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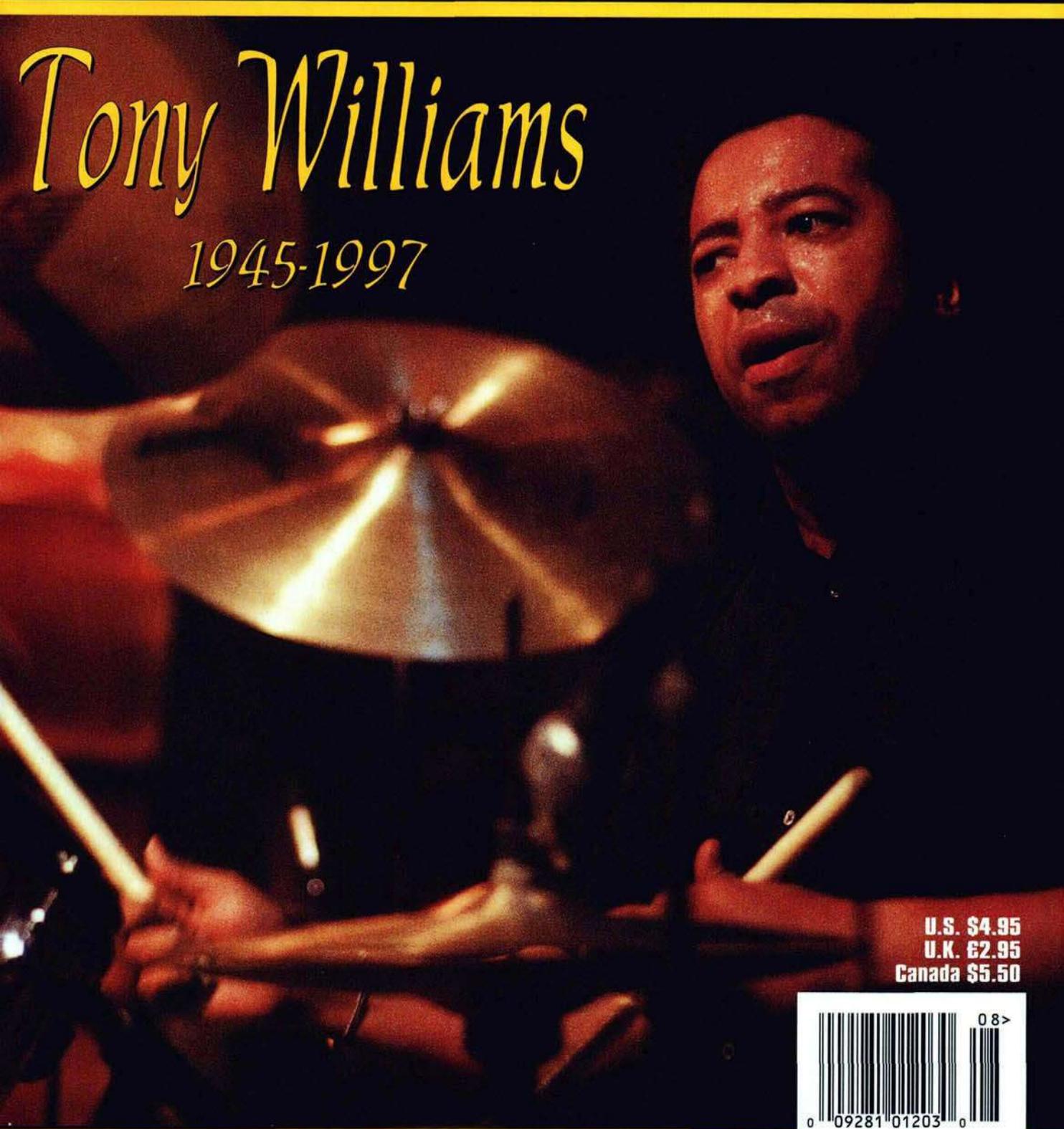
DRUMMER

