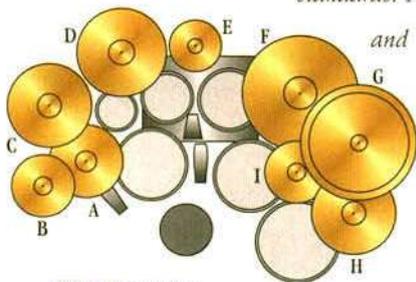


Here you can see how Rick Latham picks out his cymbals by their sound - just like any other drummer would do. Never happy with the ordinary, Rick has always set new standards. For example with his two book and video classics "Advanced Funk Studies" and "Contemporary Drumset Techniques" which every serious drummer has

made his homework. Today Rick is an absolute institution in terms of drum clinics and travels worldwide from workshop to workshop. As an in demand studio and live player he has performed with artists such as Quincy Jones, B.B. King, Neal Schon, Bill Watrous, Larry Carlton and R&B bass legend Chuck Rainey. Even with his busy schedule Rick always manages to find time for his new hobby:

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sus a focus on music), *MD* should give equal time to *all* minority drummer groups. Social issues are there and need to be aired, but *music* is my reason to read *Modern Drummer*.

Ray Krumm
Pelkie, MI

It is unfortunate that old sexist stereotypes still exist in our society. Music should be about creative expression, and not about these stereotypes. I applaud the women in your "Female Drummers Round Table" [March '96 *MD*] not for *being female* drummers, but for being *great drummers*. In the end, when the music is playing on the stereo, some of us may be able to identify an *individual's* signature style, but no one can simply say, "This was played by a man" or "This was played by a woman."

Flavio Monopoli
Vancouver, BC, Canada
e-mail: heard@freenet.vancouver.bc.ca

MUSIC AND VALUES

One of the reasons the Vintage Drum Center is in business is to continue the great traditions of the past, like service, quality, value, and friendliness. But we've found that some of today's music doesn't reflect many of the traditional values we're trying to maintain. In fact, we believe that the musicians of Gene Krupa's day would be appalled if they heard some of the "music" our children are listening to.

Music is a universal language. We communicate through it. It moves us. It can leave us with lasting impressions. Its power can shape our lives. But how are the messages in today's music shaping the lives of the current generation of children? Is the music of today promoting the traditional values that made our country great, or is it doing just the opposite? Is it the language of love, peace, hope, and brotherhood, or is it one of violence, hatred, intolerance, and despair?

All of us at the Vintage Drum Center are dedicated to preserving the music and the values we grew up on. Here are some sim-

ple suggestions we've come up with if you'd like to get involved:

1. Stop buying, playing, and listening to music whose message is destructive and demeaning.
2. Write or call radio stations, record companies, and music magazines to express your views.
3. Expose children to forms of music that will have a more positive influence on their lives.

We feel that musicians should take responsibility for the music they play and how it affects society—by creating music that brings life, encourages good, breaks down barriers and hatred, and builds up compassion and caring. By doing this we can expose our children to positive messages that will shape their hearts, their minds, and their lives so as to inspire them to be better people—people of harmony and goodness. Isn't that a tradition worth preserving?

Ned Ingberman
Vintage Drum Center
Libertyville, IA



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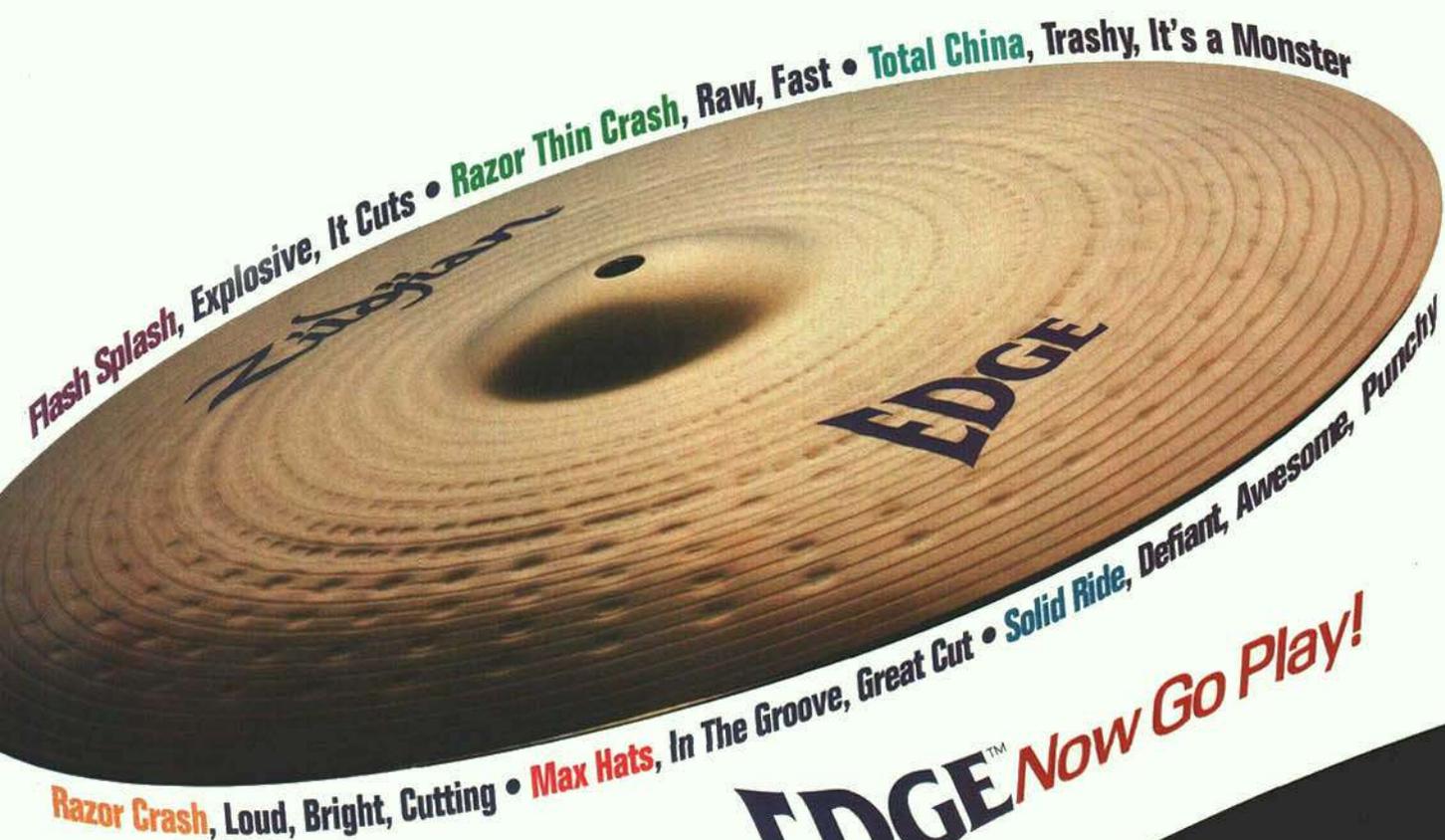
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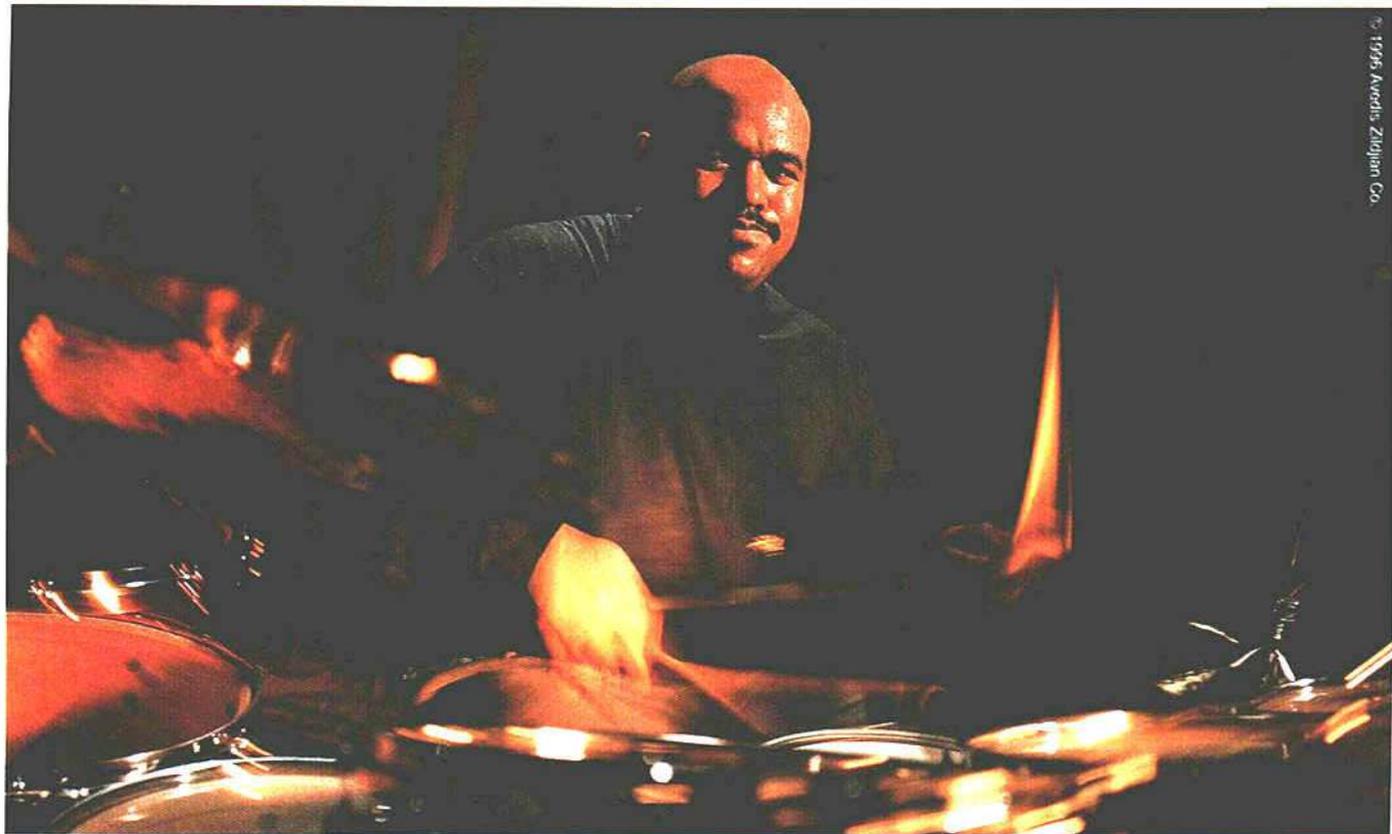
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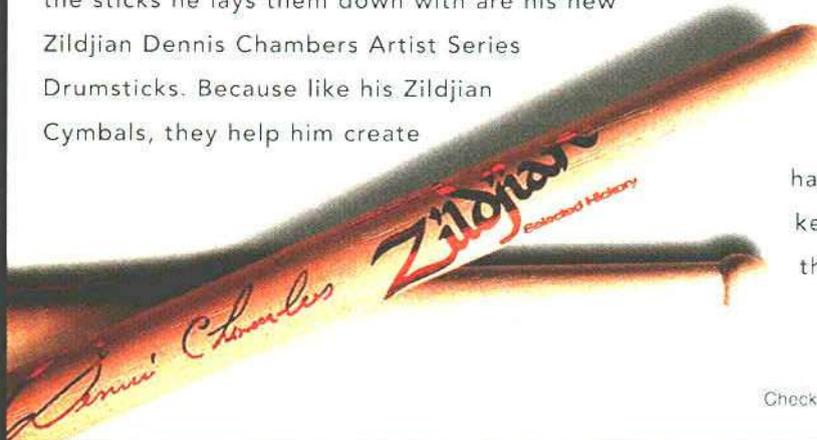
and express a sound that is truly his, and his alone. It's no wonder, then, that players like Dennis, Tony

Williams, Vinnie Colaiuta and Will Calhoun are now playing Zildjian Drumsticks. So check out a pair at your nearest Zildjian dealer.

And if you get a chance, catch Dennis live. Your ears will

have a better chance of keeping up with him than our camera did.

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LOUIE BELLSON

HERE'S TO THE DRUMMERS

With a resume that boasts names like Goodman, Ellington, Ella, Basie, Harry James, Tommy Dorsey—the list goes on and on—Louie Bellson wears his fifty-seven years in the music business well. "They let me join the union when I was fourteen, but I had to be accompanied by a grown-up whenever I played a gig," says the spry Bellson. For his latest Concord CD, *Their Time Was The Greatest*, Bellson decided to pay tribute to a dozen outstanding drummers—all, he claims, influential to him. The resulting big band set is not just sentimental, but highly spirited.

Each song is based on a drummer, Bellson says. "I chose six of the older drummers [Chick Webb, Big Sid Catlett, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Jo Jones, and Max Roach] and six of the newer drummers [Steve Gadd, Dennis Chambers, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, Art Blakey, and Shelly Manne]—not so much because of what they did solo-wise, but how they fit in with and grooved the band. A lot of those guys bridged the gap—you could call them old *and* new. These guys were great soloists, but forget that. The primary thing they could do was get in and make a band sound good, and that's the real role of a drummer. Technique is great, but if you can't swing the band—*boom*—you gotta go back to the drawing board.

"Count Basie told me, 'If you see a great band, ten times out of ten you will see a great drummer. The rest of the band can be great, but that band isn't going to sound good with a poor drummer. The rest of the band can be mediocre, and a great drummer will make the band sound great. That's how important that chair is.' As Basie said, The drummer's in the driver's seat."

Each of the drummers chosen by Bellson have had a great influence on sessions or gigs, whether or not they were the official leaders. "These drummers have a great sense of timing, of how certain tunes groove along best at certain tempos. They are masters who can play a groove that is very conducive to dancers, and then turn around and play concert music. And they all created a lot of excitement about the drums. The stuff that Buddy did with his band, and Gene, and Jo Jones—they had the tempos down, the leadership, and the musicianship. These guys did it *all*, and that's why we have so many great players today—because those guys gave us so much to hang onto. Those guys showed it to me, and I just want to pass it on."

Robin Tolleson



ANTHRAX'S CHARLIE BENANTE

"HOW I ALMOST GAVE UP DRUMMING"

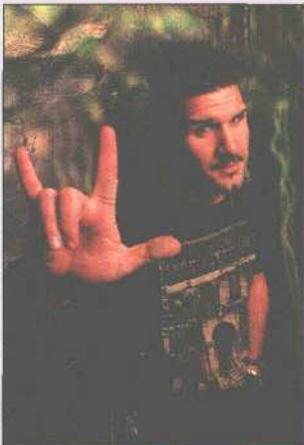
Charlie Benante has not kept his affection for the guitar a secret. On Anthrax's 1993 album, *The Sound Of White Noise*, Benante played an abundance of guitar leads and wrote most of the songs. On the band's latest album, *Stomp 442*, Charlie went a step further, writing all of the music and playing even more of the guitar parts.

But what of the impressive drumming that normally graces (some might say assaults) an Anthrax record? Charlie says that he felt a bit disillusioned with his drumming while writing and rehearsing for *Stomp 442*. "In May of '94," he admits, "we came off the road and I went into seclusion to write new music. I took three months to put together the material, and then I started working with the band on it. But I started to question my interest in drumming. I had played guitar a lot and enjoyed it so much that I wasn't sure if I wanted to play drums anymore. I just wasn't enjoying the drums like I always had in the past. It was a bit of a crisis for me."

What did Charlie do to overcome this case of drumming burnout? "A few friends of mine suggested that I go out and play drums with some different musicians, and play some different music. So I put together the Du Huskers, which was what we called this 'side project,' because it was a Husker Du cover band. I used a real small kit—very different for me—and I focused on the groove. We only played a few gigs, but I fell in love with playing again. All of a sudden I liked hitting the drums—and the drums seemed to like me hitting them," Charlie says with a grin.

This inspired drumming made its way onto *Stomp 442*, which is another great showcase for Benante's impressive abilities. And it's a rejuvenated Charlie Benante who is now tearing it up on the road with the band.

Teri Saccone



NEWS

Steve Smith's new Vital Information record, *Ray Of Hope*, is about to hit the stands. He is currently working on a new Journey record, with a major tour scheduled for the fall.

That was **Billy Ward** playing civil war drums on TNT's recent movie *Andersonville*. He also recently served as the drum teacher for the lead actor, Everett Scott, in the Tom Hanks-directed *That Thing You Do*. Billy's also been recording with Bill Champlin and Bruce Gaitsch, working on the film *The Substitute*, and doing some live dates with George

PETER YANOWITZ

SOLIDLY BEHIND NATALIE MERCHANT

Before Peter Yanowitz became a member of Natalie Merchant's traveling carnival, he spent his time as a Wallflower. While that description doesn't seem to fit Yanowitz—who has a tendency to actually dance (yes, *dance*) on his stool behind the kit—he in fact was the drummer with that perhaps misleadingly named band before joining Merchant's solo venture.

It was that six years with Jacob Dylan's outfit, two tours as the support act with 10,000 Maniacs, and about ten lessons with instructor Bernard Purdie that prepared Yanowitz for the experience of his life. "It's been incredible," he says from the road. "I've been having so much fun. I feel really, really lucky to be playing drums with somebody like Natalie. On a nightly basis I get to play so many different kinds of music."

Indeed. Whether it was the work on Merchant's critically acclaimed solo debut, *Tigerlily*, or his nearly daily performances, Yanowitz has the ability to keep up with any of Natalie's whimsical moods. From her pop-laced tracks like "Carnival" to the moodier tunes like "Beloved Wife," Yanowitz has stuck right by her side.

It turns out that his success on stage may be in part because he was one of the three musicians she turned to during the writing and recording of *Tigerlily*. The other part of the equation may be because it was Yanowitz and Merchant who worked together on the early incarnations of these songs. "Natalie likes to work with the drummer when she writes songs," he says, "because she doesn't have to get any flack from me about chords. She played piano and sang while I would play different grooves and see how they would fit with what she was doing."

During the past two years, since he's lived at Merchant's upstate New York house during an American and European tour, Yanowitz has learned a couple of lessons about music. "The main thing is that there are no rules and there are very few constants. You can just throw all that old stuff out the window, because it's different every night. That's what's great about music."

David John Farinella

Jody Stephens

Spreading Big Star's Universe

Jody Stephens is the A&R director for Ardent Studios in Memphis, Tennessee, but he first arrived there in 1971 as the drummer of a pop band called Big Star. The band released three critically acclaimed albums on Ardent, full of bright guitars, big drum sounds, soulfully delivered vocals, and passionate lyrics. Recounting the emotional roller coaster of youth, from exuberance and romantic travails to ennui and despair, Big Star's songs connected with people, building them a loyal fan base. The band rarely gigged, sold less than three thousand records (mainly because of distribution problems), and called it quits in 1974. Yet their legacy continued to grow, almost by word of mouth. By the mid-'80s, they had practically spawned a new generation of pop music. R.E.M., Matthew Sweet, the Replacements, Gin Blossoms, Counting Crows, and Teenage Fanclub are only a few of those who have lauded Big Star as one of the most influential American pop bands of all time.

"I'm really proud of those records," says Stephens. Inspired by what songwriters Alex Chilton and Chris Bell were coming up with and drawing from his own musical influences at the time, which included Ringo Starr, Al Jackson, John Bonham, and Keith Moon, Stephens' drum parts perfectly match the songwriting. His rolling fills build within each song, which Stephens says was a result of playing off the vocals and guitars. "If a singer was delivering a line in a particularly powerful way," he says, "I always thought the drums should answer that. What Alex and Chris were singing had a real impact on me, and I translated that into drum parts."

Stephens attributes his big sound on the Big Star albums largely to producer John Fry, who "got the most amazing sounds," and partly to his Ludwig IS sticks: "The thin neck and big ball gave me a great snare sound and fat tone on the toms." Jody also credits his '72 Ludwig set, the company's first oversized kit. Stephens dusted off the kit for Big Star's "reunion" in 1992, when he and Chilton teamed up with members of the Posies, resulting in a live album.

Since then, Big Star has played several gigs, including an appearance on the *Tonight Show*. And this fall, Ardent will release a Big Star tribute compilation featuring contemporary artists performing songs from the first three albums.

Stephens also adds that Big Star will continue to play out periodically.

Meredith Ochs



Ebet Roberts

Russell & the Living Time Orchestra.

Dave Abbruzzese is on the new Thin Lizzy tribute record, as well as Bernard Fowler's *Nickel Bag* release. Dave is also finishing tracks for his new project, G.R.O.

Robby Ameen has been recording with several different artists of late, including Dave Valentin, Justo Almarino, Mongo Santamaria, and Kip Hanrahan. He's also working on Paul Simon's new project.

Jonathan Mover is currently on the road with Joe Satriani.

Bruce Cox had his first solo album *Stick To It* released in March.

It features Ravi Coltrane, Donald Harrison, and several others. Bruce is also keeping busy touring with the Fred Wesley band and with Sonny Rollins.

Tom Sunderland has been doing dates in the Pacific Northwest and Japan with Branscombe Richmond from the TV series *Renegade*.

Congratulations go to Bon Jovi's **Tico Torres**, who recently had his paintings showcased at the Frankel Collection in Palm Beach, Florida.

Denny Fongheiser can be heard on recordings by Liz Phair, Richard Page, Belinda Carlisle, Catie Curtis, Lanae Reeves, Becky Barksdale,

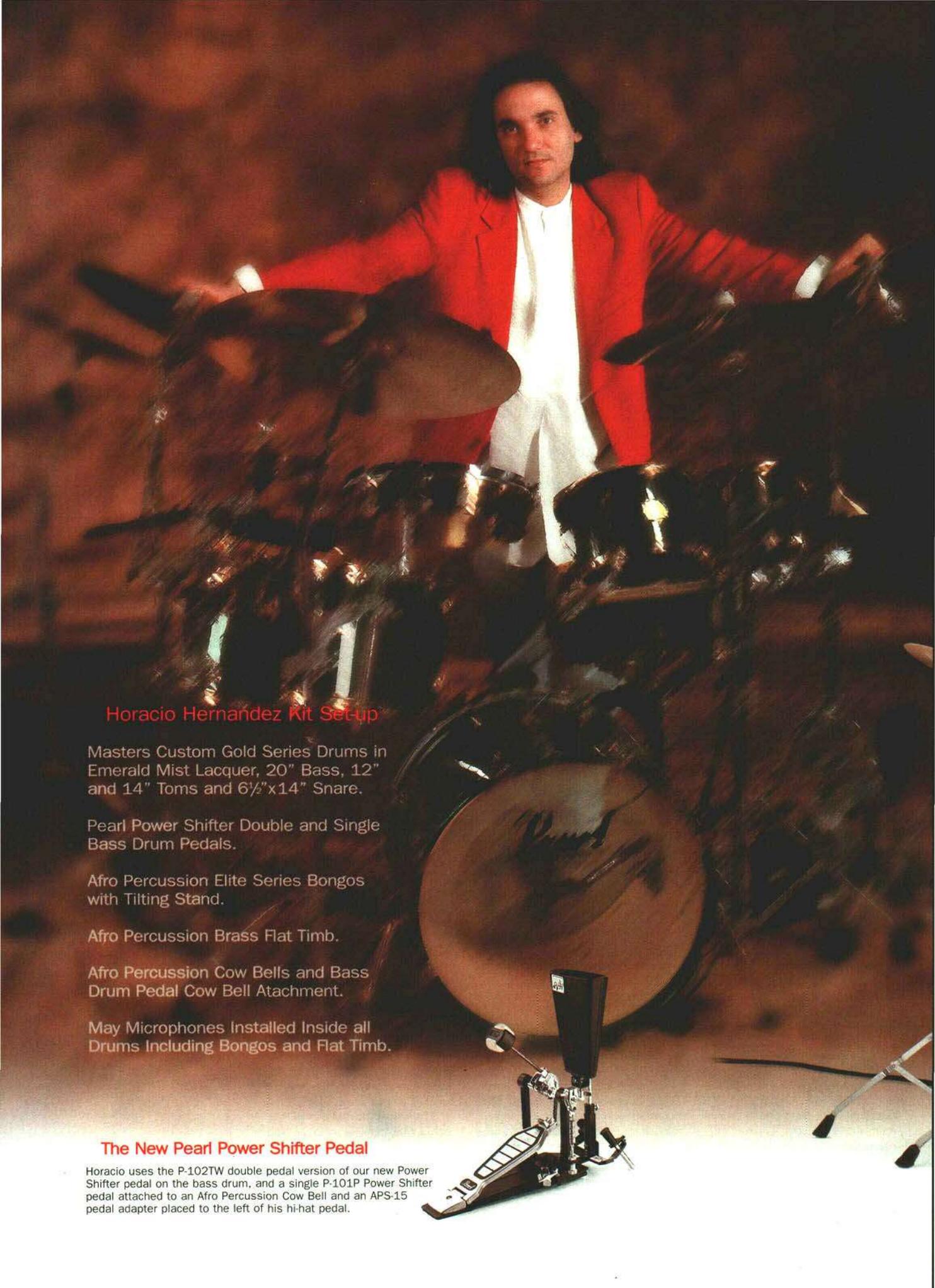
XCNN, and TRF.

Brian Keats is on 3 Day Wheely's five-song CD, *Rocket Science*. The group has been doing dates with the Gin Blossoms, and they have a song featured in the film *Kingpins*. They are currently working on a full-length album due out in September.

James Payfer is on the road with 29 Died, supporting their new release, *Sworn*.

Marcelo Palomino is on the debut album by Manhole, *All Is Not Well*.

Bobby Schayer is on Bad Religion's *The Gray Race*.



Horacio Hernandez Kit Set-up

Masters Custom Gold Series Drums in Emerald Mist Lacquer, 20" Bass, 12" and 14" Toms and 6 1/2"x14" Snare.

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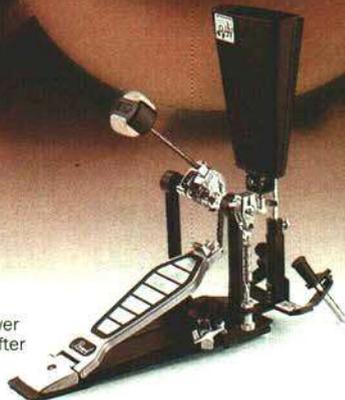
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The New Pearl Power Shifter Pedal

Horacio uses the P-102TW double pedal version of our new Power Shifter pedal on the bass drum, and a single P-101P Power Shifter pedal attached to an Afro Percussion Cow Bell and an APS-15 pedal adapter placed to the left of his hi-hat pedal.



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Percussion and Drum Set

Horacio Hernandez

To hear Horacio play is like hearing two great drummers performing together. His true four way independence allows him to play clave with his left foot while maintaining complicated double bass patterns as he seamlessly integrates Afro-Cuban percussion sounds and rhythms with drum set. His recent sold out shows with Michel Camilo, The Tito Puente Tropicjazz All Stars and Arturo Sandoval were standing room only, while backstage some of today's best known drummers stood shoulder to shoulder to watch and listen.

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Chester Thompson

Q I'm a big Genesis fan, and your performance on the *We Can't Dance* tour was what fired my interest in drumming. I'd like to know what sort of drums and electronics you use. Additionally, I particularly liked the drum duet you performed with Phil Collins on the *Dance* tour; how did you and Phil go about writing that piece? Finally, your drums have a unique sound; can you explain how you tune them?

David McGeary
Witham, Essex, England

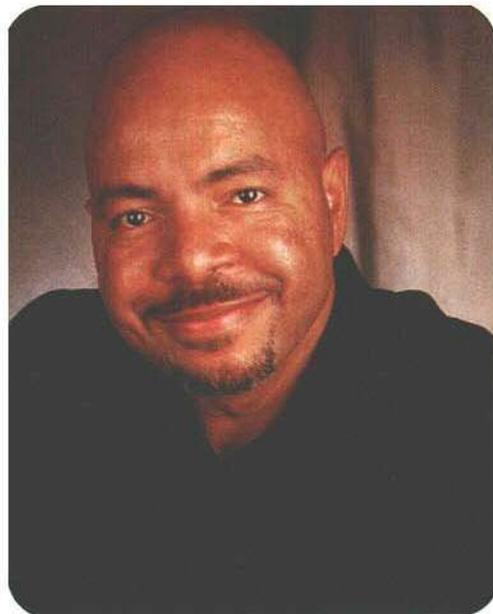
A Thanks for your kind comments. I use Sonor drums and quite an assortment of electronics. On the *We Can't Dance* tour I used a *Special Edition Signature* kit consisting of two 18x22 bass drums, a 7x14 cast bronze snare, and 8x8, 10x10, 12x12, 13x13, 14x14, 15x15, 16x16, and 19x18 toms. When I am doing recording sessions I use a much smaller kit—usually 10", 12", 14", 16" (and sometimes the 18")

toms, along with either a 20" or a 22" bass drum (depending on the project). I record with Sonor *Hilite* or sometimes *Designer Series* (heavy maple) kits.

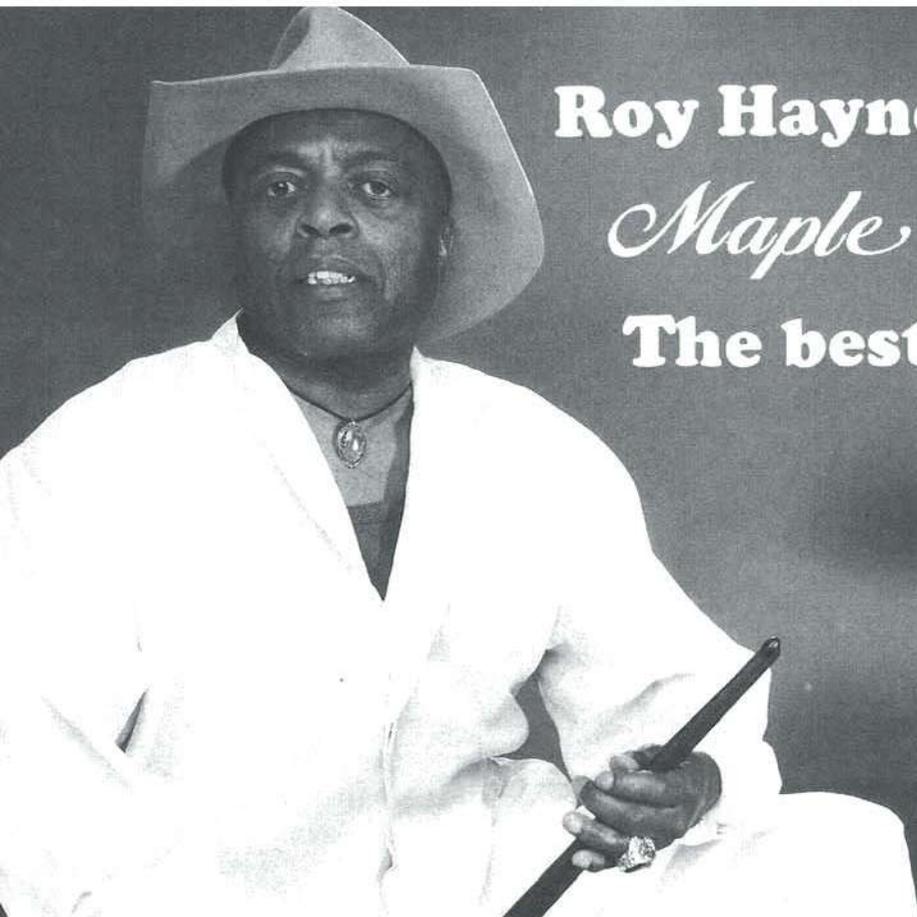
The samples I used on tour were made on and triggered from a Dynacord *ADD2* drum sampler. The interface was a *KAT midiK.I.T.I.* triggered by Trigger Perfect triggers inside the shells just below the heads.

The way I tune is to try to get the same pitch at each tuning rod around the drum. If you tap very lightly next to each rod around the head you'll hear the pitch change from rod to rod. The idea is to get them all to the same note. I also loosen my bottom heads to the lowest pitch where I still have tone on each tom. The bottom head is like the tone control or EQ on an amp. You should try experimenting with your drum by tuning the bottom heads differently. I use a very tight bottom snare head.

The duet that Phil and I played was writ-



ten in a hotel room by us jamming on a dining room chair and recording it on a cassette. We picked the best parts and then decided how to join them together. The whole process took about an hour.



Roy Haynes.

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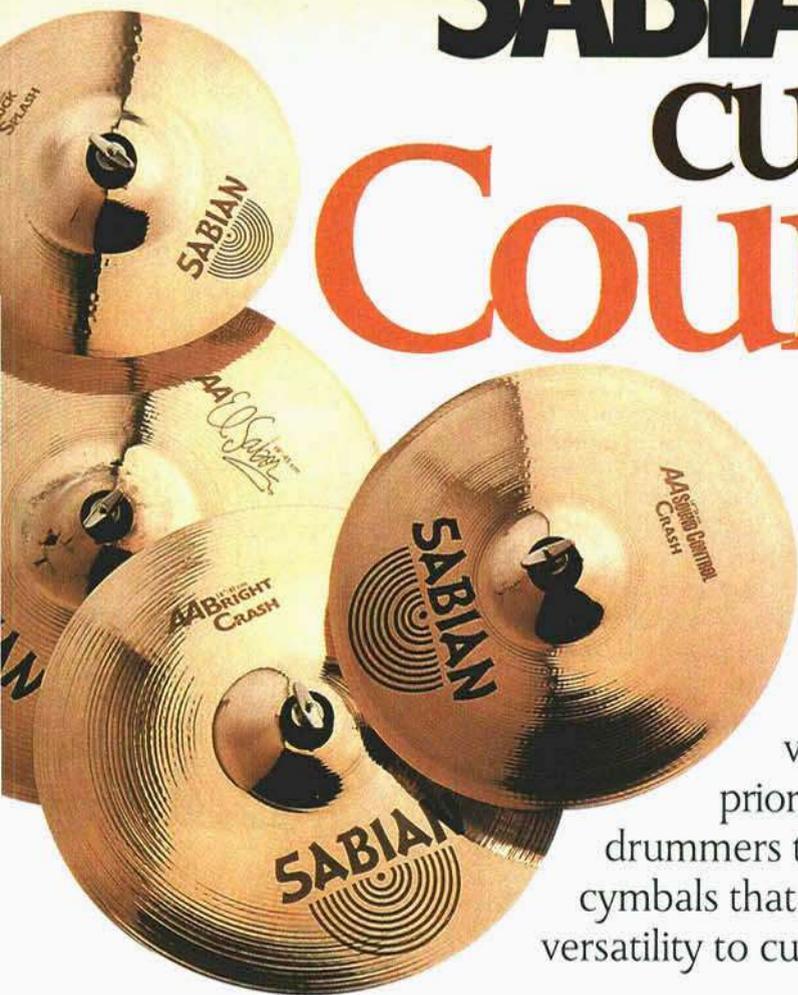
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Larry Lelli
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Milton Sledge
Nashville Studios

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Trey Gray
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James Bearden
Joe Diffie

Billy Carpenter
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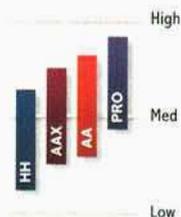
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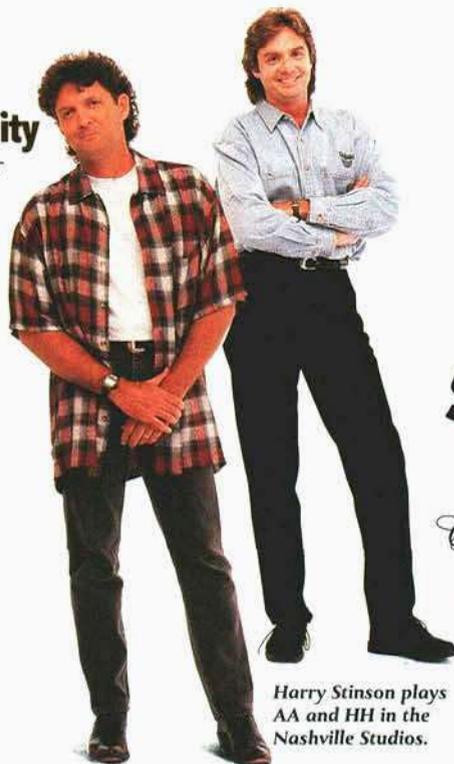
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Harry Stinson plays AA and HH in the Nashville Studios.

Billy Thomas plays AA and HH with Vince Gill.

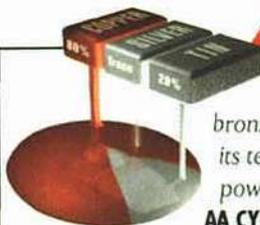
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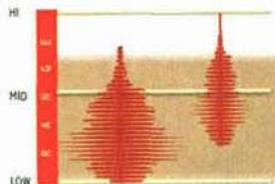
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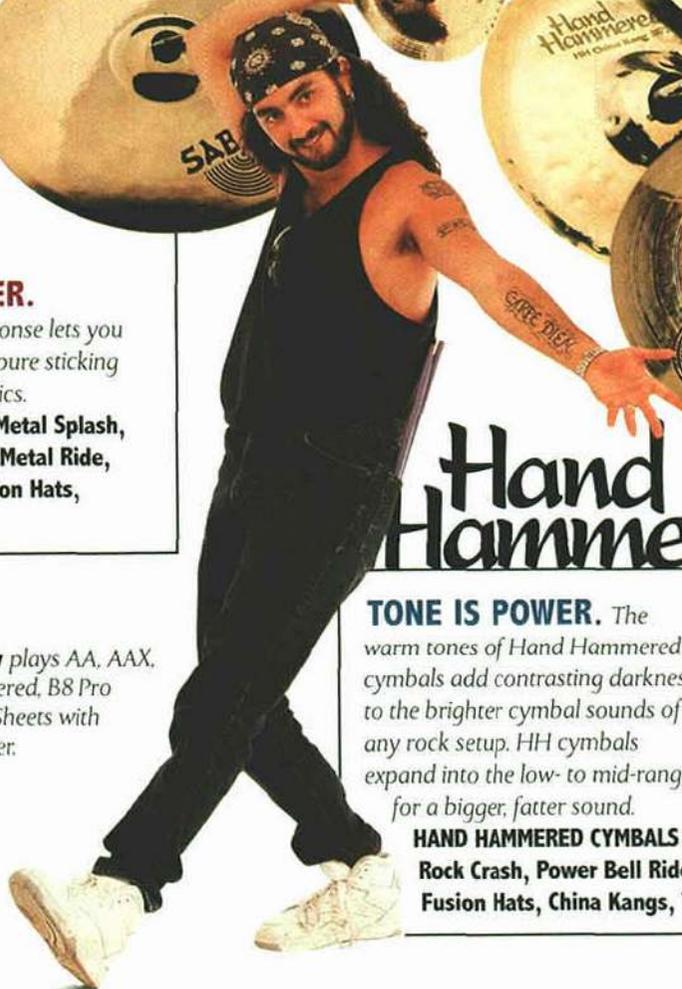


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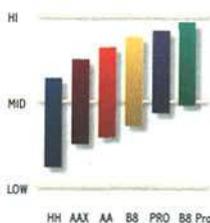
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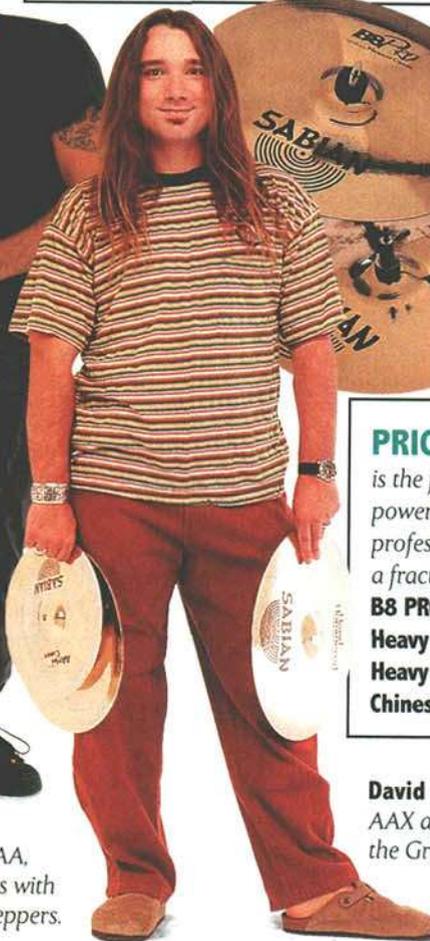
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Vintage Collection

Q I'm a dealer/collector of vintage guitars, but I recently acquired a very old drum-set from an estate. I wish to sell the items, but I don't know their value. The two mounted toms on a pedal platform have a nameplate that says, "Four In One Pedal Drums, patent 1911, Chicago, IL. U.S.A." They are 12" and 18" drums. The bass drum is marked "Ludwig" with a 27 1/2" head; the snare drum is marked "Duplex" and is 13 1/2" in diameter. Any information you have would be greatly appreciated.

Duane Dunard
Troy, MO



Four In One Pedal Drums, front view

A We thought this one would be a real challenge for our drum-history guru, Harry Cangany. But Harry rose to the challenge with this response: "What a collection! I wonder if the original owner played Dixieland music, or just gutted the Insides of a nickelodeon!"

"The bass drum is a single-tension mahogany Ludwig *Standard*, considered 28" in diameter, with a 'low boy' (early-1900s hi-hat), a student pedal, a wood-block, and a China cymbal on a crash-cymbal spring holder. The snare drum is a Duplex *Unique* eight-tube-lug model with



Four In One Pedal Drums, rear view



Duplex snare drum, Ludwig bass drum, and assorted pedals

the correct strainer for that series. It's made of solid maple with a mahogany finish, and it sits in a lightweight (and apparently very rusty) snare stand.

"Now for the invention that would make Purdue engineers sit up and take notice. The *Four In One Pedal Drum* has three tiny beaters that hit a Ludwig *Tango* snare drum, and one large overhead beater that hits the 18" tenor bass drum. Catalogs don't list such a size until the late 1920s. Until then, the smallest size for a true bass drum was 26". This setup was obviously designed for the theater or 'pit' drummer who had to cover a lot of percussion

sounds by himself.

"The drums are all really museum pieces, and as such are hard to place values on. The bass drum rig, as is, is probably worth \$100. The snare might bring perhaps \$150. The *Four In One*, with both drums, is probably worth about \$400. That makes \$650 if the winds are blowing in the right direction. However, even the venerable Bill Ludwig, Jr. was not familiar with the *Four In One*, so its rarity—or oddity—might add to its value."

Why two Hi-Hats Or Snare Drums?

Q My name is Max, and I am an eleven-year old drummer with some questions. Why do some modern sets have two hi-hats? Also, what's the reason for having two snares? Examples of both are shown on page 41 of your March issue in the Drum Workshop giveaway kit.

Max
via Internet

Q The first "auxiliary" hi-hats were designed to hold two hi-hat cymbals in the closed position only; they were not operational hi-hats in the traditional sense. They were originally created to give double-bass drum players the option to ride on closed hi-hats without having to use one of their feet to

hold the cymbals closed together. However, single-bass drum players soon saw the advantage of having a second closed hi-hat available as well, because this facilitated playing two-handed hi-hat patterns more comfortably. (For this purpose the second hi-hat is generally placed to the drummer's right, making it possible to play that one with the right hand instead of having to cross that hand over to the hi-hat on the left.)

As soon as drummers realized the advantage of having a second, closed hi-hat, they immediately wanted the option of having a second *operable* hi-hat. This led to the

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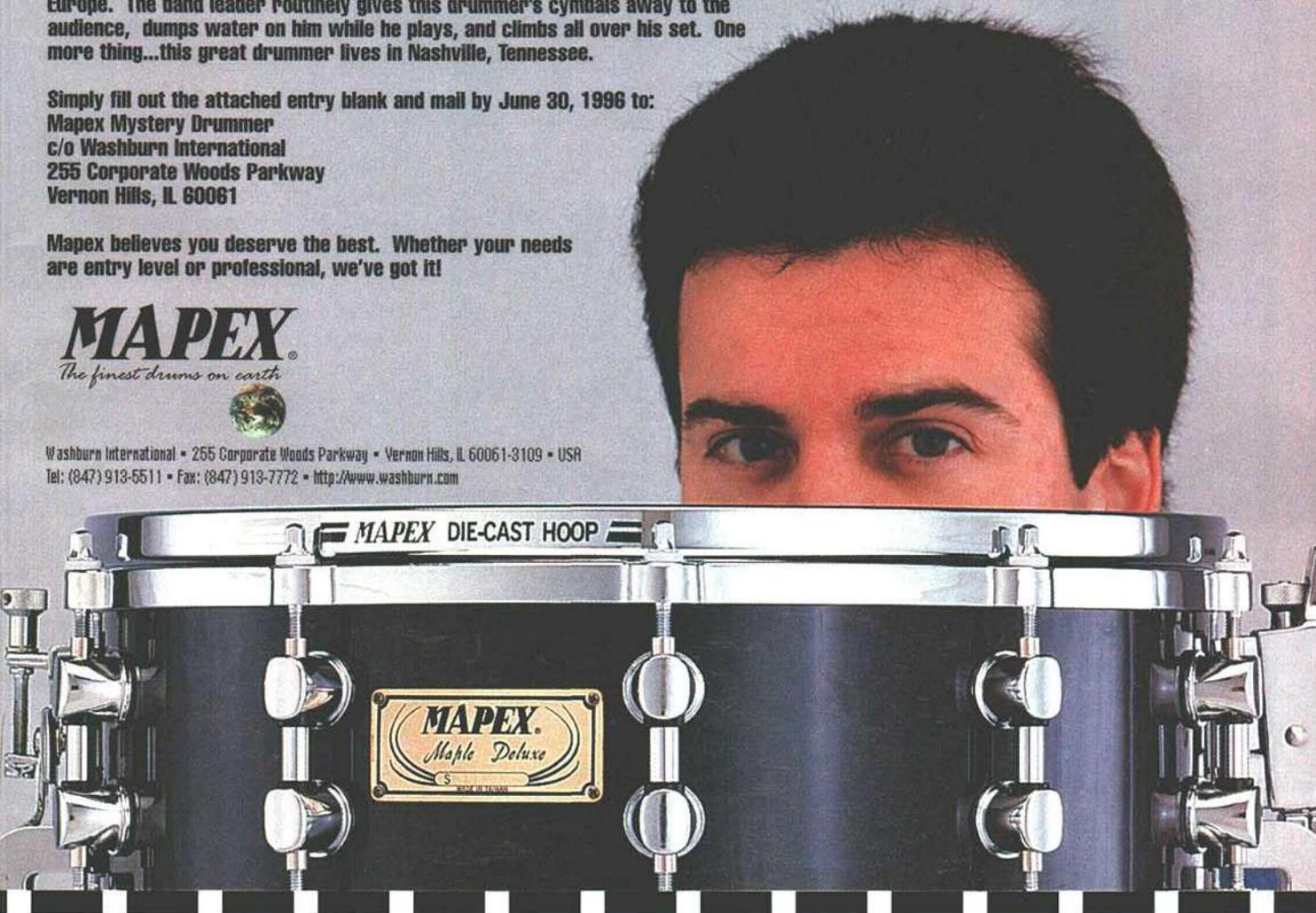
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development of the cable remote hi-hat, which allows the cymbals to be placed anywhere on the kit and operated by a foot pedal adjacent to (or in some cases in place of) the drummer's "traditional" hi-hat stand.

Besides the choice of a secondary hi-hat that is always closed or one that is cable-operated, drummers also have a choice in the types and/or sizes of cymbals they use on their primary and secondary units. Some prefer identical cymbals, so that two-handed ride patterns can sound consistent and

even. Others enjoy having very different cymbals in order to achieve a distinctly different sound between the two hi-hats. This decision is based mainly on personal taste and on playing application.

The desire for different sounds is also usually the reason for a secondary snare drum. Some drummers like to have a versatile, general-purpose drum for their "primary" snare, and a drum that offers a more specialized—if perhaps a bit more one-dimensional—sound (a piccolo, for example) as their secondary snare to cut through

certain tunes. Some use both snare drums within the same song to provide two different sounds. It generally boils down to a desire to maximize their musicality. Drummers usually have several tom-toms and several cymbals on their kits for different sounds; why not several snare drums?

Sabian Leopard China

Q I recently purchased a 20" Sabian HH *Leopard Chinese*. I bought it new but got a good price because it was a discontinued item. It has a unique sound—more "gong-like" than "trashy." For what application was it designed, and why was it discontinued? (I notice it's not listed in the current Sabian catalog.)

Anthony Forte
Raritan, NJ

A Sabian's assistant vice president of manufacturing, Nort Hargrove, responds: "Thanks for your interest in the HH *Leopard Chinese*. The concept for *Leopard Chinese* cymbals (a series that included the *Chinese*, hi-hats, and crashes and still includes a very popular 20" ride) came out of a request from drummer Pat Steward. Pat, who was then playing with Bryan Adams and is now with Canadian rockers the Odds, was looking for a raw, direct sound that would cut through the big, stadium volume of Bryan Adams' band.

"The reason the *Chinese* model was discontinued from our current listing is that the demand for 'hard' sounding Chinese cymbals was replaced with requests for 'trashier' sounding models, like our HH *Thin Chinese*. Given the somewhat limited production run on *Leopard Chinese* cymbals, what you have is now somewhat of a rarity. However, although the *Leopard Chinese* doesn't appear in our current catalog, it (and other 'discontinued' Sabian cymbals) is available by special order."



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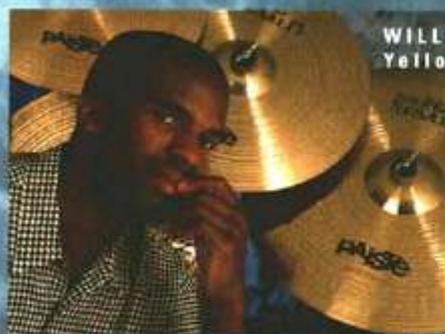
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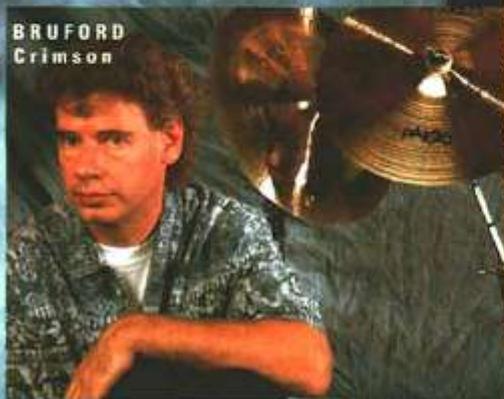
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13" Sound Formula Heavy Hi-Hat-top, paired with
13" Signature Sound Edge Hi-Hat-bottom
14" Sound Formula Full Crash
16" Sound Formula Full Crash
18" Sound Formula Full Crash
20" Sound Formula Full Ride
20" Signature Dry Dark Ride

BILL BRUFORD
King Crimson



BILL BRUFORD's current Setup:
14" Sound Formula Sound Edge Hi-Hat
16" Sound Formula Power Crash
18" Sound Formula Power Crash
20" Sound Formula Flat Ride
20" Signature Dry Heavy Ride

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and percussionists whose work frequently defines the cutting edge of music, these instruments represent Paiste's ongoing quest for the sonically non-traditional.

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steve smith journey vital information

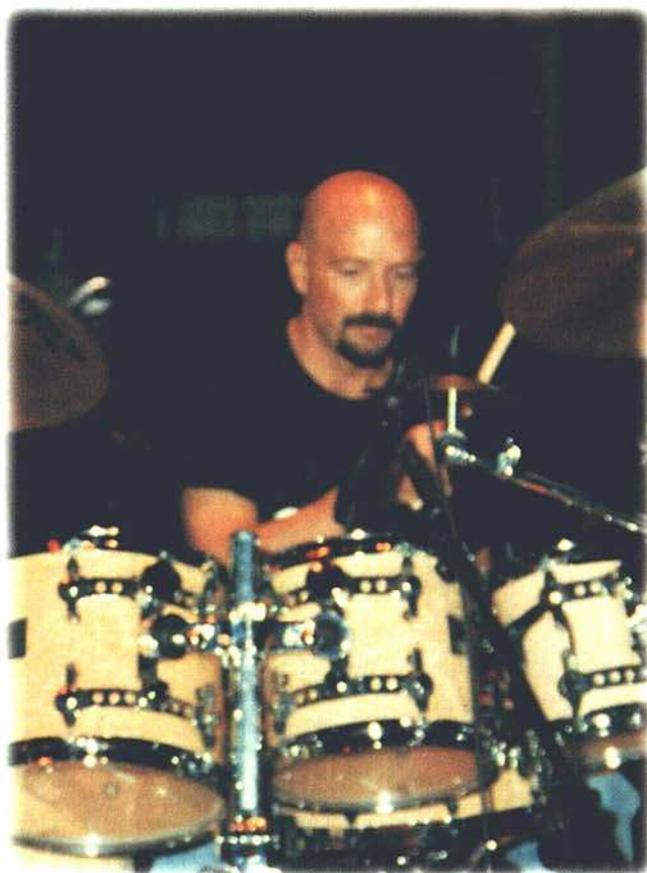
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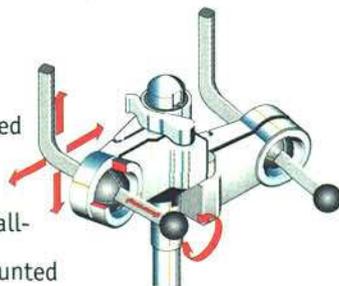
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The Designer Series

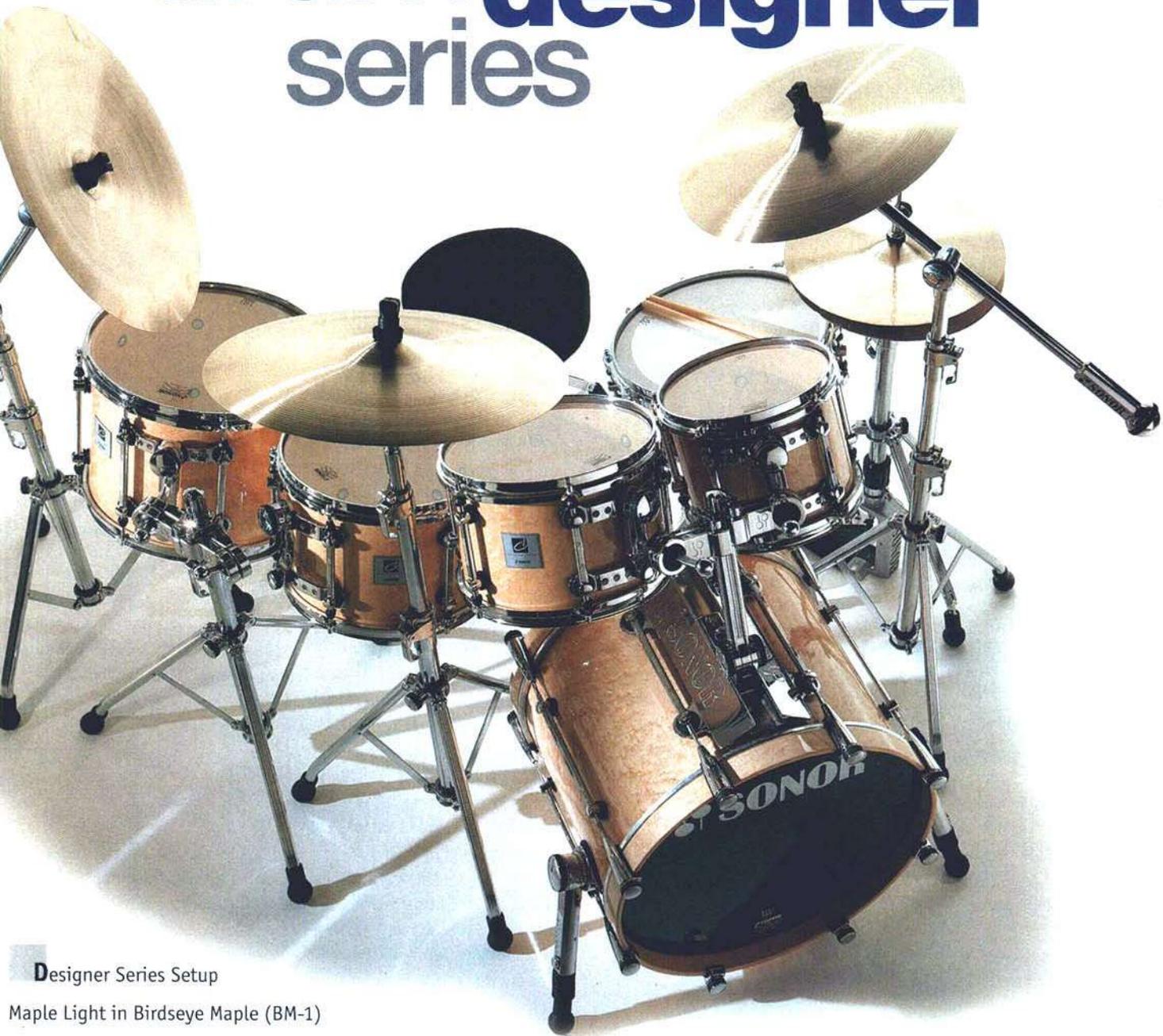
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E-mail: CompuServe: SONOR Germany 100444,2504 or Internet: <http://valley.interact.nl/sonor>

the drummer's drum designer series



Designer Series Setup

Maple Light in Birdseye Maple (BM-1)

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Pearl Signature Snare Drums

Pearl has introduced four new signature model snare drums. All of the drums feature specially designed logo badges and internal paper certificates. All wood-shell models feature newly designed snare beds for "superb sensitivity and response."



The *Dennis Chambers* model features Pearl's new *SR-020 Multi-Trace Strainer*, which is indexed to allow the snares to be "clicked" to low, medium, and high tension (as well as off).

This permits the player to change the snare response instantly depending on the mood of the song. With a four-ply maple shell, the 6 1/2x14 drum is finished in opal white lacquer, is equipped with die-cast hoops, and comes with either chrome-plated (\$649) or gold-plated (\$739) hardware.

The 4x14.7?.

The *Robinson* model features a six-ply maple shell and die-cast hoops. A wide tuning range suits it for both live and studio applications. The drum is finished in natural maple high-gloss lacquer and is available with chrome hardware at \$499.



The 5x13 *Omar Hakim* drum is said to be "extremely articulate and controlled" thanks to its six-ply 100% mahogany shell. The drum features newly designed lugs and a vertical-pull strainer and is available with

chrome-plated (\$439) or gold-plated (\$549) hardware.

The *Chad Smith* signature model features a 5x14 steel shell plated in black nickel. Said to be "ruggedly built yet extremely sensitive," the drum has a suggested price of \$359.



Pearl Corporation, 549 Metroplex Dr., Nashville, TN 37211, tel: (615) 833-4477, fax: (615) 833-6242.

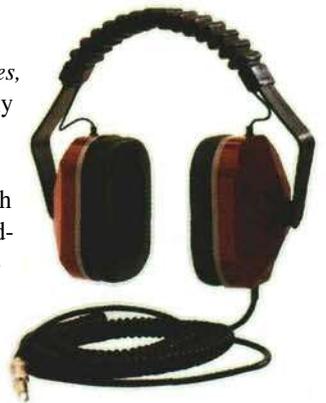
Zickos Drums

The company that created the world's first transparent drums has returned—along with its original founder, Mr. William Zickos. According to Mr. Zickos, his company will continue to specialize in producing drums with shells made of special-grade clear acrylic.

"The drums have full resonance, along with functional features that make them perfect both for the studio and the concert tour," says Zickos. "Our lugs utilize rotors that allow tension screws to pivot freely, and our no-spring lug design eliminates a major source of humming." Current lines include the *Class: X* series and the *Generation II* series (with integrated rack mount). A wide range of sizes is available in each line. The company also plans to shortly introduce a snare drum that has been under development for several years. **Zickos Drum Company, 6823 Rockhill Rd., Kansas City, MO 64113, tel/fax: (816) 361-3623.**

GK Superphones

GK Music now offers *Superphones*, an improved version of their highly popular *DrumPhones*. The new models are 20 db hearing-protection headphones custom-fitted with Sony *MDR-V6* professional recording-studio headphone drivers (frequency response 5 to 30,000 Hz). Thus the *Superphones* are said to provide the wearer with 20 db of isolation and "fantastic stereo



sound" at the same time. The phones are equipped with a heavy-duty 10' coiled cord that has both 1/4" and 1/8" stereo plugs, and they come in a custom-made, zippered vinyl carrying case. Available only from GK music direct, *Superphones* are priced at \$179.95 plus \$5 shipping. **GK Music, Inc., P.O. Box 7540, Minneapolis, MN 55407, (800) 747-5545.**

Latham Crystal Ball Bass Drum Beater

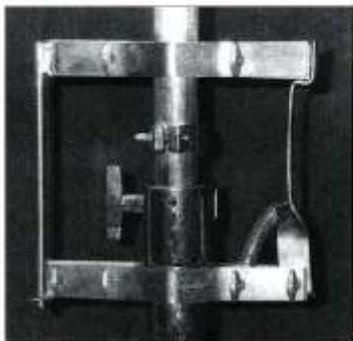
Author, clinician, and performer Rick Latham has introduced a new accessory line called Future Perc Percussion Products. The first product in this line is the *Crystal Ball*, a bass drum beater created from a clear acrylic ball mounted on a hardened steel shaft. According to Latham, the material provides exceptional attack, along with a "bigger sound with more fundamental low end." The ball material will flatten out slightly over a period of time to form a smooth striking surface against the head. List price is \$29.95 plus shipping. **Future Perc Percussion Products, P.O. Box 67306, Los Angeles, CA 90067, tel: (310) 281-9549, fax: (818) 989-0502.**

Music Directory For World Wide Web

The Taloose group and Success Marketing have announced a joint venture agreement to create MusicData.com, a World Wide Web site for a comprehensive, free listing service of music industry manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, publishers, retailers, and consumers. Dubbed "The Source To The Music Industry" by its founders, the listing will include names, addresses, phone and fax numbers, or URLs (links to Web home pages). The service will allow manufacturers and publishers to announce new products without the delay and expense of telemarketing or mailings. In addition, it will allow distributors to introduce specials to retailers quickly and inexpensively, and retailers to display their wares twenty-four hours a day, every day, to a worldwide consumer base.

The company also offers WWW Page, a service to set up World Wide Web marketing programs for businesses of all sizes, "from the sole proprietor to the largest manufacturer." This service starts at \$29.95. For more information, contact **MusicData.com, 1202 Lincoln Ave., Ste. 103, San Jose, CA 95125, tel: (800) 645-6673 or (408) 286-1202, fax: (408) 885-1202, WWW: <http://www.musicdata.com>, e-mail: comments@musicdata.com.**

The Randy Alternative Hi-Hat Holder



The *Randy* is a device designed to clamp onto a hi-hat stand and hold the cymbals in a partially opened position, while freeing the drummer's foot to play a second bass drum pedal. Designed by drummer Randy Saludes, the device affords drummers the opportunity to play an open, washy, alternative-rock-style

hi-hat sound instead of the closed-hi-hat sound produced by a drop clutch. The touch of a lever on the *Randy* returns the hi-hat cymbals to their standard playing position. For more information contact **Tania Kendall Management, 7924 Rosewood Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90048, tel: (213) 852-1960, fax: (213) 852-0934.**

GMS Adds Finishes, Cuts Option Prices

GMS now offers "classic sparkle" lacquer finishes—said to capture the vintage look of sparkle wrap finishes with all the sound-enhancing benefits of a painted finish. Classic looks such as blue, red, and champagne sparkle can now be had on any GMS drum, along with any custom sparkle color desired, and/or in burst, fade, or other patterns. The finishes are available in both the *Grand Master* and *CL* series.

GMS has also changed the prices on their custom options. Where custom colors once carried a 15% surcharge and polished brass lugs carried a 20% surcharge, those options will now carry a

per-drum surcharge, which "figures to be around 10% on a full drumkit." **GMS Drum Co., 855-C Conklin St., Farmingdale, NY 11735, tel: (516) 293-4235, fax: (516) 293-4246.**

UFIP 12-Month Warranty And Cloth Cymbal Bags



UFIP now offers a 12-month limited guarantee on all ride, crash, hi-hat, splash, and special-effects cymbals in their

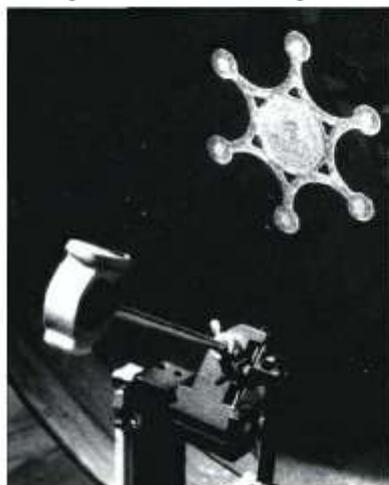
current *Class, Natural, Rough,*

and *Experience* lines. Under the terms of the

warranty the manufacturer will repair or replace any UFIP product that is defective due to material or workmanship defects for a period of twelve months from the original date of purchase.

UFIP has also begun shipping all its *Class, Natural, Rough,* and *Experience* series cymbals in reusable cloth bags. Initially used to help protect cymbals during dealer transport and storage, they can also be used by drummers for additional protection inside hard or soft cymbal cases. **UFIP Cymbals c/o Drum Workshop, Inc., 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030, tel: (805) 485-6999, fax: (805) 485-1334, e-mail: DWDrumsl@aol.com.**

Slug Batter Badge Impact Pad



The *Batter Badge* bass-drum impact pad from Slug Percussion Products is designed to allow the bass drum head to smoothly flex when struck, creating a "fuller and punchier bass drum sound." Sound projection is said to be less distorted with the *Batter Badge* (versus other stiff, solid-shaped impact pads). Made of stretch-resistant polycarbonate material, the *Batter Badge* is

intended to protect the drumhead from denting by bass drum beater impact—even from hard wood or plastic beaters. A high-strength adhesive bonds the *Badge* permanently to the drumhead. *Batter Badges* are available in silver, black, or red. **Slug Percussion Products c/o Big Bang Distribution, 9420 Reseda Blvd. #350, Northridge, CA 91324, tel: (800) 547-6401, fax: (818) 727-1126.**

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Whether Jeff Hamilton is playing with Oscar Peterson, Ray Brown, Natalie Cole, Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, or the Jeff Hamilton Trio, it's a sure bet he's playing a REMO MasterTouch VenWood drum set with FiberSkyn 3 heads. "It's got the whole sound," explains Jeff, "a big round sound. All the calf's off my drums. Everything's FiberSkyn 3."

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Zildjian Haynes And Singer Model Drumsticks



In addition to its recently launched *Dennis Chambers* model, Zildjian has added two new models to its *Artist Series* range of signature sticks.

The new *Roy Haynes* drumstick is similar in diameter to a 5A, with a long taper and elongated, oval-shaped head. Overall length is 15 7/8", and the stick is finished in a walnut stain with Roy's signature and the Zildjian logo in white. The *Eric Singer* model is similar to a 2B design, with a slightly reinforced neck and a bullet-shaped bead. Overall length is 16", and the stick features Eric's signature along with the Zildjian and KISS logos in red. Both models are made of American hickory. **Avedis Zildjian Co., 22 Longwater Dr., Norwell, MA 02061.**

Meinl Raker 10th Anniversary Cymbals



After ten years of producing *Raker* series cymbals world-wide, Roland Meinl has introduced a limited version of special *10th Anniversary Raker* models.

Although the rides, crashes, and hi-hats are similar to previous *Raker* models, they are different in the shaping of the cup. *10th Anniversary* cymbals have hand-hammered cups for a stronger tone and more "high-quality" sounds. Each *10th Anniversary* cymbal is accompanied by a certificate authenticating it as part of the limited edition. **Roland Meinl Musikinstrumente GmbH & Co., An den Herrenbergen 24, 91413 Neustadt a.d. Aisch, Germany, tel: 011-49-9161-7880, fax 011-49-9161-7543 or Meinl U.S., 20301 Elkwood St., Canoga Park, CA 91306, tel: (818) 772-6543, fax: (818) 772-6581 or meinlusa@aol.com.**

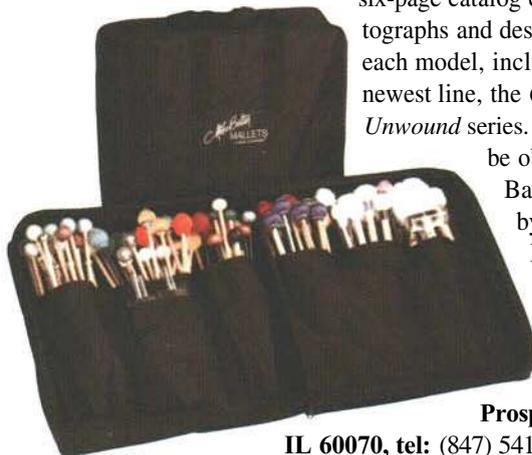
I.A.R.P. Publishes Drum Solos Book

The International Association of Rudimental Percussionists (I.A.R.P.) has released a book of drum solos similar to the book that the National Association of Rudimental Drummers published back in 1939. *I.A.R.P. Drum Solos* contains pieces by many well-known drum-corps instructors including James Campbell, Jay

Wanamaker, and Dave Vose. Some pieces are in a traditional rudimental style; others are contemporary. For more information contact **I.A.R.P., 115 North Lowell St., Methuen, MA 01844, (508) 685-3790.**

New Mike Balter Mallets Catalog

Mike Balter Mallets has released their 1996 full-color catalog. The six-page catalog contains photographs and descriptions of each model, including Balter's newest line, the *Grandioso Unwound* series. Copies may

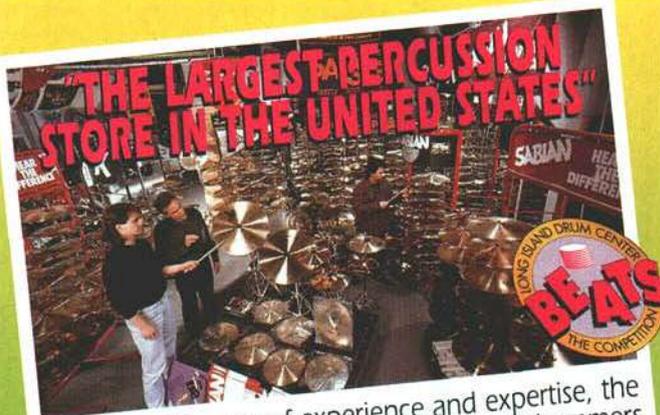


be obtained from a Balter dealer, or by contacting **Mike Balter Mallets, 15 E. Palatine Rd., Suite 116,**

Prospect Heights,

IL 60070, tel: (847) 541-5777, fax:

(847) 541-5785, e-mail: mallets@wwa.com.



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and **Kenny Aronoff**
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Tama's Starclassic division has already introduced some incredible drum and hardware innovations: ultra-thin, super resonant shells, strong enough to stand without any sound-restricting reinforcement rings, the MTH900 split system tom mount, and the Star-Cast Tom Mounting System, the most advanced and user friendly suspended tom mounting system.

Using the Star-Cast Tom System as a base, Starclassic offers yet another technological tour-de-force, the Air-Ride Snare System. But do you really need something that's so different from your current snare stand? Probably no one's better qualified to answer that question than Kenny Aronoff, a session and recording artist renowned for his formidable snare drum skills.

"There are three reasons drummers need the Air Ride..."

No. 1—Snare Drum Sound

"First of all, the snare sound you get is phenomenal! When I compared Tama's new system and a standard snare stand, the difference was immediately apparent. Since the Air-Ride doesn't clamp the bottom of the snare drum, the sound of my bottom head completely opened up."

No. 2—Set-up Speed

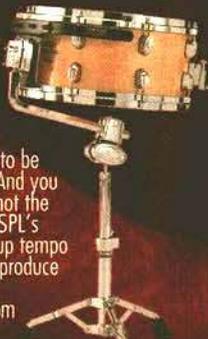
"The next reason is set-up and drum change speed. I change snare heads three times a night during a concert. With the Air-Ride, I just pull the drum off the L-arm of the stand. My drum tech Scott Davis hands me another snare drum, and I just slide it back on the L arm which has a memory lock. We're talking just seconds to make the change and fast changes are critical in concert."

No. 3—Health

"Third, it's better for your health." (This may be the first ad ever to discuss the possible health benefits of a drum stand.) "Because the Air-Ride suspends the drum instead of clamping it, it absorbs more of the impact of rim shots...a big improvement on having most of the impact absorbed by your arms, hands and wrists."

But it's not just players who are singing the Air-Ride's praises...even the engineer on Kenny's current gig, Bob Seger's *Silver Bullet Tour*, had something good to say about the Air-Ride...

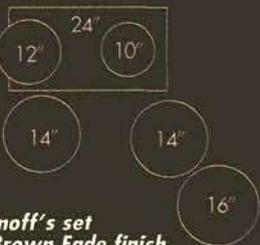
Tama's Star-Cast Mounting System is licensed under Purecussion patents.



"You notice the difference immediately. First of all the Air-Ride lets me put the snare drum where it needs to be in the mix: right out front. And you only hear the snare drum, not the hardware...even with high SPL's (sound pressure levels) or up tempo tunes, the Air Ride doesn't produce that 'rumble' between the beats that you often get from drum related hardware."



Rob "Cubby" Colby,
Sound Engineer for Bob Seger's
Silver Bullet Tour



Kenny Aronoff's set
shown in Brown Fade finish.



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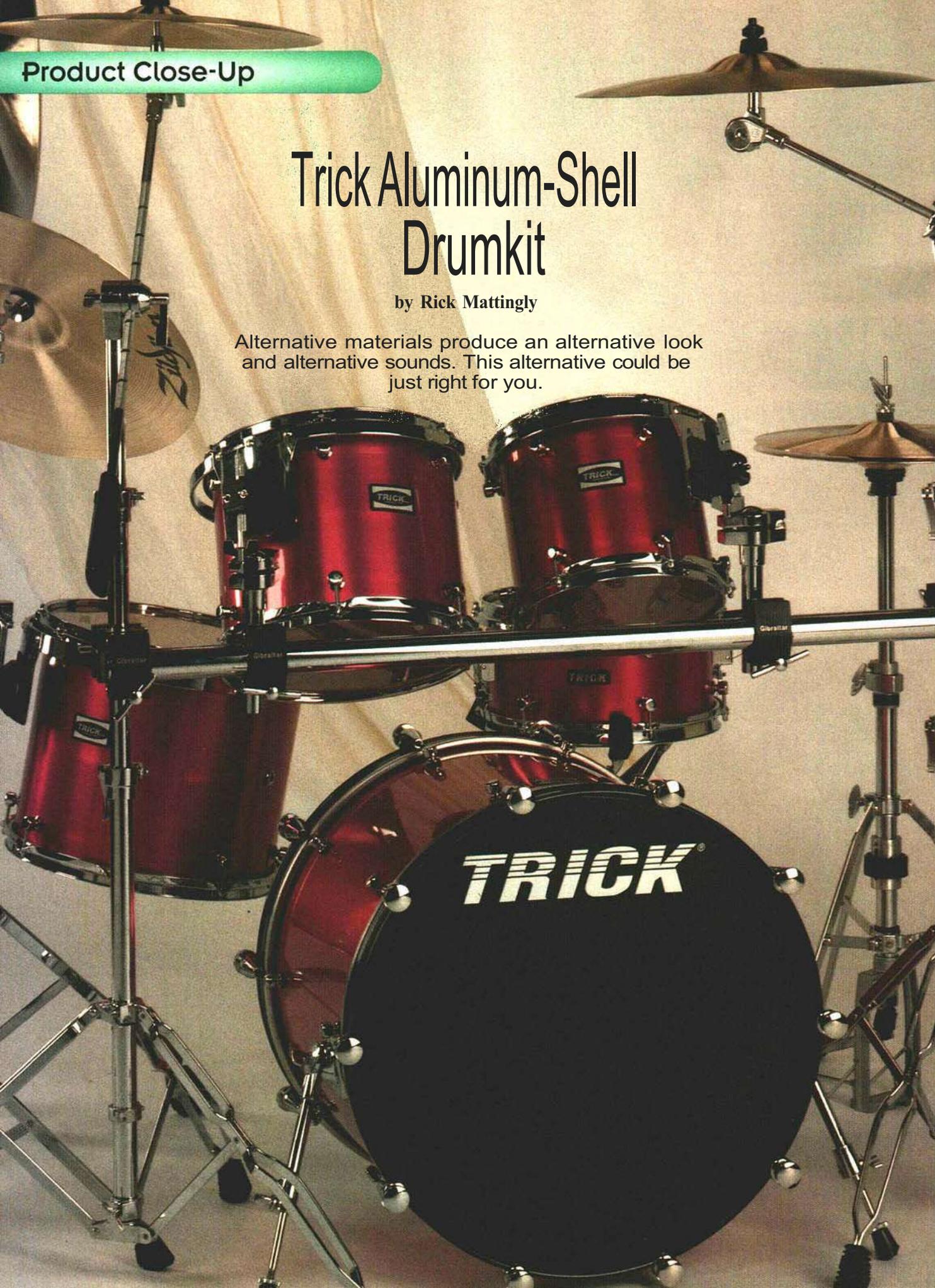
For more information on Tama Drums and Hardware, send \$3.00 (\$4.00 in Canada) to: Tama dept. MDD51, P.O. Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020, or P.O. Box 2009, Idaho Falls, ID 83403. In Canada: 2165-46th Ave., Lachine, Quebec H8T 2P1.

Product Close-Up

Trick Aluminum-Shell Drumkit

by Rick Mattingly

Alternative materials produce an alternative look and alternative sounds. This alternative could be just right for you.



Trick Percussion Products has been making snare drums from aluminum for the past several years. Now the company is offering complete drumkits. For this review, Trick provided us with a kit consisting of a 16x22 bass drum, 9x10, 10x12, and 12x14 toms, and a 6x12 snare drum.

General Description

Although aluminum is lighter than most metals, it is still heavier than wood—and the Trick drums were heavier than any wood kit I've ever schlepped to a gig. On the other hand, Trick's Mike Dorfman informed me that when they compared our test kit to a Tama *Artstar* 8-ply maple kit with identically sized drums, the drums in each kit weighed exactly the same. So apparently Trick drums are only heavier than *some* wood drums.

A seeming advantage of a metal shell over a wood one is its potential consistency. All bearing edges are lathe-cut to 45° angles on both the inside and outside. For the most part the bearing edges seemed flawless, and certainly were smoother and more consistent than those of any wood drum I've ever examined (and most metal drums, too). However, on a couple of the drums, there were some very slight nicks in the bearing edge. I first noticed them visually—since the natural aluminum color was visible. I could also feel the nicks by running my finger over them. What was especially curious was that the pattern of the nicks was exactly duplicated 180° around the shell. According to Mike Dorfman, the problem was caused by the way the drums were held on a rack during the anodizing (finishing) process. Dorfman says that this problem has been addressed and all such defects have been eliminated.

The only other defect I detected was that the shell of the 14" tom was not perfectly joined at its seam. It stuck out just a bit—although not enough to seriously interfere with tuning or overall resonance. As far as I could determine, all of the other shells were perfectly in round.

All tension casings and bass drum claws are solid aluminum, and the lugs are isolated from the shells by nylon gaskets. The bass drum hoops and tuning knobs are steel.

The toms were equipped with RIMS mounts, which are a factory-installed option. Trick will install other tom mounts on the shell for stand mounting, but bass drums are not available with a tom-mounting bracket mounted on the shell. The bass drum spurs are made by Gibraltar.

Our review kit featured a purple anodized finish with a clear powdercoat overlay, which gave the finish a bit of texture and "softened" the glare one would expect from a metal drum. Other than the bearing-edge nicks mentioned earlier, the finish was rich and flawless. The bass drum was especially striking, with its purple shell offset by black hoops. A variety of anodized colors and textured powdercoated finishes are available.

Each shell had two air vents protected by large, screw-on grommets. Whether an air vent in an aluminum shell actually needs such protection is questionable. But a raw hole would give the shell a somewhat unfinished look, so presumably the grommets are there primarily for cosmetic reasons.

Specific Features And Sound

The bass drum was fitted with a Remo black *Ambassador* front head and a *Pinstripe* batter with a Remo *Muff 1*. Right out of the box it sounded good, with enough ring for projection but not so much as to sound overly boomy. There was plenty of punch, and the sound was very deep. I've tested a number of bass drums over the years that have been louder than the Trick bass drum, but they've lacked the Trick drum's power and depth.

The tuning lugs on the bass drum feature large, round, knurled knobs for easy tuning by hand. They offer the convenience of T-handle rods without the inconvenience of having the T-handles sticking out at odd angles. (The two lugs on the bottom of the batter side, near the bass drum pedal, are drumkey-operated.)

The three tom-toms sounded good together and with the bass drum—having comparable depth and resonance. Fitted with clear Remo *Ambassador* heads, they had a fairly dark tone: much like wood drums, but with more resonance than most wood drums produce. Like the bass drum, the sound was somewhat deceptive; the drums didn't appear to be incredibly loud, and yet the sound projected well and easily filled a large room.

Trick has been making aluminum snare drums for several years now, marketed as *Kodiak T6* snare drums. The 6x12 snare we received with the review kit was virtually identical to one of the *Kodiak* snare drums reviewed in the September '92 issue of *MD*. To reiterate, the shell is 3/16" thick. It has six individual tuning lugs for each head, with snare-tension adjustment screws on both the release

and butt mechanisms (which are made by Remo but have been modified so that the screws that hold the snare cable are drumkey-operated).

Because of its 12" diameter, the drum favored high pitches. Yet its 6" depth gave it a lot of body and tremendous ring—to the point that it was almost uncontrollable without any muffling on the top head. (The batter head was a Remo white-coated *Ambassador*; the snare head was also an *Ambassador*.) But with a *Zero*

Ring, the drum produced a dry, fat sound. For those who want a very high-pitched snare drum with more body than the typical shallow-depth piccolo snare, this would be a good choice. But I suspect most players would prefer this type of drum as a secondary, rather than primary, snare drum.

The 12" snare drum is the only one Trick makes that has a seamless, 3/16" shell. Other Trick snare drums have 1/8" shells with seams, like those of the bass drum and toms. According to Dorfman, seamless shells can only be made in the 3/16" thickness, and that would make the larger drums too heavy to carry. Also, Dorfman says, the 1/8" shells favor lower overtones, which gives the drums a deeper, darker sound.

Suggested list prices for the drums reviewed above are as follows: 16x22 bass drum—\$1,375; 9x10 tom—\$485; 10x12 tom—\$495; 12x14 tom—\$515; 6x12 snare drum—\$530. These prices do not include RIMS mounts.

WHAT'S HOT

- bass drum and toms offer power, depth, and tone without overpowering volume
- 6x12 snare drum produces high pitches with good underlying depth
- bass drum features round tuning knobs

WHAT'S NOT

- drums are heavier than some comparable wood models
- test kit included some slight manufacturing flaws

Trick Carbon-Fiber Drumsticks

by Rick Mattingly

Carbon-fiber was developed by the military for use on aircraft and ships—due to its balance between high strength and low weight. Trick has its own patent-pending process for making drumsticks from carbon-fiber, and is currently offering 5A, 5B, and *Rock* models.

My first impression of the sticks was that they were slightly heavier than typical wood versions of the same sizes. But when I spoke with Trick's Mike Dorfman about this, he told me that the sticks are identical in weight—to the gram—to Vic Firth hickory models. He suggested that a *perception* of heaviness might be the result of the way Trick has put the balance point of the stick at its center (while most sticks are balanced more toward the butt). I

WHAT'S HOT

- stick beads pull out a big sound from whatever they hit
- sticks produce tremendous rimshot sounds
- carbon-fiber material makes sticks more durable than wood

WHAT'S NOT

- sticks may be heavier than some comparable hickory models
- some players may experience more "shock" due to stick stiffness

While I appreciate that synthetic sticks tend to last longer than wood sticks (and no trees have to be cut down to manufacture them), I have never been a fan of synthetic sticks because of the

way they transfer shock back into the wrist and hand. However, of the various synthetic sticks I've tried over the years, the Trick carbon-fiber sticks had the most wood-like feel. They were still considerably stiffer than the hickory sticks I prefer, but not unlike oak sticks.



still maintain that the sticks felt heavier than those I normally use, but I will say that they were comparable in overall feel.

The beads are bullet-shaped and produce a big sound from whatever they hit. The sound might be *too* big for low-volume acoustic jazz settings, but excellent for high-volume rock players. The sticks also produce tremendous rimshot sounds.

When I first took the 5As out of the box I noticed that something was rattling inside one of the sticks. After playing on a practice pad for a few minutes, the other one started rattling as well. The sticks appear to be manufactured in halves and glued together, leaving a hollow interior. Perhaps pieces of dried glue broke off on the inside? When playing full-volume on a drumset the rattle wasn't audible, but on a practice pad it was annoying. I did my best to abuse the 5B and *Rock* models to the point that they would develop a rattle as well, but I was unsuccessful. In all fairness I must report that the sticks we received for review were the first to be produced. (In order to meet the deadline, Trick didn't even have time to apply their logo to the sticks.) Presumably, the company will have time to exercise a bit more quality control on the sticks sent out to dealers.

Of course, the amount of shock that is transferred into the hands is not just a matter of the stick material. Holding a stick correctly and being able to release on impact is ultimately more crucial than what the stick is made from. Even with a flexible hickory stick, if the player is not so much striking the drum as having a collision with it, there will be a certain amount of shock transferred into the hand.

Having had the good fortune to work with Joe Morello, I learned how to hold sticks with a totally relaxed grip. Nevertheless, when it comes to rimshots, I'm still on a collision course, and that's where I've most noticed the lack of shock absorption in most synthetic sticks. In my failed attempt to make the Trick 5B and *Rock* models rattle, I played more rimshots than I normally would to review sticks—and I didn't feel that an unreasonable amount of shock was coming back into my hands.

Drummers who prefer the flex of a hickory stick may still find the carbon-fiber sticks a bit stiff, but those used to the feel of oak sticks might very well find that the Trick sticks are a viable alternative. List price is \$37.95 per pair.

ADM Block Shell Snare Drum

by Rich Watson



Custom snare drums have been coming out of the cottage industry woodwork lately with design innovations, materials, and feature combinations that challenge long-standing drum-making conventions. The "land down under's" ADM (Australian Drum Manufacturers) Custom Drums have re-entered the fray with a line of block shell drums that just may turn *your* drum-selection decisions upside down.

ADM's block shell design employs vertical blocks of wood that are glued together and carved into a cylinder. The drum sent for review was a 6½x14 jarrah wood model, constructed of thirty angle-cut blocks, each about 13/8" wide at the shell's exterior. Its satin oil finish exposed the natural allure of this unusual wood, which is similar in color to teak, but with distinctive grain patterns. A single, mid-shell air hole was centered in an oval, gold-colored metal nameplate. The drum was fitted with Remo *Ambassador* heads.

According to ADM founder and president Karl George, the

WHAT'S HOT

- superb balance of low/high frequencies regardless of tuning
- great snare sensitivity
- many feature and design options

WHAT'S NOT

- Sleishman tuning system hides some of the shell's beauty

drum's shell thickness of approximately 12mm was chosen to provide sufficient glue/wood contact area to ensure that the shell withstands the pressure exerted by highly tensioned heads. The drum's snare beds are kept shallow to minimize snare buzz and the usual slight tension distortion that normally occurs at those points on the snare head. Bearing edges are cut to a relatively sharp 45°.

All ADM drums are offered with two head tensioning options. One involves solid brass tubular lugs that are attached directly to the shell at two small contact points. The other, considerably more unusual, is the patented Sleishman Drum Tensioning System. The test drum was Sleishman-equipped.

The Sleishman system consists of a chrome-plated steel hoop that encircles the drum shell (on the test drum at approximately 2" above the bottom rim) and that is penetrated by rather long, chrome-plated, 3/8" square-stock brass lugs. The test drum had twelve pairs of lugs. On snare drums, the strainer is also bolted to the Sleishman hoop. In effect, the hardware becomes a kind of "skeleton" that surrounds—but at no point touches—the shell. As a matter of fact, except for the nameplate, the *only* things touching the shell are the heads! This total elimination of shell-hardware contact is said to create a "stress free" environment for the drum shell. Both the elegant simplicity of the principle and the performance of the test drum suggests that Mr. Sleishman has a winner here.

I should point out, however, one Sleishman system attribute that may not be self-evident—at least it wasn't to me. Quite unlike conventional lugs, which allow a drum's top and bottom heads to be tensioned independently, the Sleishman system effectively

"averages" the tension between the heads—and to a degree around each head—since there are no mechanisms on the shell that would provide fixed, independent points of resistance. This achieves what many drum manufacturers seem to be seeking of late: to acoustically isolate resonance inhibitors, and to integrate and unify contact components as much as possible so that each becomes a part of, instead of an inhibitor to, the drum's overall resonance. However, drummers who prefer disparately tuned top and bottom heads (or front and back heads on bass drums) should "test drive" Sleishman-equipped drums—especially toms and kicks—to confirm their ability to produce the desired sounds.

The drum's snare response was exceptional at all tunings and dynamic levels. I find this all the more impressive in a 6 1/2" shell, which can tend to sacrifice low-dynamic snare sensitivity for the meatier tone.

Despite the fact that the bearing edges were not perfectly flat, the drum tuned quickly and easily. Its effective pitch range was about what I'd expect from a 6 1/2" shell. When cranked to the max, strokes on the head alone tended to choke a bit, although rimshots were still quite penetrating. However, when I backed off the tension to a more moderate tuning, the drum's natural voice opened up like Pavarotti on a good day. The result wasn't so much a sustained ring, but a very balanced tone, neither fat nor "throaty," but pleasingly round. Even tuned to the upper limits of what I judged to be its optimum tuning range, the drum's warm lower sound component remained. This, along with the superb snare sensitivity,

suggests that the ADM would be a strong and versatile performer in the studio.

Regarding aesthetics, it's easy to see why jarrah wood is often used to make fine furniture in Australia; it is indeed exquisite. In addition to the rubbed oil finish, drums are available in a variety of stained and lacquer finishes. ADM apparently made no attempt to match the grain patterns of the shell blocks on the test drum, as some are fine and linear, whereas others are bolder and/or more "bark-like." To my eye, this variegation only enhances the drum's appearance, emphasizing the unusual block design and the visual "wildness" of the wood itself. I can't say as much for the formidable 1"-high Sleishman hoop and its 3 1/4"-long lugs, which obscured some of that beautiful wood. Yes, it's unavoidable; form clearly follows function here.

Because ADMs are in every sense "custom" drums, they can be ordered with a broad range of options and construction variations. Most basic among them is a choice of wood. Snare drums are also available in she oak, another Western Australian hardwood that is even harder than jarrah. ADM's Karl George says that she oak shells tend to accentuate high frequencies, producing a bright, penetrating sound akin to metal shells, but retaining the more organic warmth of wood.

Another compelling option to consider is ADM's newly introduced *HR* (high resonance) line of drum shells. *HR* drums' interiors are carved to a thinner 5mm around their mid-sections, but the top and bottom are left at the standard 12mm thickness to serve as glue-less reinforcement rings. *HR* shells are available on all toms and bass drums, whose shells are subject to relatively low surface tension, but only on snare drums with the Sleishman system, whose metal hoop bears most of the stress.

Snare drums with the Sleishman system come standard with a generic strainer with twenty-strand wire snares. Drums with tube lugs are equipped with a Mapex strainer, but ADM also happily accommodates special-ordered hardware. Die-cast hoops are available on 14" snare drums at an additional cost of about \$85.

Besides all of these options, snare drums can be ordered with specified, non-standard bearing edge angles, and shells are available in 10", 12", 13", and 14" diameters in depths from 4 1/2" to 8". Also, shells can be drilled for other brands of hardware, or left "bare" and undrilled.

With so many ways to customize an ADM order, just about anyone could "design" the snare drum of their dreams. The combination of the vertical block construction and the Sleishman tuning system produces a sound that is simultaneously crisp and exceptionally full-bodied. And if you could still ask for more, their exotic hardwood shells are distinctive and strikingly beautiful.

Retail prices range from \$480 to \$685. As reviewed, the drum lists for \$640. For more information, contact ADM Custom Drums Australia Pty. Ltd., First Floor, 47-49 Stirling Hwy., Nedlands, Western Australia 6009/P.O. Box 584, Wembley, Western Australia 6014, tel: 61 9 386 2001, fax: 61 9 386 7121.