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

August '97

Tony Williams

1945-1997



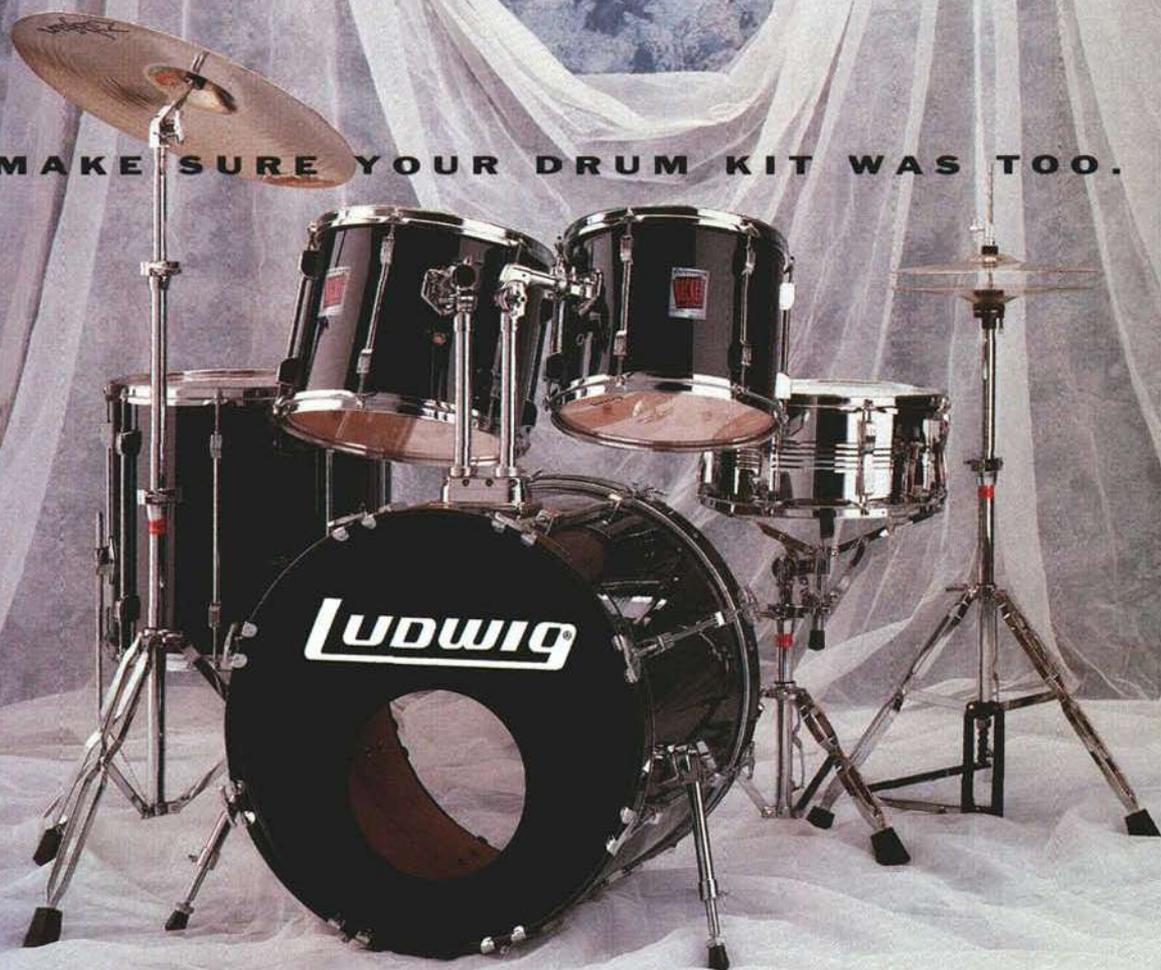
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5 Reasons To Buy Drumheads From A String Company.



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Although D'Addario is the world's largest manufacturer of quality musical instrument strings, we're a technology company first. Our cutting-edge research and development efforts are the key to our success. Now our extensive team of scientists, engineers, and machinists are focusing their talents on making Evans the world's premier drumhead.

2 Unsurpassed Quality and Consistency.

Since acquiring Evans in 1995, D'Addario's engineers and mechanics have been working overtime on a long list of developmental projects, and their innovative new equipment and production techniques give Evans heads a quality and consistency that is virtually unchallenged.

• Low-Temperature Collar Forming

Evans' low-temperature collar forming system is simply the best process for molding the collar of a drumhead. Coils run cool water behind the vibrating portion of the drumhead film, protecting it from the heat which forms the collars. Unlike other forming methods, Evans' water-cooled plates don't affect the film's physical properties (especially important for 2-ply heads; this process ensures that the plies lie flat against one another), making for the most consistent, best sounding drumheads available.

• Unsurpassed Consistency For Our Coatings

A brand new automated coating system is now in place at Evans. The system has pneumatically controlled metering nozzles which regulate coating tolerances to plus or minus .00025" to provide remarkable consistency.

• A Better, Safer Coating

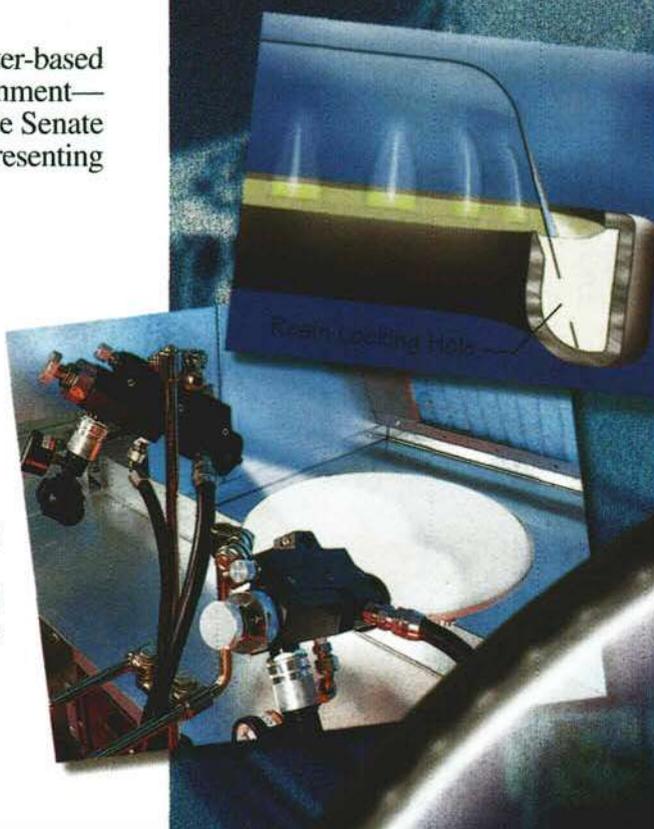
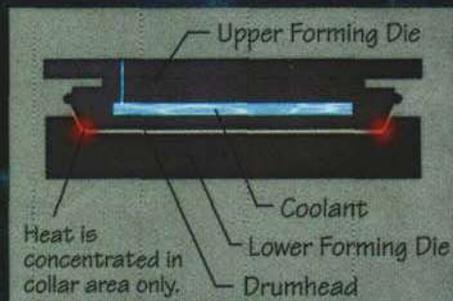
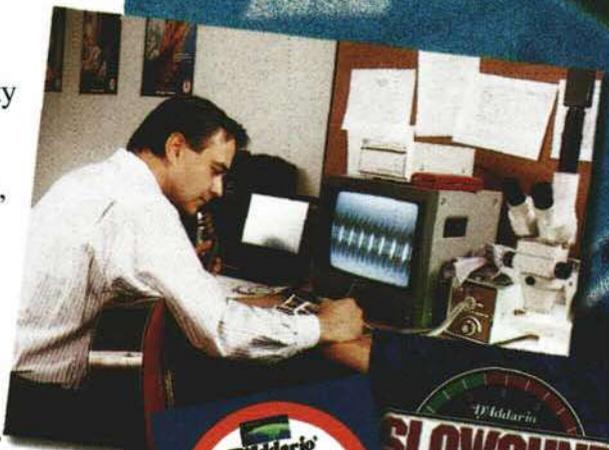
All Evans coated drumheads are now sprayed with a new water-based coating that is extremely durable, but also safe for the environment—something we take very seriously. In fact, the New York State Senate recognized D'Addario's commitment to the environment by presenting us with the Award for Environmental Excellence.