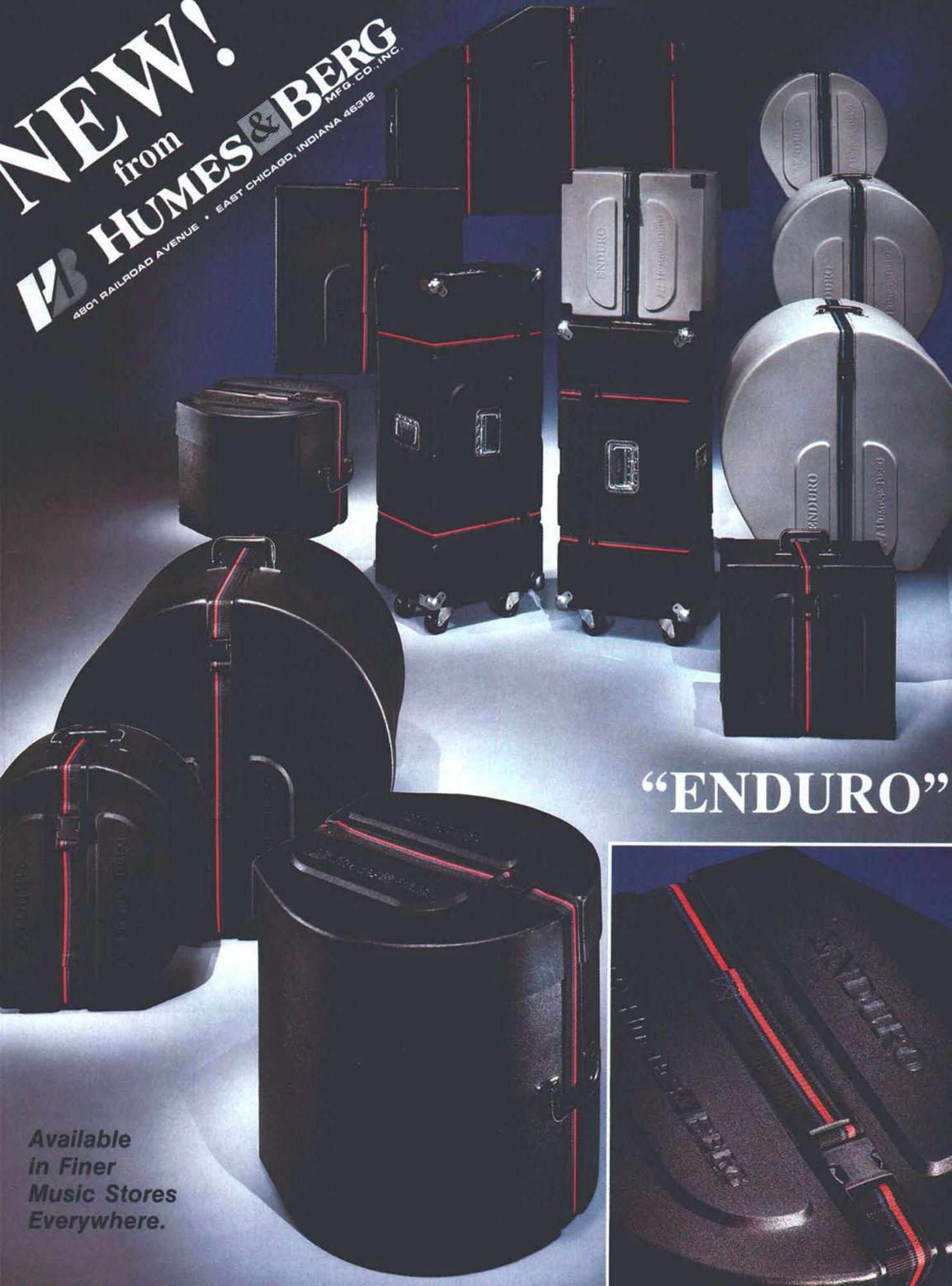
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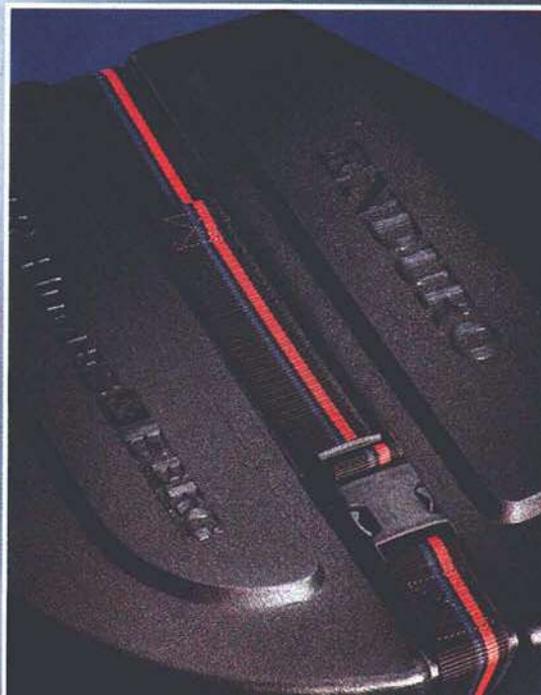
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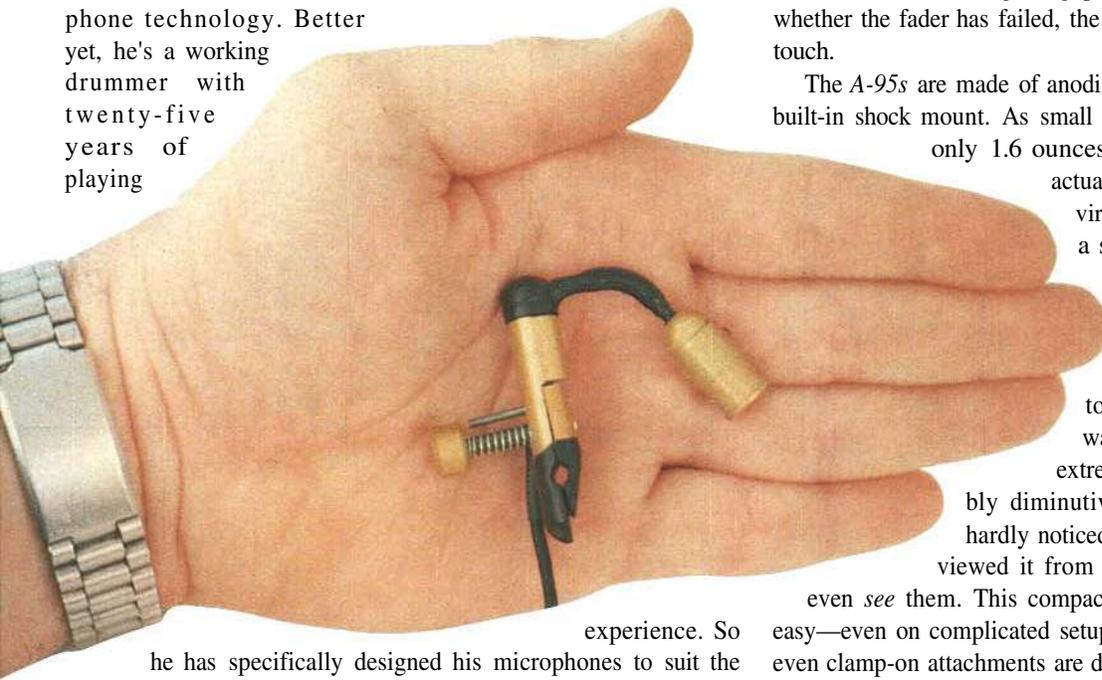
Applied Microphone Technology Drum Mics

by Rick Van Horn

How can something you can barely see sound this good?

One of the great joys of doing reviews for *MD* is that from time to time I get to "debut" a new or little-known product that I think has tremendous potential. Such is the case with Applied Microphone Technology's new drum mic's. AMT is a small outfit that has chosen to put their limited financial resources into product development rather than advertising—so you may not have heard much about them. But just because the company is small doesn't mean they can't make a great product.

AMT's microphone designer is Marty Paglione. He's a creative guy who's tremendously knowledgeable about microphone technology. Better yet, he's a working drummer with twenty-five years of playing



experience. So he has specifically designed his microphones to suit the needs of real-world drummers playing in every conceivable situation—from clubs and casual gigs to studios or concert stages.

AMT's current line consists of two models: the *A-95* snare and tom mic' and the *M-40* bass drum mic'. Each model is designed to be as compact and unobtrusive as possible while offering the most

"transparent" reproduction of sound possible. ("Transparent," for those who aren't into audio technology jargon, simply means that the sound is reproduced exactly as it is, with no additional high- or low-end emphasis or other sound coloration added by the microphone itself.)

Descriptions

The AMT *A-95* snare and tom mic' is an ultra-miniature microphone designed to clip on to the rim of any drum. The clip portion is a shaft about two inches tall and 3/8" in diameter. From this shaft extends a tiny gooseneck that holds the mic' itself, which is 3/8" long and also about 3/8" in diameter. You can comfortably hold the entire mic' assembly in the palm of your hand.

The mic's are super-cardioid condensers, and they require phantom power from your sound board. Because of this, AMT has built a small LED phantom-power indicator into each mic' so that if a drum-mic' channel isn't working, you can instantly tell whether or not the mic' itself is getting power (rather than worrying about whether the fader has failed, the cable has shorted, etc.) It's a nice touch.

The *A-95s* are made of anodized aluminum, and they feature a built-in shock mount. As small and light as they are (they weigh only 1.6 ounces, including their cable), they're actually pretty rugged. They attach to virtually any drum rim by means of a spring clip that's fast and easy to use but still secure under normal playing. The result of this is that in the event you hit them with a stick, they're more liable to simply be knocked out of the way than damaged. But that event is extremely unlikely given their incredibly diminutive size. When I played the kit I hardly noticed that the mic's were there; when I viewed it from the audience area I could barely even see them. This compact size also makes mic' placement easy—even on complicated setups where mic' stands, booms, and even clamp-on attachments are difficult to use.

The *M-40* bass-drum mic' is actually a two-part system. The mic' unit is a 2"-long by 3/8"-diameter tube set on a 2"x1 1/2" base-plate. The plate is there just to give the mic' a place to sit securely when placed inside a bass drum. A small cable connects the mic' to a 1"x1"x3" active-electronics box from which the performance

of the microphone can be tailored. (More on this later.) Only the mic' goes in the bass drum; the box would be placed on the floor. Once again, the mic' is so small as to be virtually invisible, yet durable enough to withstand the rigors of repeated use.

In terms of mic' placement, the obvious method is simply to put it on a muffling pillow inside the drumshell. In fact, the mic's tiny size provides the option to permanently affix it inside the drum. For those who play with no hole in their front head, Marty Paglione has designed a mount that clamps to the front bass-drum hoop and puts the mic' conveniently in front of the drum.

The Test Format

I conducted this review under slightly different circumstances than others I've done in the past. Marty set up a test situation with a set of AMT mic's placed on a high-quality drumkit in the Cabaret Room at Seasons Resort and Conference Center at Great Gorge, in McAfee, New Jersey. On the same kit Marty also placed a selection of the major microphone models commonly used for drum miking.

The purpose of listening to other microphones along with the AMT mic's was not to judge one against the other, A/B fashion. Marty simply wanted me to have a point of reference for state-of-the-art microphone performance.

I played the drums myself to get a solid idea of their sound from behind the kit. Then I went out into the house and listened to the drums played by another drummer (the talented Mr. Terry Bissette) in order to hear their sound from that position. This all took place before *any* mic's were turned on. Then, with the able assistance of Seasons house sound engineer Dave Tassej and sound consultant Roger Page, I was given free rein to work with the various microphones—comparing features like sensitivity, headroom, gain before feedback, frequency range, responsiveness to EQ adjustments, and overall clarity. By going through this listening process I established my own parameters of outstanding drum-mic' performance. Only *then* did I have the AMT mic's turned on.

Some drummers—and many sound engineers—are wary of using condenser mic's on drums. This is primarily due to their sensitivity (or "gain structure"), which can make them difficult to control. They often have to be attenuated ("padded") to a large degree before they can work effectively, and this can create problems with balancing the overall mix on the sound board. But Marty has taken this into account, and has specifically tailored the gain structure of the AMT mic's to be only 3 dB more sensitive than a Shure SM57 dynamic mic'. In this way the mic's still offer some of the sensitivity advantage provided by a condenser, but they also are as easy to control as a dynamic. Sound engineer Dave Tassej underscored the effectiveness of this feature, saying, "The fact that the AMTs were con-

WHAT'S HOT

- exceptionally accurate sound reproduction
- ultra-compact size makes placement easy and mic's inconspicuous
- responsiveness is designed for real-world applications
- bass drum mic' can be tailored for specific sound qualities

densers scared me at first. But the only one I padded for use in our showroom was the kick-drum mic'—and that only slightly. They're super controllable."

Microphone Performance

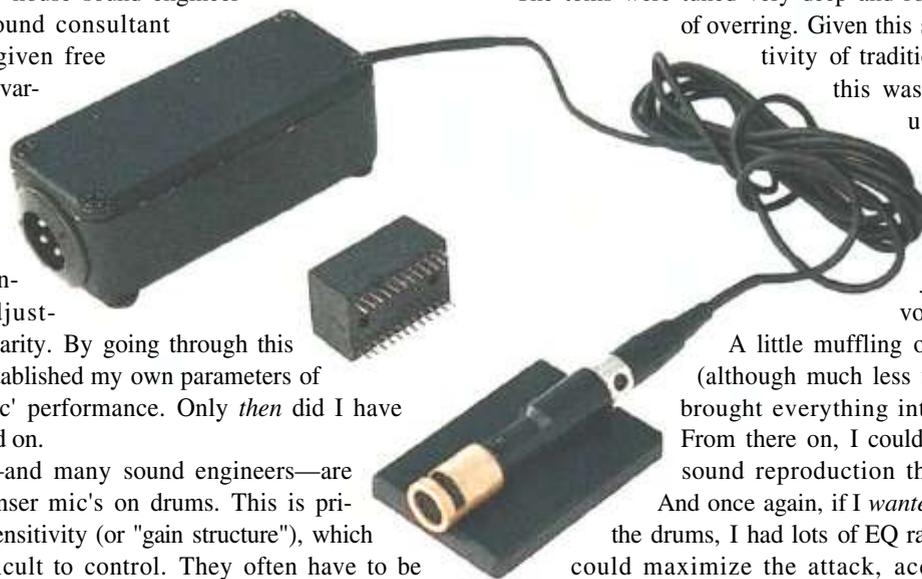
The A-95 snare and tom mic' was *incredibly* accurate in terms of how it reproduced the sounds it heard. In fact, when the mic' was run at a low gain level I couldn't even tell it was *on*, the sound was so much like that of the "live" drum. When we ran the fader up a bit, the drum sound changed in only one respect: It got louder. This was based on a virtually flat EQ setting. When I deliberately worked with the EQ to *change* the drum sound, I was able to do that quite effectively. The drum's acoustic sound was pretty deep and mellow; I was able to add a little high-end boost to bring out the attack and the crispness. The beauty of this was that I didn't lose any of the low end or body of the drum sound in the process. The A-95's frequency response allowed me a wide range of adjustment with no sacrifices.

The toms were tuned very deep and round-sounding, with lots of overring. Given this situation—and the sensitivity of traditional condenser mic's—this was a formula for disaster under normal circumstances. But the gain structure of the A-95 allowed me to control a lot of the overring just by adjusting the volume level of the mic'.

A little muffling on the drums themselves (although much less than you might expect) brought everything into total controllability. From there on, I could just enjoy the accurate sound reproduction that the mic's provided.

And once again, if I *wanted* to alter the tonality of the drums, I had lots of EQ range in which to do it. I could maximize the attack, accentuate the depth, or achieve a combination of both with a minimal amount of EQ adjustment. At all times and under all EQ settings the mic's projected the drum sound with good definition and clarity—even on busy drum patterns.

The M-40 kick-drum mic' had *lots* of headroom for plenty of control range. I ran it with very little attenuation, and it still allowed for lots of fader boost before distorting (good for those who like a kick drum that rattles the walls). Yet it also transmitted a full, round, *complete* bass drum sound at a low volume—which



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some popular dynamic bass-drum mic's don't do.

The bass drum itself was muffled and tuned so as to be pretty flat and dull (a typical studio sound), so I experimented with EQ-ing the *M-40* to achieve different tonalities. It responded beautifully: A small amount of low-end boost gave me a deeper, fatter drum without any accompanying "muddiness." I had to add a proportionately greater amount of high-end EQ to get a more pointed attack sound, but the result was more than satisfactory. I'd say that the *M-40* favors the low end, with exceptional clarity in that range. This isn't surprising, given its intended purpose, but it actually has a pretty impressive overall frequency range. According to Marty Paglione, the mic's offer a frequency response of 50 Hz to 20 kHz and can withstand sound pressure levels (SPLs) of up to 141 dB.

Now, this is where the active electronics I mentioned earlier come in. The box that the *M-40* connects to contains a replaceable computer chip that permits what's called "wave shaping" with each microphone. The chip controls the mic's gain structure, frequency response, and frequency curve. Through the use of different chips, drummers or engineers can actually have their *M-40s* tailored to suit their particular tastes or applications. For example, an *M-40* could be adjusted to suit their familiarization with other mic's, or it could be "fine-tuned" to suit the acoustics of a given room. This versatility adds to the *M-40's* value. AMT plans to offer updated chips direct to end users. The chips will be exchanged at no cost; if the user wishes to acquire additional chips they'll be priced around \$25. (A sound engineer might want to take advantage of this option, since it would make it possible to have a "selection" of high-quality microphones at \$25 apiece.)

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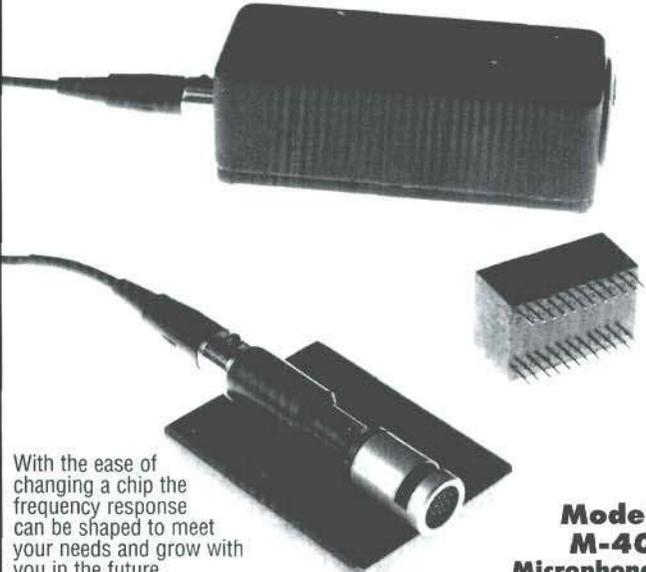
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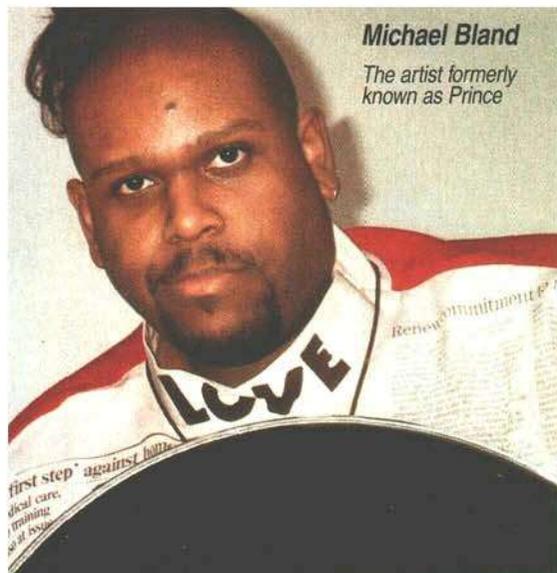
Model M-40 Microphone

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Conclusions And Prices

I was really impressed with the performance of the Applied Microphone Technology mic's. They provided sound reproduction and adjustment capabilities equal to or better than almost any microphone I've ever heard. They provided convenience and positioning flexibility that exceeds that of almost any mic' on the market. They're designed by a drummer—with features that apply to real-world drumming applications. Given all of that, I honestly think the AMT microphones represent a major step forward in drum-mic' technology.

And the best thing is, they don't cost an arm and a leg. A set of four A-95s, with a carrying case, will have a list price of \$790 (which will be discounted to around \$600 by most major retailers). The M-40, owing to its greater electronic sophistication, will list for \$350. These aren't budget prices, but they are certainly competitive with other condenser systems on the market—and with many popular high-end dynamic mic's, as well. As I said earlier, there's a good chance you may not have heard of Applied Microphone Technology, but you owe it to yourself to check out their exceptional products. If the mic's are not in your local drum shop, contact Applied Microphone Technology, P.O. Box 33, Livingston, NJ 07039, tel: (201) 992-7699, fax: (201) 994-5139.



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After playing for thirty years, I decided to take a year away from performing in order to devote time to some serious study. Under the guidance of master teacher Fred Gruber, I ended up basically starting over, "reinventing" myself, and changing absolutely everything about the way I approach the drums, both physically and mentally.

As part of the process, I began to desire an instrument, a "voice" which reflected this "new/old" me. A voice which could be both traditional and innovative, with unparalleled tone and response. I found this "new/old" vision exemplified in the drums and the people of Drum Workshop.

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— Neil Peart

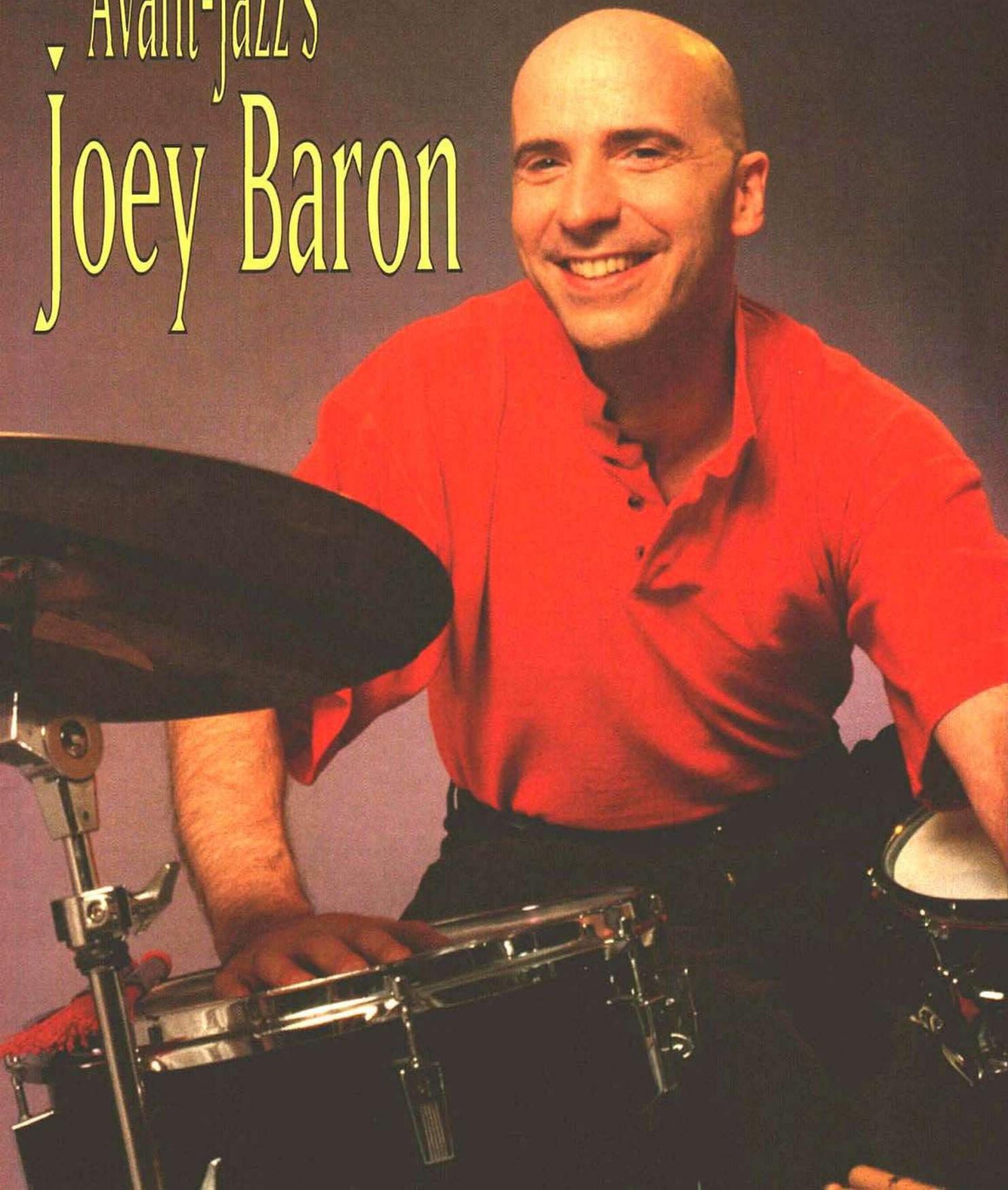
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Avant-jazz's
Joey Baron



By Ken Micallef

It's a summer day back in 1975, and Joey Baron is late. He's on the way to audition for his hero, the legendary, lusty-throated singer Carmen McRae. Baron is a jumble of nerves. He's lost, the police are literally on his tail, and his hair is falling out.

"At that point I had a beard and long hair," recalls the now shaven-headed drummer. "There I was, totally lost and driving around Beverly Hills in my Ford Econoline van. The police started following me, probably because this was around the time that Charles Manson had committed all those murders—they must have thought I looked like him. My heart was pumping, I was late, and I was trying not to freak out.

"I finally found Carmen's house. She actually had to come out and tell the police it was okay for me to be there. She walked back inside, and I was shaking. I took my drums in, unpacked the trap case, and set up. I didn't know the piano player or the bass player, so I was totally intimidated. I sat down, and she called 'Clear Day.' I thought to myself, 'No problem.' I know her arrangement—heard it a million times. We started the tune, and after eight bars Carmen stopped us. She was sitting across from me, looking down at the floor. She breathed a sigh and sort of shook her head—and I broke out in a sweat. She looked up at me and didn't even crack a smile. I figured I'd better head for the door. She says, 'You got the gig, motherfucker.' I screamed and jumped up. She was being deadpan 'cause people had told her about me."

What people had told Carmen McRae about Joey Baron was that this is a drummer with a single-minded vision. Back then, that vision was to play swing with the woman whose rhythmic gifts were equaled only by the outstanding drummers she employed. Today, Joey Baron's vision is to be the most creative and unusually independent drummer he can be. While many musicians take the first avenue that leads to monetary success, Baron's goal has been to grow as a musician, not to line his pockets with quick cash.

Joey Baron is the rare drummer who constantly surprises both musicians and audience. In mid-performance he might suddenly swing his snare

drum over and start playing on the "wrong" head. Or, for just a bar or two, he'll drop the sticks and play the snare drum with his hands, or grab a cowbell off the floor and make it erupt as the rhythmic center of the groove.

With Bill Frisell, the guitarist with whom he has recorded seven albums, Joey is the blood and bones of the music, shading it with unusual timbres or driving it mad with a combination of joyful creativity and eclectic, mood-altering rhythms. Often, he'll play hopscotch for an entire song, barely settling down to play a standard groove. But with Joey it *always* grooves—in its own way—whether it's with the Ornette Coleman-meets-Klezmer music of Knitting Factory guru John Zorn, or the avant-scapes of Laurie Anderson.

Baron spent his twenties in California playing with Hampton Hawes, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, Chet Baker, Herb Ellis, and Carmen McRae, but eventually made his way to New York. Once there he became known for his marvelous ability to create a unique statement that was both musically supportive and wonderfully witty.

Now, with his own trio, Barondown, Joey's gifts are on full display. With a line-up of drums, trombone, and tenor sax, the trio catapults into thoroughly unknown territory. Wild sambas collide with feisty strip beats; free improvisation leads to oddball versions of bossa nova standards; impossibly fast swing dovetails with the horse-hoofing walk of a country 8 western finale.

But Joey Baron does nothing for simple shock value. He just hears things differently than the rest of us. Ask him why he didn't take the latest David Bowie tour offered him (after playing on Bowie's recent disc, *Outside*), and he'll tell you about an upcoming gig with his trio in Germany. When called for a spot with seminal jazz pianist Bill Evans back in the '70s, Joey turned it down (along with the instant fame that would have followed) to play jazz seven nights a week with friends. By remaining true to the music he loves, Joey Baron has evolved into one of the most remarkably creative—dare we say "revolutionary"—drummers of the '90s.

Inside The Mind Of One Of Drumming's Most Creative Thinkers

Photos by Ebet Roberts

KM: I understand that you were a magician as a child.

JB: I learned a few tricks.

KM: Your playing is like a magician's sleight of hand. You're always pulling these unusual and surprising things out of the hat; you never take the obvious route musically.

JB: What you're hearing is actually based on ordinary things. There are a lot of records I'm on where you can hardly tell I'm there. It's just a function of the way people treat me as the drummer. The hero is the singer or the horn

player or whoever. So what you're hearing is rooted in ordinary things—that's where I start. It's a long process that started when I was nine.

KM: Were you always attracted to sounds that seemed different?

JB: That's the real secret, if there is a secret to what I do. You have to keep in mind my background: I come from a poor, working-class Jewish family. My ancestry goes back to Russia. When I started, nobody in my family was a career musician, so I didn't have a jaded idea of music. When I heard something, it wasn't presented to me as "This is the good stuff or "This is the not-so-good stuff." When you're young, you make up your mind about what you like and what you don't like.

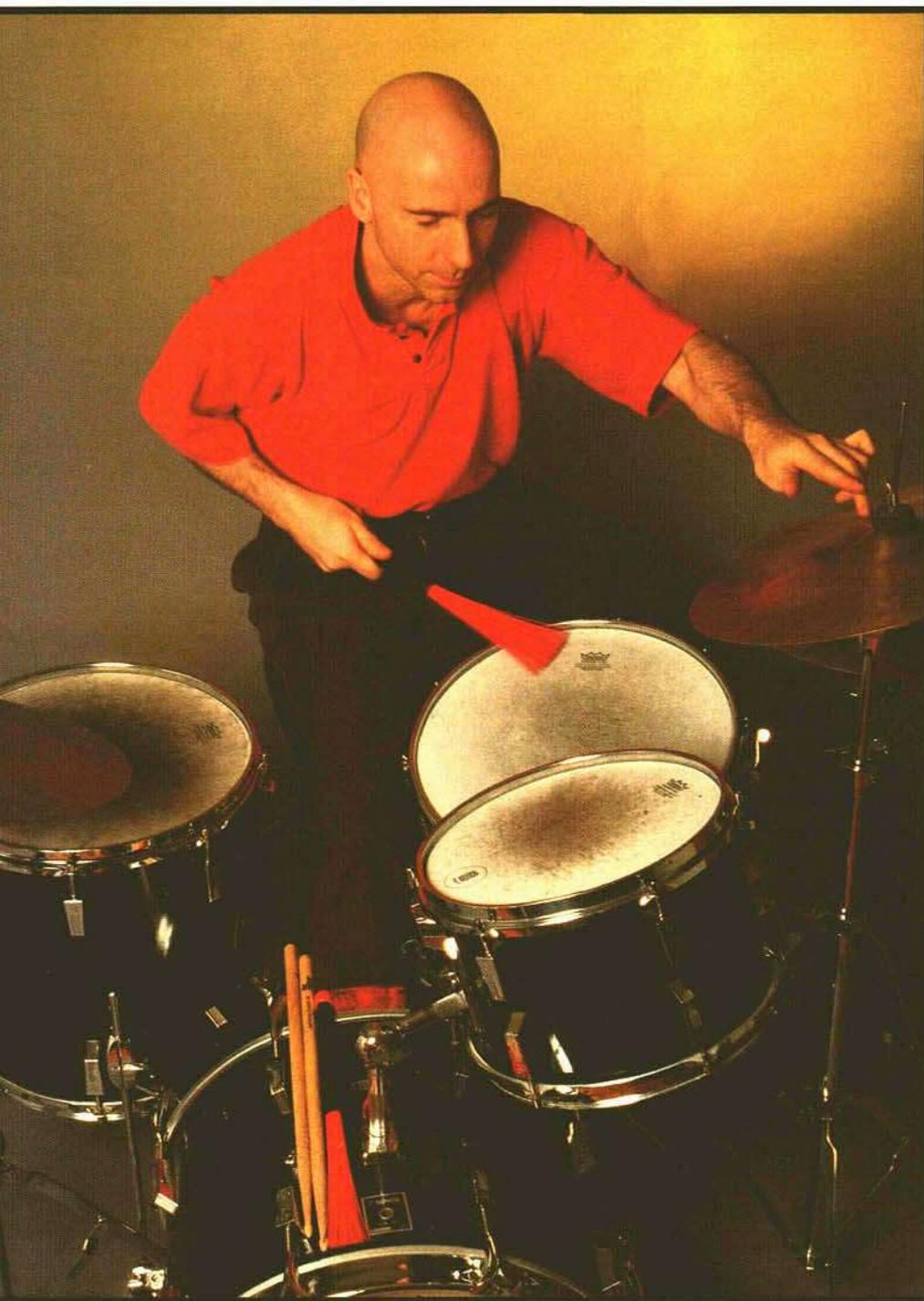
KM: What was the first record that impressed you?

JB: We listened to the radio. Being poor, we didn't have a lot of records or stereo equipment. My brother had a portable Magnavox, which I used. My first influence was music that was played on television shows and commercials. We're talking 1964, so it was things like Ed Sullivan, the *Tonight Show*.... Back then the formats weren't as restricted as they are now. There was a wider variety of music on television then—and on the radio. It wasn't "all jazz all the time." Just within an inch on the dial you could hear Patsy Cline, Jimmy Smith, Ray Charles, Buddy Rich, and Miles Davis...and all these stations dovetailed. There was no separation of the music. I think when a person is treated like that, not told how hard or how good something is, he or she can take it all in.

KM: So from a drumming perspective, the first thing you learned to play was probably not an 8th-note rock beat.

JB: Gene Krupa was still a big deal then. And Ringo Starr was very visible. The biggest influences, though, were my mother and father, Dora and Jack Baron, and my two older brothers, Bruce and Alvin. Alvin had Mongo Santamaria and Dave Brubeck records, and Bruce loved Ray Charles.

When I started playing a snare



drum, which I had bought with money I saved mowing grass, I just played along with the radio. I made a whole set out of the snare drum, trying to get all sorts of sounds out of it. Later, when we could afford a stereo, I played to my brother's records: Mongo Santamaria, Wes Montgomery's *California Dreamin'*, a *Readers Digest* record of the *William Tell Overture*, Buddy Rich's *Big Swing Face*, and Jimmy Smith's *Organ Grinder Swing*. I stacked them up and played along. These records were very influential to me simply because I liked them, not because of an intellectual thing. It was wonderful. They were live records, where you could hear people enjoying themselves. It was an incredible feeling to be a part of that.

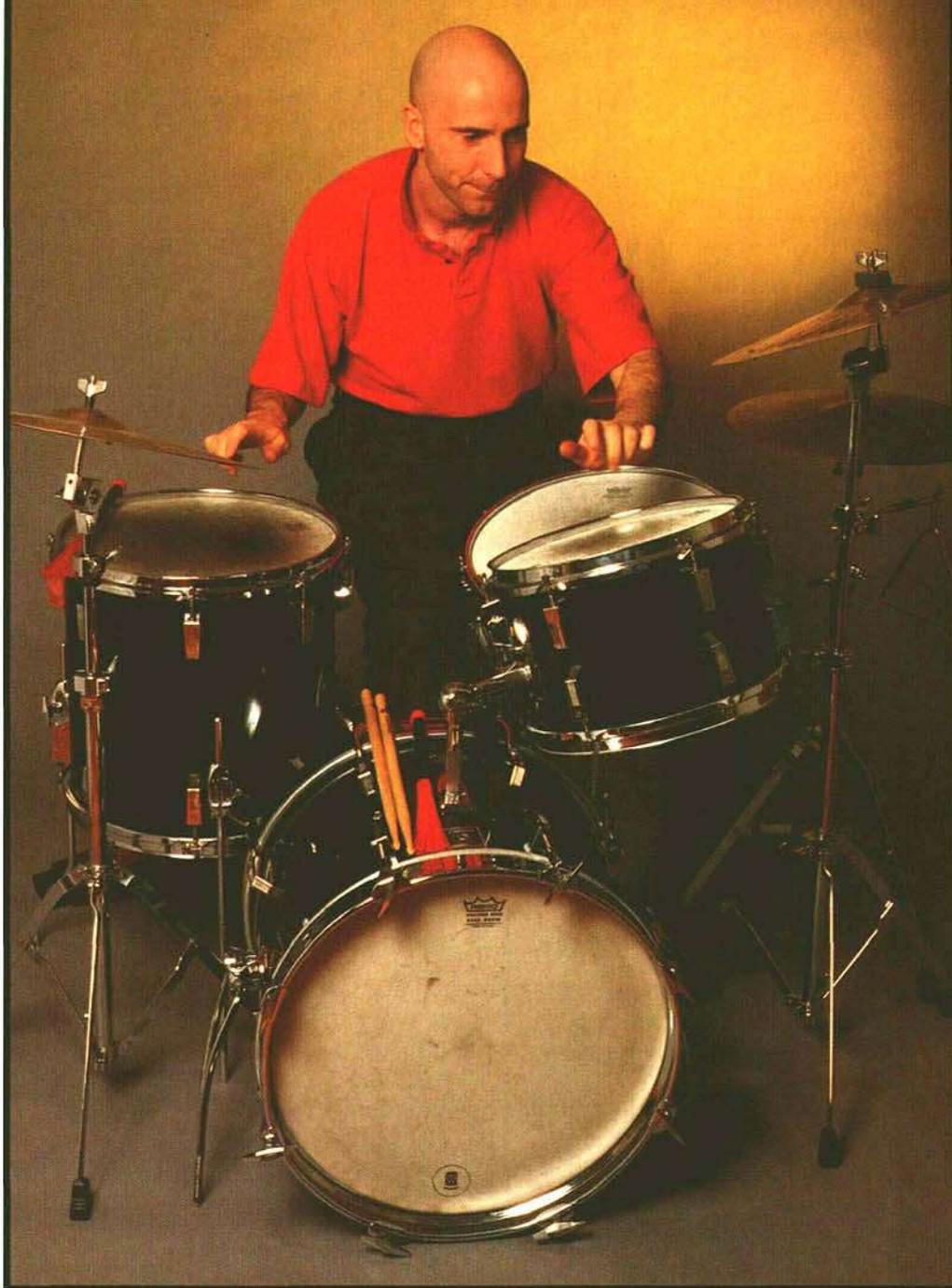
So I played along to a lot of different things, from Mongo to Jimi Hendrix to the Beatles, and a lot of singles as well because they were cheaper than albums. I didn't realize that something was jazz or that something else was rock. It was all fun. That's the basis of why I play like I do. It was presented to me in a very open fashion. And I was very fortunate because some parents don't have the patience to listen to their children practice.

KM: Does coming from a poor family help that?

JB: Working-class families are good at being close, because that's what you have, you have each other. There's a shortage of material things, but you do know how to be close. My parents didn't know anything about drumming, but they gave me the time to figure it out. They really encouraged me. I think that's why people sail in some areas and struggle in others. You need people—you need a support team—and that shapes your picture of the world.

KM: What were the first bands you played in?

JB: The first band was the school band in the fourth grade—concert style, no jazz. I played the bass drum, snare drum, and cymbals. I fig-



"In my jazz-snob sense I thought that these people were 'out' and couldn't play. Then all of a sudden something clicked. I realized that there were no expectations, no one telling me what to do. It was up to *me* to bring something to the situation."

ured out a way to play all three by putting a beater in my shoe and hitting the bass drum with it. Our teacher let us work up an arrangement of "Louie Louie" for fun. We played that riff over and over. We also did the stock marches. Our teacher encouraged us. This is the crux of why I do what I do. She supported my talent and steered me toward a drum teacher, Mr. McClure, at Boykin's music shop. He taught me how to read. He was very thorough in the way he

taught me. I don't read much these days but....

KM: Really? It sounds like you would have to read with someone like Frisell.

JB: It's more about thinking of the big picture. You think about the form, not so much the drums. My head is not in the drums.

KM: That shows in your playing, in that it doesn't literally reference a lot of drummers. Did your technique come naturally or did you spend hours practicing?

JB: I loved the drums when I started. It's all I could think about. I played all the time, practicing six hours a day. I would carefully organize my practice time: an hour on reading, an hour on working on my lesson, an hour on technique, an hour on *Stick Control*, an hour on the left hand, an hour on brushes.... I was very concise about the information. I took it very seriously. It gets back to people respecting you that way, taking you seriously because you love something. My family didn't interfere. That was as crucial as what I practiced.

I would see Buddy Rich—and let's face it, he was very inspirational. I know some people hate what he did, but whether you hate it or not, you cannot deny the technical excellence he achieved. It's very inspiring to see anybody doing anything well. I dreamed of having hands and feet as fast as his. I thought, "If I just keep on doing it...." I tried everything, practicing with 3S sticks and with metal sticks, and spending even more time on technique.

Fortunately, I was able to meet people who were older than me and into music. They told me to stop worrying about chops. Bill Lohr, a pianist, and Tom Redman, a drummer, introduced me to records like Miles Davis's *My Funny Valentine*. They helped me to not get hung up on technique. They opened me up to the world of music that swung. Slowly, I took it all in.

I'd been playing along with Buddy Rich's solos, I had achieved a certain amount of chops, and I knew how to get around the drums. As far as what to do with it, though, I didn't have a clue. And at a certain

point I realized that I wasn't going to get there. My left hand just wasn't going to do what Buddy Rich's did. That was reinforced by an interview with Art Blakey where he said, "Whatever you've got, hang onto it. Build on it." I interpreted that as meaning you shouldn't throw anything away. To this day I'll still do things the way I did when I first hit a drum.

KM: Like what?

JB: Like hitting a drum and letting the stick cascade across the head. When I think that sound is applicable I'll do it. I used to drop sticks a lot when I was a kid, but I only owned one pair of sticks. So when one stick was gone, all that was left was my hand, and that's how I started playing

with my hands [as on "Tab," from Bill Frisell's *This Land*]. I've also tried to use things in different ways, like playing a snare drum on its side. What other sounds can I get with this? What is this capable of?

I'll play on the snare-side head to get the Swiss drummer sound, or scrape the snares. When I want a different sound for a particular section, I'll scope out a space where I can flip the drum over, if only for a minute. I think a trademark of my style involves my getting a lot from a minimal arsenal of equipment. I just have hi-hats, a ride, a crash, a sizzle, and a four-piece kit.

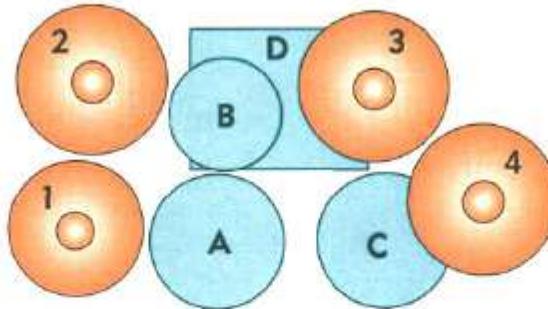
KM: The cowbell is also an integral part of your sound.

JB: The cowbell's just laying on the floor, so when I hear a spot for it I'll pick it up and put it wherever I can. I'm not too precious about it. My approach is to keep thinking and to keep the foundation. Also, the context matters. With Frisell, the context is not the same as with someone playing a show. The context allows me to do certain things. That's why I play with these types of people. I like having the freedom, and yet I do have the background, so if it is required of me to just lay something down, I can do it. But really, all of the stuff I do that sounds so abstract actually came out of my working club dates, weddings, fashion shows—

gigs where the drummer is required to keep the beat.

KM: So you had experience with all these different types of gigs?

Baron's Setup



Drumset: Sonor *Phonic* (from 1975) in black finish

- A. 5 ½ x 14 L Ludwig chrome snare
- B. 8x12 tom
- C. 14x14 floor tom
- D. 14x18 bass drum

Cymbals: Various

1. 14" Spizz hi-hats (by Roberto Spizzichino)
2. 16" Zildjian A crash
3. 16" Spizz ride with a 1" flanged edge
4. 16" Spizz swish with two rivets

Hardware: Pearl hi-hat and cymbal stands (their lightweight models), DW bass drum pedal (occasionally a double pedal) with hard felt beater

Heads: Remo coated *Ambassadors* on all drums, with no hole in front bass drum head

Sticks: Vic Firth *American Classic 5B* with wood tip, Regal Tip brushes

"I made up my mind that I would take what I love about traditional jazz and add to it. I went from being someone who had a rep as a tasty accompanist to someone who people thought couldn't play a bar of straight time!"

JB: Yes, though it was a bit different back when I was coming up. You'd play standards at a social event—"On The Street Where You Live," "On A Clear Day," "Autumn Leaves"—and people would be dancing. They weren't there to hear you play, but you could swing and maybe stretch out a little bit. It was quite different from today's Top-40 cover date, where you've got to get "the sound." Then it was a lot looser and you played *music*. But that was my introduction to playing music. And I played all sorts of things, like at a pizza parlor with a ragtime pianist, at bar mitzvahs....

KM: Some of that music is very hot.

JB: I never played Klezmer music. We just played the bar mitzvah dance that was celebrating the event, and then we played rock 'n' roll. We played "Havanagele," but it was no big deal, it was just the music I'd heard in the synagogue. It was in the air, the same way the radio was in the air. I didn't have to make an in-depth study of it.

Jazz, for me, was not that way. Four beats on a cymbal with an incredibly full feeling didn't come as easily. By the time I came of age musically things had already become advanced—it had been that way for years. Jo Jones with Count Basie didn't happen in my time. That really piqued my curiosity. How did he do that? That was the biggest magic trick I could ever pull off.

KM: You mean getting that big sound?

JB: Just swinging. How did Ed Thigpen swing so hard? Jimmy Cobb, Kenny Clarke, Baby Dodds—when they were hitting the pulse, how did it feel? Everything in rock 'n' roll was stated, so there was nothing left to the imagination, it was more straight up and down. But there was so much *inflection* in a slow swing piece. That was a mystery to me. I could hit four quarter notes, but it didn't feel the same.

I went on a quest. I collected all of the Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich records I could, and that lead me to Max Roach. That is how the web spread and how I found

out about small-group playing, like the Oscar Peterson Trio with Louis Hayes or Ed Thigpen. That intimacy really got me. They didn't do full-blown drum solos, but I didn't condemn it. I realized they were relating to something other than displaying their technique. It was just as valid. Thank God I knew people who explained that to me.

KM: So early on you got past the idea of "the guy with the most chops wins."

JB: Yes. It's a big myth that there is a best, or that there's only room for one. These ideas exist to support a system that is basically falling apart. A company wants to highlight a drummer to sell their product, so maybe he's glorified a bit. It gets into capitalism. But there *is* room for everybody.

KM: What else did you learn from your early playing experiences?

JB: Some of the guys I was working with thought of a lot of the gigs we did as just another boring job. My perspective was that I was so excited to be on a gig playing music that I gave them something to deflect their boredom. When they would look at me, they'd laugh. They couldn't believe I was having such a great time. I'm lucky to have kept that attitude throughout my career.

KM: You do seem to bring that to gigs now.

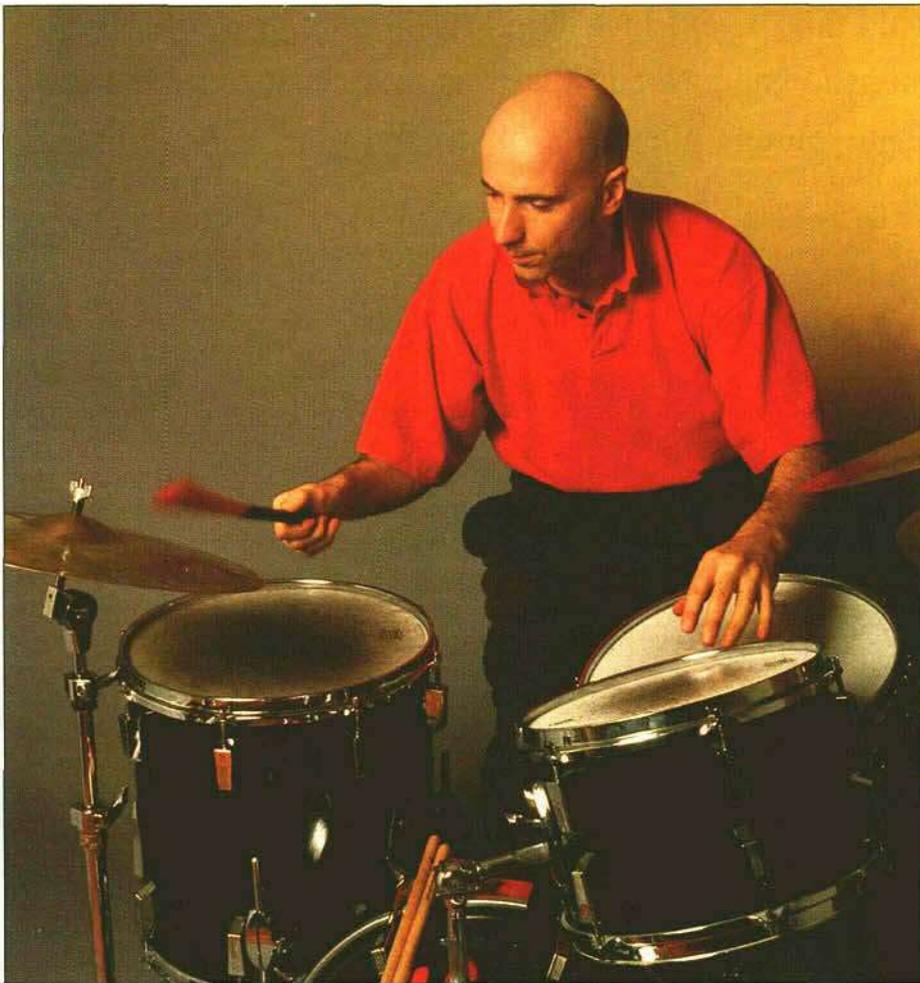
Pleasurable Listening

Here are the albums Joey lists as most representative of his drumming...