• A Perfect Hoop

At Evans, our engineers have recently retooled our hoop forming machines with a closed-loop feedback system that ensures precise length control to thousandths of an inch—every hoop is not only perfectly round, but exactly the same as the last one. So when you buy an Evans head you know exactly what you're getting, with no variables.

• Guaranteed Against Pullout

A new space-age resin ensures an inseparable bond between our film and hoops. This resin, combined with hundreds of resin-locking holes and our patented bent-over tom and snare hoop profile, enable us to unconditionally guarantee that our heads will never pull out.





3 Forty Years of Drumhead History.

We didn't invent Evans drumheads. In fact, Evans began to commercially market drumheads using Dupont® Mylar back in early 1958. Chick Evans was considered a rebel when he hit the road with the first Evans All-Weather polyester drumheads. Many of our older Evans dealers recall his road show, in which he would pour a glass of water on his snare head to demonstrate how this new plastic substitute for calf skin would not be affected by climatic changes.

Despite their creativity, Evans always remained a small innovative maker of quality drumheads. Over the course of their forty year history they would introduce many new technologies, including Hydraulic heads, CAD/CAM hoop design, the Genera line, and the famous EQ bass drum system. Robert Beals, the former owner of Evans, was very careful in selecting who would acquire his company. He wanted the new owners to have extensive experience in marketing music products, he wanted the company to be a family run business, and he wanted them to be passionate about his Evans drumheads. They had to make a lifetime commitment like he had to the product line. The marriage to D'Addario was perfect.

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4 Nine Generations of Excellence.

Genealogical records from Salle, Italy show that D'Addario family members were string makers as far back as 1700. The art of making music strings was handed down from generation to generation, and today the ninth generation of the D'Addario family is intimately involved with the management of the company.

Of course, throughout the 20th century, D'Addario's focus has always been musical instrument strings, but when Charles D'Addario began producing gut strings in Astoria, N.Y. in 1917, he frequently supplied drum makers with quality gut snares. Now, with the acquisition of Evans, our commitment to the drum business is serious.

What does that mean for Evans? It means that you can expect every drumhead we make to get the same attention to detail and pride of workmanship that our ancestors put into their stringmaking back in Salle, Italy...not to mention our unprecedented dedication to consumer and dealer satisfaction.

The "Boot Hill Boomer"



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THE HEADS HAVE NEVER HAD TO BE REPLACED - THIS IS AMPLE PROOF OF EVANS DURABILITY!



5 A Few Words from the Pros.

The list of drummers who use Evans heads is an all-star lineup, and new players join the ranks each day. Here's what a few of them have to say:

"[Evans] Generas sound great and they tune well. They have a very pure tone, but a real nice attack, and they don't sound like plastic."
--Paul Wertico

"I love using Evans heads—they're easy to tune, they make my drums sound good, and they make me sound good. D'Addario has found a way that with perseverance and ingenuity, you're going to get a perfect head every time. They have taken a great drumhead and made it excellent."
--Peter Erskine

"Dependability is a must for me, so I use Evans drumheads. If you want great sound and great feel, choose Evans. They just keep getting better all the time."
--Dennis Chambers

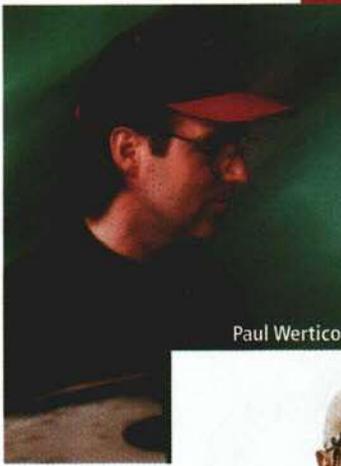
"Reliability, consistency, and attention to detail: Evans products have everything you need."
--Bill Bruford

"Drumheads are the link between your rhythmic ideas and your drums. With Evans drumheads I never have a shortage of inspiration. I love them; they make my drums sound great."
--Will Kennedy

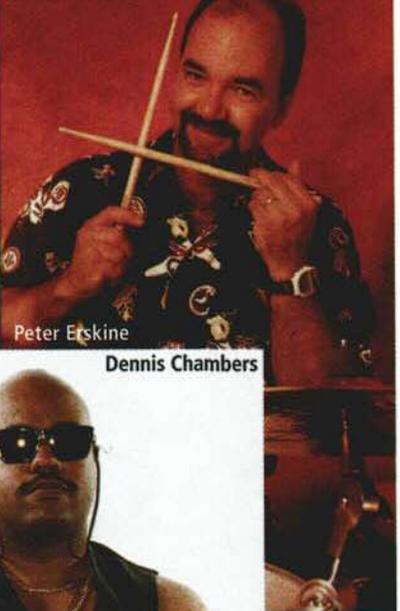
"I'm so impressed with the ongoing commitment to improvement. In many companies, they get complacent about their products. Complacency is not an option at Evans. One of the things that's most critical is consistency. I know that my Evans heads will all be consistent and they'll all be perfect."
--Carl Allen