Artist	Album Title	Label/Catalog#
Joey Baron	Raised Pleasure Dot	New World 80449-2
Joey Baron	Tongue In Groove	JMT 849158-2
Joey Baron	Crackshot	Avant 059
Bill Frisell	This Land	Nonesuch 79316-2
Frisell, Driscoll, Baron	Live	Gramavision GCD 79504
John Zorn	Masada, Volumes 5&6	Avant 899 & 900

...and here are the ones he lists as most inspirational.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer	label/Catalog#
Jimmy Smith	Home Cookin	Donald Bailey	Blue Note 84050
Keith Jarrett	The Mourning Of A Star	Paul Motian	Atlantic SD 1596
Jimmy McGriff	The Worm	Mel Lewis	Solid State SD 18045
Stan Getz	Sweet Rain	Grady Tate	Verve V8693
Tony Williams	Spring	Tony Williams	Blue Note 84216
Albert King	Masterworks	Al Jackson	Atlantic AD2-4002
Joao Gilberto	Joao Gilberto	uncredited	Verve/Polygram 837 589-2
Art Blakey	The Big Beat	Art Blakey	Blue Note 4029
James Brown	Sex Machine	Clyde Stubblefield	Polydor 314-517984-2
Janet Jackson	Janet	Jimmy Jam/Terry Lewis-- samples	Virgin V21X-87825



JB: Well, I've always made my way as a musician. I'm really proud of that. I was always busy with club dates when I wanted to be, and I was happy about it. When I was in Los Angeles, from '75 to '82, I was only making thirty dollars a night, but I was playing with great people and I was very excited about it.

When I was a kid I went to Berklee for summer camp. That really turned me on, because there I found out that there were other kids into what I was into. At that point I was still playing bar mitzvahs, but I was working.

KM: Were you excited by any of the rock drummers when you were coming up?

JB: At that time I was into Ringo Starr, Keith Moon, Ginger Baker, and John Bonham. They all swung their bands. And it's not just the drumming I'm talking about, it's the time in which it took place. Back then twenty-minute drum solos were popular, like Ginger's "Toad." I had all the Buddy Rich stuff back then, so when bands would let me solo, I would mix it up. I would improvise rather than play the solo

note-for-note.

KM: That was the origin of what you're doing today.

JB: Yeah, and again, it was the context. I was in a band that would play the Who, so I experienced playing a roll all over the set as my part. The drums just had more of a spot back then. Today, it's a strict function. Back then, to solo was a function of the drummer. The options were bigger.

KM: Your drumming and the music you play thrive on idiosyncrasy. Your music refers, literally, to all these musics of the past.

JB: I got in on the tail end of a lot of things. I did a hotel circuit with a Top-40 lounge group; we would sneak in some organ jazz when it was slow. We'd play a hotel for a month, and the five of us would split one room. I had a vaudeville trunk that held my entire life. That was after the summer camp at Berklee. Then I finished high school early and returned to Berklee.

Berklee represented a meeting ground for young people who were into music. It wasn't until I got to Berklee that I realized

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Dave's Drum Depot

Nashville, TN
Fork's Drum Closet

Baltimore, MD
Gordon Miller Music

Fraser, MI
Huber & Breese

Plainview, NY
Long Island Drum Center

Louisville, KY
Mom's Music

Normal, IL
Pro Sound Center

Charlotte, NC
Reliable Music

Toronto, Ontario
Montreal, Quebec
Ottawa, Ontario
Steve's Music

WESTERN TOUR

Lynwood, WA
Band-Aid Music

Fresno, CA
Bentley's Music

Monona, WI
Drums 'N Moore

Portland, OR
The Drum Shop

Kansas City, MO
Explorer's Percussion

Albuquerque, NM
Luchetti Music

Memphis, TN
Memphis Drum Shop

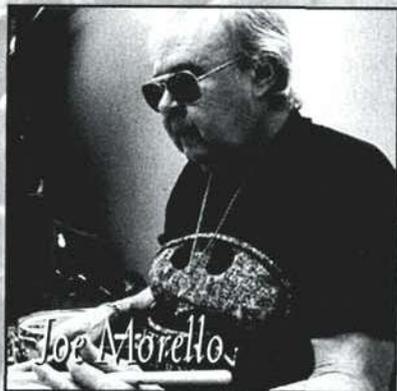
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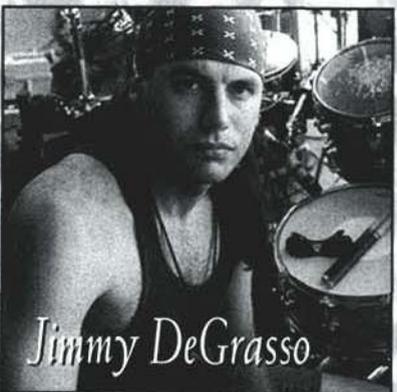
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that songs have a form. I thought from watching movies that the musicians just played. I didn't know they were relating to a thirty-two-bar form that cycles over and over. Eight bars, sixteen bars, trading fours—until I went to school, that jargon meant nothing to me.

KM: Did that help your creativity?

JB: It kind of gave me a background of playing more with my ear. I knew how to read, and I could keep my place, but my whole approach to music up to that point was inch by inch. So when somebody said that instead of counting each note or measure, you could multiply it by two, it freed up my attention so I could fly.

KM: What were your goals at this point?

JB: All I wanted to do was play music. I specifically knew then that I wanted to play with Carmen McRae, so after a gig in Las Vegas I went to Los Angeles. I didn't know a soul. I bought a van with money I saved on the road. I figured if I lost my apartment I could live in the van. In L.A. I got a union book and started calling everybody. I knew all of Carmen's music, and after a while everyone knew I wanted to play with her. It seemed that a few of the guys I talked to out there didn't care that they were gigging with Carmen. They were already burned out on music; it had become a job.

KM: How do you keep a situation like that fun?

JB: I look for something that will stimulate my interest and enthusiasm. I totally immerse myself in whatever I'm doing at the moment. If I'm working with Carmen McRae, I do my homework. I know what makes her tick and why. That's the deep part. I get into it. When I feel that it's time to add to that palette, I notice when it feels like the right time to up the ante and add on. It's hard to do that, because some things get in the way.

People think I'm crazy for some of the choices I've made, others think I'm smart. The choices I've made haven't always put me in the most visible position, which is why people might not know my name. Until recently I haven't stepped out as a leader.

KM: What are the questionable choices you've made?

JB: Once, while I was in Los Angeles, Bill Evans was looking for a drummer and I could have joined his trio. But I went with

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another trio that played jazz seven nights a week, and we *played*. Musically, I had an opportunity to explore more with that trio, and that helped to build my character. Everyone else was starting to make more money, so it was hard, especially since I thought I had the goods.

KM: But you eventually got to Carmen McRae.

JB: Up to that point it was my life's goal to play with her. I wanted to learn to swing. And that was the time when everybody was

playing fusion. That stuff was in the air, but it was no big deal for me. I didn't have to go on a quest for that. But playing slow tempos in an intimate setting was a very mysterious thing. I wanted that intimacy. I wanted to learn to control the drumset to accompany a piano, bass, and vocalist. What I wanted didn't seem to have anything to do with the popular music of the time.

I did my homework to get the gig with Carmen. Besides getting the music togeth-

er, I called all the guys who had played with Carmen and hit them with questions. I was a nuisance. But after a while that led to some gigs, including Helen Merrill. So the word got around about me. It's the same everywhere: Musicians talk to each other and word gets around. Eventually I got to audition for Carmen, got the gig, and stayed with her for three years.

KM: You played with most of the jazz community in Los Angeles as well.

JB: I worked with Al Jarreau, Lou Rawls, Carl Schroeder, and the Lew Tabackin-Toshiko Akiyoshi big band, and I taught at PIT. I was even on a record with Cybill Shepherd.

L.A. was more relaxed then, and all these legends lived there. They did everything—casuals, club dates, television shows. I met [trombonist] Jimmy Cleveland, and he invited me to the *Merv Griffin Show*, where I met Ray Brown, Jake Hanna, and Jack Sheldon. I got to meet and hang with all those guys. That was my straight-ahead training. Donald Bailey took me under his wing then; he is one of my biggest influences.

KM: But eventually you came to New York.

JB: I'd grown frustrated with the isolation of L.A. Hal Blaine told me I had to be in town and on call twenty-four hours a day, and that I had to take any gig to get studio work. Well, that's not what made me want to play. Studio work didn't give me the feeling I got when I was a little kid, when I would cry because I was having so much fun playing the drums. It just wasn't for me.

It was hard at first trying to fit in New York. I had credentials, but they didn't mean much there. I had a bit of a rep for being a sensitive player who could accompany and play all the styles. But I started going to jam sessions with Fred Hersh, Kenny Werner, Billy Drewes, and Jamey Haddad, and eventually I giggered with Red Rodney and Ira Sullivan.

KM: So you were ready to make a statement.

JB: I wanted to use this arsenal of ability that I had built up. The cobwebs were starting to loosen. I wanted to play with people like Kenny Kirkland, but it wasn't happening for me. I didn't understand how political the situation in New York is. It got to me. But I eventually realized that what I

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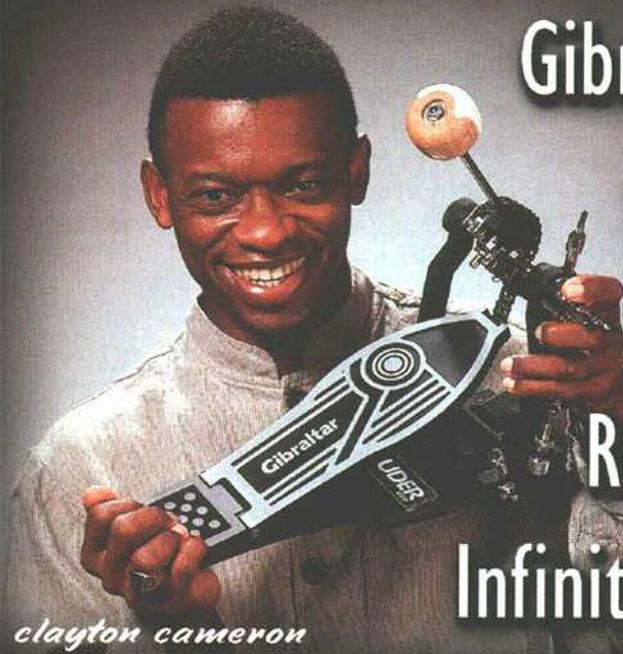
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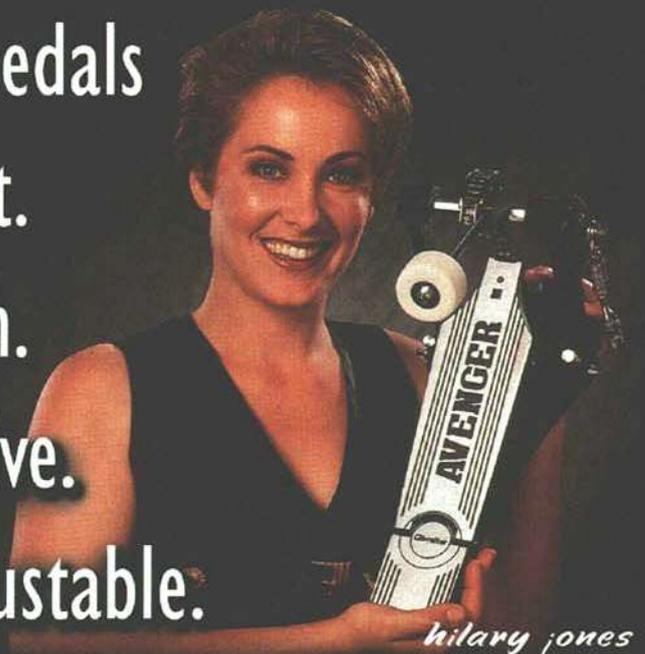
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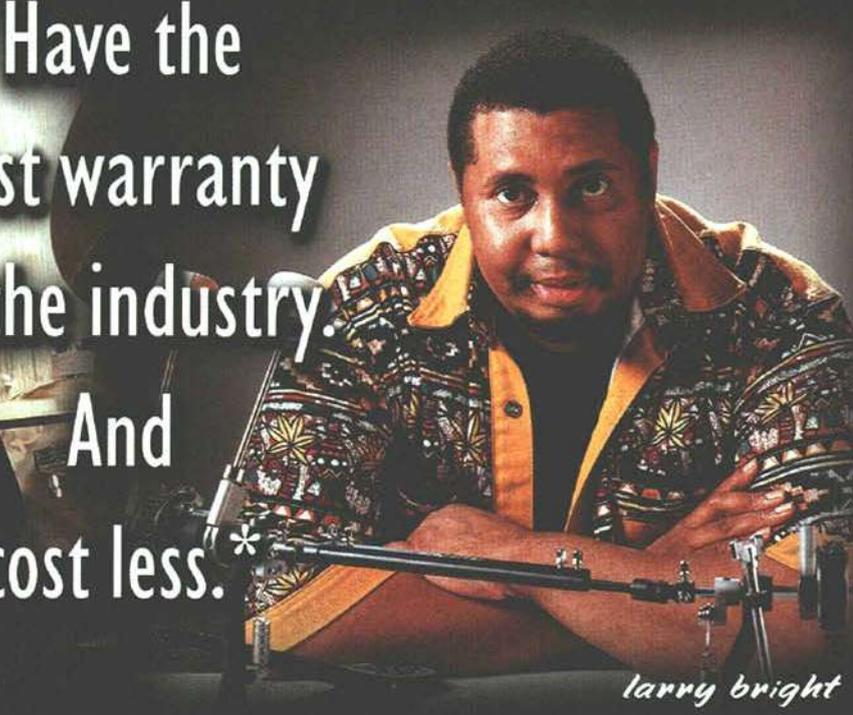
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wanted to do didn't have anything to do with being a Sideman with these guys I *thought* I wanted to play with.

I met Bill Frisell at a jam session with Marc Johnson, Jim Pepper, and a whole bunch of people. At one point during this jam session I hit a rimshot—the session had been dragging on and I just felt like I didn't want to fuck around anymore. I looked up and Bill and I met eye to eye. We hooked up. He knew that I knew that he knew.... We took each other's numbers and started playing duos. We became very close, and through Bill I met musicians who weren't coming from the angle of a jazz snob, which I had become. Bill introduced me to John Zorn, Arto Lindsay, Hank Roberts, Tim Berne, Ronald Shannon Jackson, Melvin Gibbs, Elliot Sharp.... In my jazz-snob sense I thought that these people were "out" and couldn't play.

We played with Hank Roberts and I wondered, "Where's the bass? This is horrible." Then all of a sudden something clicked. I realized that there were no expectations, no one telling me what to do. It was up to *me* to bring something to the situation. That was very influential, meeting those musicians. It turned my head around.

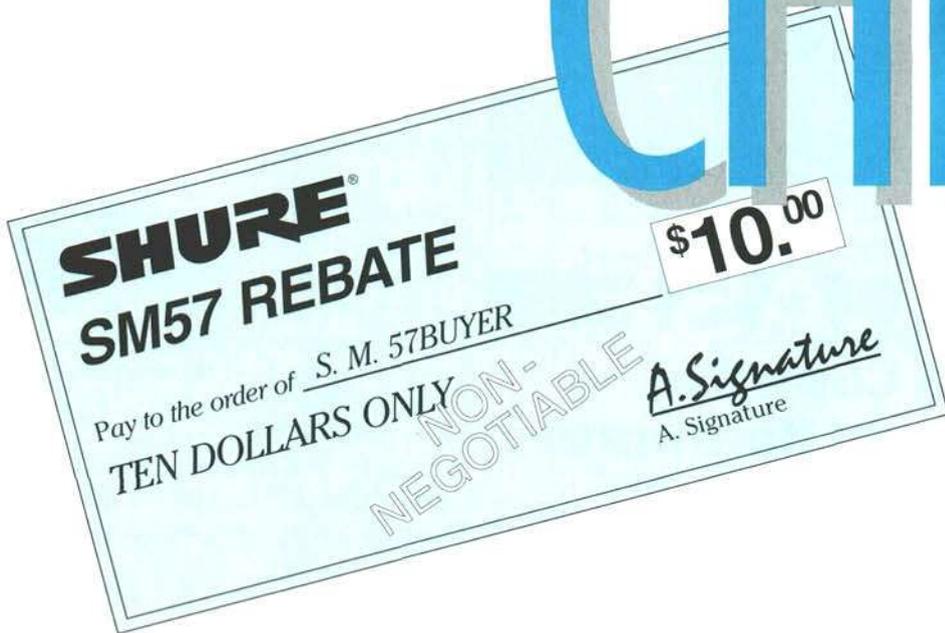
Slowly I started pulling myself out of the merry-go-round of gigs and began working on music with Tim Berne and Herb Robertson. We didn't have any work, so I was making my living with Toots Thielemans, Jim Hall, and Lew Tabackin, and doing club dates. But it was fun working on something from the ground up, where I had input. I was treated equally and encouraged. Frisell started his band around that time as well.

I decided that I wanted to play with people who brought themselves to what they do and who didn't screw around. So many times you play gigs with people who are burned out. When I sense that happening, I take myself away from it. I started realizing that the traditional comeback of jazz involves people expecting you to play Art Blakey's licks or Philly Joe's licks. That was so strange to me. I made up my mind that I would take what I love about traditional jazz and add to it and keep learning, and be in a supportive environment. Prior to that I was only interested in whether a guy could play. I went from being someone who had a rep as a tasty accompanist to

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someone who people thought couldn't play a bar of straight time!

KM: Does Frisell hand out charts?

JB: His music is basically lead sheets, not scripted parts. He will ask for specific things or mention when he feels something doesn't work. He knows all the references I have. We have similar musical backgrounds. We can quote old R&B tunes or Top-40 stuff. Not that we're trying to be cute, but any kind of feeling that comes from that, he knows about.

KM: So was it a revelation for you meeting someone with the same instincts?

JB: We're still learning about each other. We still play duos, like two kids in a sandbox. That's what I'm attracted to.

KM: The music on the Frisell albums is so radical, yet so musical. It takes a while to get it.

JB: For me it involves thinking about music, as opposed to just the drums. I don't really think about the drums too much anyway. I have the same drumset I had when I was in California—I've had it since 1976. I don't think about drums, I think about feel, grooves, and the strength in the rhythm of the music.

KM: How do you come up with parts for Frisell's music?

JB: Bill writes from the top down, whereas some people write from the rhythm section up. Bill writes the pitches and the harmonies and the basic bar structure, but in terms of what the feel is, it's open. The tune goes by and the time is happening, but whether it's straight-8th time, swing, or Latin-based, it's open. We just try to make everything work together so it isn't isolated.

KM: How does that differ from John Zorn's music?

JB: John's is a repertoire band. It's his compositions. It isn't about being able to express your own thing. *Naked City*, for instance, was pretty specific.

KM: But you do some interesting things with his music. On "Tag" [from Zorn's *This Land*], for instance, are you playing with your hands? And are you playing a concert bass drum?

JB: It's my foot pedal on the bass drum and hands on the edge of the snare drum with the snares off. [*Seated at the drums, Joey plays a slow, dainty cadence on the head with both hands while alternately muting it with the left hand.*]

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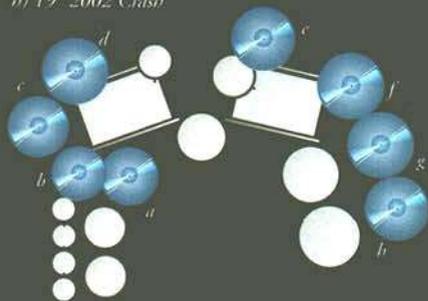
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WHAT TO PLAY.



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KM: What sound sources are you playing on "Resistor" [also from *This Land*]?

JB: Everything—the rims, the sides of the drums, the heads, cowbells. The cowbell was sitting on a table that I pulled over. [Joey plays the groove from the "Resistor" track.] This could've easily been a bebop track. It was up for grabs even at the time of the recording. We just chose to do it that way. We do it differently in performance.

KM: At one point you play the ride pattern on the cowbell. The whole thing can be sensory overload for a listening drummer.

JB: At that point of the song I was thinking about the overall line, not just that I'm playing a cowbell. It's the sound that I wanted, but my major function was to keep it moving and keep the time. I was just orchestrating it differently around the set.

Today things are taken for granted: If it's jazz, play the ride cymbal. I personally get tired of that sound, but I also think about the other instruments involved. There's a lot of note and pitch information that gets covered up sometimes by the ride cymbal. There may be a better choice at certain times.

continued on page 69



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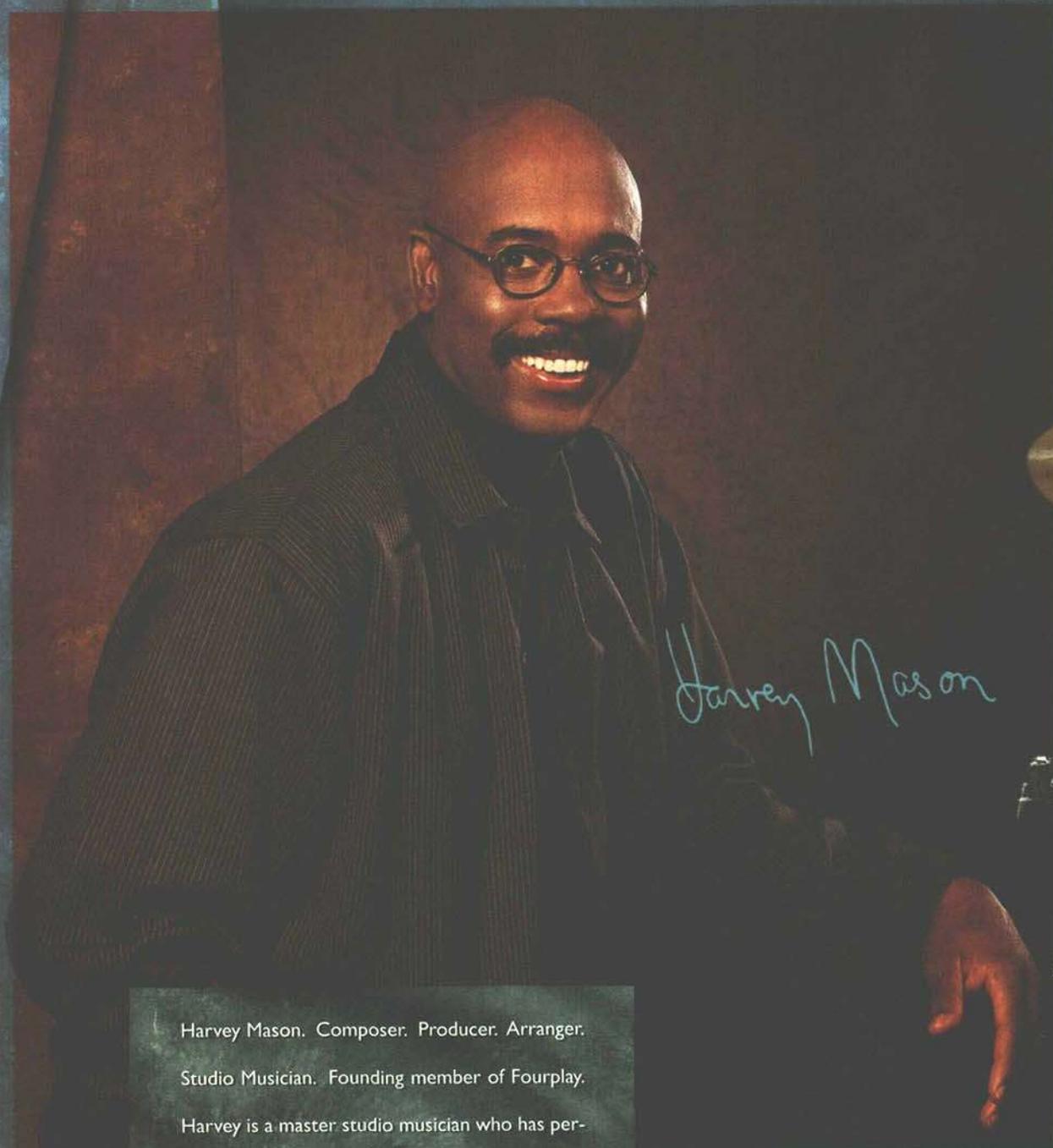
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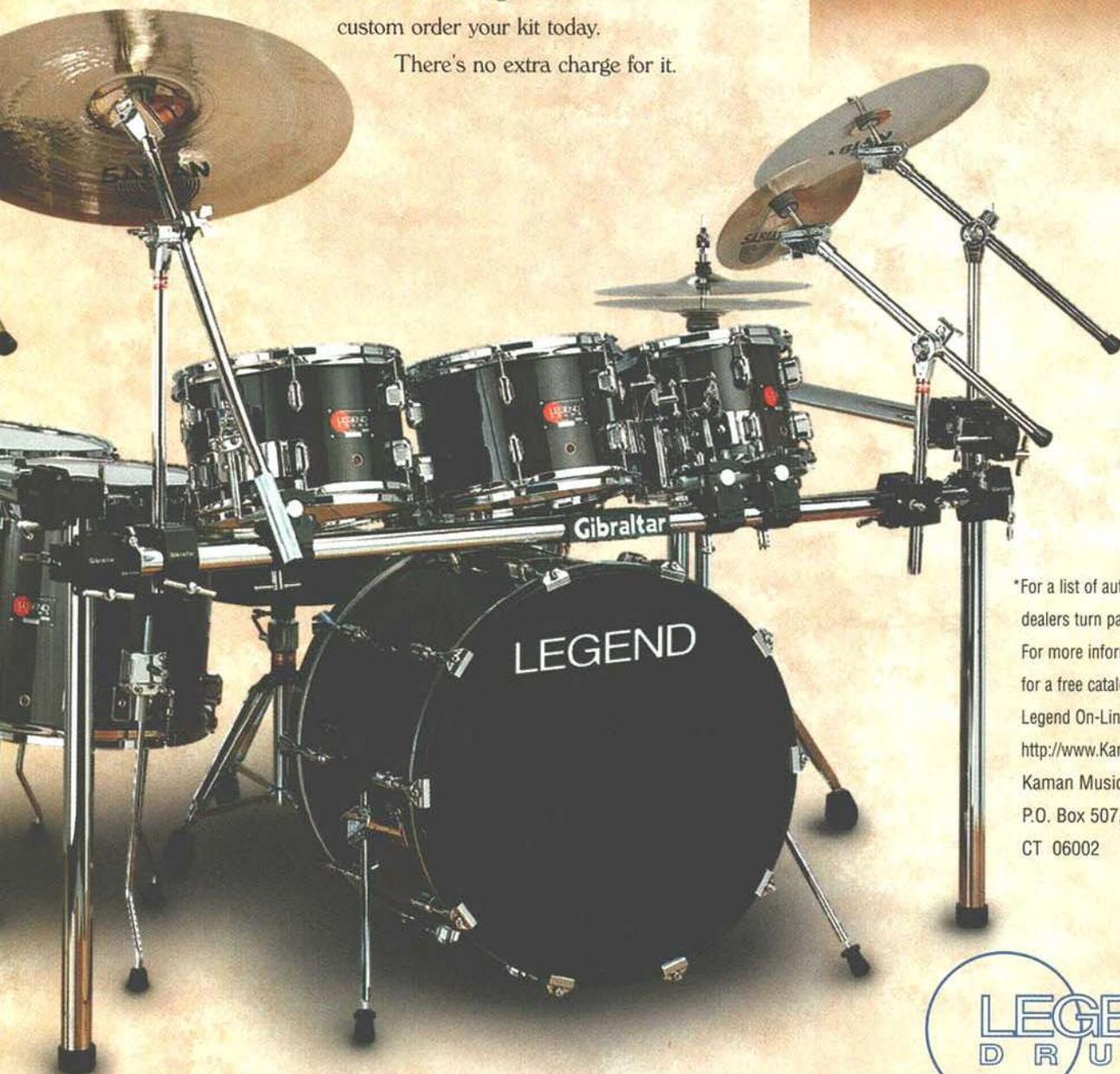
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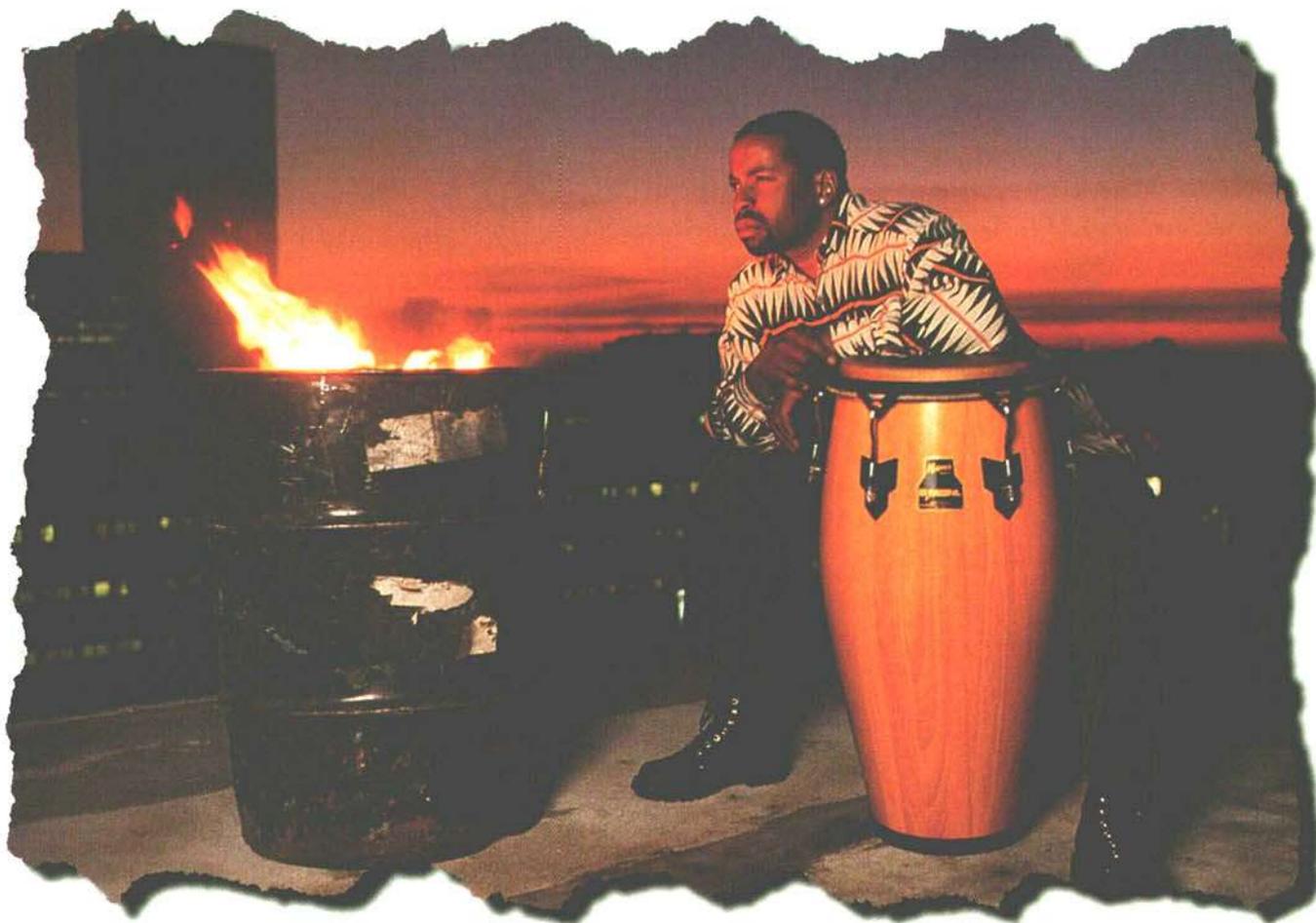
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PHOTOS: PIC BY GALLO, C.

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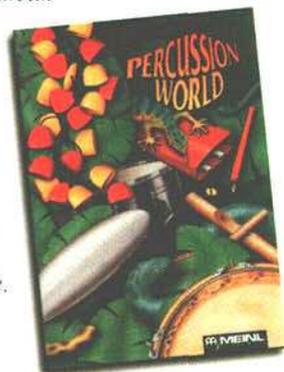
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KM: You cover a lot of ground stylistically in your own trio. Why did you choose the instrumentation of drums, tenor saxophone, and trombone?

JB: Voice and drums were the first musical instruments, so the horns represented the voice to me. And I wanted to strip it down. I wanted to do something that would push me away from the things I was associated with sonically. I didn't want to be a sideman in my own band. With this instrumentation, it couldn't sound like Bill's band. Ultimately, for me, that would be a disaster. And the influence of early R&B bands, with trombone and tenor, also plays a role in my trio.

KM: Rhythmically, the trio plays odd funk, burlesque strip beats, calypsos, mambo, swing, shuffles, a lot of free space. Generally, what's the concept behind the music?

JB: Number one, what I want to do is play music that is fun, that invites people in. If a person walked off the street into a performance of mine, he or she wouldn't need to understand the history of music to enjoy it. That's my job. I also wanted to project a sound that is very direct. The concept was to use an extension of my experiences and use minimal tools. It's a band, not a trio without a bass.

KM: How does all of this translate to *Outside*, the David Bowie album you recorded last year?

JB: I met Bowie through Brian Eno, who liked what I had done on a Laurie Anderson record he produced, *Bright Red*. Laurie likes what I do. When I worked with her she had a bunch of ideas on tape and just wanted to see what I could come up with. She liked the sounds that I used. So Brian suggested that I come and help with the Bowie tracks. They wanted me to add stuff to tracks they had already recorded.

KM: Was he happy with what you did?

JB: They were very happy. Bowie got excited and flew in a bass player from Israel. It started as just an overdub/mixing session, but it turned into a recording session with an entire band. They actually called me for the tour, but I already had a tour with my trio set up and I didn't want to put it off.

KM: Most drummers would've jumped at that tour, but not you.

JB: Yeah, I know, [laughs] I enjoyed working in the studio with Bowie. He's great, and he really knows what he's doing. He's got a set of pipes, too. He was singing in the drum booth, and his voice was so strong I could feel my chest vibrate.

KM: Where do you want to go from here career-wise?

JB: Well, I've done three records with my trio. I'm really happy with all of them, especially the new one [*Crackshot*, on Avant]. It's the most focused.

KM: Compared to *Tongue In Groove* or *Raised Pleasure Dot*, *Crackshot* is more sedate and song-oriented, and less agitated.

JB: I was really focused. *Crackshot* is a development of the first two records. When we perform, there is still all of that other stuff happening. But for me, the trio needed some focus to offset the extremes. I wanted each tune to be its own world, rather than each going to the same place.

Now I feel that I have a sound and a concept established. I feel confident in what I've done with Barondown. I'm writing a lot of the tunes with improvisation involved, but it's not about blowing over a set of changes. The rhythms are written but the pitches aren't. Those choices are the blowing, everything else is moving along.

I'm interested in expanding that concept to what people call a "normal" group. I don't feel afraid that it's going to sound like some other band. I'd also like to be able to play for more people, especially in this country. I work a lot in Europe, but I feel there is an audience here. It's my responsibility to think about how to get in front of people. I want to think about what people can hear, without losing any integrity as a composer and a player.



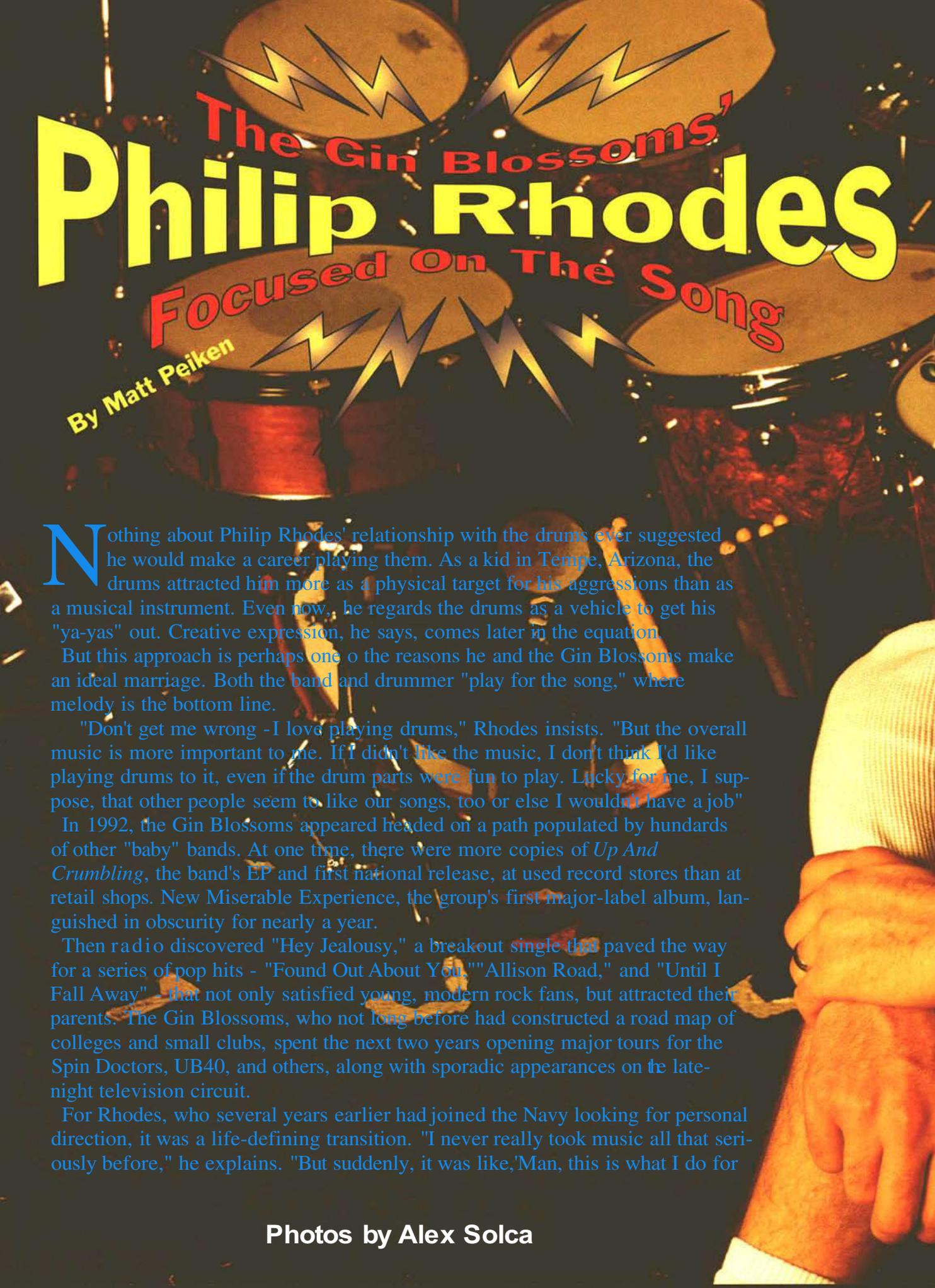
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A photograph of a drummer playing a drum set, with the text overlaid on the image. The drummer is wearing a white shirt and is captured in a dynamic pose, with his hands on the drums. The background is dark, and the lighting is focused on the drummer and the drums. The text is in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font, with some words in red. The overall mood is energetic and focused.

Philip Rhodes

The Gin Blossoms'
Focused On The Song

By Matt Peiken

Nothing about Philip Rhodes' relationship with the drums ever suggested he would make a career playing them. As a kid in Tempe, Arizona, the drums attracted him more as a physical target for his aggressions than as a musical instrument. Even now, he regards the drums as a vehicle to get his "ya-yas" out. Creative expression, he says, comes later in the equation.

But this approach is perhaps one of the reasons he and the Gin Blossoms make an ideal marriage. Both the band and drummer "play for the song," where melody is the bottom line.

"Don't get me wrong - I love playing drums," Rhodes insists. "But the overall music is more important to me. If I didn't like the music, I don't think I'd like playing drums to it, even if the drum parts were fun to play. Lucky for me, I suppose, that other people seem to like our songs, too or else I wouldn't have a job"

In 1992, the Gin Blossoms appeared headed on a path populated by hundreds of other "baby" bands. At one time, there were more copies of *Up And Crumbling*, the band's EP and first national release, at used record stores than at retail shops. New Miserable Experience, the group's first major-label album, languished in obscurity for nearly a year.

Then radio discovered "Hey Jealousy," a breakout single that paved the way for a series of pop hits - "Found Out About You," "Allison Road," and "Until I Fall Away" - that not only satisfied young, modern rock fans, but attracted their parents. The Gin Blossoms, who not long before had constructed a road map of colleges and small clubs, spent the next two years opening major tours for the Spin Doctors, UB40, and others, along with sporadic appearances on the late-night television circuit.

For Rhodes, who several years earlier had joined the Navy looking for personal direction, it was a life-defining transition. "I never really took music all that seriously before," he explains. "But suddenly, it was like, 'Man, this is what I do for

Photos by Alex Solca





a living.' It was a great feeling, but it was pretty scary, too. It kind of blew us away, but we didn't have time to really get caught up in all the excitement because it was just one show after another, and tons of traveling. It was great for me, personally, because this band was the first thing in my adult life that I really felt right with. I had a future to look forward to."

Still, commercial success had its flip side. Critics wondered aloud whether the Gin Blossoms could rekindle the creative spark behind *New Miserable Experience*, which sold more than two million copies in the United States. The skepticism particularly stemmed from the absence of guitarist and chief songwriter Doug Hopkins, who, after battling alcoholism and depression, committed suicide just following that album's release

The band's response takes shape in the form of *Congratulations I'm Sorry*, a collection of

mildly interesting pop songs that makes up with musical muscle what it lacks in infectious charm. The Gin Blossoms are a decidedly tighter band, though, and Rhodes, through sheer experience, plays with a newfound, audible confidence.

Now, back on the tour trail, the Gin Blossoms are preparing for a busy spring, summer, and beyond. But for Rhodes, now twenty-eight, it's all part of his own new miserable experience. "I don't really like the road, except for the shows. But I think of what else I could be doing and I'm grateful," he says. "No matter how well the new record does, we know it's a triumph for us, that we can make good music without Doug, and that there's still a lot of creativity left in this band."

MP: How are the new songs going over with people? After having such success with *New Miserable Experience*, I'd think most fans would mainly want to hear those songs and not give the new ones a chance.

PR: Well, I can't blame them for that. I mean, the record just came out and I don't even have a copy yet. But it's been so far, so good. We debuted at Number 10 on the *Billboard* album chart, which is a completely different scene from how our first record went over. With that one, we toured for almost a year before we sold maybe eight records—or maybe it was ten. Nobody outside of Arizona, knew who we were.

We were playing a lot of colleges and small clubs. We had an EP out first, but it wasn't really a good representation of us. The songs were good, but the production wasn't, and we didn't have a clue as to what we were after in terms of the sound. So there were never really any grand hopes for *New Miserable Experience*. We thought we

made a good record, but we were just happy to have it out so we could start moving on as a band. It took forever for people to catch onto it, and I think that's because it took a long time before people really listened to it. Radio finally caught on to "Hey Jealousy," and then it was sort of a word-of-mouth build-up.

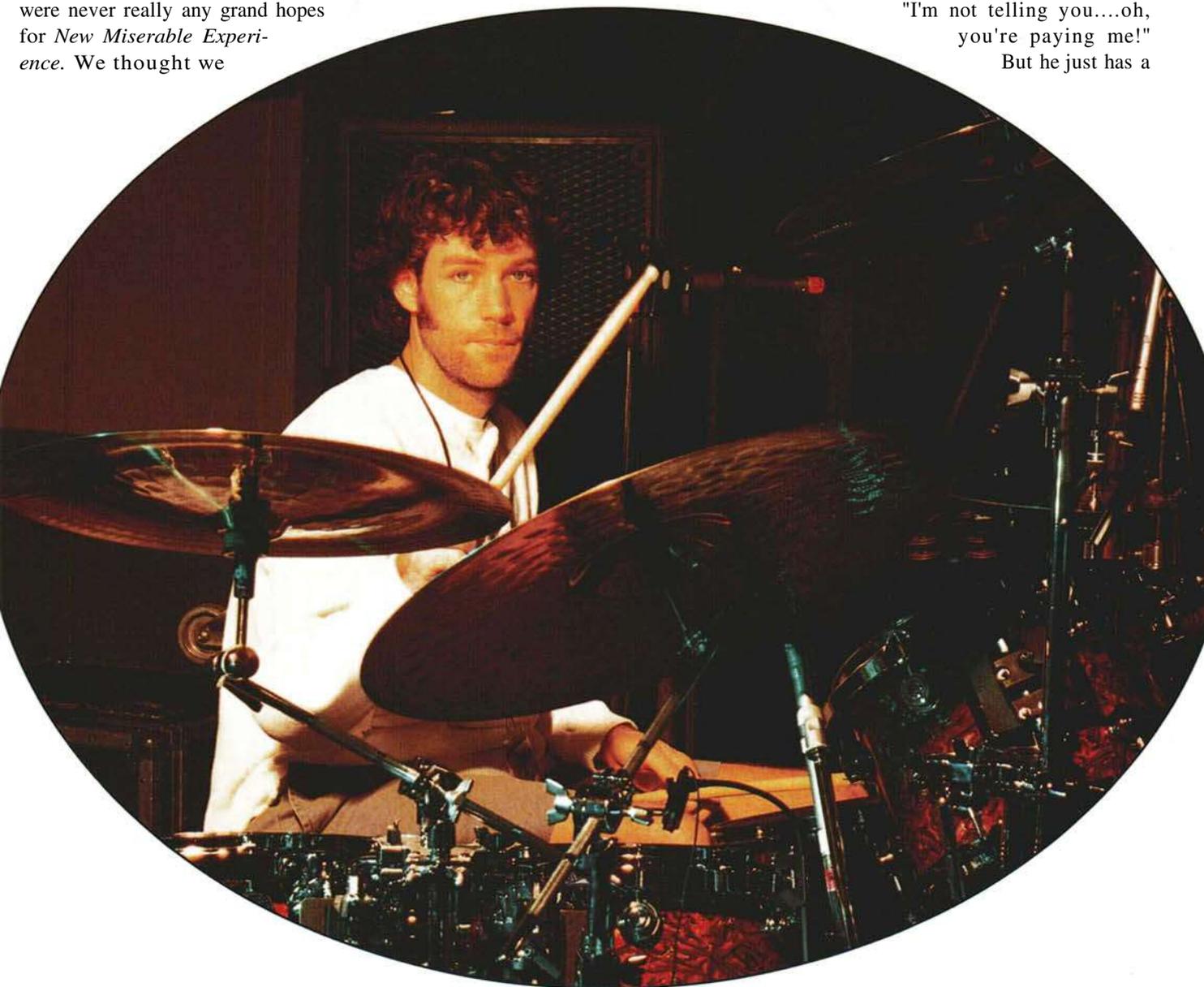
MP: Tell me about the recording process of that first album. Did you enjoy it?

PR: It was a completely different approach from the way things were done for the EP, and it was a real learning experience. We recorded at Ardent Studios in Memphis, and our producer, John Hampton, was really great about showing us how to get certain sounds and how the choice of microphones and mic' placement makes all the difference. We'd ask him things like, "Wow, how do you do that?" and he would say,

"I'm not telling you...oh, you're paying me!"

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"I used to think, 'Click track? Oh, I guess I am speeding up.' But I eventually learned that it's alright for the music to speed up—live, all good rock music speeds up and slows down—but the key is making it feel good."



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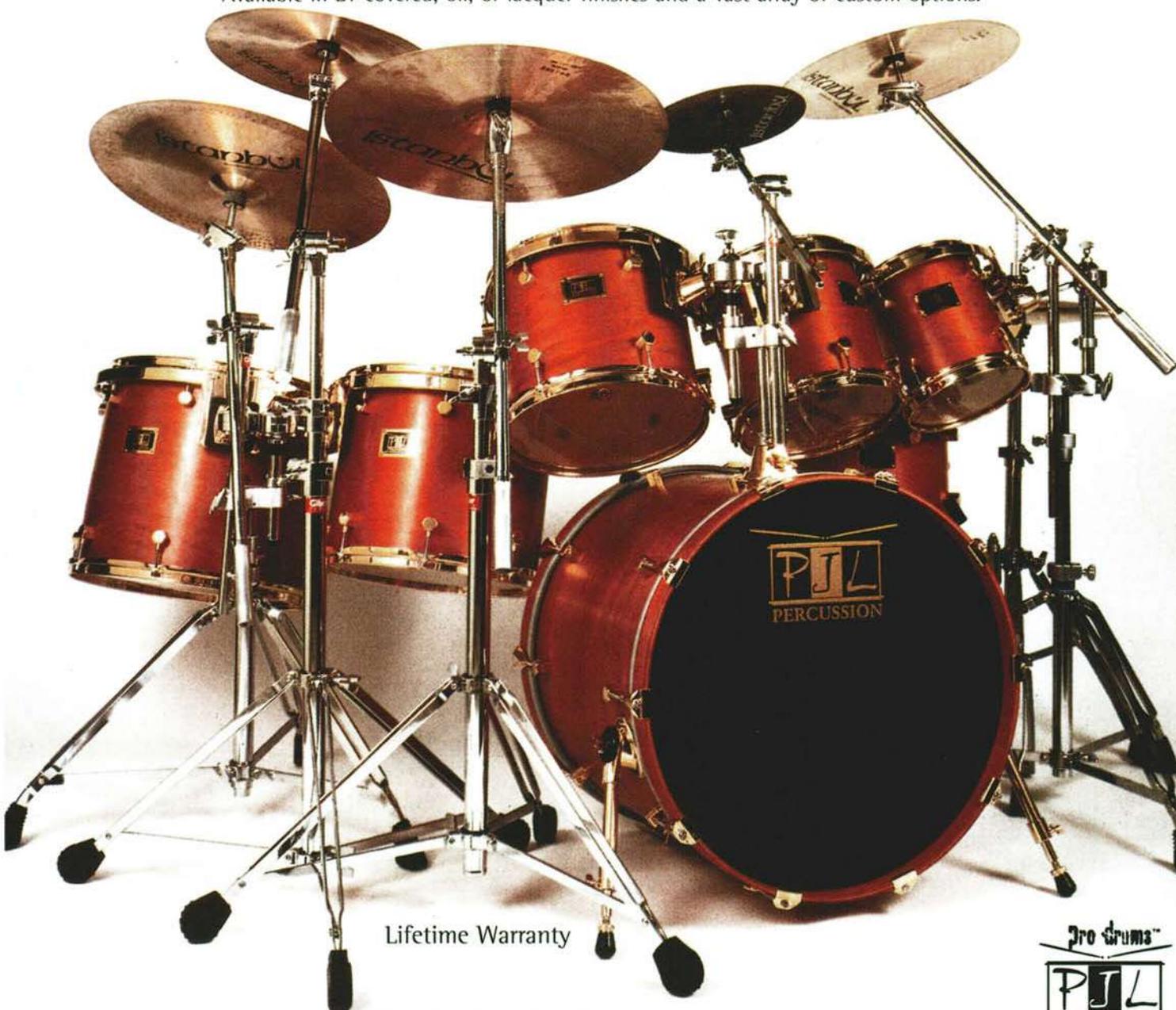
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wealth of knowledge about production and engineering, and we just soaked it up.

MP: What about the differences in the recording process between your last record and the new one?

PR: Well, everything was a learning experience with the first album in terms of music and life in general. It was fun for a while, but then it started to be a pain in the ass. It was hell watching Doug fall apart, and that was happening all during the recording. Jesse [Valenzuela, guitarist] had to pick up the pieces, but we were faced with a decision: Either just break up—because Doug was such an important part of the band—or move on without him. Doug was a great songwriter, but we eventually came to the conclusion that we still had a lot going for us as a band without him. It was the toughest decision

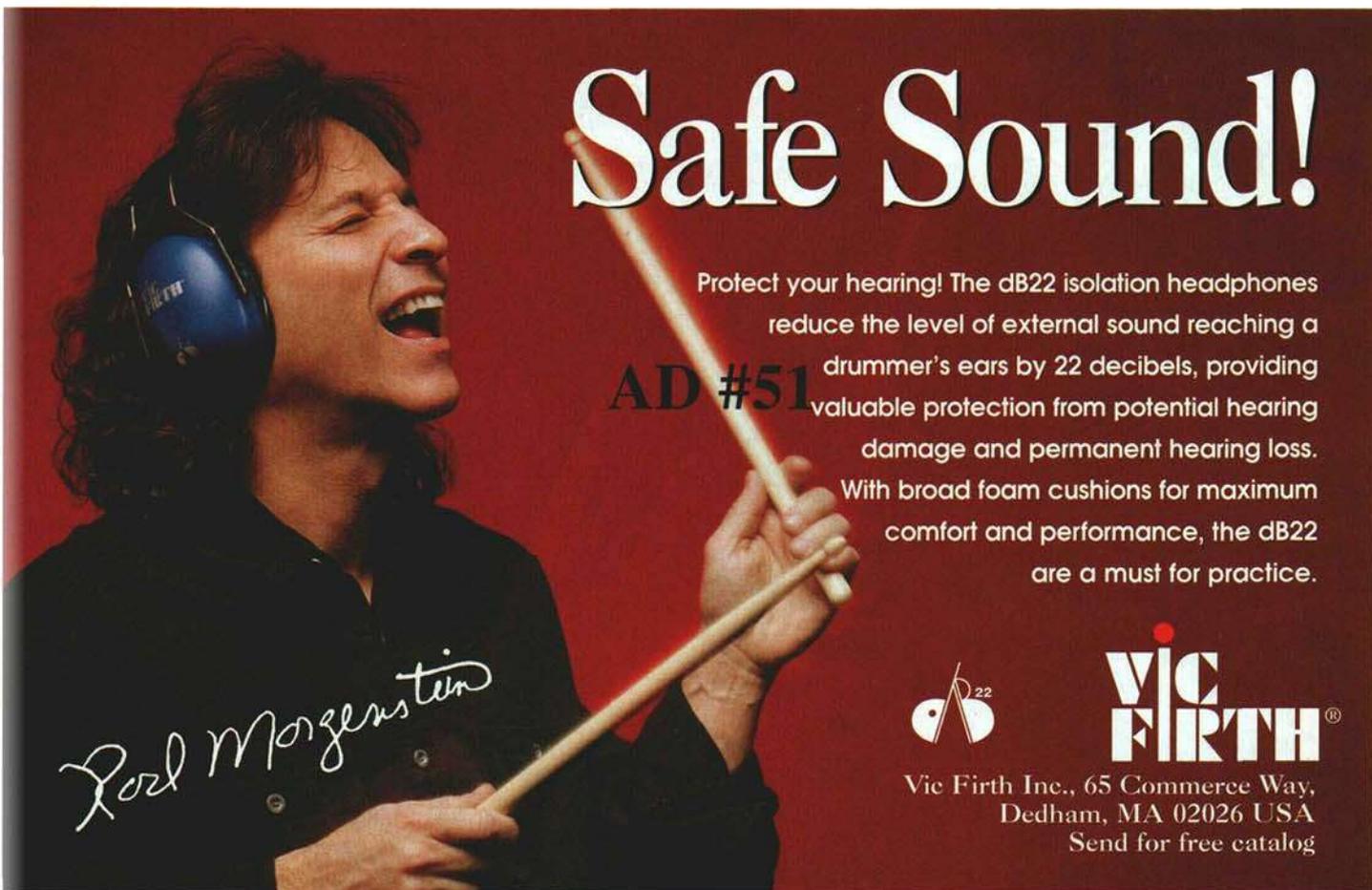


we'd ever had to make, and that's why the record is called *New Miserable Experience*.

MP: Given everything you went through with Doug, do you think the Gin Blossoms would have made this follow-up record if *New Miserable Experience* wasn't commercially successful?

PR: Touring really helped us recover emotionally, and once Scott [Johnson, who replaced Hopkins] came in, we really got tight as a band. Then we started working on new material, and I think we would have made a second record anyway, because we needed to prove to ourselves that we could still create good music together.

The songwriting duties have changed a lot, and now everybody has a lot more creative input. I was working double-time with Jesse and Robin [Wilson, singer], just helping with the arrangements. It was



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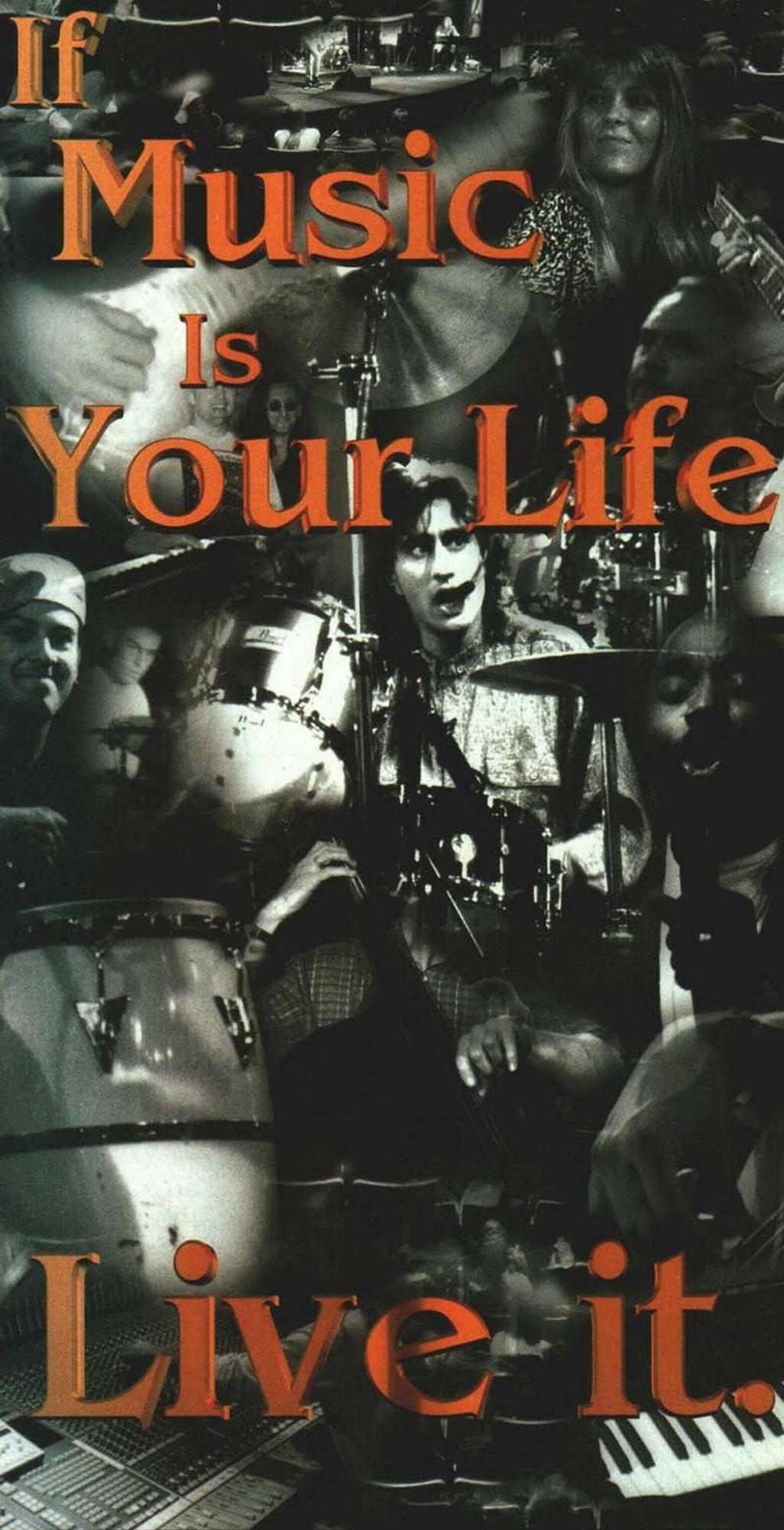
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work, but it was fun to have more of a personal role with the actual creation of the songs.

MP: Did you approach the new record differently than you did the last one, strictly from a drumming point of view?

PR: For *New Miserable Experience* I just used this little Gretsch kit that Hampton had. I'm playing a Drum Workshop kit now. I used it for the new record and I love it, especially the snare. We used about five different snares on the record, but a lot of that came from John Hampton. He's a producer and a smokin' drummer. He grew up in Memphis and has a great feel for music and sound, and we relate really well.

For the previous record, we went straight to 32-track digital. This time, we tracked on a two-inch 16-track, and we got this big, fat bottom end with it. There's a lot to be said for analog tape compression; it makes the drums sound so much more natural. Then we dumped that all to digital for overdubs.

And Hampton is the punch master—anything that needs to be thrown in, he can do it, even with the drums. On the country song on the new record, "Memphis Time,"

I go from the bridge into the solo section with a drum roll, and I dropped the stick after I played it. Everything up to that point was great. So John just had us start two bars before that point, and after we finished the song, he just got out a knife and spliced it together. It's seamless; you can't even hear it.

But my approach to drumming hasn't really changed. I've always been sort of laid back with the chops thing, and I've pretty much just played for the songs and tried to make them better. I've always been a hard player, though. I really don't have anything else to compare it to, though, because this is the first and only band I've ever been in.

MP: How did you hook up with these guys?

PR: I played with Doug and Bill [Leen, bassist] once when I was about fifteen or sixteen. By the time they called me several years later, the Blossoms had already gone through two drummers—the first was running from the law and the second moved away. But I wasn't even around during that time. I went straight from high school into the Navy.

I come from a musical family. My grandfather had his own big band in the '30s and '40s and my grandmother was a dancer, and they used to work for what they called "flops and chops," which meant a place to crash and something to eat—I always loved that term. But anyway, I got his kit when I was in seventh grade. My mom wanted me to take piano lessons first before I started in with the drums, but I hated piano...and that's when I started driving my parents mad.

I took drum lessons for a year, but then it was mostly playing to CDs. I always loved pop music, even to play drums to. Sure, I went through my Rush phase, but pop music really grabbed me. Tom Petty, Cheap Trick, the Beatles—I loved playing drums to the music I loved listening to. And I spent hours playing to that stuff. But nobody around my neighborhood in Tempe was ever organized enough to get a band going.

So I spent three years in the Navy as a signalman, and it was just lame. I was lucky enough to have a kit on the ship I was on. I got them to get me one from the ship's recreation fund. But it was real life,

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Paul Morgenstern

right in my face, and it was a stepping stone to growing up.

I ended up getting kicked out for smoking some grass and punching out my first-class petty officer. I wanted to get kicked out—I'd had enough—and smoking pot was the quickest way to get thrown out. I

just wanted to get out and work for a while and start playing drums again. I never thought the drums were very important to me, but when I wasn't playing, I always wished I was.

MP: Even so, you probably never thought it would amount to a career. After all, you

were living in Tempe, not L.A.

PR: But fortunately, we sort of transformed the music scene there. It used to be more blues-based, but then we started playing the colleges, parties, and clubs, and we just sort of took over. We were playing tons of horrible covers and we got plowed every night. We eventually started playing a lot of showcases like South By Southwest and shows at the Coconut Teaser for ASCAP. I hated those gigs because there are all these jaded industry people who don't know you and just stand there with their arms folded.

But we got a big break when a writer with *College Music Journal* got us into this unsigned band thing, and we ended up playing at the 1989 MTV New Music Awards. It wasn't a really big deal back then, but the Chili Peppers were there. It was our first time in New York. We played a couple of shows there, and it was mind-blowing—just the whole experience of being in a city like that. And we actually signed with A&M on my birthday.

MP: How have you grown as a drummer since then?

PR: It's been more with my confidence than anything else. I used to think, "Click track? Oh, I guess I *am* speeding up." But I eventually learned that it's alright for the music to speed up—live, all good rock music speeds up and slows down—but the key is making it feel good. If the music feels right to play it faster or slower, then you should play it faster or slower. You

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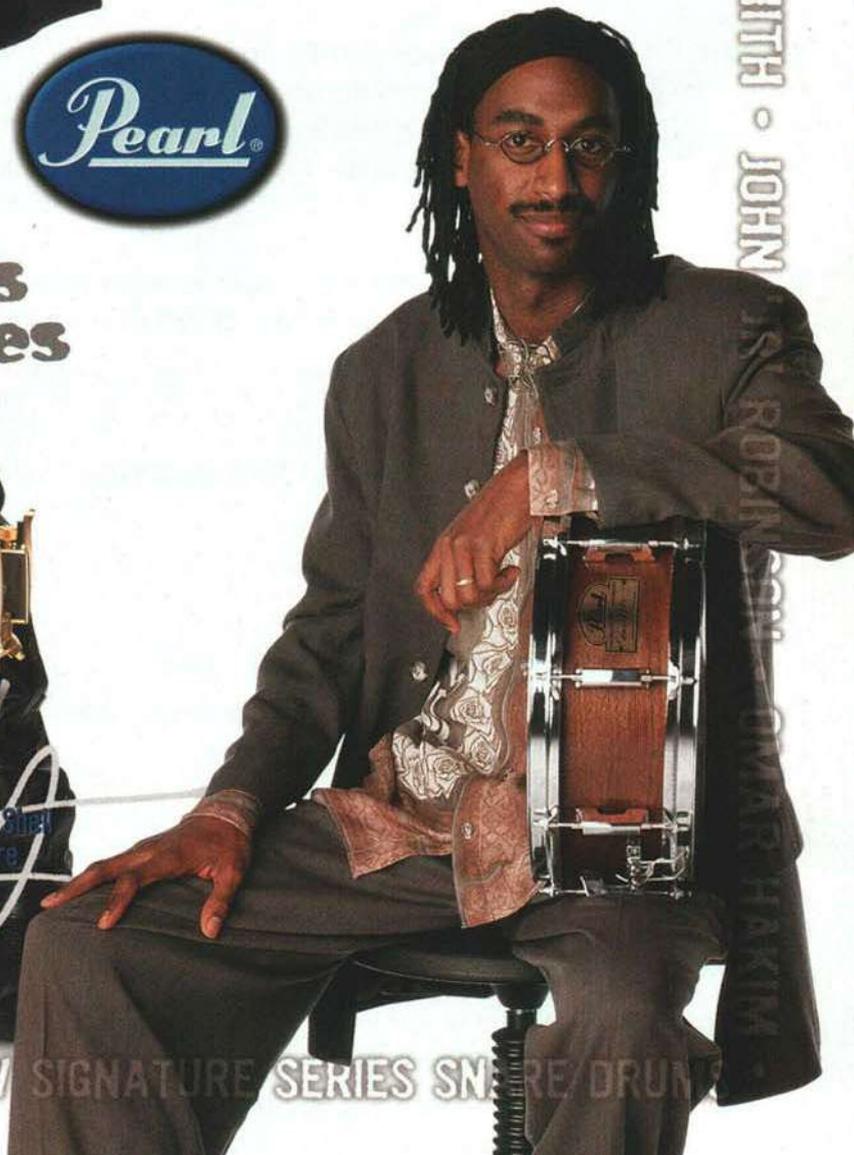
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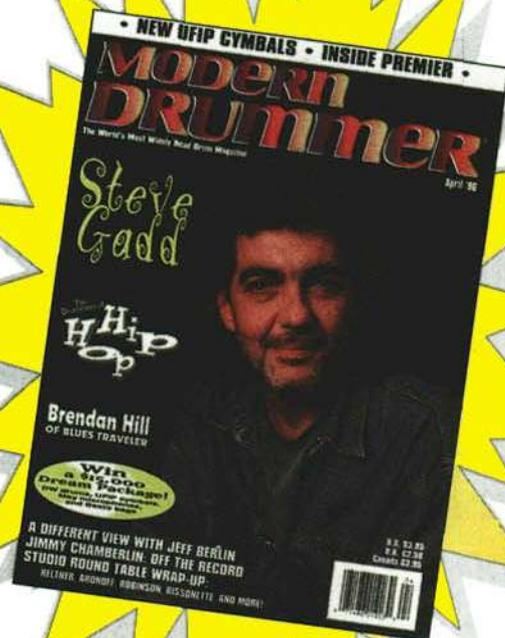
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shouldn't be glued to one tempo, because that can take a lot of energy away from the music.

I used-a click in the studio pretty much through the entire record, but I play off it—either go behind the beat a little or a bit in front of it—I don't worry about sticking right to it. It's just sort of a guide for me.

MP: Are you playing the same kind of setup you always have? I've noticed you seem to sit low, and I was wondering how that affects what you play.

PR: It's not something I planned or anything. I guess that's just how tall the milk crate was when I first started playing, and I just got comfortable with that height. For a long time, it was hard to sit at any kit with a kick drum larger than 20". My first kit had these deep toms, and I sat so low, it was impossible to play on anything bigger than a 20". But now, with the shallower toms, it's no problem. I'm playing a 22" now.

I like the fast, shallow toms because the sound cuts a lot better. My toms are 10", 12", 14", and 15"—those are small floor toms, but the DWs get a good, low pitch

for their size, and I don't tune them very high. But I like to tweak the snare up there. I used a 5x14 Noble & Cooley in the studio because it gets such a great crack. I used a DW 6 1/2x14 solid snare for the slower and mid-tempo songs because it's so fat.

It's funny, I have these small toms and these giant cymbals. My crashes are 17" and 18" *Paiste Full* models. I used to play 19" and 20", but I'd have to hit them so hard just to get a sound. The thing is, I get a little excited sometimes and the 17" keeps breaking, so I might have to get something heavier.

MP: So where do you see the music going for this band over time? Will the Gin Blossoms always be a pop band or do you see things getting more adventurous musically?

PR: I think we got a little nutty on the new record—at least nutty for us. There are songs like "I Can't Figure You Out," which was a completely different direction for us. And we had some great session guys come in and play. Art Neville put some Hammond B3 on stuff—that man has soul—and Robbie Turner played pedal

steel on "Memphis Time." And we had accordion on there as well.

But above everything else, it's about the songs, the melody. And I think that no matter what direction we go in or how we fool around with things, the melody will always be a grounding force for us. That's what this band is built on, and good songs will never go out of style.

MP: What about you personally? If you weren't in the Gin Blossoms, would you still play drums?

PR: Yeah, I think so. The drums have probably been one of the only constant things in my life. But I don't know if I could ever find another band that would be as much fun to play in as this one. I mean, these guys are my friends. We got together as friends just to have fun, not to be some super-group. I can't speak for everybody else, but I know that's still the most important thing for me. We're all happy and grateful for the success we've had, and I know I'm thankful that this is my job now. Sometimes I wonder how a loser like me ever got so lucky.



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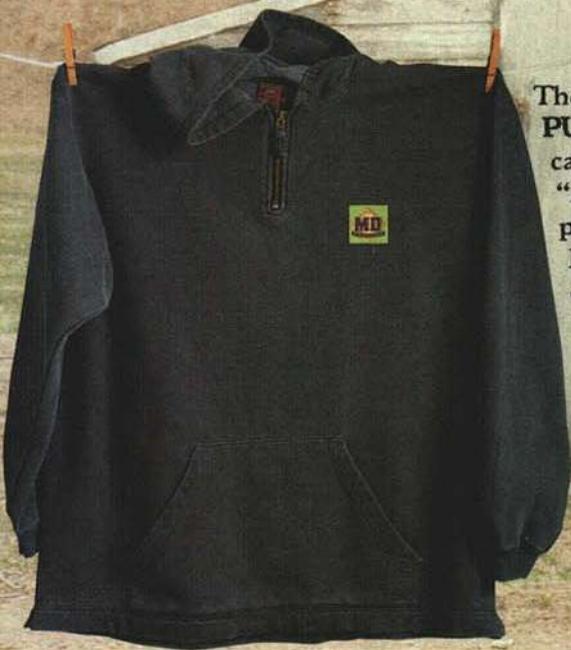
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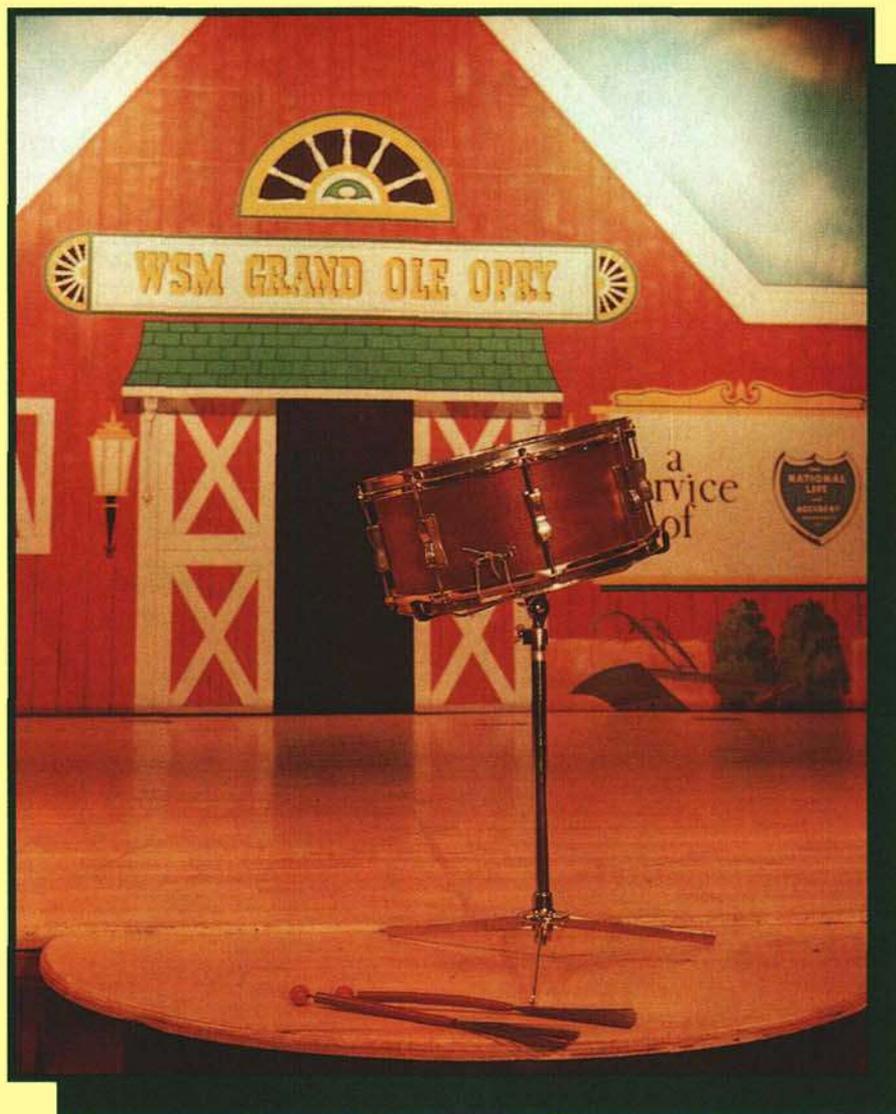
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Nashville Studio Drummers

Round Table: Part 2



Last month we gathered together Eddie Bayers, Lonnie Wilson, Jerry Kroon, Milton Sledge, Tommy Wells, Kenny Malone, Owen Hale, and Paul Leim at the original home of the Grand Ole Opry, the famed Ryman Auditorium, to talk about the current state of

Nashville studio drumming. Once these gentlemen—Music City's finest studio drummers—started talking, all sorts of great topics came up—simply *too* much valuable info to fit in one article. So this month we continue where we left off with more pearls from these country greats.

RF: What's the status of click tracks in Nashville studios today?

Paul: With the advent of the machines in the '80s, producers and musicians became more aware of time and tempo. We got locked into playing with the click, and that became an integral part of what we do. That, in itself, takes away some of the individuality you had years ago. Kenny, you've been here quite a while. When did you start seeing the click track? Did you use it in the '70s?

Kenny: It started to turn up around the mid-'70s. People started saying, "Let's have regular, quantized time." The first time Ronnie Milsap wanted to use a click track was in the mid-'70s. I remember him saying, "I want it at 120 beats per minute." I had played 120 beats per minute in the Navy for fourteen years! But he liked to cut with the click so he could splice the best segments from each take, which isn't music to me.

Last year we cut a Christmas song, and Ronnie didn't use the click at all, which was great. I don't enjoy playing with click tracks because you only know they're right when you *can't* hear the beat.

Jerry: I never wanted to use a click, but then writers started doing their own demos with drum machines. I'd go in and they'd say, "It's really got to be *this*." Sure, music recorded without a click can have a natural escalation sometimes, but it feels good. But back then they just wanted it to be perfect. They became very tempo conscious, so out of self-defense we started playing with the click. But I have to say I actually like playing with a click. I don't have any problem with it.

Eddie: I like to use a click, especially when we're running a song down at a certain tempo and the producer says he wants it a little faster or a little slower. The other musicians could be thinking ten beats ahead, when one beat might be all it needs. So we can run the tune down with the click one beat up, get the feel we want, and then shut the machine off.

Milton: There are producers who only use a click to count off the tune, and then they shut it off.

Eddie: And you say, "Thank you." There are just times when the click inhibits the feel, and I think producers recognize that.

Kenny: It's a great tool, man.

Milton: It's like using electronics to enhance the sound of a

drumkit: It's a helpful tool.

Jerry: I don't think of it as a click track. To me, it's just percussion.

Owen: I agree. I don't think of it as a machine back there.

Jerry: I've heard things that you play on, Paul, where you've programmed little percussion parts. They seemed as natural as if you had a real percussionist playing with you.

RF: Switching gears slightly, what can producers and engineers do to give you that ideal session?

By Robyn Flans



"I know certain musicians who are at that burnout stage, but they can't bring themselves to say no to a session. They're so afraid that if they turn one down they won't be called again."

Milton Sledge

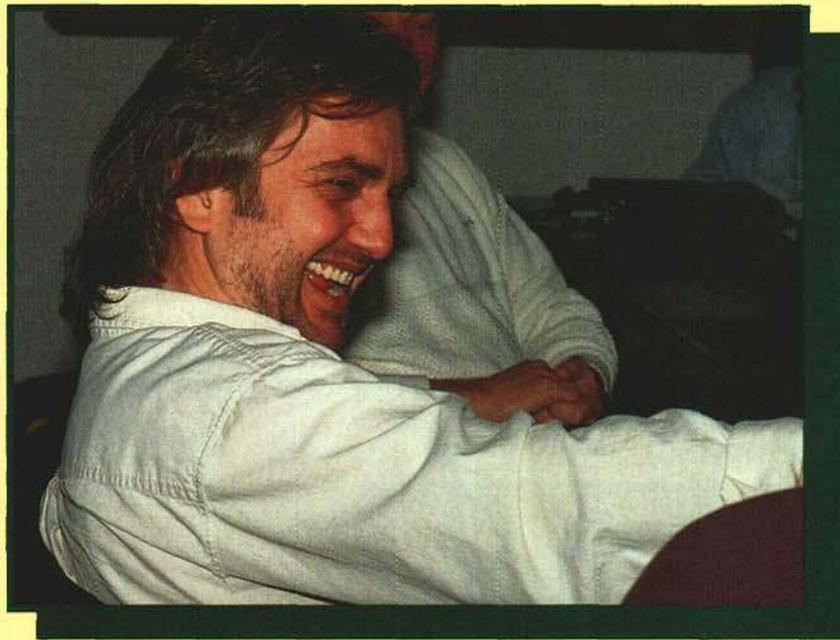
Photos by Rick Malkin

Lonnie: For me, the most enjoyable sessions are with producers who *know* when you've got a rhythm track.

Tommy: A good producer is one who, when I get a track that I really like, will say he'll listen to it.

Milton: But as a musician you should never be afraid to say, "Let's do one more," or "Let's keep that one." If a producer is intuitive enough, he'll listen to you.

Paul: Everyone in this room has enough self-confidence to either say, "Look, we can't do it again right now; just give me five minutes." But you do run into people who can be difficult.



Owen Hale

Eddie: I don't know about you, but when I find a particular artist or producer is a jerk and humiliates musicians, he's out the window as far as I'm concerned. I can't even listen to the guy's music after that.

Paul: That's how I am with Ray Charles.

Owen: What do you mean?

Paul: I had done a record with him, and one of the tunes started out with just four quarter notes on the bass drum. After the session I was called to do a TV special with him. Well, at the taping I was in a drum booth, way in the back, and he was standing up beside the conductor. I started the bass drum beats for that song, and I get through two of them, and he yelled, "Wait, wait, wait, baby, baby, baby. You're not getting me here," pointing to his heart. He was standing forty feet away from me and I was in an iso booth. So the conductor, who is a good friend of mine, said, "Paul, just start it again." I got through three beats and he yelled, "Baby, baby, baby, baby, you're not getting me here, baby." I said, "Could you put on some headphones?" He said, "I don't need no headphones if you ain't getting me here, baby."

Eddie: Oh man.

Paul: Well, I think I got to the fourth beat the next time, and it was, "Baby, baby, baby, we ain't going no further until you get me here." There were sixty musicians waiting and watching all of this. The producer ran out asking, "What the hell is going on?" And it's all my fault, right? It probably cost the producer \$100,000 in overtime that day.

I will *not* take another date with Ray Charles. But that's the way he is. More often than not, though, the big stars are the nicest people on the planet.

RF: Let's talk about magic moments in the studio.

Jerry: Usually the magic moments happen for me during that one "extra" song on a session. The first one that comes to mind is Vern Gosdin's "If You're Going To Do Me Wrong, Do Me Right." We were in Woodland cutting, and we had a bit of a struggle that day. Things weren't sounding good; I don't know what the deal was. But we got to the last few

minutes and they wanted to try one more song. They played the demo and we wrote the chart. It's just a simple country song—the drums aren't even important in that song—but that moment was magic. It's happened like that for me a few times.

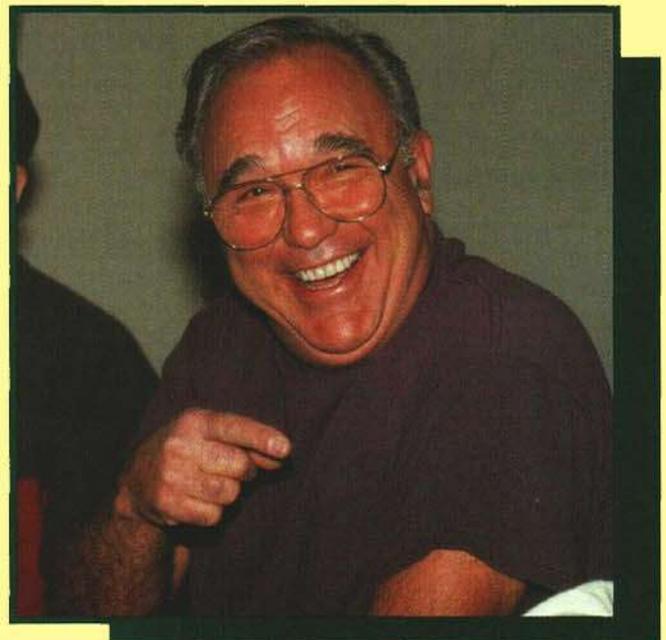
Tommy: I was thinking of a particular magic moment, and you, Eddie, were there when it happened. I was doing my first session with Ricky Van Shelton. I was only there because Eddie had broken his arm. We cut "Crime Of Passion" and Eddie was in the control room along with the producer's dog, Danny. Buckingham, the producer, is kind of superstitious, and if Danny howls during a performance he knows he's got the track. During the first take the dog howled—and that was the one.

Eddie: That's a great record. If we all went around and talked about the tracks that had everything, we would all agree that those tracks will stand the test of time. You'll be

able to listen to them twenty years from now and still be happy. I think that's because the spirit is in them.

Jerry: For me, you can talk technology out the window, but the real magic is when I hear something on the radio I did with a bunch of my friends. It may not even be the definitive drum part. It's just about being a part of this whole Nashville recording community. That's what gets me.

Lonnie: I'd like to address the topic of "formula." We play on songs that become hits, and then all of a sudden there's a clone act—we have to play that same way on many other sessions. It becomes a situation where it's the same song with



Kenny Malone

the same changes. That's a little bit frustrating when you think, "Man, I can do something different, but they're not letting me."

Owen: I call that the "same song, different hat syndrome."

Eddie: When they bring that kind of material into a project, you already know what they're going to want you to do. You can't do anything else because everything has that formula written in. You know the feel of the intro, and you know how the turn-around is going to be.

Jerry: That brings up a subject I hate: Nashville gets a bad rap for being "country this" or "country that." You've got guys here who have done it all and can play it all. We are not just a bunch of hayseed drummers. We know how to do what needs to be done. I would imagine, Paul, that coming from L.A., you had an eye-opener about all of the different feels you had to play when you began working here.

Paul: When I came here the techno thing was dominating in L.A.—locking up to the tape and all that stuff. There's a lot of film work that goes on there, so most of the discussions of tempo in L.A. are in frames per beat. So I came here talking in terms of frames per beat, and I think people thought I was trying to be a smart ass. But it was just a different environment. As simple as that sounds, I had to think about talking in terms of beats per minute, which is entirely different. That was one thing; the other was just playing "rootsier."

Jerry: It's a lot harder than people think, isn't it?

Paul: For me it's about going back to playing the way I did in the clubs in Texas.

Kenny: Gotta make 'em want to dance.

Paul: Exactly. Here, if they're not dancing or crying, you're not getting to them.

RF: I'd like to ask about how someone breaks into the studio scene here. Can a talented kid in Iowa actually move here and get gigs in the studio?

Jerry: Well, it's not nearly as closed as it was when I came here. Back then there was only the A team, which was Buddy Harmon and a couple of other guys. Then the next group of people broke in. But I think it's *way* easier today. There are so many musicians here now.

Owen: The pie is bigger.

Lonnie: There's a lot more work.

Jerry: I think there's one important factor that every drummer who comes here should know: You've got to quit playing "drums" and start making *music* if you're going to be successful. We are all song people here. We listen to the song and we *play for* the song. We have a designated role. Some people might consider that selling out, but like Eddie said, we're hired, so we can either do the date or not. When we get hired to play a date, we're playing for that artist.

Lonnie: I think every one of us has toughed it out at some point before breaking in. I know Eddie did tons of sound-alike things for years, and club work—I did too. When I moved here, I didn't know a soul.

I'll tell you, now is a great time for the kid in Iowa wanting to break in. It's never been more open. There are more and more producers, like James Stroud, Don Cook, Keith



Tommy Wells

Stegall, and songwriters or players who came up through the ranks. Those guys make the best records.

RF: So if all these guys from Iowa move here...

Kenny: We'll move to Iowa, [everyone laughs]

RF: How does the potential competition make you feel? Do you ever worry that the call you just had might be the last call you're ever going to get?

Jerry: Change is inevitable. I'll speak for myself: I've basically had my day in the sun. I'm not the new kid on the block. I've played on a lot of great records and I have my gold and platinum collection. There are new producers who have come along who either stereotype me or just don't want to use me. That's the nature of the beast. If you would do this interview five years from now, I promise you there'd be a few different people sitting around this table.

But the bottom line is you have to keep your integrity. I'm forty-nine years old, but inside, I'm really a seventeen-year-old kid. I want to grow up and be a drummer someday! That's my biggest goal. I'm with the best. There are no better drummers around. This guy [pointing to Lonnie] is like a new guy, and he's doing great. I understand that, but I'm not going to lay down and just die. I'm going to continue to play.

Eddie: The great thing about it, though, is that Jerry could play on the big hit next year. You never know.

RF: I'd like each of you to tell me about your first session.

Kenny: I didn't hear a note I played. I had just gotten out of

the Navy. It was for Bobby Thompson and Jim Covard. They were ready to record a song right away, whereas all I had was the intro written for the tune. I was wondering, "What are these guys doing?" I had no idea what number charts were or anything. I don't know how I got through the thing, but somehow I did.

Paul: That just reminded me of when I first came here and saw a number chart, instead of seeing regular music with bars. I was lost for the first six months. I kept asking other musicians on sessions, "How come you guys keep getting to the end of the tune and I don't even know where I am?"

RF: Can you explain the number system?

Paul: Anybody who has taken beginning piano lessons can understand it. It's based on scales. For instance, a "5" on a number chart represents the five chord of whatever key you're in, and that's the case for any number. See how far I've come? [everyone laughs] But when you're used to reading legitimate music and you look at a number chart, instead of there being bars and staves, there are only numbers. For example, 1145 would be four bars long with two bars of 1,

one bar of 4, and a bar of 5.

What also makes this confusing is that every leader in Nashville has a different way of writing charts. For instance, Stevie Gibson writes a fermata as a whole note. The first time I saw that in one of his charts I stopped. Everybody else kept on going. I asked, "Guys, there's a fermata here. What are we doing?"

Milton: The cool thing about number charts, though, is that you can easily see how a tune is phrased by the way the numbers are written out. You can read in blocks—you can read four bars ahead without losing your place. When I get a session with regular music, I take a pencil and circle the phrases.

Paul: Every kid in this country who is in music theory class should have to learn this.

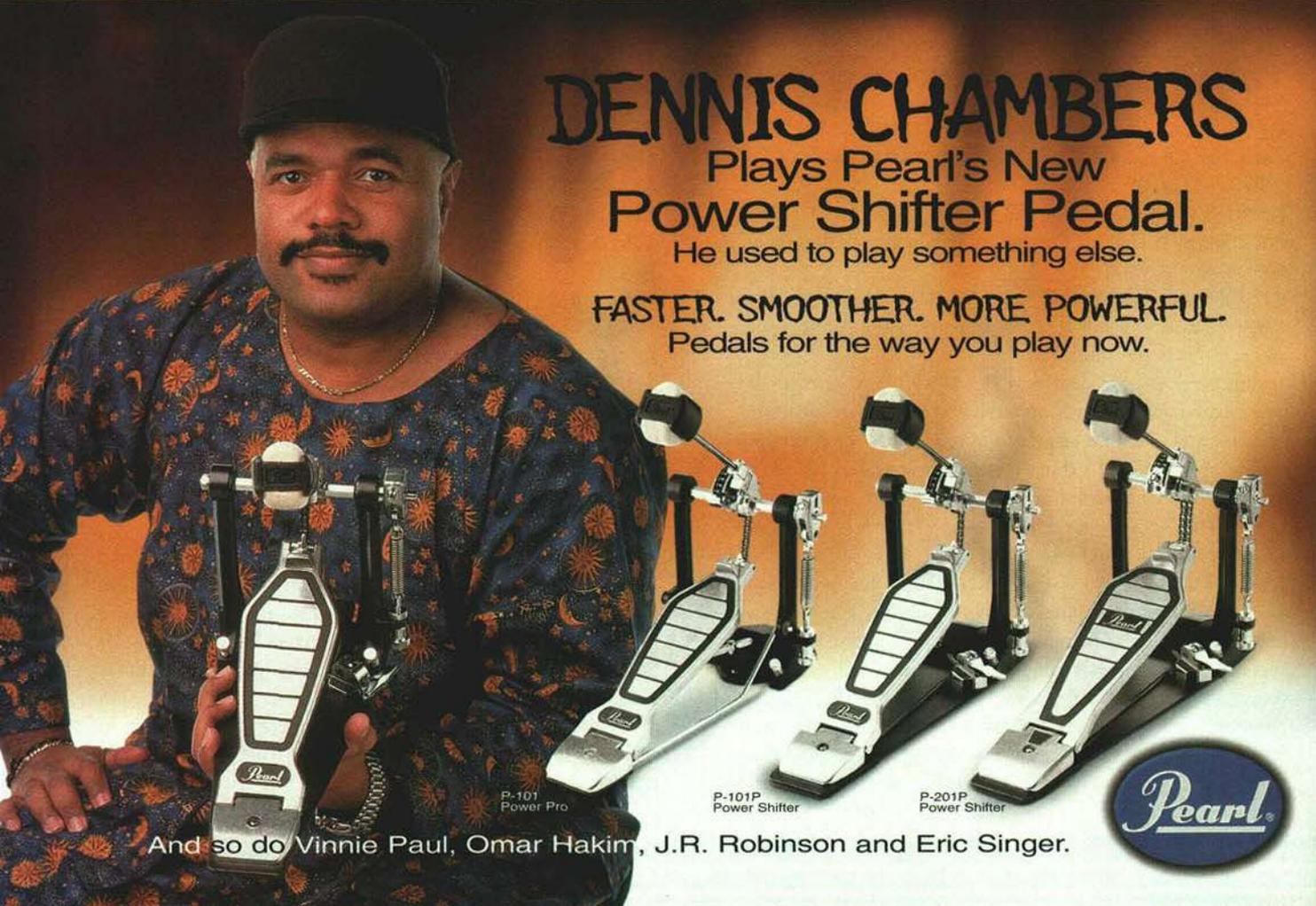
RF: Back to first sessions.

Jerry: I remember the first session I did that became a number-one single—"I Believe In You"—which happened because of Larrie Londin. Bowen was producing it, and all the big session guys were on it. For some reason they needed to do an extra session, and Larrie thought he

couldn't do it. He felt confident enough in me to tell Bowen that I could do it. I did the session, but I found out later that Larrie's other date was canceled. He actually could have done the session, but he didn't. I found out he had told Bowen, "No, you hired him, he'll do a good job. Let him play."