"The end product is the deciding factor, and I'm totally happy with the performance and sound of Evans products. The drumheads are just great. But the most important part is that Evans puts forth an effort. You know you're working with a company that's excited about their product."
--Michael Baker

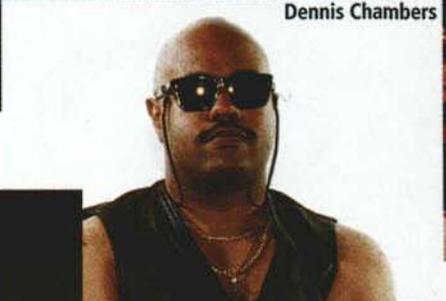
"Evans heads are extremely consistent, and they have a very musical tone. You know when you put a head on that it's going to be cool."
--Adam Nussbaum



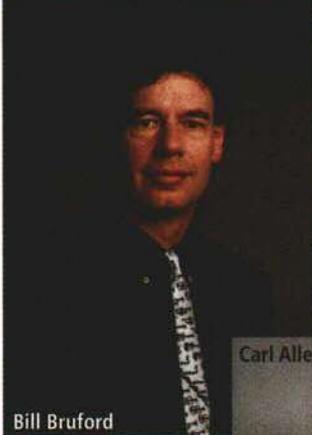
Paul Wertico



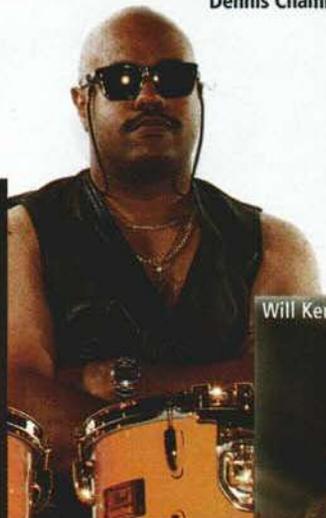
Peter Erskine



Dennis Chambers



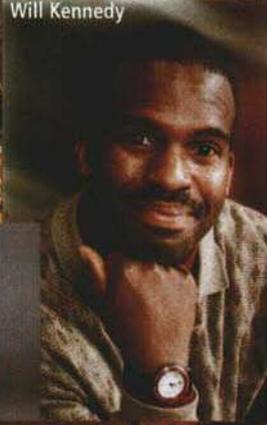
Bill Bruford



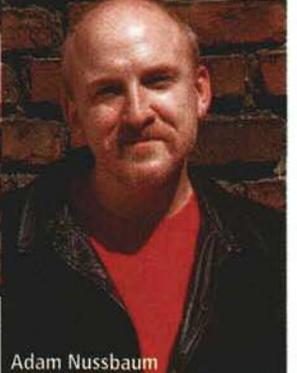
Will Kennedy



Carl Allen



Michael Baker



Adam Nussbaum

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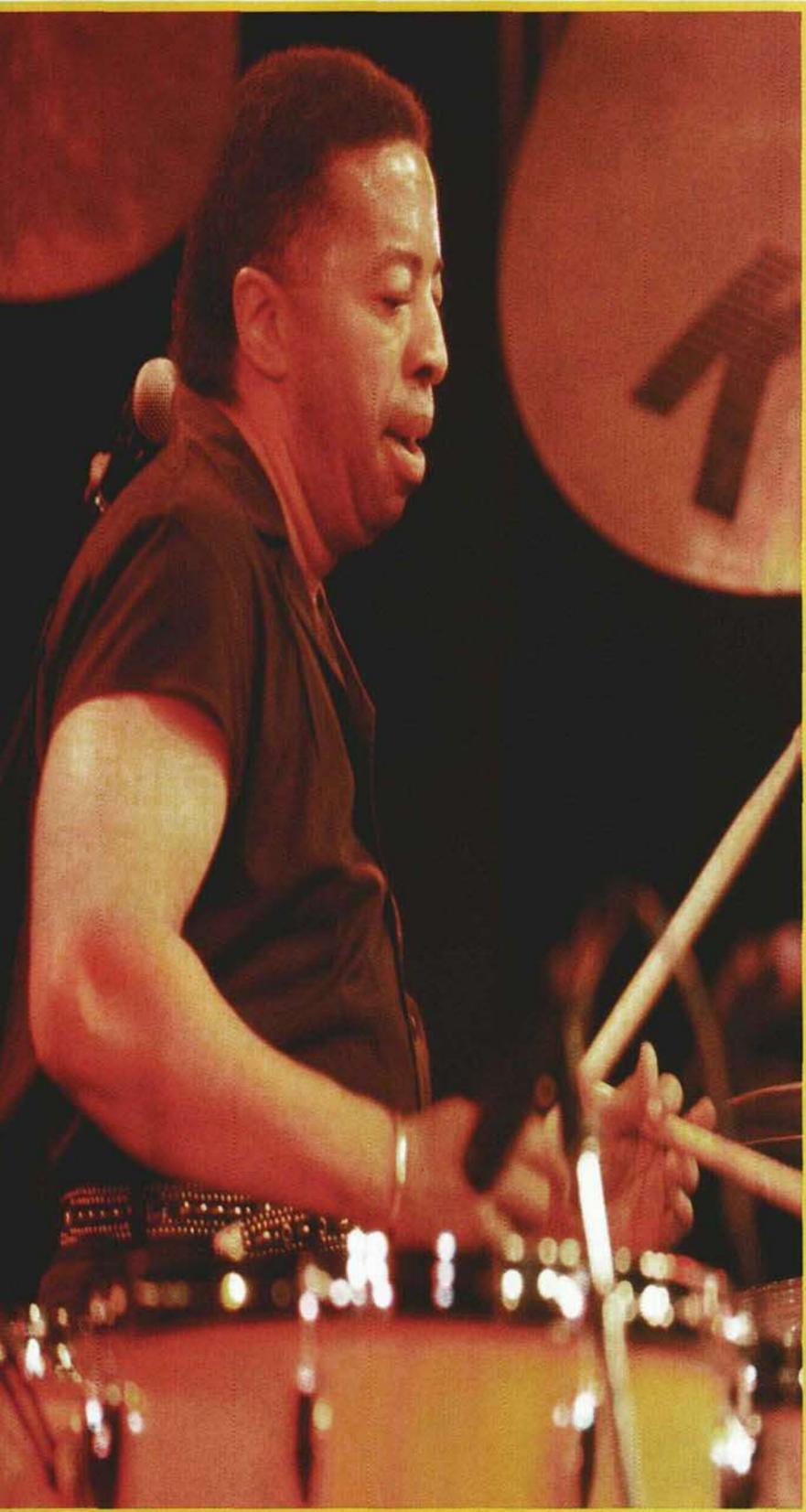
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Tony Williams