Eddie: I had a similar situation. I had worked with [producer] Jim Ed for two or three years, and he called me for a date, but I had to go to Oakland to do a concert. They called Larrie, who I found out had said to him, "I'll do this date, but I want you to understand that I'm just filling in for Eddie. This is Eddie's account." I couldn't believe it.

In honor of Larrie, I have to tell you about my first session, even though it was on piano. As everybody knows, I had worked as a keyboard player with Larrie on drums down at the Carousel Club in 1973. He got me on my first date, but on that date one of the players had been drinking. This guy was being difficult, reaming everybody on the session. He was on everybody's case: "I'll show you how to read that chart," "You're playing it wrong." It



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just turned into chaos. All of a sudden, the drums *flammed* and Larrie yelled, "I've had enough of your shit."

Larrie was so concerned about *any* project he worked on that he took responsibility for it. I think that's important for those of us who have achieved what we have; we need to be aware that our knowledge should not be used as a weapon. It should be used to enlighten. It isn't about the individual; it's a collective effort. We are team players. Larrie was always concerned with making sure that we went with the integrity, that nobody lost sight of what we were there to do no matter *what* the case was.

Jerry: When things aren't going well, some people will just sit and not say anything. Larrie wouldn't be afraid to say, "Wait. Enough. This is not flying." I respected him for that. Too many times people will sit there and not say anything because they're worried about their job. The guy they're working for knows something's not right. Sometimes he just needs somebody to stand up and help him out.

Tommy: My first session in Nashville was in '73 with the band I was with at the time, Dust. It was at Music City Recorders,

which is now Studio 19. We had a keyboard player on the session with us, Buddy Skipper, and we were told we needed a percussionist, which ended up being Larrie. I knew why he was there—just in case I didn't cut it. So we did the session and he played percussion. I felt some pressure. "Here's the Motown guy who played on 'When You're Hot, You're Hot.' I thought, "I'd better play good." Everything worked out fine, though. When we were done that night, Larrie took the whole band down to the Carousel, where he was playing drums—and Eddie was on piano. It was a great time.

It was just a couple of years later that I moved to Nashville, and Larrie was a big part of that. When I was on the road with that band, I would call him up and he'd ask, "When's your next day off?" I'd say, "Well, Sunday's our travel day." He'd say, "Just come to Nashville," so I'd fly to Nashville and he'd pick me up at the airport. We'd play drums all day and into the night in his basement, and then he'd take me to the airport in the morning so I could fly to my next gig.

Jerry: Larrie gave me my first set of Pearl

drums. One day I got a last-minute call for a session. I didn't have my car, so Larrie loaned me his and gave me the snare drum he used on all of Jerry Reed's stuff. He actually *gave* me that drum.

Paul: That kind of support—"Glad you're here, glad you're part of this"—is what *makes* Nashville. We can't lose that. James Stroud was always like that to me. When I would come in, he would say, "If there's anything you need, just ask. Here's a snare drum, I used it on so and so." Everybody has always been so wonderful here, and that shows up in the music.

Listening to everybody talking makes me think about the differences between L.A. and Nashville. It's unbelievable. That's why so many people are moving here and bringing in so many projects. Even European projects are coming here.

RF: Now that more people have moved to town, do you think the phenomenon of studio burnout is as prevalent as it used to be?

Owen: I was on the verge of burnout while I was doing Cleve Frances in February, 1994. I was tired. That's when I got a call from Gary Rossington asking me to join Lynyrd Skynyrd. I jumped on it. Before

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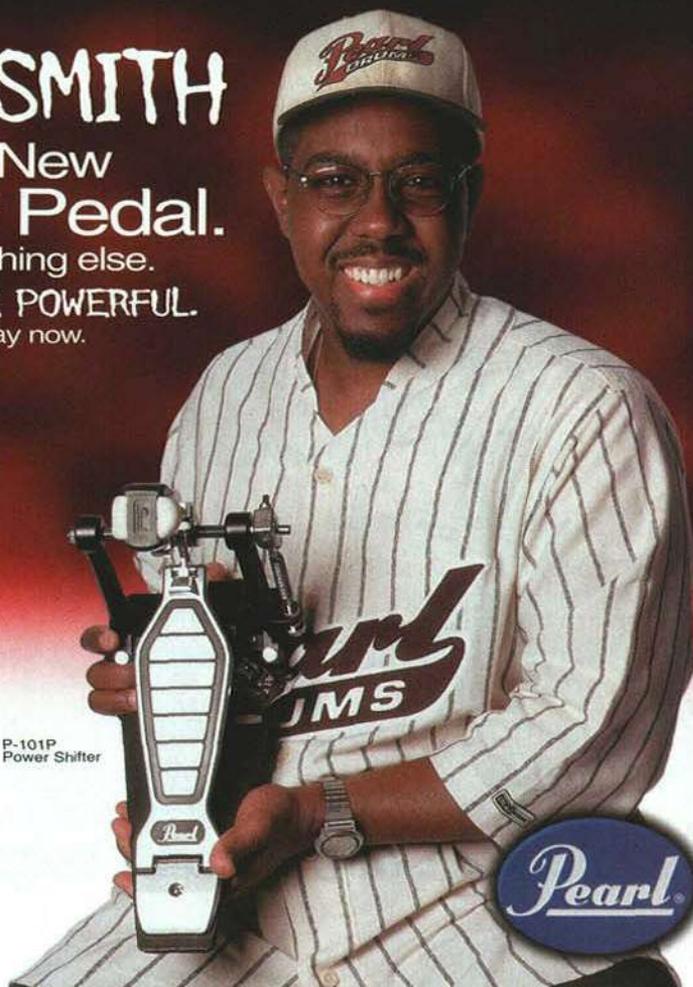
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that I was actually thinking about stopping my studio work for a while.

Paul: I've talked to producers who say, "I wish our guys were doing more live things." You take chances live; you don't have to listen back to the performance. You play something that's out there, and it's either great or it isn't.

RF: How does that affect your playing in the studio?

Kenny: It keeps it fresh.

Jerry: I quit doing a lot of sessions that I just didn't want to do, even if it meant cutting back on things financially.

RF: What kind of session would that have been?

Jerry: Just sessions that are too much of the same thing and that are not very rewarding. I practice all the time, even when I have a day off. I am always trying to improve, because there are things I want to do. I think that inspiration of wanting to become a better player is what helps me avoid getting burned out.

RF: Kenny, I know you went through a couple of burnouts. What are the symptoms of burnout and what can you do about it?

Kenny: Everything I played started to sound like the time before. I'd go into the studio and it was, "Okay, rim on the verses, open head on the choruses, fill going into the choruses." I finally said, "I can't do this anymore. I have to get out of here." That was about fifteen years ago. I needed a change, so I took a jazz trio to Key West and played at Captain Hornblowers jazz club. Crystal Gayle came down and sang with us, and then we took off and went on the road with her for a year.

RF: That had to make a financial difference to you.

Kenny: Oh yeah. I gave away my code-phone. But I just couldn't do it anymore. Unfortunately I stayed away for a while—it lasted ten years.

RF: You disappeared for ten years?

Kenny: I was *really* burned out. It does have a happy ending, though, because today, at fifty-seven, I still love to play. But the love of playing comes not only from the response of the musicians, but from the audience and the dancers. They give music an immediate purpose. I'm thankful I still love to play.

Milton: One other thing is that you can't be afraid to say no. I know certain musicians who are at that burnout stage right

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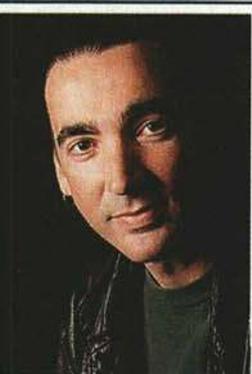
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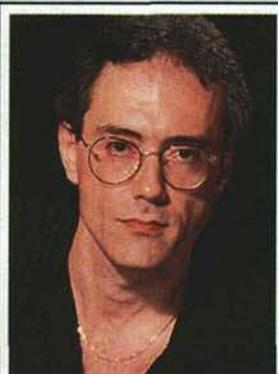
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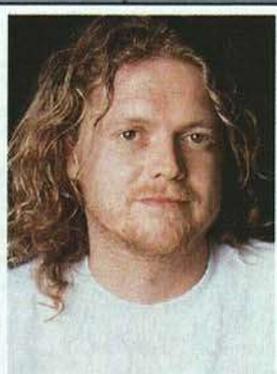
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now, and they don't even realize it. They can't bring themselves to say no to a session. They're so afraid that if they turn one down they won't be called again.

Tommy: I have found it's an incredible release to do a live gig at the end of the week, just to slam it and blow it out. Owen, you get to go out and slam now.

Owen: Yes, except that the first week I was on tour I was wishing I was twenty-three instead of forty-three. I had to quit smoking and I started running, just to be able to do the gig with Lynyrd Skynyrd.

I actually almost passed out in Houston at the Woodland Pavilion. It was 100° and the air conditioner was broken. We got to "Sweet Home Alabama" and I looked up and started seeing spots. I was soaking wet, my drum tech was putting cold towels on my neck, and at the end of the song I just fell back. He caught me and they had to give me oxygen. But I still believe that playing live is necessary to avoid studio burnout.

RF: Eddie, have you ever approached burnout?

Eddie: No, because I had an opportunity that some of these guys didn't, which was to lay in bed for a year after my accident and contemplate that I actually might not play again. Because of that I was able to reconcile the fact that some days it's going to be music and other days it's going to be work. When it is work, I accept it as work and don't allow it to contaminate my musical spirit. I know that if it's a three- or six-hour session, it will pass. I'll look in my book and be comforted by knowing that next week I'll be somewhere else.

Paul: We all realize how lucky we are to be here.



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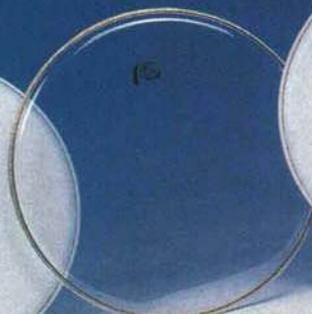
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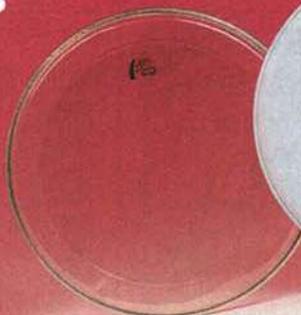
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Owen: Big time.

RF: What advice do you have for a drummer who comes to town and wants to "make it"?

Jerry: When I first came to town, there was this bowling league on Sunday nights that a lot of players were part of. I was really concerned about their thinking I was hanging around just to "germ" them—to get in with them. I was very cautious about it. I wouldn't really get together with them, I just bowled with them. Eventually I subbed for Jerry Carrigan a lot. Carrigan knew that when he called me I wouldn't be trying to take his gig. That's the way I approached all the guys who used me as a sub. A lot of people will say things like, "I can do better than the guy I'm subbing for." But it's a pecking order. To the new guy I'd say take your time, be a nice guy, and be true to yourself.

Paul: Sometimes I'll get calls from guys asking if they can have my overflow [sessions he's too busy to do]. We can't do that. That's going to reflect on us, and it's not fair to the rest of the guys who have paid their dues.

RF: So what should a new guy do?

Paul: He should start by working in clubs for twenty dollars a night and work his way up like the rest of us did.

Tommy: He's going to get his opportunity from the guys he's playing with in clubs.

Paul: They'll come up as a group together.

Tommy: What happens is the guitar player gets a gig doing a demo for some songwriter, and then he's going to call his buddies from the band he's worked the bar with. That's how you break in.

Eddie: In most cases, if I get a call and I can't do it, the producers

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know who they're going to call next. They have a list. I can always give input, but more than likely when we hang up the phone they're going to call the next guy on their list.

Paul: For a kid to come into town and thinks he's going to get on a major date or a great demo date, that's really an over-

expectation, because he doesn't have a clue as to what he's going to be dealing with. He won't know how to deal with the people, the tempos, the feel, whatever. You've got to know about all that stuff. It takes time and experience. The guy from Iowa has got to know that there's room at the top, but he can't *start* at the top. He's got to start in the

trenches like every single one of us did.

Kenny: When I came here I started a jazz trio and we played at the King Of The Road hotel, downstairs in the lounge. Ronnie Milsap was playing upstairs.

Jerry: I came here with a country artist, but the deal got weird. The artist told me it was a \$150-a-week job. I was making \$200 in the club I was playing at home, but I thought it was a good opportunity. I didn't know that it would be \$150 only if I worked all three days. The next week we didn't work three days, so I only made \$100, and by the third week I only made \$50. At one point I played the Opry once a week for six weeks, and only made \$12.50 a week.

I literally crashed and burned in my first attempt to come here. I had to pack up after living in a boarding house and go back to the Midwest. I stayed there for a year and got my money together. Then when the club thing fell through there, I moved back to Nashville. But you can't be afraid to come and fail. I always tell guys that if they're serious about it, they should have enough money so they can stay here for at least six months just so they can get a feel for it.

Paul: It's like starting a new business: Almost everybody who has had a successful business has failed or had a slow period at some point.

Eddie: Especially in music. I think there's something in all of us that eventually became evident. We weren't going to do anything else. It didn't matter if we had to work in factories during the day; we had an unrelenting love for making music.

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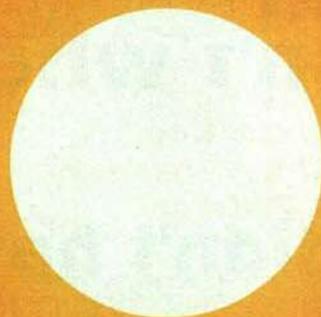
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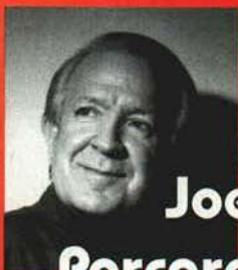
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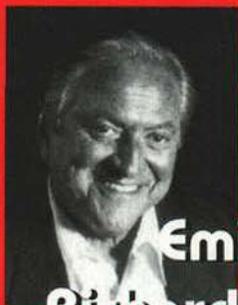


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MD 1996 READERS

HONOR ROLL

MD's Honor Roll consists of those drummers and percussionists whose talent, musical achievements, and lasting popularity placed them first in MD's Readers Poll in the categories indicated for five or more years. We will include these artists, along with those added in the future, in each year's Readers Poll results as our way of honoring these very special performers. This year, MD is pleased to add Kenny Aronoff (Pop/Mainstream Rock '92-'96), Dennis Chambers (Electric Jazz '92-'96), and Vinnie Colaiuta (All-Around '92-'96) to the Honor Roll, in recognition of each drummer's five consecutive wins.

ALEX ACUNA

Latin/Brazilian Percussion

AIRTO

Latin American and Latin/
Brazilian Percussion

KENNY ARONOFF

Pop/Mainstream Rock

LOUIE BELLSON

Big Band

GARY BURTON

Mallet Percussion

DENNIS CHAMBERS

Electric Jazz; Funk

ANTHONY J. CIRONE

Classical Percussion

VINNIE COLAIUTA

All-Around; Studio

PHIL COLLINS

Pop/Mainstream Rock

TIC FIRTH

Classical Percussion

STETE GADD

All-Around; Studio

DAVID GARIBALDI

R&B/Funk

LARRIE LONDIN

Country

ROD MORGENSTEIN

Rock/Progressive Rock

NEIL PEART

Rock; Multi-Percussion

RUDDY RICH

Big Band

ED SHAUGHNESSY

Big Band

STEVE SMITH

All-Around

LARS ULRICH

Hard Rock

DATE WECKL

Electric Jazz

TONY WILLIAMS

Jazz/Mainstream Jazz

HALL OF FAME

1996: VINNIE COLAIUTA

1995: Elvin Jones

1994: Larrie Londin

1993: Jeff Porcaro

1992: Max Roach

1991: Art Blakey

1990: Bill Bruford

1989: Carl Palmer

1988: Joe Morello

1987: Billy Cobham

1986: Tony Williams

1985: Louie Bellson

1984: Steve Gadd

1983: Neil Peart

1982: Keith Moon

1981: John Bonham

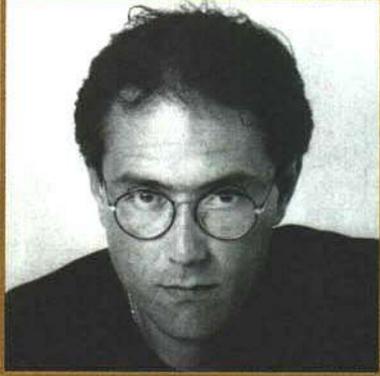
1980: Buddy Rich

1979: Gene Krupa



POLL RESULTS

ALL-AROUND



VINNIE COLAIUTA

2. Simon Phillips
3. Kenny Aronoff
4. Anton Fig
5. Dennis Chambers

STUDIO



Jay Wiley

KENNY ARONOFF

2. John "J.R." Robinson
3. Jim Keltner
4. Denny Fongheiser
5. Steve Ferrone

ELECTRIC JAZZ

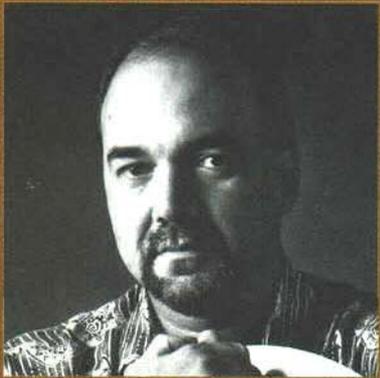


John Walker

DENNIS CHAMBERS

2. Steve Smith
3. Will Kennedy
4. Joel Rosenblatt
5. Bill Bruford

MAINSTREAM JAZZ



Shigeru Uchiyama

PETER ERSKINE

2. Dave Weckl
3. Bill Stewart
4. Jack DeJohnette
5. Clayton Cameron/
Marvin "Smitty" Smith

BIG BAND

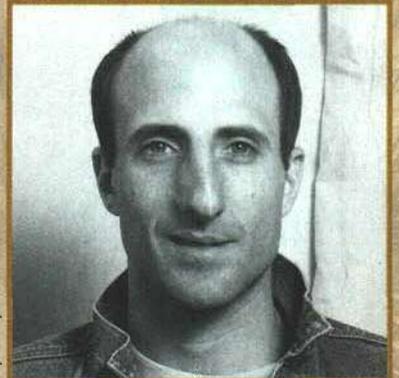


Sean Yennett

**MARVIN "SMITTY"
SMITH**

2. Dave Weckl
3. John Riley
4. Jeff Hamilton
5. Max Weinberg

POP/MAIN-STREAM/ROCK



Jay Wiley

KENNY ARONOFF

2. Carter Beauford
3. Vinnie Colaiuta
4. Manu Katche
5. Jimmy Chamberlin/
Steve Ferrone

In order to present the results of our Readers Poll, the votes were tabulated and the top five names in each category are listed here. In the event a tie occurred at any position other than fifth place, all names in that position are presented and the subsequent position was eliminated. When a tie occurred at fifth place, all winning names are presented.

READERS POLL SUBSCRIPTION GIVEAWAY

In appreciation for the participation of MD's readership in this year's poll, three ballots were drawn at random to determine the winners of free one-year subscriptions to *MD*. Those winners are Benjamin Bilello of Narragansett, Rhode Island, Mike Somers of Parlin, New Jersey, and Don Nichols of Naperville, Illinois. Congratulations from *Modern Drummer!*

HARD ROCK



ALEX VAN HALEN

2. Matt Cameron
3. Mike Portnoy
4. Dave Abbruzzese
5. Dave Lombardo/
Vinnie Paul/John Tempesta

PROGRESSIVE ROCK



Lissa Wales

MIKE PORTNOY

2. Tim "Herb"
Alexander
3. Bill Bruford
4. Terry Bozzio
5. Matt Cameron/
Simon Phillips

FUNK



CHAD SMITH

2. Omar Hakim
3. Herman Matthews
4. Steve Jordan
5. Kenwood Dennard/
Russ McKinnon

COUNTRY



Rick Malkin

EDDIE BAYERS

2. Jamie Oldaker
3. Paul Leim
4. Billy Thomas
5. Martin Parker

UP & COMING



CARTER BEAUFORD

- (Dave Matthews Band)
2. Brian Blade (Joshua Redman)
 3. Jim Sonefeld (Hootie & The Blowfish)
 4. Billy Martin (Medeski, Martin, & Wood)/
Jojo Mayer (Screaming Headless Torsos)/
Patty Schemel (Hole)

PERCUSSIONIST



Veryl Oakland

SHEILA E

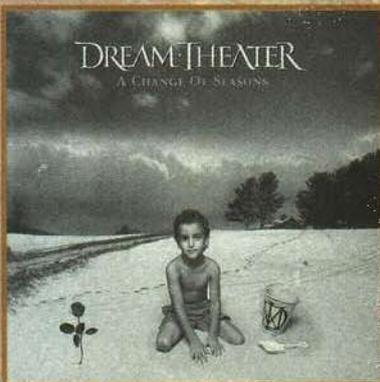
2. Trilok Gurtu
3. Tito Puente
4. Luis Conte
5. Giovanni Hidalgo

RECORDED PERFORMANCE

MIKE PORTNOY

Dream Theater: *A Change Of Seasons*

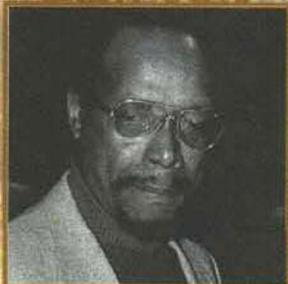
2. Carter Beauford—Dave Matthews Band: *Under The Table And Dreaming*
3. Tim "Herb" Alexander—Primus: *Tales From The Punchbowl*
4. Bill Bruford/Pat Mastelotto—King Crimson: *Thrak/*
Alex Van Halen—Van Halen: *Balance*



EDITORS' ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This award is given by the editors of *Modern Drummer* in recognition of outstanding contribution to the drum/percussion community by a performer, author, educator, manufacturer, etc. The persons so honored may be notable figures in drumming history or active participants on today's scene. The criteria for this award shall be the value of the contribution(s) made by the honorees, in terms of influence on subsequent musical styles, educational methods, or products. There will be no limit as to the number of honorees that may be designated each year. For 1996, *MD's* editors are pleased to honor:

ALAN DAWSON



Alan Dawson enjoyed a dual career as an outstanding jazz drummer and a legendary teacher. His playing career began in the early '50s with the Lionel Hampton band; by the early '60s he had established a reputation as a superb jazz drummer. Alan was the house drummer at Lonnie's in Boston between 1963 and 1970, and a member of the Dave Brubeck Quartet (with

Gerry Mulligan and Jack Six) from 1968 through 1974. Additional performances with a who's who of jazz artists heightened Alan's popularity as one of the most tasteful, meticulous, and intelligent players on the jazz scene.

Dawson's reputation as a teacher was established shortly after he joined the faculty at the Berklee School of Music in 1957. He taught at Berklee for the next eighteen years, and continued to teach privately for many years thereafter. Focusing on technique and independence in combination with a total "understanding, appreciation, and respect for the music itself," Alan was mentor to a generation of drummers—including many of today's top drumming stars.

AL JACKSON



Al Jackson made his name as the "house drummer" for the Stax record label from the late 1960s through 1975—and as a member of that company's legendary studio/performing group, Booker T & The M.G.s. Jackson's body of work on Stax reads like several chapters in the history of American music: records by Booker T & The M.G.s, Rufus and Carla Thomas,

Sam & Dave, Eddie Floyd, Albert King, Otis Redding, Isaac Hayes, Wilson Pickett, and countless others. Outside of Stax, Jackson also recorded with Al Green, Aretha Franklin, Bill Withers, Leon Russell, and Rod Stewart.

Even though Jackson's personal background was rooted in jazz and big band drumming and he possessed impressive technique, he brought a unique and very successful simplicity to what he played on vinyl. Eschewing constant fills or gratuitous cymbal work, Jackson preferred to keep the arrangements uncluttered. The quintessential Al Jackson sound was a solid, popping snare backbeat and a relentless groove. On that groove were built such hits as "Green Onions," "Knock On Wood," "Sittin' On The Dock Of The Bay," and "Ain't No Sunshine."

Al Jackson has influenced virtually every R&B-oriented drummer who followed him. He might have become an even greater figure in drumming history had his career—and his life—not been cut short in 1975. In the early autumn of that year Jackson was murdered in his home town of Memphis, Tennessee.

MEL LEWIS



A master of subtlety and understatement, Mel Lewis pioneered the small-group approach to big band drumming with acute musical sensitivity. Never a technician, Mel made up for it with an instinct for blending with the band, coloring an arrangement, and maintaining dynamic control.

Starting his professional career at the age of fifteen, Mel worked with a variety of bands in the 1940s before coming to prominence in 1954 with the Stan Kenton band. After stints with such giants as Terry Gibbs, Benny Goodman, and Gerry Mulligan, Mel joined with trumpeter/arranger Thad Jones to form the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis big band in 1965. That band recorded, toured, and performed Monday nights at New York's Village Vanguard for years—becoming a jazz institution in the process. Jones left the band in 1978, but Mel kept it going, remaining at the helm until his death in 1990. At the time of his passing, Mel Lewis was universally acknowledged as one of the most *musical* big band drummers who ever lived.

MARTIN COHEN



Thirty years ago Latin and ethnic percussion instruments in America were restricted to a few bongos and congas brought in by touring artists. At that time the U.S. had an embargo against Cuba—where most of the good Latin drums were made. But a young engineer from New Jersey named Martin Cohen had a love for Latin music and musicians. He combined his skills and his

musical taste to make instruments for the musicians he associated with. What began with a pair of bongos that Cohen hand-made in his Bronx home led to what is now LP Music Group—the world's leading manufacturer of Latin and other ethnic percussion instruments.

Not only did Cohen found a company, he essentially founded an entire industry, since prior to the inception of LP there was no major Latin-instrument presence in the percussion market. Through his constant focus on both innovative product development and aggressive marketing, Cohen brought the music world's attention to Latin and other ethnic percussion—along with a variety of original, non-traditional percussion devices. In so doing, Martin Cohen opened up a whole new consumer base and paved the way for several other major manufacturers now in the field.



The Triplet Roll



by Joe Morello

Transcribed by Jim Jacobus

Several years ago, my good friend Fred Hinger and I were discussing different types of rolls. Fred was an accomplished snare drummer and timpanist with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, and he really knew his business. He asked if I had ever heard of the triplet roll, which he demonstrated for me quite effectively.

My teacher, the great George Lawrence Stone, had mentioned this roll to me many years earlier. Stone believed it had its place but felt that the "buzz" or "closed" roll was adequate to produce the "long tone" desired by orchestra conductors of his day. After seeing how beautifully Fred played the triplet roll, however, I was convinced of its usefulness.

If performed well, the triplet roll produces a more even sound than the closed roll, and the impact sound of the sticks is less obvious. Most drummers find it more relaxing to play, since there

is not as much of a tendency to "choke down" with increasing speed as there is with a closed roll.

The triplet roll, preceded by two measures of 8th notes, is shown below. Play each note as a single wrist stroke at first. As you increase speed, each initial beat will be played as a wrist stroke with two rebounds. In your left hand (traditional grip) you will get these rebounds by using a slight forearm movement and downward pressure with your fingers. In the right hand, use a slight forearm movement and then pull upward with the fingers.

In rudimental days, the common method of practicing rolls was by starting slowly and working up to a faster tempo, going from open to closed strokes in the process. However, it is more effective to practice the following exercises at an even speed throughout.



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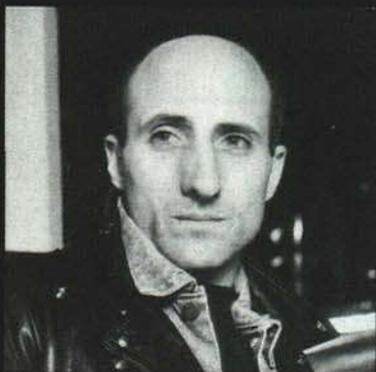
DENNIS CHAMBERS
#1 Electric Jazz



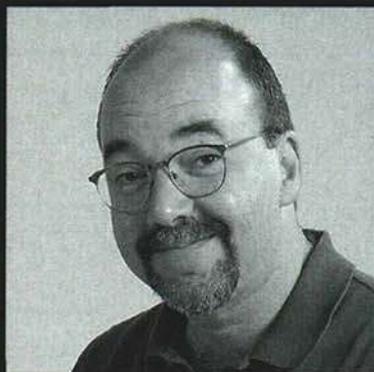
VINNIE COLAIUTA
Hall of Fame
#1 All Around



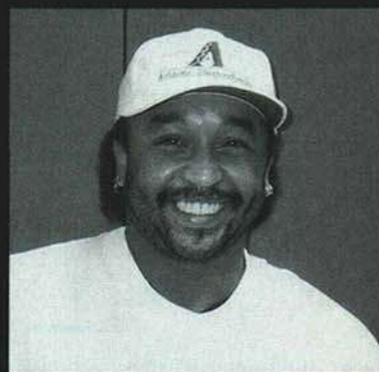
MARVIN "SMITTY" SMITH
#1 Big Band



KENNY ARONOFF
#1 Studio
#1 Mainstream Rock



PETER ERSKINE
#1 Mainstream Jazz



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Melodic Soloing With Ostinatos

by Rob Leytham

MUSIC KEY



During my college orchestra years, one of my favorite percussion instruments to play was timpani—not only because of the huge, resonant sound, but also because timpani were the only drums that produced a singable melody. Many times we drummers get so caught up in

the rhythmic and technical side of drumming that we forget the melodic side. I try to encourage my drumset students to play as melodically as possible.

One way that I teach the concept of melodic drumming is through the use of beginning timpani books. To apply such materials, I assign a pitch to each drum on the drumset. Then I have the student play an ostinato, or repeating pattern. The student then plays the written melody from the timpani method book on the assigned drums along with the ostinato. This is a great exercise for building limb independence and teaching melodic creativity.

Let's experiment with this concept by using a pattern in 3/4 time. First, learn the foot pattern. Here the bass drum plays on beats 1, 2, and 3 and the hi-hat plays on beat 1 and the "&" of beat 2. Practice this slowly until it feels comfortable. (All written 8th notes are to be swung.)



Now let's add the snare drum part, played with the left hand and with the snares turned off. The left hand plays on beat 1, the "&" of 1, the "&" of 2, and 3.



Repeat this pattern, adding the accents on the second note of each grouping of two. As you play this pattern continuously, start to speed it up and change the counting from 3/4 time to that of 6/8 time: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & .



Once you feel that you have control over this pattern, bring the dynamics down on the ostinato to *piano* and try playing the following melodic solo with your right hand between your high tom and floor tom. (Feel free to use any other sound source on your kit.) The first eight measures deal strictly with 8th notes. These

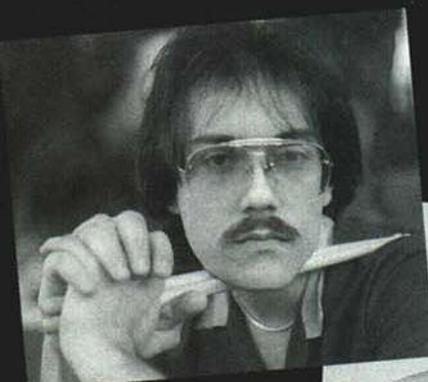
can be done fairly easily during the first few tries. The last eight measures are more challenging, since I have included 16th notes to be played with your right hand over the repeating ostinato.

If you have problems with these patterns, take away your left hand and try it just with the right hand and the feet. Play it like that several times while listening to the melody before adding your left hand again. If you are still having difficulty, leave the feet out and concentrate on your hand movements and how they fall rhythmically into place. After several tries, you should be able to add the ostinato. It may take a couple days of practice, but once you have mastered the exercise, it can be melodically and musically exciting.

Melodic Solo



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MD Hall of Fame

#1 All Around

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Honor Roll

EDDIE BAYERS

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JOHN "JR" ROBINSON

#2 Studio

TRILOK GURTU

#2 Percussionist

BILL STEWART

#3 Mainstream Jazz

JOHN RILEY

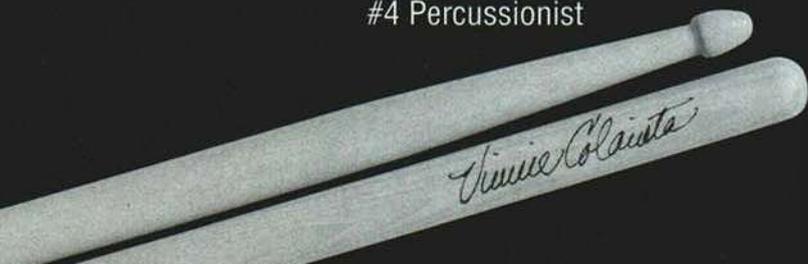
#3 Big Band

LUIS CONTE

#4 Percussionist

DENNY FONGHEISER

#4 Studio



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The Rock March: Part 2



by Rod Morgenstein

MUSIC KEY



Let's continue where we left off last month and explore other ways of playing the rock march. Like many of the previous exercises, examples 1 through 9 have the bass drum playing quarter notes.

Example 1 is a basic two-surface ride pattern with the right hand playing the ride cymbal and the left hand alternating between the hi-hat and snare.

1

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

Example 2 adds an open hi-hat and additional snare hit on the "ah" of 4

2

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

Example 3 utilizes the ride cymbal bell (indicated with an accent) and displaces the snare on beat 4 by having two tom hits before it.

3

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

Example 4 adds a bit of syncopation, with the floor tom sounding just before the snare backbeat.

4

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

Example 5 alternates the right-hand ride pattern between the body of the cymbal and bell.

5

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

Example 6 "doubles up" on the ride cymbal and hi-hat to give this beat motion and excitement.

6

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

Examples 7 through 9 reverse the sticking pattern by beginning with the left hand. This may feel tricky at first, but it's a great coordination exercise as well as an effective way to create groove patterns.

7

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

8

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

9

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

Examples 10 and 11 introduce a new bass drum pattern and make use of the ride cymbal bell, tom, open hi-hat, and "doubling up," for a variety of sound.

10

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

11

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

Examples 12 and 13 are linear beats (only one sound surface played at a time), characterized by the bass drum never playing on a down beat. This creates an off-beat syncopated feel, which works great when locking in with a solid bass player.

12

R L R L R L R L

13

R L R L R L R L R

Examples 14 and 15 introduce a shuffled single-bass-drum pattern with non-continuous syncopated hand patterns on top.

14

15

Use all of these beats as a springboard to come up with your own beats. Also, expand the one-measure examples into two-measure beats by combining the different exercises or by adding a little something extra of your own to one of the above beats.



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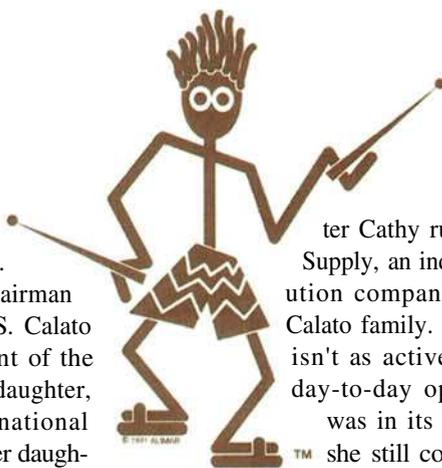
TAMA

Regal Tip: The Stick People

by Rick Van Horn

Regal Tip is a venerable name in the drumstick industry. Founded by Joe D. Calato in the late 1950s, the Niagara Falls, New York-based company gained its initial fame for the introduction of the nylon-tip stick. Since that time, Regal Tip has remained a leader in percussion-product innovation.

They've also remained a family-run operation. Joe D. Calato ("Joe Sr.") is the chairman of the board. His son, Joe S. Calato ("Joe Jr."), is the president of the company. Joe Sr.'s eldest daughter, Carol, is director of international sales and marketing. Younger daugh-



ter Cathy runs Direct Music Supply, an independent distribution company owned by the Calato family. Mom Kay Calato isn't as active in Regal Tip's day-to-day operations as she was in its early years—but she still comes in regularly to keep a watchful eye over the profit & loss statements.

I first visited the Regal Tip company eleven years ago. At that time they were one of perhaps four major drumstick manufacturers. Today the drumstick field is crowded with players—with new brands seeming to appear (and sometimes disappear) on a monthly basis. How has Regal Tip responded to the influx of all this competition?

Joe S. Calato ("Joe Jr.") replies, "The way we've handled competition is with variety—primarily through our accessory line. And we do this based on our history as manufacturers. When my father started making drumsticks, he really *made* drumsticks. All the other brands *bought* sticks made by wood-products manufacturers—and then said they were drumstick companies. Later some of them started making the sticks themselves, but some are *still* having them made for them by others. We have always been a manufacturing company, so



The guiding forces at Regal Tip (from left, standing): Joe S. Calato, president; Rick Catanese, plant engineer; Joe D. Calato, founder and chairman. Seated: Carol Calato, international sales and marketing director.

we've always had the ability to make things. So today, while other companies are making more sticks, we're making different brushes and specialty items. While the competition is playing catch-up with the last new product we introduced, we're putting something new on the market.

"Our particular advantage," Joe Jr. continues, "is that we don't have to go back and forth with prototypes between designers and outside manufacturers. We do everything here, from start to finish. And if we're not sure how to do something, we figure out a way. That's the way it's been since my dad first made sticks in his basement."

Brushes are a perfect example of "figuring out a way." Regal Tip produces a wide variety of brushes in order to take advantage of a recent resurgence in brush-playing interest. "It's harder to make brushes than to make sticks," says Carol Calato, "which you can tell by the plethora of stick manufacturers on the market today compared to those who make brushes. And just because we offer a lot of brush models doesn't mean it's any easier for us to make

them than for anyone else. We just have a dedication to them that dates back to when my dad first started making them."

Joe D. Calato ("Joe Sr.") picks up the story: "When I first decided to make brushes, I had never even seen a brush made before. But I didn't like the brushes on the market at the time. Now, the *theory* of what a wire brush should be is one thing; to manufacture something that will meet those requirements and still hold up is another thing entirely. So we made a brush the way a *drummer* wants a brush to feel, not a manufacturer. I started with harder aluminum that wouldn't kink. Then we used molded rubber on the back end so you wouldn't get a rattle. We've added a few other innovations since then, of course, but basically that started our whole attitude toward creating new products. Over the years the young people around here got better ideas, and I let them handle it. All the innovations we're offering today are the result of young minds in our company who know what's going on in the outside world."

What about input *from* the outside

world? Does Regal Tip entertain ideas from working drummers? "Of course," responds Joe Sr. "One of our most influential products was the original *Blastick* [a heavy plastic brush that paved the way for literally dozens of plastic brushes and brush-like devices now on the market]. The inventor approached me at a trade show with a prototype and asked me if I'd like to make them for him. I said sure—because even though I had no idea what they were, I knew what they could *do* as soon as I saw them. The trick was coming up with a way to *make* them efficiently. I mean, at first we were out there working with a Bunsen burner...."

Joe Jr. adds, "In addition to inventors, artists like Clayton Cameron and John Beck have been major contributors. And we also get a lot of ideas from consumers. For the most part the market tells us what it wants; all we



Regal Tip Manufacturing



When *MD* last visited the Regal Tip factory, their milling had been done at the Niagara Falls facility. They now have a cooperative arrangement with a mill in Kentucky to supply their wood exclusively. The wood—which is shipped ready-made in dowel form—comes from all over the south and from Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Over the years Regal Tip has automated some of its manufacturing operations—mainly by modifying existing equipment. "Everybody told us we'd have to buy new lathes in order to get automatic feeding," says Joe S. Calato ("Joe Jr."). Well, about five years ago one of our own designers created an automatic-feed hopper for one of our existing lathes, and we built it here in our machine shop (1). Part of the fun of manufacturing, for me, is being able to adapt machinery and create new methodology. The auto-feed system has allowed us to increase production and make overall manufacturing easier at the same time."

After the dowels have been lathed into drumstick shapes, the sticks are filled with a paste wood filler to fill in the open grain and give each stick a super-smooth surface. This makes the finishes of Regal sticks a little different than that of any other brand. The filler also seals the wood and adds some oils, which increases the sticks' resilience and durability.

After the sticks are filled, a sanding machine runs each one



against a series of sandpaper pieces to sand each contour of the stick's shank (2). A second machine sands the tips of wood-tip sticks.

On one conveyer-fed operation the sticks receive four different

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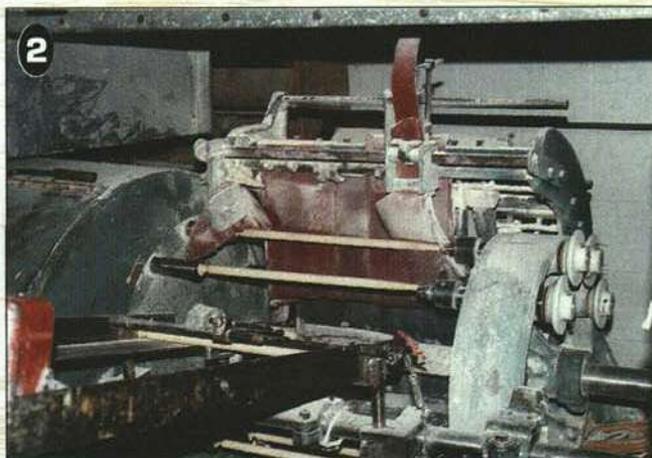
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have to do is keep our ears open."

An excellent example of "open ears" is given by Regal Tip plant engineer and product developer Rick Catanese. Says Rick, "Tony Miranda, who is head of percussion at the University of Buffalo, does a lot of film scoring, and he's always looking for different sounds. He wanted a slapping sound, so I came up with a stick fitted with a 'fly-swatter' arrangement of flexible plastic paddles. Joe Jr. had been trying to come up with an idea for something to hit a conga drum with. He saw what I'd made for Tony, and he thought, 'Hmm....' He cut the finger off a leather glove, wrapped it around the paddles, and *voila*—*Conga Sticks*. From a sound effect for a movie came a device with a totally different application for hand percussionists."

"Totally different" is the catch phrase to this area of Regal Tip product development. As Joe Jr. puts it, "Drumset players are always looking for something different for their arsenal. And then there are all the people involved in the world music movement—not to mention the traditional Latin percussion scene, which has been seeing tremendous growth. We've been developing a lot of new products in that direction, too. In addition to our *Pete Escovedo* timbale sticks, our *Cow Knocker* cowbell beater, and the *Conga Sticks*, we've just introduced a special cowbell/tambourine beater for use in foot pedals. The input for that came from percussion great Walfredo Reyes, Sr. and his son Danny Reyes, who's



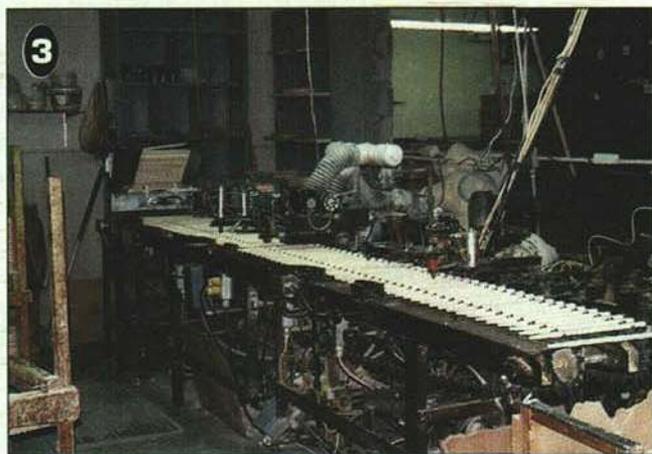
processing steps (3). After being fed from a hopper onto a conveyor, the sticks are placed in order. A small saw then cuts off the excess from the butt ends. A second step can sand rounds onto the butt ends if necessary, then the butt end is sanded. Next, the butt is drilled to receive a short plastic insert used to hold the sticks during their lacquer bath. Then each stick gets its plastic insert.

The sticks are held vertically by this insert on a moving track, which moves the sticks slowly through the lacquer bath, then lifts them out of the bath and passes them through a dryer. (Author's note: Unfortunately, we couldn't include a photo of the lacquering process here. Joe Jr. was afraid the flash from my camera might ignite fumes from the lacquer bath and end my MD career with a

bang.) After the bath, another mechanical process trims the plastic insert off the butt end of each stick, leaving behind the portion drilled into the stick itself and thus creating the infamous "black dot" in the butt of every Regal Tip drumstick.

Regal Tip has always machined their own nylon drumstick tips. The addition of a larger machine about two years ago allowed the company to begin machining mallet heads, brush parts, and other items that had previously been jobbed out (4).

Tips are also attached to drumsticks via a mechanical process. "We developed all this machinery over the years when nobody else was doing it," says Joe Jr. "Now most of the other companies are





now touring with Yanni."

Regal Tip also focuses significant attention on the classical or "legit" percussion market. In addition to a long-successful line of timpani mallets designed by and named for the late Saul Goodman, the company recently introduced the *Opus* series of stick/mallet combinations. Combining a standard drumstick with a triangle beater and either a hard nylon ball or a hard felt mallet, the *Opus* sticks were developed in close association with famed performer and educator John Beck of the Eastman school of music. We hope to develop them into a whole orchestral line for the legit percussionists and the school and university market."

Even given all this emphasis on accessories and specialty products, Regal Tip has not reduced its efforts on the manufacture of traditional drumsticks. "Drumsticks are still the bread and butter of our business," says Carol Calato emphatically. "They still represent the majority of our sales. But with as many accessories as we have, they're a big business for us, too."

"Accessories add to the pot," comments Joe Sr. "But you have to put out things that everybody else isn't already selling a version of. Our specialty sticks and sound devices aren't products that are thrown together; they have quite a bit of time and thought behind their design—and they require specific manufacturing machinery. The key to making a successful accessory is that it must be simple enough that anyone can understand its application and use—but

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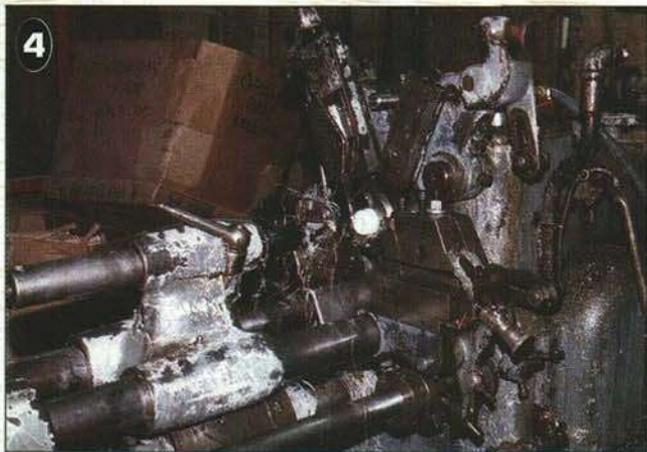
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using something similar to our process. As a matter of fact, we saw some photos of one of our competitors' operations in another magazine once, and their tipping machinery looked *exactly* like ours. It turns out that they had hired an engineer we had laid off six months earlier. We took it as a compliment."