One could easily make the case that Tony Williams was *the* most important drumset artist of all time. As if redefining and expanding the possibilities of the drums in the jazz idiom (while still in his *teens*) were not enough, Tony went on to bridge the gap between jazz and rock, forever changing the way we view the instrument—and the music.

In honor of his profound contributions, this month *MD* presents **A Tribute To Tony Williams**, in which writer Bill Milkowski details Tony's mercurial career; **The Final MD Interview** with Williams, conducted by Milkowski just before the drummer's passing; **Tony Remembered** by the drummer's peers and disciples; John Riley's invaluable **Style & Analysis** of Tony's revolutionary approach to the kit; and Mark Griffith's **A Lifetime On Track, The Recorded Legacy Of Tony Williams**.

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john stanier

The best thinking-mosher's punk-metal group? Helmet's ascension to critical and popular acclaim hasn't made pigeonholing them any easier, as their new *Aftertaste* CD reminds us. No skin off drummer John Stanier's nose; he's got more important drums to beat.

by Matt Peiken

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Remembering Tony

The year: 1962. The place: The Clifton Tap Room, a little jazz club in Jersey where we'd hang on our nights off, or meet after the gig. The Tap Room was also where we'd get together for Monday night jams—to play just for *the fun* of playing.

Occasionally, some of the leading jazz artists would be booked on weekends. I clearly recall how much we drummers anticipated the appearance of Herbie Hancock's trio featuring a relatively unknown seventeen-year-old drummer from Boston. The word was out that the kid was a prodigy, destined to be "the next guy" on the drumming scene. We knew he'd studied with Alan Dawson, and played with saxophonist Jackie McLean, and that he'd been offered the gig with Miles. We didn't know much else about him, except that his name was Tony Williams.

The place was packed that night. SRO. It seemed that every drummer within fifty miles of the club was there to check the kid out. Some (including me) even sent subs to their regular gigs, just to see what all the fuss was about. Well, it sure didn't take us very long to realize why there was such a buzz. The first tune—a fiery, up-tempo romper—pretty much set the tone for what was to follow.

What we witnessed throughout that evening was this young man's remarkable command of the instrument, far beyond what you'd expect from a seventeen-year-old: flawless execution, an intense drive, a dynamic time feel, one explosive solo after another, and a series of "fours" and "eights" that spun our heads around. It was almost too much to grasp in one sitting, and the sentiment of every drummer present that

night was the same: *Where in God's name did this kid come from?*

By the end of the night, some of us were considering plumbing as a new career. Others thought about clarinet lessons. Some felt that maybe two solid years back in the woodshed might get them a little closer to that level of performance. But there was one thing we all agreed upon: We'd seen and heard something *very* important that evening, and there was no doubt that this young man would eventually make an indelible mark on the drumming world.

Tony Williams passed away on February 23rd of this year after suffering a heart attack. He was fifty-one years old. Tony didn't really like being called a *legendary* drumming figure, though most of us would agree that's *exactly* what he was. From thirteen Miles Davis recordings, to performances with Coltrane and Hendrix, to the Tony Williams Lifetime that paved the way for an entire generation of fusion bands, Tony was recognized as a genius of the instrument, and one of the most influential musicians ever to grace the planet.

The bulk of *MD's* feature section this month consists of our tribute to Tony. Here you'll find his life story, a discography, a style & analysis, a classic solo transcription, fond recollections from admiring drummers and musical colleagues—and the very last interview Tony conducted, with music journalist Bill Milkowski, just two months prior to his death. We dedicate the entire August issue of *Modern Drummer* to the memory of Tony Williams.

Don Spagnardi

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The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine



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TONY WILLIAMS

I was just getting ready for my daily practice when I heard that Tony Williams had died. First I was shocked, then sadness invaded my body. I ran to my bedroom and stared at the photo of Tony hanging on the wall—always pushing me to strive to a higher musical level. He is still there—the poster hasn't fallen. The CDs are still there. His soul will always be there.

Gustavo Basualdo
 Buenos Aires, Argentina

A Tony fan since high school, I had never had the opportunity to see him in person. When I saw that he'd be doing a clinic in Albuquerque, I jumped at the chance, knowing that it might be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

After playing for an hour straight, Tony offered few explanations regarding his solo techniques, and was quite volatile depending on who and what he was addressing. Even so, I took a lot away from the session. His answers to my questions were insightful and inspiring. I'm so thankful that I made the 1,200-mile round-trip to see him, because as it turns out, it *was* a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Jim Parsons
 Dallas, TX

There never was—and never will be—a pretender to Tony's throne. One of his messages was that you create your *own* throne. His playing was a gift to the human spirit, as important to the evolution of music as that of John Coltrane and Jimi Hendrix.

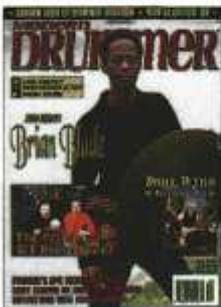
Kevin Slater
 Los Angeles, CA

There are no adequate words to mark such a death, nor to commemorate such a life. The best we can do is remember the joy, passion, and commitment that imbued

every irrepressible note Tony played. He rewrote the history of our instrument, and his fire will continue to light up this world and the next.

Hal Howland
 Vienna, VA

BRIAN BLADE



Thanks for your May cover story on Brian Blade. He is a wonderfully tasteful musician, a superbly articulate man, and an inspiration to me personally (if only for his pacific acuity). The fact that

you featured Brian, rather than a drummer who might generate higher sales than a jazz drummer, increases my opinion of your magazine even more.

Topher Leinberger
 Philadelphia, PA

DONY WYNN

Your story on Dony Wynn was both refreshing and inspiring. To read how someone overcame the disappointment of being fired from what might have been the opportunity of a lifetime—and then had the perseverance to woodshed on weak points and remain true to his goal in life—is a reminder that one door never closes without another being opened. It's an important lesson for us all.

Roger Bates
 San Antonio, TX

It's great to read about someone who has worked as hard as Dony Wynn has to get where he is today. Dony is a truly dedicated drummer—both to himself and to his gig with Brooks & Dunn. He has great time and keeps the beat well, as all drummers should. I'm sure we'll be seeing and hearing more from him in the future.

Greg Pollard
 San Leandro, CA

GINGER FISH

I don't care if Ginger Fish can drum with the best of them—they wouldn't set up near him. The band he represents alone should disqualify him as any kind of a performer, let alone a drummer. A band that advocates murder, S&M, pedofilism? No wonder the music industry is dying. Where do you draw the line with "freedom of the press"?

Kurt
 Kent, WA

I've been wanting to find out more about Ginger Fish, but unfortunately he is rarely interviewed. *MD* (of course) comes to the rescue and provides a great look at Ginger and the band.

Cindy Elder
 Lincoln, NB

A band where you worry about being beaten over the head with a mic' stand if you miss a cue is not the kind of gig Ginger Fish (or anybody else) should be playing if he wants to stay healthy.

Sean Simpson
 via Internet

Is there a psychiatrist in the house? It's nice to know that *MD* honors Mental Health Awareness Month, with Marilyn Manson destroying Ginger Fish's drums. Definitely a tough act to follow at Wrestlemania!

Eliot Landsberg
 Coral Springs, FL

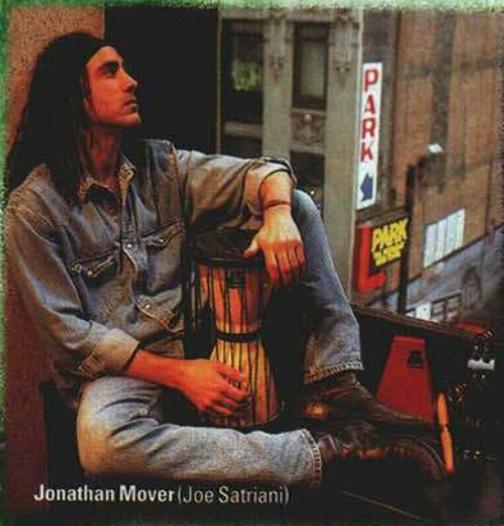
The Ginger Fish article disgusted me. To treat worthless scum like Marilyn Manson as worthy of space in a magazine that I have supported angers me. Ideas have consequences, and Manson's ideas are corrupting youth. I believe Ken Micallef and the editors of *Modern Drummer* have neglected their moral responsibility, and I will not be renewing my subscription.

Dan Strunk
 Edgewood, KY

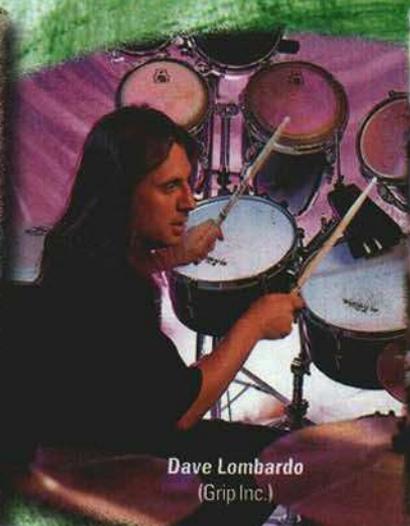
Ginger Fish is a unique and exciting drummer, and your interview expressed his opinions and thoughts on drumming and

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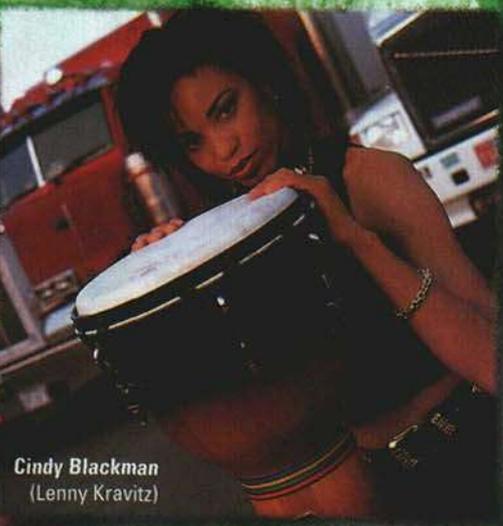
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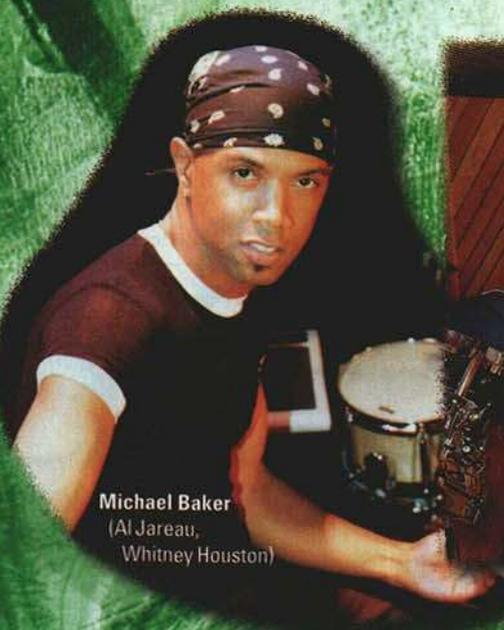
Jonathan Mover (Joe Satriani)



Dave Lombardo
(Grip Inc.)