After the sticks have been silk-screened with their logos and model names, they are carefully weighed and paired within a gram of each other. Then they are packaged for shipping. According to Joe Jr., "Most of the big retailers take them out of the bags and put them into bins—so matching up the sticks for them is totally useless. But it's very important for the smaller stores. They're only going to buy a few pairs of any one model, and they don't want anybody mixing them up.

"Right now we put all our Regal and Regal Tip models into plastic

bags," Joe Jr. continues. "*Elite* models [featuring darker hickory wood] go into a paper sleeve. We probably will go to a paper sleeve on everything soon. Consumers like the ecological aspect of that, and they can see the stick better in the store. A lot of stores that would take sticks out of the bags will leave them in the sleeves."

Brushes are a huge product area for Regal Tip; the company has had to add machinery recently to keep up with increased demand. Virtually all parts are made and assembled in-house. Each brush model involves several separate parts, and the assembly process is extremely labor-intensive (5).



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not so simple that anyone can run out to the local store and make it themselves."

"We get a kick out of the idea that we have everybody catching up," adds Joe Jr., smiling. "I think we're the most-copied manufacturer of our kind."

Regal Tip Drumsticks Today

Ironically—in light of all the aforementioned development in accessories and new sounds—"traditional" drumsticks seem to be going in a retro direction. Just as brushes are enjoying a new life on the market, wood-tip drumsticks have taken a substantial lead in sales over nylon-tip sticks—even for Regal Tip, the brand whose very name is a result of nylon tip development. Joe Sr. attributes this to a change in contemporary playing styles. "When I first put a nylon tip on a stick," he says, "it wasn't to get a different sound—although that certainly did happen. It was mainly because I kept wearing out the tips of my wooden sticks and had to replace the sticks. In those days the tips were what wore out on a stick. Today, a stick wears out or breaks primarily at the neck—because of the heavy rimshot playing, hi-hat riding, and cymbal crashing that drummers are doing."

"On the other hand," comments Joe Jr., "sound must have something to do with it. A lot of guys are beginning to appreciate the duller, flatter sound of a wood tip on a ride cymbal. The jazz players especially seem to prefer that sound."

One thing about Regal Tip sticks that hasn't changed in recent years is their finish. The glossy lacquer coating on Regal Tip sticks has always been one of the distinguishing features of the brand—even amid some controversy. Says Joe Jr., "Some people think our sticks are slippery because they have a glossy finish. 'Glossy' doesn't mean 'slippery,' it just means it shines more than a dull finish. Actually that finish can get tacky and *improve* the grip of a stick as you play with it."

"Another thing about drumstick finishes that people don't know," Joe Jr. continues, "is that they can be affected by outside factors that you wouldn't expect. For example, John Beck used to carry his sticks in a vinyl stick bag. Somehow the fumes from the vinyl material were interacting with the lacquer on the sticks and causing it to dissolve!"

The positive or negative aspects of Regal

Tip's finish may soon become a moot point, however, because Environmental Protection Agency regulations regarding the use of petroleum-based finishes are getting more and more stringent. As a result, many wood-products companies—including drumstick manufacturers like Regal Tip—are being forced to examine other options. "We're very likely going to have to change our finishing process soon due to these EPA regulations," admits Joe Jr. "And we're actually in favor of that from an environmental point of view. But it's going to change the nature of drumsticks for everybody—not just for us."

Rick Catanese adds, "We were experimenting with water-based lacquers five or six years ago. The finishes they gave the sticks then were actually *too* tacky. They got gummy in a drummer's hand as he played. So we couldn't use them. But the lacquer manufacturers are right on top of it now, and the water-based finishes we're examining now are very nice."

A significant change that has taken place within the Regal Tip drumstick line has to do with the famous "Regal Tip taper." For years almost any Regal Tip model could be characterized as having a thin-necked design that promoted excellent rebound—but might not be as durable against heavy playing as some other brands. Today that's no longer the case. "Times and playing styles have changed," says Carol Calato, "and we have to be responsive to those changes. So we now offer more fatter-necked models, along with longer sticks. Today, some short-tapered sticks—like our 8A—are among our best sellers. And in the last couple of years we've developed special models like the *Barbarian*, *Titan*, and *Alternative* to address the need for more powerful sticks."

An unusual aspect of Regal Tip sticks is the fact that certain models have significantly different specs for their wood- and nylon-tip versions. Joe Sr. explains this difference, saying, "Wood-tip and nylon-tip sticks are sometimes different because of the machining necessary to make each one. Other times it's because we feel that the best sound and performance is achieved by each stick with slightly different dimensions. Often, it's a combination of both."

Stick design and dimensions today enjoy a tremendous level of sophistication, based on the tastes of the market. But it wasn't

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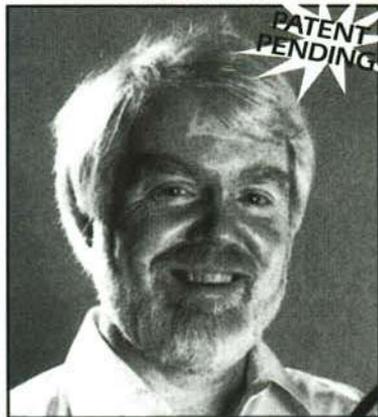
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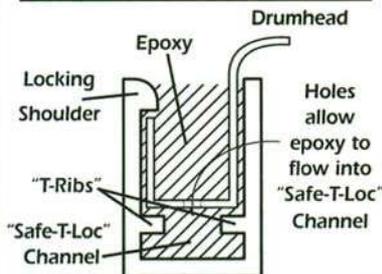
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always that way. "When I put out my five original models back in the late '50s," says Joe Sr., "I copied what I thought were the leading sticks at the time, which were Ludwig's 5A, 7A, and three other models. Then came the *Jazz* model, which is my own. The *Rock* model was the first "beefed up" stick we made. At the time people called it 'the stick with the big front end'; by today's standards its a lightweight. We've taken things in our own direction ever since then—and so has every other stick manufacturer. This is what's led to the number of stick models on the market today. It's great for some drummers in terms of choices, but it can be confusing for others. And it can really pose a problem for the dealer who has to figure out which models to buy and where to put all of them."

Joe Jr. points out Regal Tip's dilemma: "We try to be sensitive to the dealers' problem—and just last week we were discussing cutting some models from the line. Unfortunately, every time we do that we get letters from drummers who preferred those specific models. No matter how we try to trim our lines, we always cut out somebody's favorite. But the only way we can introduce *new* models to meet new drummer demands is to cut out some slow-moving models. Also, it hurts us when we have to take down a run of a model like the 8A—which is selling thousands of pairs a week—in order to run a more obscure model that sells a few dozen pairs.

"And yet we still have to be very careful how and where we cut models from our line," Joe Jr. continues. "Stick design is the most personal element of playing drums. I can't tell you how many calls I get from people who say, 'I've created a stick design that's perfect for every drummer.' That's impossible. It's like saying there's one style of music that's going to appeal to everybody. It isn't going to happen. We have fifty models of sticks on the market, and eight models of brushes. And we *still* can't please everybody. Nobody can."

The Stick People

After almost a generation of projecting a solid—if somewhat conservative—company persona, Regal Tip introduced a new logo a few years ago: a jaunty "stick figure" drummer atop a slogan that read: "Regal Tip—The Stick People." What prompted the change of image?

"We decided that the line needed a new look," replies Joe Jr. "We were getting comments that our image was a little stodgy. We'd been around a lot longer than some of the other companies, and people associated us with some of the 'old jazz players.' Well, we didn't want to be the stick *just* for the 'old jazz players.' We wanted to be a jazz stick, a rock stick, a classical stick...*everybody's* stick. So we latched on to the 'Stick People' image as being new and hip."

Adds Carol Calato, "When we adopted the new logo, we also started adding new colors to our packaging—and to our products too, in some cases. Coloring the products has a big identification value. When someone sees someone playing a timbale stick with a green end—even from a distance—they'll either know that it's a Regal Tip timbale stick or they'll ask, 'What is that stick with the green end?' Clayton Cameron's *Signature* brushes have a yellow nylon sleeve. Right after we added that feature, Clayton got the gig with Tony Bennett—who's on TV all the time and features Clayton constantly. Well, Clayton is already a great promoter, and now he has a 'signature' Regal Tip product to play with that's immediately recognizable. That yellow sticks out! Our *Flares* have black handles with bright red plastic brushes. It helps us to be identified—and we think it also makes the products just a little more fun to play with.

"It all gets back to why we adopted the new logo," Carol concludes. "It represented our whole philosophy of what we do and why we do it. It's the perfect description of who and what we are: We *are* the stick people!"



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As I sat in *Modern Drummer's* library watching *Legends Of Jazz Drumming, Part One*, each MD editor quietly sneaked in, pretending to have some order of business in the room—looking for a photo, researching a drum company.... Turning my head at one point, I noticed each had made himself comfortable in a chair, eyes glued to the TV screen, apparently forgetting what he had come in for in the first place.

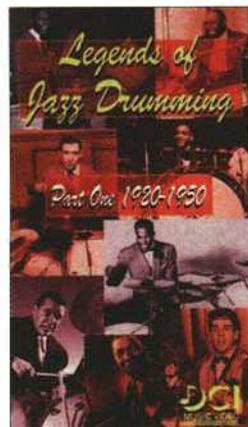
This reaction is certainly not surprising; you really can't go wrong with fascinating historical reels like the ones this video mines. Essentially a collection of early film clips and still shots of the giants of early jazz drumming, narrated by Louie Bellson with commentary by Roy Haynes, *Legends* succeeds in presenting all the

class, grace, power, and innovation of our elder statesmen in one succinct package. Highlights include early shots of Zutty Singleton, Chick Webb, Davey Tough, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Kenny Clarke...well, you get the idea, and after all, I don't want to give it *all* away.

Bellson does a good job of

putting each player's important contributions into perspective, and both he and Roy Haynes add credibility to the production as witnesses and participants in the (r)evolution of America's greatest cultural contribution.

Adam Budofsky

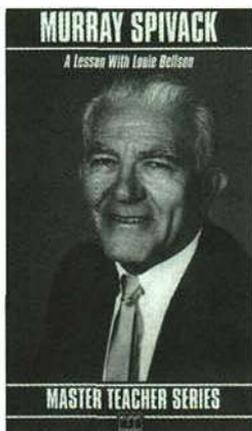


MURRAY SPIVACK

A Lesson With Louie Bellson

(Warner Bros./CPP)
\$39.95, 70 minutes

Remember those frustrating first drum lessons when someone kept telling you you're not even holding the sticks right? Well, the late Murray Spivack, venerated by some of the best players in the industry, will make you feel that way all over again!



Known for forcing even the most accomplished—and ultimately grateful—drummers to "start over from the very beginning," Spivack "tutors" Bellson on proper grip, as well as basic strokes and their application to a few rudiments. Bellson's surprising difficulty with a

couple of the concepts is comfortingly empathetic. Despite the lesson's elementary starting point, its assumption that the viewer already knows the covered rudiments suggests that it is not intended for beginners. David Garibaldi and Peter Donald provide separate elaborations.

This tape was produced when Spivack was over ninety years old, and his delivery is at times painfully slow. The real hitch, though, is the omission of steps between the painstaking explanations of truly fundamental elements of playing and the blazing drumset solos performed by Bellson and Garibaldi. Analysis is left to the student. It's a bit like spending an hour describing a wrench and how to use it—and then showing the student a Ferrari and saying, "Okay, so build it!" As presented, the solos can only be viewed as "icing," or as a reward for enduring the laborious attention to some undeniably great advice.

Rich Watson

RECORDINGS

KRAKATAU

Matinale
(ECM1529) Ippe Kitkii: dr, perc, gongs

Uffe Krokfors: perc, bs vln
Raoul Bjorkenheim: gr, bs recorder, gong

Jone Takamaki: tn, al, sp, bs sx, krakaphone, reed and wood fl, bell

On their fourth album (and second on ECM), the Finnish group Krakatau vindicates leader Raoul Bjorkenheim's

description of their sound as "expressionist timbre music" alternating with "primitive jazz" (though *primal* might be closer to the mark, since nothing on *Matinale* suggests historical or stylistic immaturity).

Drummer Ippe Katka sounds like Paul Motian here, with more technique and more toys. His warm drum tuning and his penchant for expansive-sounding metals of all sizes make his

playing eminently listenable.

You will love *Matinale* if you are a fan of such ECM stalwarts as Jon Christensen, Bill Frisell, Jan Garbarek, Terje Rypdal, and Edward Vesala (whose band Sound & Fury gave birth to Krakatau). All these influences appear alongside those of Abrams, Braxton, Coleman, Hendrix, Kirk, Lake, and Shepp. Like their nation's musical hero Jean Sibelius, the

members of Krakatau convey at once the vast icy ringing North and the warm woody intimacy of folk art. Free or loosely orchestrated fanfares, water gongs, bowed guitar strings, and growling foghorn reeds evolve to surging grooves and fine chant-like melodies. The emotional climax is the searing antiwar protest "Sarajevo."

Hal Howland



MICHAEL SHRIEVE

Two Doors
(CMP CD 74)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ½



Trio One
Michael Shrieve: dr
Shawn Lane: gtr, vcl
Jonas Hellborg: hs
Trio Two
Shrieve: dr
Bill Frisell: gtr
Wayne Horvitz: org

This double-length CD gives two different views of Shrieve's drumming, captured in recent collaborations. To hear him play so convincingly in both trios says a lot for his smarts and power, and underscores his fascinating career in a variety of acoustic and electronic settings. Shrieve is not only an effective accompanist, he leads by the will of his strokes and makes daring use of solo space.

Shawn Lane and Jonas Hellborg have a sound that's macho and lyrical, heavily reminiscent of the British progressive rock bands of the mid '70s: the atmospheric of Holdsworth's I.O.U. with the precision of John Wetton's U.K. The pace is breakneck at times, but Shrieve never sounds frantic, giving each note its due. Shrieve has always been a good cymbal man, but on "Deep Umbra" he lays out a clinic's worth of shadings. The

rumbling "Sorcerer" sounds like some of Hellborg's best work with Ginger Baker, and Shrieve's solo piece, "The Smiling Tarshishm," is a very musical and slightly ambient drum feature. Lane uses his voice to bolster guitar lines, adding exotic spices to the new groove of "Baraji."

Frisell and Horvitz are like the ultimate musical smart-alecks, and there's a fair amount of mockery and sabotage happening on this unhurried session recorded in the drummer's current home, Seattle, in 1993. Shrieve balances the straightforward rock here with a bombastic wit. The "tunes" are really mostly jams—some build well and introduce ideas that hold up, like "Lincoln Logs"; others could use a little more direction. Shrieve seems to enjoy the lack of a bass player on "Queen Bee," as he turns the beat back and forth under Frisell's riff, reveling in the tension.

Robin Tolleson

PATATO, CHANGUITO, & ORESTES

Ritmo Y Candela/
Rhythm At The Crossroads
(Redwood RR 9503CD)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ½

Jose Luis "Changuito" Quintana: dr, timbales, bongos, congas
Carlos "Patato" Valdes: congas
Orestes Vilato: timbales, congas, bongos, perc
Rebeca Mauleon: pno, syn, perc, vcl
Joe Santiago: bs
Enrique Fernandez: sx, fl
other musicians

When these three greats of Afro-Cuban percussion joined forces for a one-day jam session (along with piano, bass,

and reeds), they pinned the studio's groove-o-meter to the red. Several tracks were later doctored with guest overdubs that sometimes seem superfluous, but the vigor of the in-the-moment jams triumph.



As a Grammy nominee, *Ritmo* has garnered a lot of praise. It's not the ground breaker that much media pitch has suggested, but it is a fun disc loaded with fiery rhythm tracks that, in their best moments, smartly overlap various Latin grooves. The rhythmic cross-pollination is especially effective on "Descarga En Faux," where Changuito lays down his trademark back-phrased, loping, songo beat between Patato's driving congas and Orestes' cracking timbale licks. "Los Maestros Hablan" is a fitting closer, featuring each master in an intimate solo spot, coaxing "melodies" and shadings from the skins.

Jeff Potter

YORON ISRAEL CONNECTION

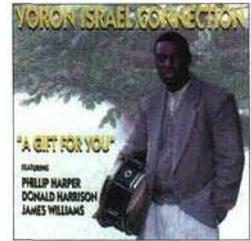
A Gift For You
(Free Lance CD 024)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ½

Yoron Israel: dr, perc
Lance Bryant: tn, sp sx
Bryan Carrott: vbs
Ed Cherry: gtr
John Lockwood: bs

Since '92, swinging Sideman

Yoron Israel has graced nearly thirty discs, and his demand is growing in the New York jazz clubs. This well-deserved debut as a leader allows Yoron ample feature time and furthers his promise as a composer.



Yoron's years as Sideman to the masters taught him how to maintain the delicate balance between staking out a strong individual voice and being a team player. With his impressive facility, smooth swing, exquisite brushwork, masterly shading, and wellspring of ideas, Yoron is proving to be one of the jazz drumming world's finest "new" faces of the '90s.

Jeff Potter

TOKEN YOKO

Lies Of Jim
(Innecourse ICRTYOI)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ½

Jacob Meggers: dr, perc
Eric Johnson: bs, vcl
John McDowell: gtr
Pete Santogrossi: vcl, gtr
Mike Ogle: sx, raps

Rare is the day when you can get your musical rocks off with a cross between Blind Melon, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and latter-day Screaming Trees. But somewhere in that tepid mix sits Token Yoko, a fun, throwback-styled band from Davis, California that sits a funky shade north of Southern rock.

There are plenty of extended

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Germany's wonderfully hip Messidor label features a great roster of modern Latin jazz artists; their **UNITED NATIONS OF MESSIDOR** is a hot two-CD sampler with plenty of cutting-edge drum and percussion grooves. Saxman Jorge Sylvester points the way on *MusiCollage* (Postcards), mixing jazz, Latin, and world music; drummer **GENE JACKSON** and percussionist **BOBBY SANABRIA** are bold and creative with this fresh sound. **CHRIS ACLAND**'s steady and unadorned drumming pushes Lush's excellent and oh-so-British *Lovelife* (4AD/Warner Bros.) into candy-coated pop heaven. **HANNA FOX** confidently adds an individualistic slant to some left-field grooves on Babe The Blue Ox's new release, *People*, while ex-Blake Babies/Antenna drummer **FREDA LOVE** smartly strips it to floor tom and snare on the Mysteries Of Life's new *Keep A Secret* (both RCA).

RATING SCALE

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

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guitar leads here, along with a sax sendoff on the final cut. But more often than not, Jacob Meggers keeps the band from getting too giddy with the groovy-good times. While other drummers in this style tend to lay behind the beat, Meggers sits squarely on top of it, using quick fills and a sharp ride hand to motor things along.

His double-kick, 16th-note triplets at the intro to "B.S." are about as showy as Meggers gets here. He spends the rest of the time laying down crisp, attacking rhythms that let the guitarists explore their hippie-inflected muse. His drums come off refreshingly live, though his toms, fittingly, sound single-headed.

Along with drumming in this band, Meggers also drums for a number of album projects coming out of Soundfarm Recording Studios in Vacaville, California, where he oversees Token Yoko and about a half-dozen other bands signed to his Innercourse Records.

Matt Peiken

ITALIAN INSTABLE ORCHESTRA

Skies Of Europe
(ECM 1543)



Tiziano Tononi: dr, perc
Vincenzo Mazzone: dr, perc, timp
sixteen other musicians

The Italian Instabile Orchestra is a big band augmented by French horn, violin, cello, and a few unusual horn doublings. Its democratic personnel spans fifty years of creative musicians from all parts of Italy. (Only founder Pino Minafra has become well-known to American listeners, but pianist Giorgio Gaslini is a strong presence.) *Instabile* suggests the economic prospects of such a group in the face of "the

indifference of the Italian concert circuit and...the narrow-mindedness of the bop traditionalists and the well-bred fusionists...against a backdrop of complacent conformism." Preceding Marcello Lorrain's enlightening essay is a foreword by Ornette Coleman, whose *Skies Of America* introduced harmolodics in 1972 and was, like the present disc, more accessible than its descriptive text.

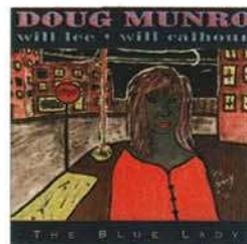
Skies will be interesting to the composer-arranger as much as to the drummer-percussionist. The music is often cinematic, jazz styles of all periods alternating with dissonant fanfares, easy cabaret dances, collective soloing, barking rock, graceful salon music, remarkably smooth transitions, and plenty of wry humor. Vincenzo Mazzone's aggressive timpani rolls are put to good use in "Il Suono Giallo," and Tiziano Tononi gets to stretch his Elvinian wings in "Masse D'urto"; for the most part the two percussionists function as

equal members of an intriguing and unapologetically flawed ensemble.

Hal Howland

DOUG MUNRO

The Blue Lady
(CMD 8041)



Doug Munro: gr
Will Calhoun: dr
Will Lee: bs

As more of Will Calhoun's playing is exposed to the public, there seems to be less and less that he *can't* play. Fusion freaks, polyrhythmic head-bangers, and anyone who enjoys good trio playing or heavy solid grooves will enjoy this effort from guitarist Munro, the *Late Nightly* visible

bassist Lee, and Calhoun. (Producer Joe Ferry plays wah-wah guitar on Calhoun's composition "Chaa Creek.") Indeed, Will's versatility is highlighted here—in particular, his graceful but aggressive approach to the Wayne Krantz-like "Battle Of Wills." "Song For Kathleen" is a little like Calhoun's work with Living Colour, but maybe a bit more like Tribal Tech...or Jan Ackerman and the group Focus.

Munro seems to pay homage to Scofield's funky Chambers days on the sparse "Blue Moves," with Calhoun tossing hi-hat asides on top of a stringently funky groove. Will lends a nice hip-hop composition to the blend, but saves the fireworks for later, with some incredible flam triplets on "If 6 Was 9" and a smart, dynamic, and bold solo on "Mambo De Peg." In fact, Will sounds completely at ease and in control all through *The Blue Lady*.

Robin Tolleson

BOOKS

NEW ORLEANS JAZZ AND SECOND LINE DRUMMING

by Herlin Riley and Johnny Vidacovich

(Warner Bros./Manhattan Music)

\$24.95 (with CD)

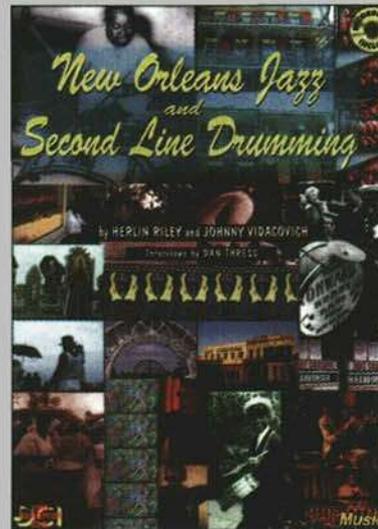


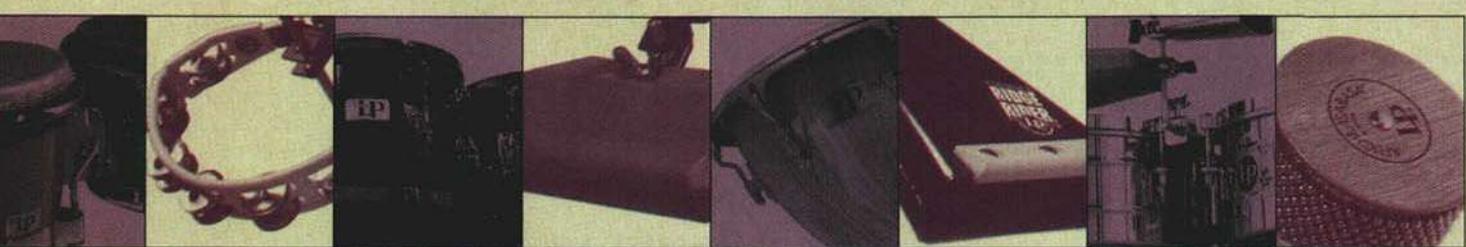
More than a book/CD of transcriptions and patterns, this is a volume about history. Its two halves are based on videos from DCI's *New Orleans Drumming* series: Herlin Riley's *Ragtime And Beyond* and Johnny Vidacovich's *Street Beats: Modern Applications*. Riley guides us through the evolution of New Orleans jazz drumming styles from their riverboat and brass band beginnings to swing, and Vidacovich demonstrates how he blends local traditions into his modern jazz and R&B drumming.

Although writer Dan Thress receives second billing, he deserves equal praise for his knowledgeable interviews and well-researched articles on important Crescent City drummers such as Vernel Fournier, Baby Dodds, Ed Blackwell, James Black, Joseph "Smokey" Johnson, and David Lee.

Also included are discographies and a pullout poster charting the lineage of influential and notable N'awlins drummers from 1873 to the present. Great to play through or just read, this is a cultural mini-encyclopedia.

Jeff Potter

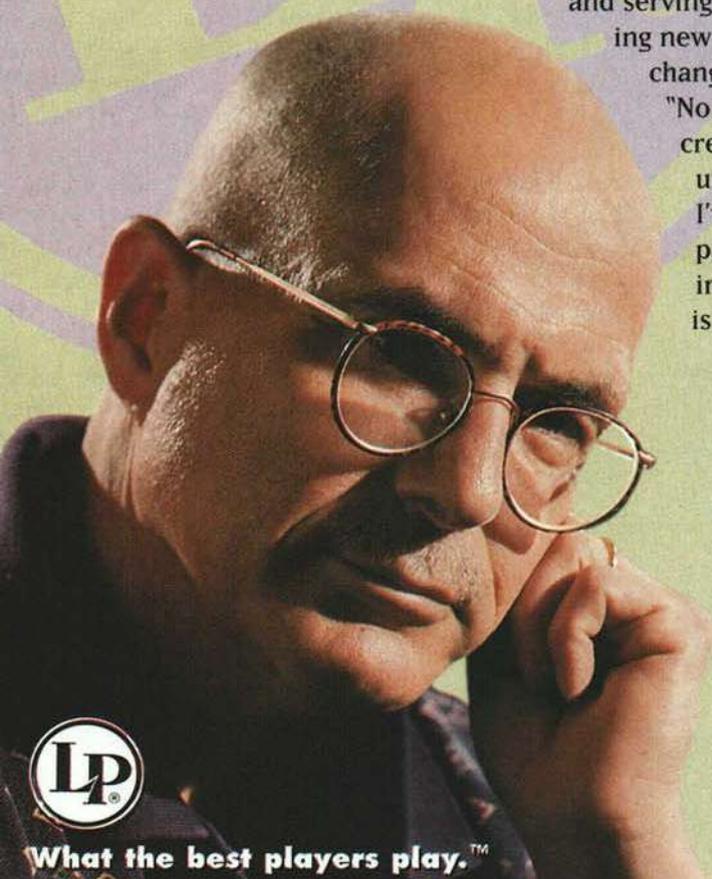




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Alan Dawson

by Rick Van Horn

Alan Dawson, an outstanding jazz drummer and a legendary teacher, died on Friday, February 23, 1996, following a lengthy illness. He was sixty-six years old.

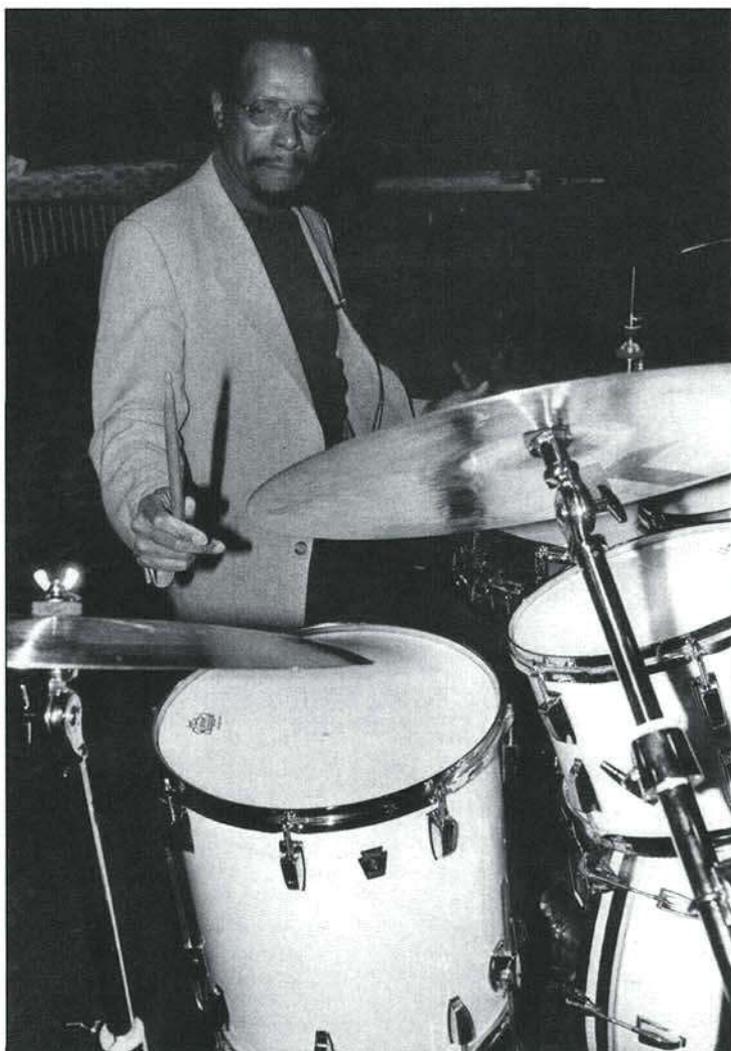
Born in Marietta, Pennsylvania in 1929, Alan began playing locally in 1943. He was strongly influenced by Papa Jo Jones, and his first break came in the early '50s with the Lionel Hampton band. By 1951 he was working with Sabby Lewis and building a

solid reputation as a superb jazz drummer in the Boston area. Between 1963 and 1970 Alan was the house drummer at Lennie's in Boston—where he backed a variety of top artists.

Alan was known for his ingenious use of rudiments, his melodic approach to drumming, and an extremely advanced level of hand and foot coordination. As a member of the Dave Brubeck Quartet (with Gerry Mulligan and Jack Six) from 1968 through 1974, Alan also established himself as a resourceful soloist with rock-steady time. Additional performances with artists like Phil Woods, Reggie Workman, Oscar Peterson, Sonny Stitt, Dexter Gordon, Quincy Jones, George Shearing, Tal Farlow, Earl Hines, and Hank Jones further heightened Alan's popularity among musicians, who considered him one of the most tasteful, meticulous, and intelligent players on the jazz scene.

Ironically, what started out to be a sideline for Alan—teaching—may be what he is most remembered for. In 1957 he became a member of the faculty at the Berklee School of Music in Boston—where he remained for the next eighteen years. "I never set out to be a teacher," Dawson once commented in an *MD* interview. "I became a teacher because people expressed an interest in what I was doing. I like to think I teach music, and the drum happens to be one of the instruments with which to create and communicate musical ideas. In teaching someone, I want that person first to be a *musician*. The pupil must have an understanding, appreciation, and respect for the music itself." Alan obviously had a talent for communicating this philosophy to his students along with their musical lessons, because the list of drummers he taught and directly influenced includes Steve Smith, Kenwood Dennard, Harvey Mason, John "J.R." Robinson, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Tony Williams.

By 1987 Alan was in semi-retirement. He had left Berklee and was teaching privately in the Boston area while performing occasionally in local venues. But his reputation among drummers remained strong, and he was invited to appear at *Modern Drummer's* inaugural Drum Festival. Even though he shared the bill with drumming stars Dave Weckl, Kenny Aronoff, Rod Morgenstein, and Steve Gadd, it was Alan who literally mesmerized the audience. The assembled drummers listened in rapt attention as he delivered a one-hour lesson that combined his technique with his musical concepts. The standing ovation Alan received at the end of his presentation was a fitting tribute to this superb artist and educator.



Lissa Wales





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Jeff Hamilton On...

by Phil Smith



One could spend an entire day talking with Jeff Hamilton about the groups that he has played with. They read like a history book of jazz legends and pioneers. Included in this list would be names such as Oscar Peterson, Count Basie, Woody Herman, Ray Brown, Natalie Cole, and the Clayton/Hamilton Jazz Orchestra.

As of late, Jeff has been busy with new music and projects of his own. He leads the Jeff Hamilton Trio (with Larry Fuller on piano and Lynn Seaton on bass), which has released a CD titled *It's Hamilton Time on Lake Street* records. Jeff has also been a guest performer with the VDR Big Band, and he recorded *Blue Thumb* with New Orleans pianist Dr. John. Jeff is also active in the education circuit, doing various clinics and maintaining an active private teaching schedule. Jeff was given no prior information on the following tracks.

...Tony Williams

Tony Williams Quintet: "Mutants On The Beach" (from *Tokyo Live*)

Williams: dr; Ira Coleman: bs; Mulgrew Miller: pno; Wallace Roney: trp; Bill Pierce: sx

JH: Tony Williams. It took me a minute to get it because I think of Tony as being an innovator who's always pushing the envelope. I didn't hear that on this particular track. Still, his time and the fact

that he plays the hi-hat on all four quarter notes is pretty much a giveaway of his playing in the '90s. But this is still great Tony Williams.

PS: How would you compare this with Tony from the mid '60s?

JH: To my ear, the major change is in the subtleties. Tony seemed to have more nuance when he was playing in the early days. Now it seems like it's all out front and he's laying his cards on the table. It might have something to do with being a leader and feeling that the drums should be in the forefront on that band.

...Vernell Fournier

Ahmad Jamal Trio: "Tater Pie" (from *Poinciand*)

Fournier: dr; Jamal: pno; Israel Crosby: bs

JH: [after four bars of intro] That's enough! This is Vernell Fournier with Israel Crosby and Ahmad Jamal in one of the greatest trios of all time. This is mandatory listening for my students. I learned a lot from Vernell. I've tried to tell him that a couple of times, but we didn't quite hook up. He is one of my heroes—especially with the brushes. I hope he reads this and realizes that.

...Louis Hayes

Cannonball Adderly Quintet: "Del Sasser" (from *Cannonball Adderly Collection, Vol. 1*)

Hayes: dr; Cannonball Adderly: al sx; Nat Adderly: cor; Bobby Timmons: pno; Sam Jones: bs

JH: I'm guessing Roy Haynes—although it didn't seem as busy as Roy normally would be. But it sounded like a Roy Haynes cymbal pattern.

PS: It was from that era, but it was Louis Hayes with Cannonball's quintet.

JH: Oh. Well, you fooled me on that one.

...Kenny Washington

Mulgrew Miller Quintet: "Playthang" (from *From Day To Day*)

Washington: dr; Miller: pno; Bob Hurst: bs

JH: It's swingin'. It's raw...hangin' it out with a great cymbal sound. Time is solid. Comping is great. Fours are tasteful. The first person that came to mind was Kenny Washington.

PS: You're right.

JH: But it sounds like an older recording. His tuning is lower on this recording than on anything else I've heard him play.

PS: It's not a brand new recording, but it was done in 1990.

JH: It sounds kind of '80-something—like an old, boomy recording that was Kenny's ideas played on lower-sounding drums. I have the sister cymbal to his ride cymbal. No wonder I like it! [laughs]

...Steve Gadd

Hubert Laws: "Airegin" (from *In The Beginning*)

Gadd: dr; Laws: fl; additional musicians

JH: Well, my only guess would be Steve Gadd.

PS: Right.

JH: [laughs] Well, that's all I have to say.

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...Jack DeJohnette

Pat Metheny: "Turnaround" (from *80/81*)
DeJohnette: dr; Metheny: gtr; Charlie Haden: bs; Dewey Redman: tn sx

JH: It sounds like Adam Nussbaum on higher-pitched cymbals.

PS: What's your take on this open, broken style of playing?

JH: It's *wide* open. It's a style that contributes to the soloist. The bass is holding this down, and the drums and guitar are bouncing off each other. A lot of soloists like the drummer to actually play a solo at the same time. Not to play *over* them, but certainly contribute "solo-wise" to their solos. That was a great example of that.

...Victor Lewis

Woody Shaw: "To Kill A Brick" (from *Woody 3*)

Lewis: dr; Shaw: cor; Rene McLean: al sx; James Spaulding: al sx; Onaje Alan Gumbs: pno; Buster Williams: bs

JH: Sounds like Gregory Hutchinson's ride cymbal. But the solo didn't sound as comfortable as he usually sounds, so I'm way off! [laughs]

PS: It's Victor Lewis with Woody Shaw's group back in the late '70s.

JH: I never would have guessed it. I heard that band without the two altos over in Europe. I don't remember Victor sounding like this. He doesn't sound like that at all now. Both sounds are great, but I would never guess it was the same person.

...Gus Johnson

Count Basie Band: "Every Tub" (from *Basie Swings The Blues*)

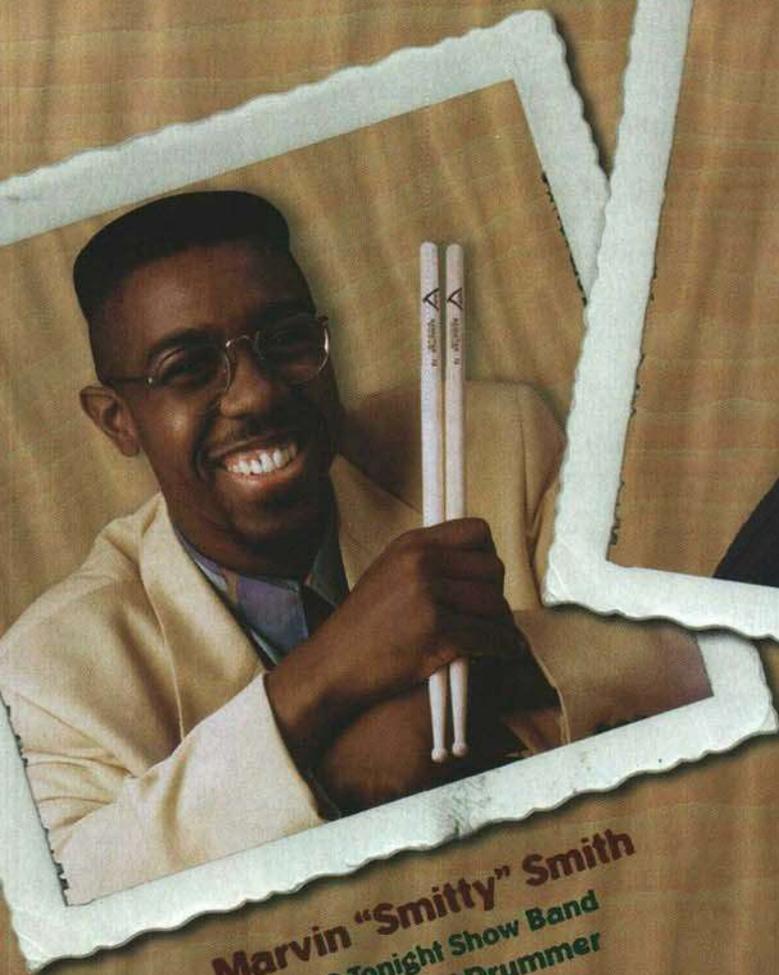
Rhythm section: Johnson: dr; Basie: pno; Buddy Catlett: bs; Freddie Green: gtr

JH: Papa Jo Jones? You can't hear the drums very well on this recording. But Papa Jo and Gus Johnson were the only Basie drummers who could make the band feel this way: the way it was swingin' with this tempo on this kind of tune.

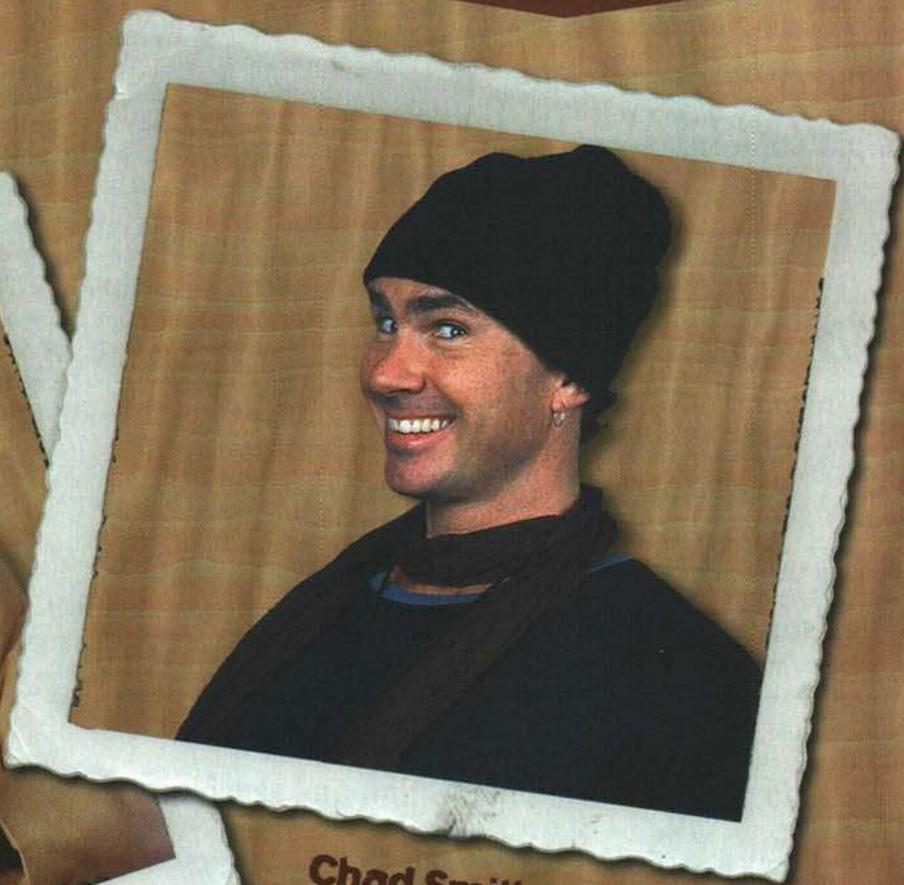
PS: It's a little later than Papa Jo. It's Gus Johnson.

JH: Good. Some of these old recordings are tough to hear, and it's rough trying to guess a drummer just by telling how the band swings. Gus had that sweet right hand that would get the band to fall into place with him. He was understated, and the band could just kind of sit on top of him. Great.

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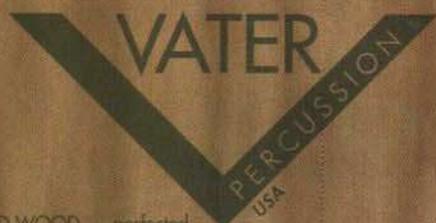


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...Buddy Rich

Buddy Rich Big Band: "The Rotten Kid" (from *Buddy Rich Big Band*)

Rich: dr; additional musicians

JH: [after a couple of choruses] They should put this out on CD. [after the tune finishes] This is one of the rare recorded examples of Buddy playing hardly any fills. He was mostly interested in *time*, and in keeping the shuffle going throughout the tune. A lot of negative comments regarding Buddy's playing were about how busy he was. I think it was unfair a lot of times, because this kind of thing—where he put the chops away and just shuffled everybody to the end—is overlooked. Ray Brown talks about what a great drummer Buddy was to play time with. Ray and Buddy loved playing together. Everyone who puts Buddy down for playing too much should hear this.

...Ed Soph

Woody Herman Band: "La Fiesta" (from *Giant Steps*)

Rhythm section: Soph: dr; Andy Laverne: pno; Wayne Darling: bs; Joe Beck: gtr

JH: [after about sixteen bars] It sounds so funny when you haven't heard it in a long time. You know, you hear it a certain way at that age, and when you hear it now it sounds like a completely different version of another band playing that arrangement.

PS: How long has it been since you last heard it?

JH: 1975. Only twenty-one years! [smiles] This is Ed Soph. I think Ed deserves a lot of credit for modernizing big band drumming in a jazz sense. Obviously this is not a Woody Herman dance band number. It was really about taking it into the colleges and playing Chick Corea material. Learning the styles was one of the hardest things to do when joining the band. You had to master Davey Tough to Don Lamond to Jake Hanna to Ed Soph to a host of others, including Chuck Flores and Jimmy Campbell. You had to play "La Fiesta" like Ed Soph did and "I Got News For You" like Don Lamond did.

...Mel Lewis

Terry Gibbs Big Band: "Cottontail" (from *Dream Band*)

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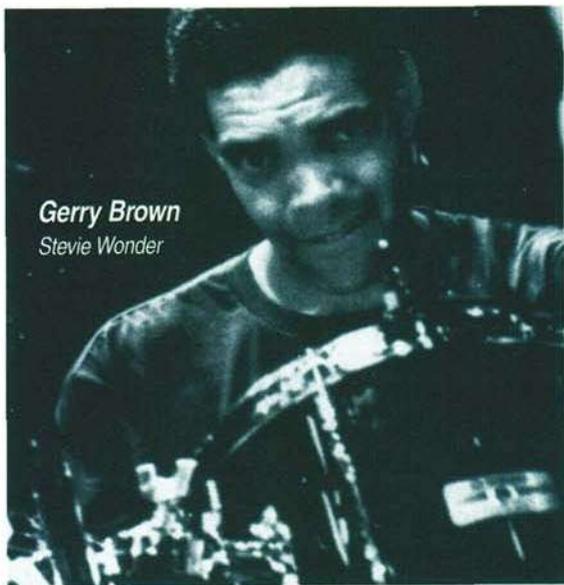
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Rhythm section: Lewis: dr; Gibbs: vbs;
Pete Jolly: pno; Buddy Clark: bs

JH: [after one bar] Stop! [mimics opening band kicks] If I don't get this one you should throw me out of the room. This is Mel Lewis—my main mentor in big band drumming. It's funny; he didn't like to talk about this period, because he was such a forward-thinking guy. He loved his band in New York, and he felt he'd come a long way, playing-wise, from this. But I think this is some of the greatest drumming ever. Mel caressed the band at times—and goosed it when it needed it. His philosophy was to be a big sofa for the band to sit on. That philosophy is exemplified by this style of playing in the late '50s and early '60s with the Gibbs band.

...Sonny Payne

Count Basie Band with Ella Fitzgerald:
"Shiny Stockings" (from *The Sunny Side Of The Street*)

Rhythm section: Payne: dr; Basie: pno;
Freddie Green: gtr; Buddy Catlett: bs

JH: [after four bars of piano intro] Sonny Payne! [laughs] He's a big influence on my playing in that he liked to...umm...[smiles] express himself!

PS: He's pretty different from the other drummers in the Basie band.

JH: He replaced Gus Johnson, and it was quite a different approach. Not only did Sonny bring in the flash and flare of the stick twirls, the standing up, and the activity, but his drumming was also quite different. Freddie Green said that he loved the fact that Sonny played with the rhythm section—but would also go out on his own and play off-the-wall fills. He said that everybody trusted each other, and if the fills weren't quite there, the band would make it work. That's really what teamwork in a band is all about. You can hear the warm feelings for everyone in the band on all these recordings.



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Gary Seligson And Richard Hilms Broadway On The Road

by Rick Mattingly

Down in the orchestra pit of the touring production of *Miss Saigon* it was obvious that something was wrong on stage. The conductor was beating time with one hand and holding a phone to his ear with the other, talking to someone backstage.