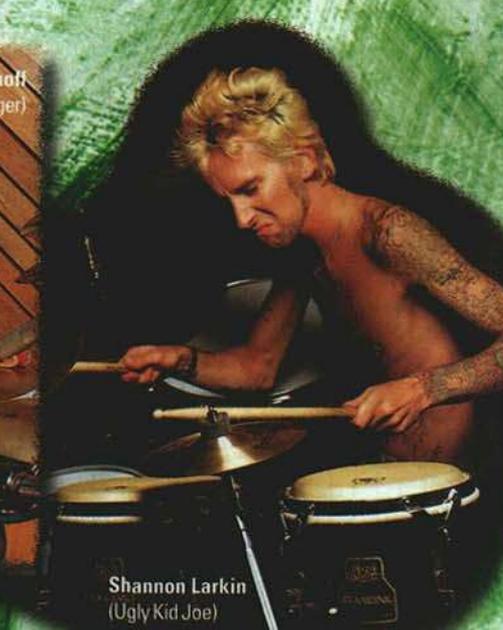
Cindy Blackman
(Lenny Kravitz)



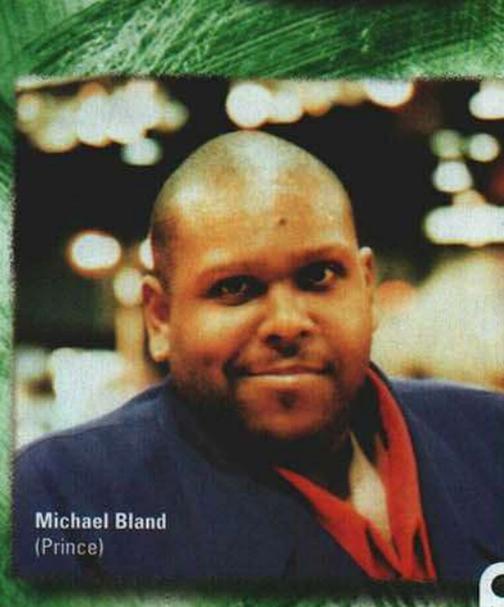
Michael Baker
(Al Jareau,
Whitney Houston)



Kenny Aronoff
(Bob Seger)



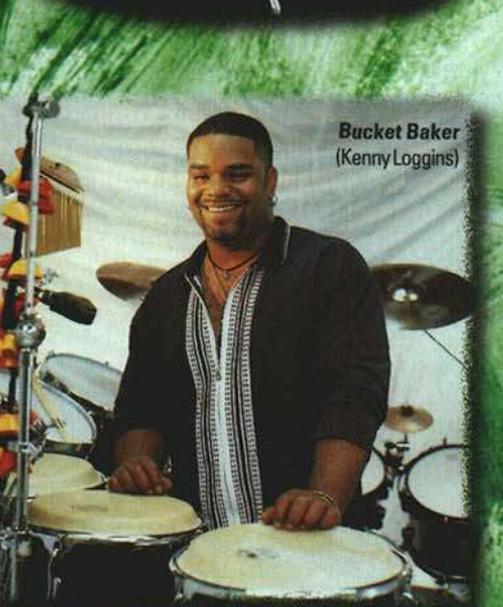
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Michael Bland
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Paul Wertico
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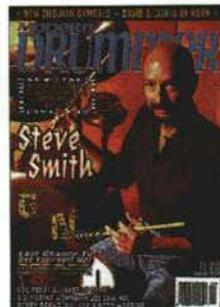
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the surrounding music business. Thanks!
 Kevin Barry
 Racine, WI

DAVID SILVERIA



I really enjoyed your *Up & Coming* article on David Silveria of Korn [April '97 MD]. Thanks for featuring him and other drummers of the wide music scene that you cover.

Chris Hoehne
 Torrington, CT

That interview with David Silveria proves what an ignorant, uneducated band Korn really is.

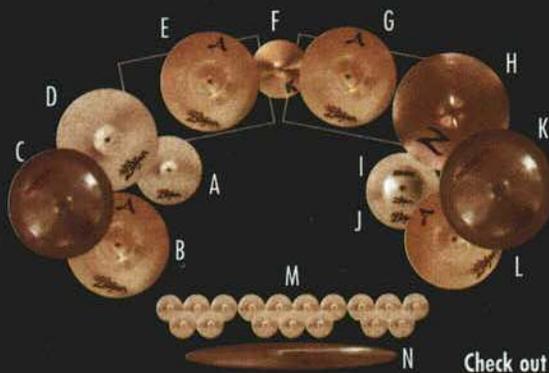
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continued on page 14