"We didn't know what was happening," says percussionist Richard Hilms the following day. "Your first thought is to stop playing—and some do—until you figure out what the signals mean, because those are not signals you see every day. The conductor kept pointing to his head. Did he have a headache? Was the roof leaking? It was kind of scary, but we held it together."

They found out later that there had been a glitch with a couple of computerized prop moves.

"We kept repeating the same four-bar intro," says drummer Gary Seligson. "In a situation like that, you don't want the show to

completely stop because then you break that connection between the actors and the audience, and the whole magic is gone."

There was a similar glitch a few minutes later, but the problem got solved and the show continued. It wasn't back to business as usual, though.

"The first act was now running about five minutes behind," Seligson explained. "That can translate into a big deal, because if the show runs late, the producers end up paying overtime to nearly two hundred people.

"So to make up for the lost time, the conductor was pushing all the tempos. Some of the orchestra members were on top of it and others weren't. As the drummer, I had to work a little harder to make people realize that we were taking things faster."

Seligson and Hilms say that's just one example of the kind of thing that can happen during a show—which serves to dispel the myth that once you learn the music, every show is exactly the same.

"There are changes all the time," Hilms explains. "There might be an understudy on stage who sings way behind the time, or one who sings way on top of the beat. Some conductors will keep the time going the way they want it and make the singers come to them. Others will follow what's happening on stage."

For Seligson, the challenge is to stay in the moment. "I really listen to whatever instrument or section I'm playing with and make sure I'm really with them and I'm not too loud or too soft. The sound can be different in every pit, so whereas in the last town *afor*te was [playing from] six inches off the snare drum, in this theater that might be too much. So I'm always listening and adjusting. It's live theater in every sense of the word."

Having each been on the road for over a decade with touring productions such as *Cats*, *Les Miserables*, and *Miss Saigon*, Seligson and Hilms agree that who you know is



Hilms (left) and Seligson

crucial in terms of just getting a chance to prove that you can handle the gig.

After graduating from the Hartt School of Music, where he studied classical percussion with Alexander Lepak, Seligson moved back to his native New Jersey and began studying drumset with Gary Chester. Knowing that Seligson had done some community theater work, Chester suggested that Seligson call another student of his, Howard Joines, who was the drummer for the Broadway revival of *The King And I*.

"Every Broadway drummer is required to have three subs," Seligson explains. "I called Howie and introduced myself. He said that Gary Chester had mentioned me, and he would be happy to let me sit in the pit and watch him play the show. So I did that, and afterwards I asked him if I could take the music and learn it. He said he didn't need any subs at that time,

but to go ahead and take the music because you never know. Sure enough, a few weeks later he needed a sub, and I was ready."

Seligson showed up at the theater about an hour before the show, figuring that would give him plenty of time to get acclimated to Joines' setup. But no sooner did he start to practice than someone told him he had to be quiet.

"So I went outside and walked around the block to try to calm my nerves," Seligson laughs. "I came back and sat down behind



the drums, which were facing the stage. The show started and Yul Brynner came out. One of the first things he did was look down in the pit and notice that some kid he'd never seen before was playing drums. He gave me this look, like, 'If you even *think* about messing up....' But I got through the show and Howie asked me back to sub for him again.

"If you get approved as a sub, word gets around quickly," Seligson says. "Because I did a good job on *The King And I*, I

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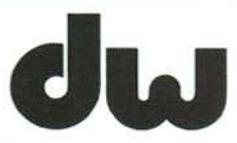
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started subbing for *Little Shop Of Horrors* and at Radio City Music Hall. About three months later a contractor called and asked if I wanted to go on the road with *On Your Toes* for five weeks. Gary Chester told me not to go. He said, 'If you go out of town for more than three weeks, you'll end up being on the road for years.' I've been back home a couple of times since then, but basically he was right. I'm still out here."

Similarly for Hilms, the initial recommendation came from one of his teachers, Arnie Lang, at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. "My first connection to musical theater was a bus-and-truck production of *A Chorus Line*, because Arnie knew the contractor," Hilms recalls. "After I did that show on the road I came back to New York and called the contractor for the New York production. He told me I could sub for Ben Herman, who did *A Chorus Line* in New York for fifteen years. I was a little nervous when I went in to do the first show because the setup was different, and then Ben showed up and sat down behind me to watch me play the show. Even though I had done the show on the road for eighteen months, I couldn't calm down because he was sitting there, *watching*. My first timpani roll was real uneven, but Ben leaned over and patted me on the back and said, 'Relax, Rich. You're all right.'

"So I started subbing that show, and then one day Michael



Hinton, who is currently the percussionist with *Miss Saigon* in New York, came up to me and said, 'I like your vibe and demeanor. I'd like you to sub for me.' He kept me working for a long time in New York, and I owe him a lot."

Seligson says that recommendations come from other musicians as well as conductors. "Ultimately, the contractor has to answer to the conductor, so if a conductor says he wants so-and-so to play drums, the contractor will call that drummer. Contractors also rely

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on word-of-mouth from other musicians. If a show I'm with has an opening for a bass player, I might be asked if there is someone I'd like to work with who could handle the job.

"Which brings up another point," Seligson adds. "Shows go out for long periods of time, so it's important that the people in the orchestra get along with each other. If a contractor knows that a certain musician has a volatile temperament, he will be reluctant to put that person in planes, buses, hotels, and orchestra pits with other musicians. So that is another element of professionalism that needs to be there."

While Seligson considers himself primarily a drumset player and Hilms classifies himself as a percussionist, each can cover both drumset and percussion when the situation demands it. They agree that although there is more call for strong drumset players, some knowledge of percussion is necessary in many situations.

"When I got hired to play drums for *Les Miserables*," says Seligson, "if I had gone in there with just a traditional blues/jazz/rock drumset background, I don't think I could have done justice to the part because it was so symphonic in nature. For one thing, if you only play drumset, you may never have worked with a conductor, which is integral to playing a Broadway show. Even though the drummer has a lot of responsibility for the time and the attitude, you can't see the stage from the pit, and sometimes you can't even hear it. The conductor is the link, and you have to be able to understand what he or she is trying to convey."

For *Miss Saigon*, Seligson and Hilms are covering everything that was written for one drummer and two percussionists in the original score. Hilms says that because a lot of orchestra pits

around the country are smaller than those found in New York theaters, touring productions often have to use fewer musicians, and it's not uncommon for a single person to cover drums and percussion.

"The parts in a lot of the newer shows aren't as challenging as the stuff written in the '50s and '60s," says Hilms. "But they call for so many different percussion instruments that coming up with a setup and choreographing your moves and stick changes can take a tremendous amount of time. You might only have a couple of beats to put down one mallet and grab another one—and you have to do it by feel because you have to keep your eyes on the conductor. If a mallet is two inches away from where it's supposed to be, you could miss the part."

Seeing Hilms' and Seligson's *Miss Saigon* setups, it's easy to understand what Hilms is saying. Both musicians are encircled by instruments, and each setup includes a couple of TV monitors connected to a camera that is aimed at the conductor. No matter which way Hilms and Seligson are facing at a given moment, they can see the conductor. Often, they are playing a different instrument with each hand, and they may even be holding two or three different mallets at the same time.

"You have to keep your wits about you," Hilms says. "After you have a hundred performances of the same show under your belt, it's easy to drift off and grab the wrong thing. You might end up striking a prayer bowl with a brass mallet instead of a yarn mallet."

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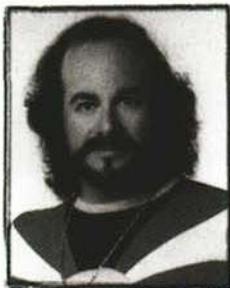
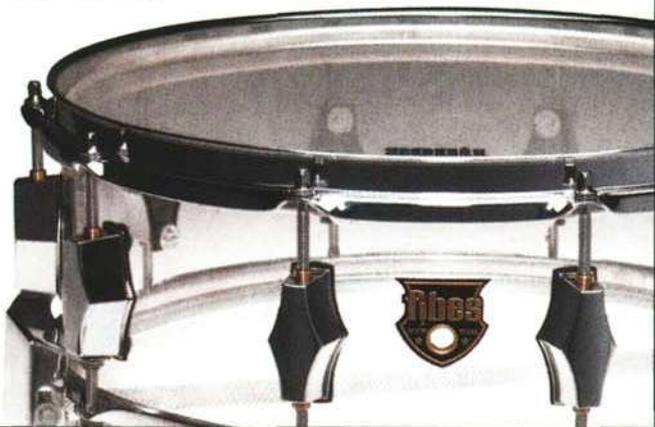
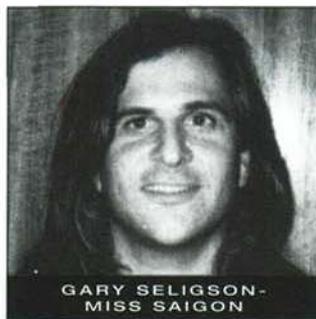


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all of the set-ups, tear-downs, and traveling, the musicians have very little free time. "Going to the hotel gym is a great way to relieve tension and emotional upset in those situations," Hilms comments.

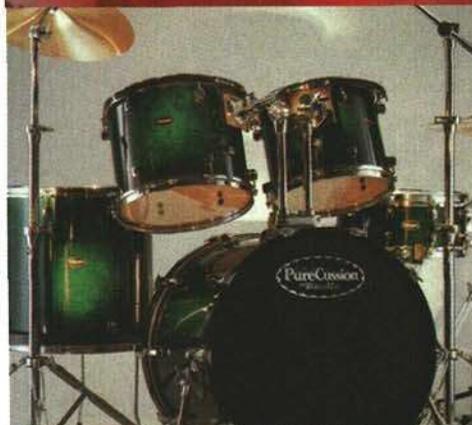
Currently, Seligson and Hilms are enjoying the fact that *Miss Saigon* runs in each city for six weeks, so they have a lot of free time. Seligson has been able to meet a lot of musicians in the different towns and do some sitting in with jazz and blues bands. He also uses an electronic drumkit in his hotel room to practice with tapes and CDs. Unfortunately for Hilms, staying in shape on orchestral instruments such as timpani and crash cymbals is more difficult. Because of stagehand union regulations, musicians can't practice in the theaters during the day.

"People think that because we're playing eight shows a week, we don't need to practice," Hilms says, "but that's not true. You always need to practice and learn new things because styles are constantly changing—and they're getting harder to play."

Despite the difficulties, Hilms and Seligson agree that being on the road with a quality production presents more rewards than disadvantages. "It's good money," says Seligson, "and you get to see the country—and even the world. And with a show like *Miss Saigon*, where we stay in one town for a while, it's like a paid vacation. You have to give the show your undivided attention for three hours each night, but the rest of the time is yours."



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Mike Lewis

Mike Lewis got his first drumset at the age of three, played in clubs at ten, toured the Midwest by sixteen, and graduated with honors from the Percussion Institute of Technology at twenty-one. He considers himself "a born drummer."

The son of a professional drummer, Mike lists his influences as John Bonham, Tommy Aldridge, Neil Peart, Dave Abbruzzese, Jeff Porcaro, "and hundreds of others." He received formal training from Casey Scheuerell, Doane Perry, Ralph Humphrey, Efrain Toro, and Joe Porcaro. "My teachers taught me tech-



nique," says Mike, "but I really developed my style from seventeen years of playing live and in studios." That style combines musical versatility (amply

demonstrated by his demo tape) with a highly entertaining and visual on-stage personality.

In addition to recording for various demo projects in the L.A. area, Mike has spent the past five years touring extensively throughout Alaska and Hawaii with two different bands. One band featured a classic Top-40 repertoire; the other focuses on "new alternative" music. Mike plays five to six nights a week, using a Yamaha *Power Recording Custom* drumkit, assorted Sabian, Paiste, Zildjian, and Wuhan cymbals, a hybrid Gibraltar/Tama rack, and extensive electronic gear including a *drumKAT*, various triggers and Daz pads, an Alesis *D-4*, and a Roland *R-70* drum machine.

When it comes to his goals, Mike states them simply and succinctly: "I hope to get a gig with a major recording artist so I can fulfill my dream of recording albums and touring the world!"

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Vince Littleton

Spokane, Washington native Vince Littleton began his formal musical studies at the age of eight, and played in both drum & bugle corps and school music programs through high school. Then he went on the road with various rock, R&B, and country bands. A return to college at Eastern Washington University earned him a B.A. in music as well as experience as a teacher at local high schools.

Shortly after graduation Vince relocated to San Francisco, where he embarked on a highly successful career as a live and session player. He regularly performs rock and blues with Merl Saunders & the Rainforest Band, Latin jazz with Corcovado, R&B with Zakiya Hooker, and jump swing with the Johnny Nocturn Band. Throughout the course of his career Vince has also performed live with such musical notables as Carlos Santana, Booker T, David Grisman, Bill Watrous, and Maria Muldaur. In December of 1995 he toured Italy with New Riders Of The Purple Sage.

Vince's session credits include soundtracks for HBO's *Tales From The Crypt* and The Movie Channel's *Joe Bob Briggs'*



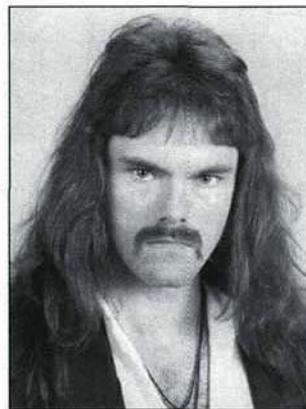
Drive-in, and such recordings as Lloyd Gregory's *Wonderful*, Ranjith's *Fallen Ashes*, and the Rainforest Band's *Live—Still Havin' Fun* and *It's In The Air*. Vince handles all this performing on a Yamaha *Recording Custom* drumkit and Zildjian cymbals.

Given the variety of his credits, it's easy to understand why Vince's demo tape focuses on his versatility—establishing solid grooves in a wide variety of styles, and displaying an impressive soloing technique as well. A forward-looking drummer, Vince hopes to parlay his talents into an ever-escalating musical career.

Bud Brook

Thirty-one-year-old Bud Brook hails from Smyrna, Georgia. Bud has spent the majority of his playing career in the Atlanta area, working with a variety of club and showcase bands. That experience has led him to his current position as drummer for Temper Tantrum, a high-energy original hard-rock trio that has been touring the Southeast since 1992.

Temper Tantrum's style leans toward progressive, melodic rock, employing sophisticated syncopations and rhythms along with sheer, powerful drive. So it's not surprising that



Bud's drumming influences include Terry Bozzio, Mike Portnoy, and Mark Zonder. The group's self-produced promotional cassette showcases Bud's fluid style,

incorporating impressive double-bass technique into his creative drumkit patterns. Bud performs these patterns on a seven-piece Premier kit equipped with an array of Zildjian cymbals.

"My goal is to have a successful touring and recording career," says Bud. "I'd also like to produce some time in the future. But my main interest right now is Temper Tantrum. Besides playing drums, I write lyrics—and I also manage the group. That keeps me busy enough for the time being!"

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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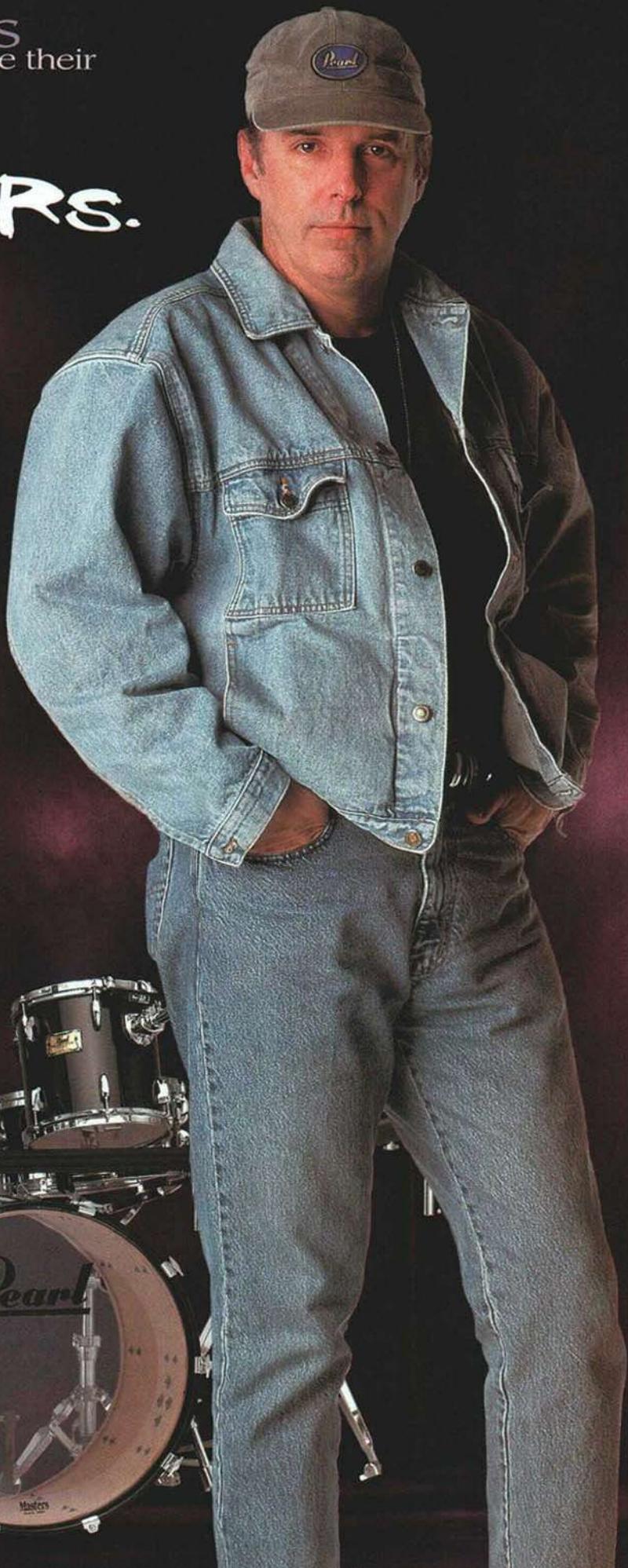
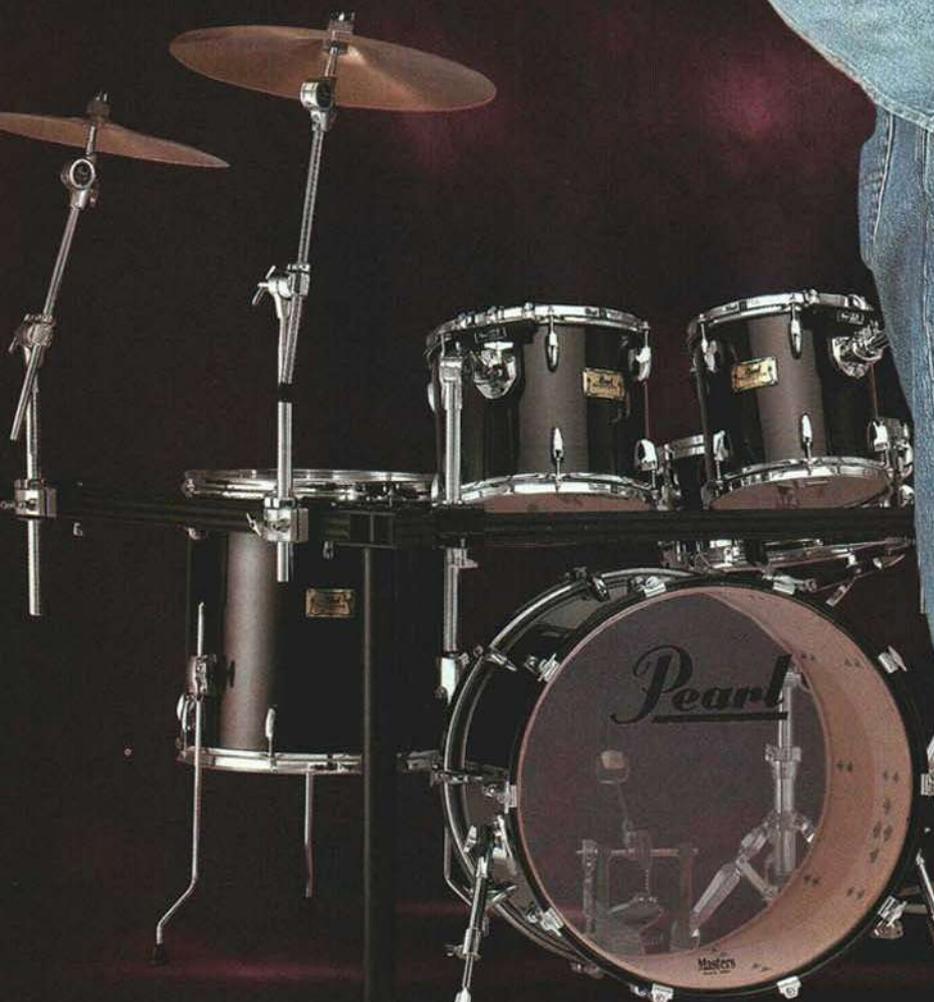


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Rob The Drummer

Connecting With Kids Through Drums

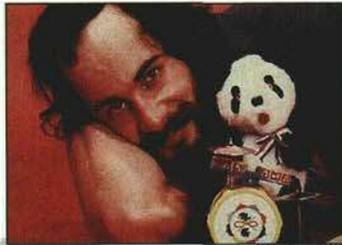
by Robyn Flans

Rob The Drummer (a.k.a. Robert L. Gottfried) has the best of both worlds. He is able to play the music he enjoys by traveling with such artists as Larry Young and Jeff Pevar.

At the same time, he's able to fulfill his soul's mission: to help the youth of today with a specifically designed program that integrates drums and spirituality.

When we caught up at L.A.'s winter NAMM show, Rob was energized, as usual. "I was in the Fibes booth, adjusting a foot pedal. I looked up through the clear tom and there was Billy Cobham—the reason I started to play drums in the first place—standing above me. When Billy played with Mahavishnu...for a lot of us that was an important moment, both musically and spiritually. Those were exciting times."

"Those times" were the late '60s and early '70s, when Rob was a young musician growing up in Connecticut. He was following in the footsteps of his dad, who played with such notables as Paul Whiteman, Bunny Berrigan, Ray McKinley, and Ray Kinney. "It was in the genes," laughs Rob. "On my kindergarten report card, they



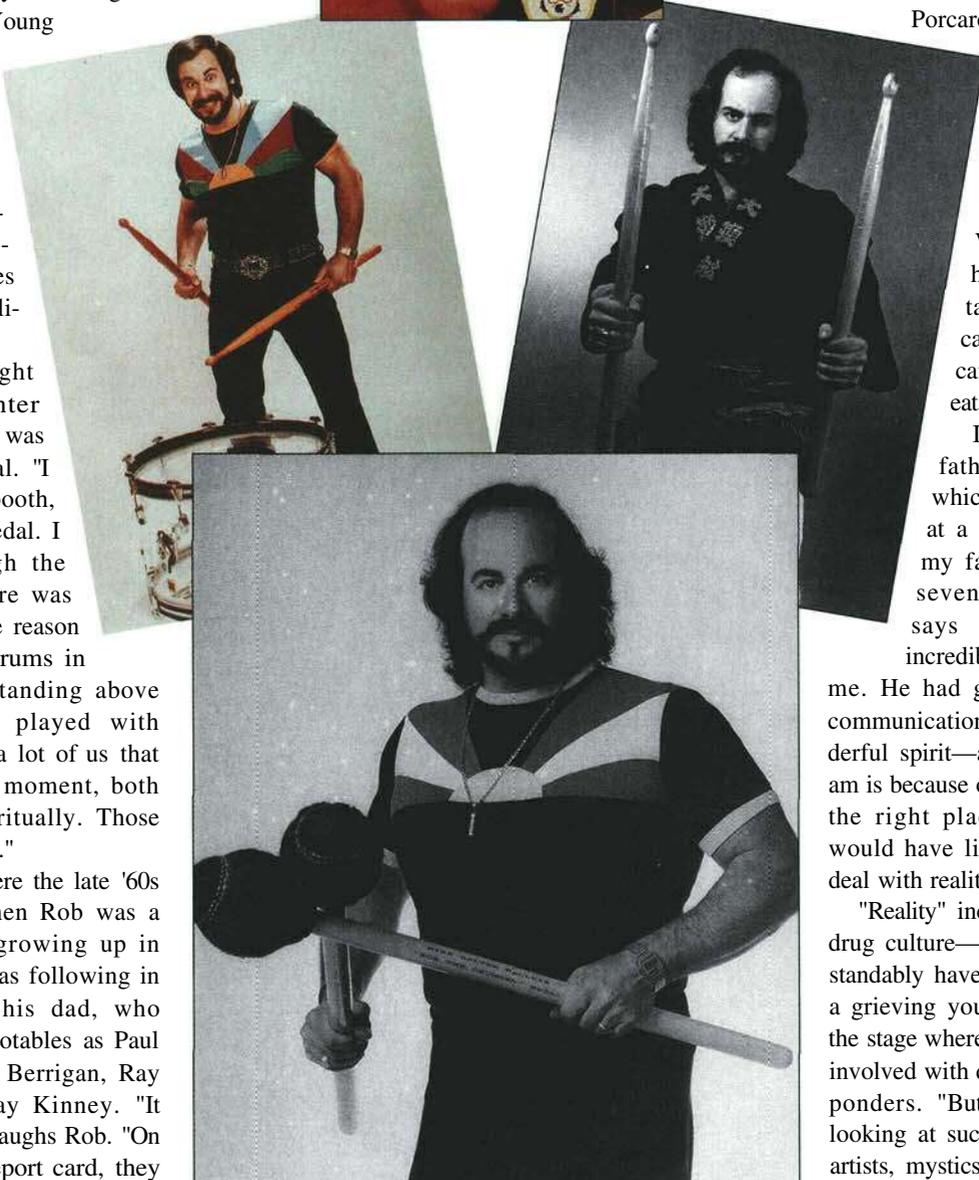
said I was the conga player of the class and wouldn't let anyone else near the drum."

Rob's first lessons were with Joe

Porcaro (who lived in the area at that time) and Al Lepak. After high school, he took lessons from Narada Michael Walden at Walden's New York home. "I've tried to take whatever bits I can from whomever I can. You are what you eat," he puts it simply.

In 1970, Rob lost his father to lung cancer, which put the drummer at a crossroads. "When my father died at forty-seven from smoking," says Rob, "it was an incredible wake-up call for me. He had great humor, great communication skills, and a wonderful spirit—and much of what I am is because of him. He put me in the right place. As '60s' as I would have liked to be, I had to deal with reality."

"Reality" included a burgeoning drug culture—which might understandably have seemed enticing to a grieving young man. "That was the stage where I could have gotten involved with drugs, I suppose," he ponders. "But I was in college, looking at such people as martial artists, mystics, and spiritual lead-



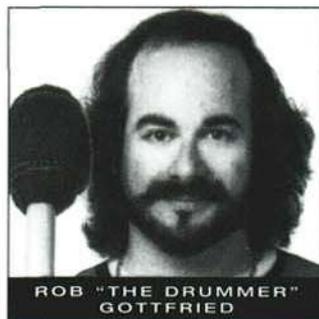
ers—who were changing the way they felt *naturally*. I actually did my thesis on this concept. I was also watching a lot of my musical friends burning out, mainly because of the pressure of the Viet Nam lottery. I watched them doing drugs and not sleeping at night—or maybe for two or five nights. Then they'd feel like a bulldozer ran over their heads for three days. I thought to myself, 'Gee, *this* sounds like a good time.'

"I believe that people can reach the caliber of a Dennis Chambers or a Vinnie Colaiuta naturally. It just takes work. I made a decision about life that would carry on through to everything I did."

Rob had the opportunity to share his philosophy at the age of twenty-five, when a teacher friend invited him to come to a junior-high class to talk about drums. "As soon as I started to play," Rob recalls, "I saw that I had the attention of even the wildest kid. I would later understand that it was because drums were primal. Drumming is a much deeper experience than anything you would approach on a verbal level. I thought, 'Why not use this as a way of making a connection?' Communication was big in our family, and I wanted to continue that.

"I began doing little performances," Rob continues, "talking about what it's like to be *in* the music, rather than separate from it. There are very few parallels to what it's like to be deeply involved in something that is more than the sum of its parts. You're involved with four or five other people, and there's another element that becomes greater than all of you. I talked about what it was like to be in that sort of process, and I tried to let them experience a catharsis—to let them live through me for a moment in

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order to see what that feels like."

An old high-school friend who was involved with the Children's Television Workshop sent a representative to watch one of Rob's presentations. Based on the drummer's performance, he asked Rob to do a *Sesame Street* segment—which brought the character of Rob The Drummer to the national level in 1980. Rob's positive message was further presented on such shows as *Kid's World*, *Romper Room*, and even recently on Nickelodeon's *Total Panic*. All the while Rob continued per-

forming for kids at schools.

"In the '60s vernacular," says Rob, "I was talking about 'getting off on something natural. Drumming was a natural way to change the way you feel. The thing that makes my program unique among anti-substance-abuse campaigns is that I'm not dealing with a negative approach of, 'Don't do drugs.' I'm offering a positive approach: 'Do this instead to get to the same place.'"

"I deliberately do everything to knock myself down as any kind of authority fig-

ure," Rob explains, "even playing barefoot. When I go to a high school or college and they announce that I've been on *Sesame Street*, often the kids' reaction is, 'Come on, what is this? Let's go back to class.' But then I come out and play, and if I don't grab them one way, I'll grab them in another. If it isn't directly through my drumming, it might be through humor—or through something unique, like the Dynacord *Rhythm Stick*. That's a MIDI controller that looks like a guitar. The average person is knocked out because I'm walking around while playing the sounds of a drum." Rob also endorses Fibes clear drums, Zildjian cymbals, Remo drumheads, DW pedals, Mike Balter mallets, Pro-Mark drumsticks, E-mu electronics, Aphex electronics, Electronic Percussion Systems, the May miking system, Sennheiser mic's, Roc-N-Soc seats, Latin Percussion, Lexicon electronics, and Anvil cases. He is also currently exploring the possibilities of audience engagement with Zendrum controllers.

"I use every ability I have to establish a rapport with my audience and to get their defense screens to go down," says Rob. "Then, if I'm going to say something, they'll at least hear it. The kids have heard the substance-abuse industry point of view—they don't want more of the same. So I end up making it mostly musical. Then, in the middle, I hit them about the essence of freedom and freedom of choice. I bring that home by talking about my first trip to Russia, with the U.S. Delegation On Alcohol Abuse. My telephone was tapped there, there were microphones in the hotel walls, and they followed us wherever we went. I talk about paranoia and what it's like growing up knowing somebody's watching you all the time, for real. Ultimately what I'm saying is, 'Know what you're doing. Make a choice. I think you can get there without drugs.'"

Rob gets letters that make his work incredibly rewarding. Says Rob, "I've actually gotten letters saying, 'I was just about to start tripping my brains out. I had experimented a little bit, but you came to my school and I quit that day,' or 'You're the reason I play. You came in right at the moment when I was looking and I was vulnerable, and you changed my life.' That's when you know your own life cycle is worth something. If your personal power is

Vic Firth salutes the Modern Drummer Readers Poll Winners

- ★ Tim Alexander
- ★ Kenny Aronoff
- ★ Terry Bozzio
- ★ Matt Cameron
- ★ Jimmy Chamberlin
- ★ Jack DeJohnette
- ★ Kenwood Dennard
- ★ Sheila E.
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- ★ Anton Fig
- ★ Omar Hakim
- ★ Pat Mastelotto
- ★ Russ McKinnon
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- ★ Dave Weckl



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enough to get you to a point where you can be there for that kid, then you know you're doing something right."

In addition to his motivational programs, when he's home Rob teaches between thirty-five and forty students a week from Trinity College and Loomis-Chaffee Private High School. "When I teach, I stress the rudiments on the technical side. But more important, I focus on the flow of the music and being able to exchange that on an even level with other players. Time-wise, I stress being able to play with a metronome. The drummer is the beat-keeper of the entire organization—everything else is icing on the cake. The next thing, though, is the emotion of it. What are they feeling, and what is anybody else going to feel? From the beginning I really point them toward objectivity. I tape every one of the lessons, because I want them to listen to what it sounds like. Getting someone to come out of themselves when they're real young—to get an outside perspective—is very healthy. I've helped build some real champions—players who have won big jazz poll awards."

The player in Rob gets satisfaction from mini tours he does with such musicians as Jeff Pevar and Michael Ruff. And the character

of Rob The Drummer continues to create incredible opportunities for Gottfried the drummer. In 1984, through a recommendation from the United Nations, he performed a sixteen-city tour for the Yamaha Music Foundation at huge arenas in Japan. He was recently contacted by the Jerusalem Anti-Drug Authority for performances in Israel, and he'll shortly be making his second visit as Rob The Drummer to the White House.

Rob's first White House performance was with the award-winning William H. Hall High School Jazz Band in December of 1995. "I met the President and the First Lady," he says with a smile. "There I was, sitting in the most powerful place in the world,

shaking hands with the most powerful man in the world. I was playing in the East

Room—where Roosevelt was told about Pearl Harbor, where the Kennedys ate, and where Lincoln hung out. I was sitting there, smiling with my students, playing in heaven—and knowing that my dad lives inside of me. I said, 'Dad, you made it. Take a look around, and dig this.'"

"I'm not dealing with a negative approach of, 'don't do drugs.' I'm offering a positive approach: 'Do This instead to get to the same place.'"

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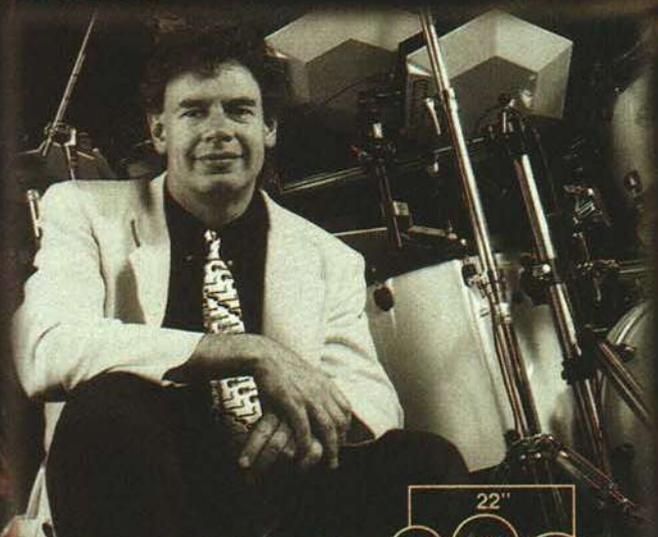
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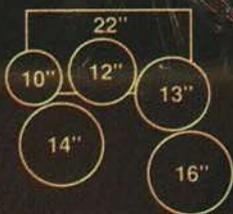

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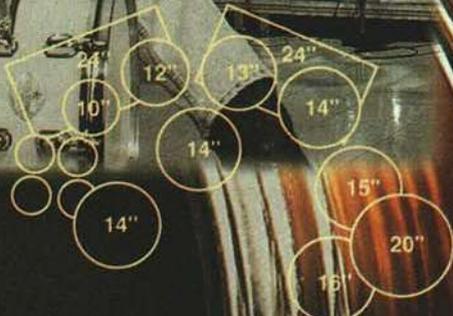
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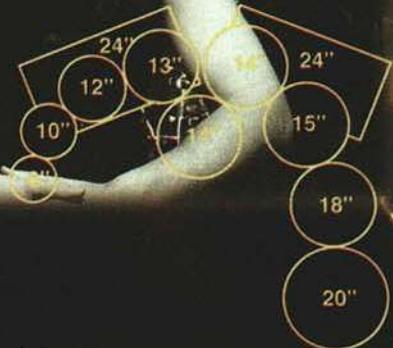


... to give our thanks to all of you who took

Dave Lombardo



Hard Rock/Metal



Joel Rosenblatt



Electric Jazz



...to also give recognition to some other masters
(and are very likely to show
Rodney Holmes, Scooter



artists who made the Modern Drummer's Reader's Poll and

Mike Portnoy

Hard Rock/Metal
Progressive Rock
Recorded Performance

Diagram: 24", 8", 10", 12", 24", 14", 13", 14", 16"

Kenny Aronoff

All-Around
Mainstream Rock
Studio

Diagram: 13", 24", 10", 14", 14", 16"

the time to support your favorite artists and...

John Tempesta

Hard Rock/Metal

Diagram: 24", 10", 12", 24", 14", 14", 16"

Tim Alexander

Progressive Rock
Recorded Performance

Diagram: 10", 22", 12", 8", 14", 18", 22", 15", 20"

of time and rhythm who are worth checking out
up in future reader's polls)...
Warner, Earl Harvin Jr.



In Memoriam: Sammy Creason

Sammy Creason, former touring and session drummer with such artists as Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, Willie Nelson, and Jimmy Buffett, died in Nashville on December 21, 1995 at the age of fifty-one.

The Jonesboro, Arkansas native began his career in the early 1960s. He played on his first of many successful records at the age of sixteen. In 1964 he performed with the Bill Black Combo, opening for the Beatles on their first American tour. Over the years he was a session drummer for Atlantic, Stax, and Hi records, ultimately performing on two platinum and five gold records. He also toured for twenty years with singer/songwriter Kris Kristofferson, who said of Creason: "Sammy was my first and favorite drummer—and the heart-beat of our music. He had the power to carry us through whatever piece of hell we were in, and the spirit to soar with the good times—when they happened—all over the world."

Indy Quickies

Pro-Mark has been presented with a Positive Performer Award from *Inc.* (the magazine for growing companies) and MCI Telecommunications Company. The award recognizes exceptional customer service and innovative techniques used to identify and exceed customer expectations.

Hearing Education and Awareness for Rockers (H.E.A.R.), an organization dedicated to educating the public about the relationship between hearing impairment and exposure to excessive volume, has joined the Internet and the World Wide Web with their HEARNET. The Web site includes hearing health information, a musical events calendar, and a referral list of H.E.A.R. affiliates that includes doctors, audiologists, health organizations, educators, and musicians. HEARNET can be found at <http://www.hearnet.com>.

Zildjian has opened a new hand-cymbal selection room at its Norwell, Massachusetts headquarters that is specifically designed for orchestral cymbal matching and selection. The room will be available for visiting orchestral and drum corps artists to make their selections, and for dealers to make selections for their stores. The room will also be used by Zildjian's orchestral staff for pair-matching their recently introduced *Classic Orchestral Selection* cymbals.

In an unprecedented display of cooperation among percussion manufacturers, **Remo, Inc.**, **LP Music Group**, and **Sonor Drums** recently co-sponsored the Rhythm For Life Spring Tour. The tour offered workshops to college students interested in pursuing a career in music therapy.

Sabian has gone online with a comprehensive Web site designed to inform and educate viewers with cymbal and acces-

sories information, artist news, clinic updates, press releases, dealer and distributor listings, and more. The site may be reached at <http://www.sabian.com>.

Keller Products, Inc., a major U.S. manufacturer of drum shells, has created a home page on the World Wide Web. Internet users can use the site to access an online brochure containing photographs, illustrations, and information about the company's products and activities. Keller's URL is <http://www.kellerproducts.com>; their e-mail address is keller@kellerproducts.com.

Gladstone Society Formed

Lang Percussion has founded the Gladstone Society, an association of current owners and admirers of Gretsch/Gladstone, 1950s Billy Gladstone, and Lang/Gladstone drums. Membership in the society offers the opportunity to exchange ideas and gain knowledge and insight on subjects related to the ownership and enjoyment of these rare drums, along with other vintage drums. Members will receive a bi-annual newsletter, a free Gladstone medallion lapel pin, and discounts on Lang Percussion products. The newsletter contains articles by prominent experts on the care and maintenance of Gladstone and other vintage drums, along with an "Owner's Corner" and information on the latest at Lang Percussion. A two-year membership costs \$10; owners of Gretsch/Gladstone, Billy Gladstone, or Lang/Gladstone drums will receive their first two years free. For more information call (212) 228-5213, fax: (212) 673-7082.

Steve Smith Honored By Berklee



Steve Smith recently received a 50th Anniversary Medallion from his alma mater, the Berklee College of Music. The award ceremony was part of a year-long celebration of Berklee's fiftieth year. The school presented the awards to select individuals around the world who have brought particular distinction to the college through their accomplishments in contemporary music. Pictured here: Berklee president Lee Eliot Berk applauds Steve after presenting him with his medallion.

Endorser News

Your eyes were not deceiving you—**Vinnie Colaiuta** was playing a Gretsch kit on the February 24 episode of *Saturday Night Live*. Vinnie has officially become an endorser of Gretsch drums.

Harvey Mason, Bashiri Johnson, and Tony Morales (the Rippingtons) are now endorsing K&K drum mic's, while **Frank Colon** and **Rick Latham** are endorsing the company's trigger equipment and pads.

Solo percussion star **Evelyn Glennie** is now a Pro-Mark *Autograph Series* artist.

New Pearl drum endorsers include **Eddie Bayers, Chris Brown** (John Berry), **Michael Degirolamo** (Lee Greenwood), **Olbin Burgos** (Gloria Estefan, Jon Secada), and **Giti Khalsa** (Seven Mary Three).

Danny Gottlieb is now playing Zildjian cymbals.

New Regal Tip drummers include **Carl Allen, Curt Bisquera, Horacio Hernandez** (Michel Camilo), **Steve Houghton**, and **Greg Upchurch** (Eleven).

Percussionist **Mat Britain** (Lee Greenwood) is now an Afro Percussion artist.

Michael Bland (drummer for the artist formerly known as Prince) has joined Cannon Percussion's list of Attack Drumhead endorsers.

Legendary congero **Armando Peraza** is now an LP endorser.

Peter Erskine has joined the D'Addario/Evans (drumheads)/Vandoren Musician's Advisory Board.



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Drumkit Of The Month



Rick Golden's kit began life as two 10x28 Ludwig Scotch bass drums, 10x14 and 12x15 Ludwig marching snares, and a 12x17 WFL marching tenor drum—all made in the 1950s and '60s. The Wichita Falls, Texas-based drummer added a 5x14 Ludwig metal snare to make a complete drumkit.

The two bass drums were glued together to make one 20x28 bass drum. The 10x14 snare became a rack tom; the other two marching drums became suspended "floor" toms. The original hardware was powder-coated by Midwest Custom Drum Repair, the white pearl covering was supplied by Precision Drum Company, and the bass drum head design was done by Bell Sign Company. The drums are mounted on a Gibraltar rack using Pearl ISS tom mounts. Sabian cymbals complete the total ensemble.

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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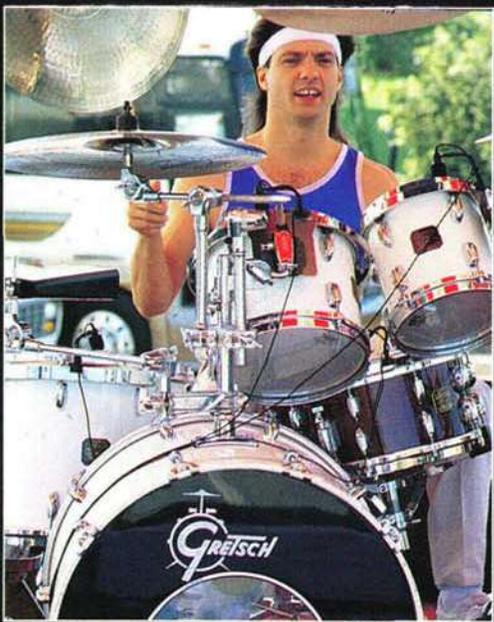
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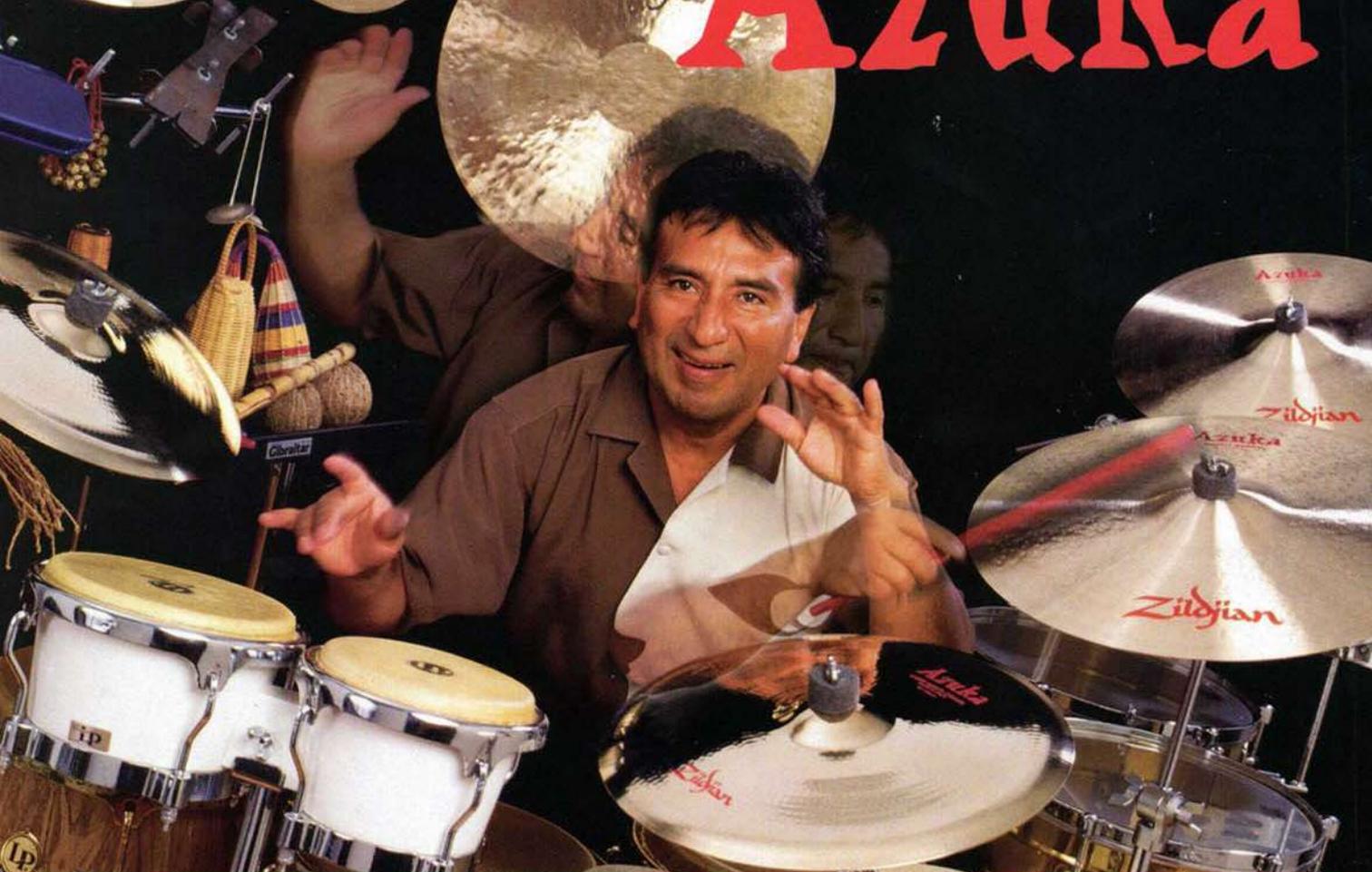
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