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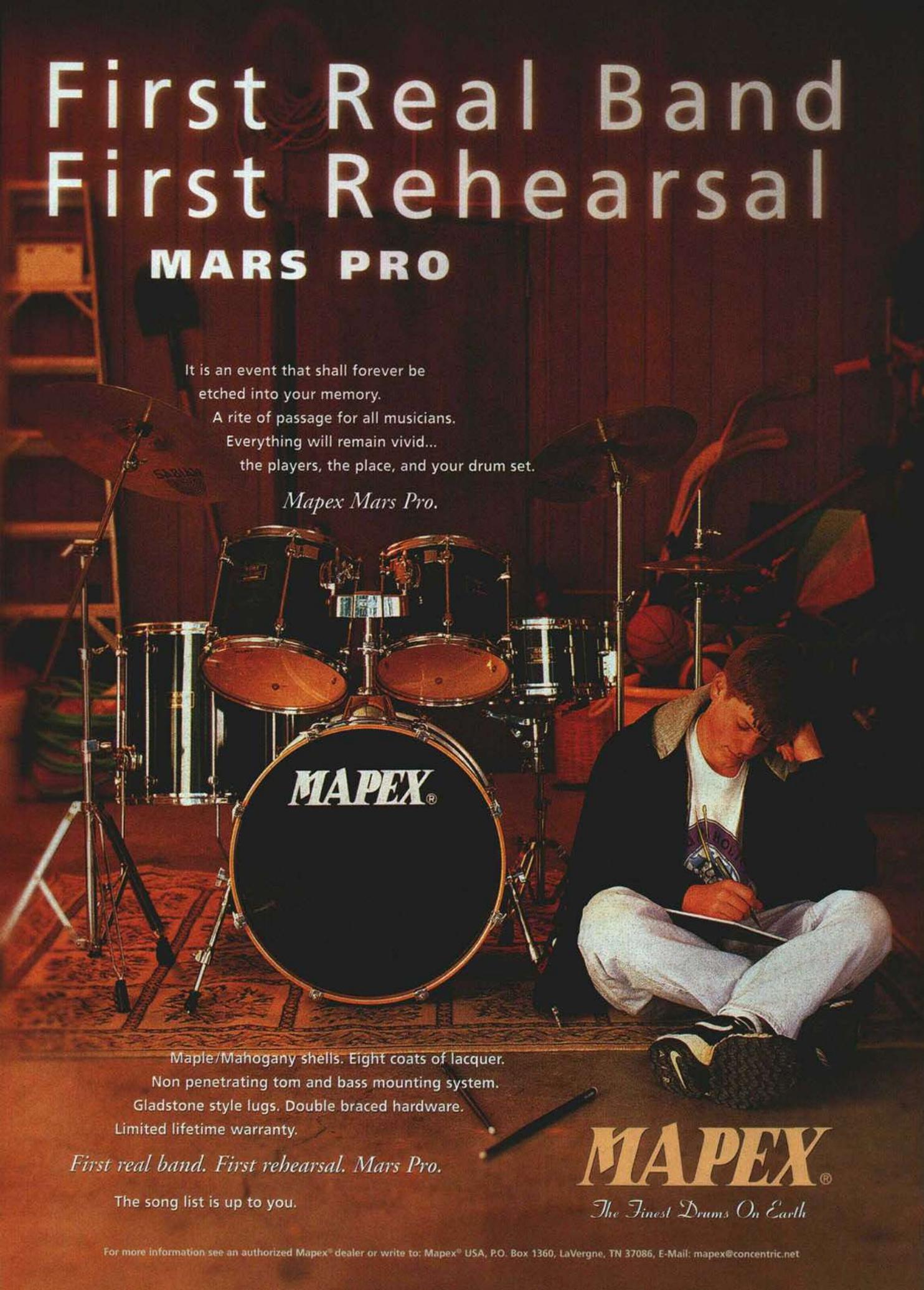
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continued from page 12

DIET FOR A ROAD WARRIOR

There are going to be a lot of sick drummers out there if they jump too quickly onto the health-food bandwagon espoused by Bobby Rock in his "Diet For A Road Warrior" [April '97 MD]. I know, because I did a major "I love me" overhaul from burgers to beans some fifteen years ago—and nearly gave myself a nutritional stroke!

It takes months (and sometimes years) for the body to readjust to new food—especially (and ironically) "healthy" food. Your body will go on a near binge-and-purge cycle if you take away its fat fix too quickly. Admittedly, after I convinced my system that I wasn't out to kill it with tofu and trail mix, things gelled nicely. My mistake was to not introduce these new foods *slowly*, one or two at a time. The human body appreciates a gentle touch, as opposed to a total overhaul. Add something and eliminate something, but do it slowly and systematically. Bobby is right; you will feel lots better—but in due course.

Regarding Bobby's "magic bag" contents: When did fresh fruit, avocados, carrots, celery, and especially pine nuts become "non-perishable" items? Pine nuts, unless refrigerated or baked in something, will turn rancid. Maple syrup will turn to vinegar without refrigeration. Soy milk is nasty, but dry nonfat milk is great. Cart along some raisin bran and you'll be in business. Also, eat non-MSG-laced, veggie-based Oriental food for hot meals on the road.

My best advice is to mix and match new food and old food. Eat "some of this" and "some of that," until you have a diet of all "this." Take it from one who knows.

Susan Georgion
Spartanburg, SC



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Dave Lombardo

Coming To Grips With His Music

Dave Lombardo is five years and two albums into life after Slayer, and, for the first time in his memory, he feels free to create music that truly represents his spirit. "In Slayer," Dave says, "I had to be a certain kind of drummer. And with the first Grip Inc. album I felt I had to be what others expected of me to a certain degree. It's so much different now. A lot of time has passed. My band has been together awhile, and I think I can finally put the past behind me."

Lombardo's forward vision has chiefly come through the writing, recording, and release of *Nemesis*, the latest disc from Grip Inc., which breaks the thrash metal barrier to incorporate bits of industrial and hardcore with unabashed groove. Though Lombardo peppers the new record with blast beats and quick tom work, he shelves the double-kick he felt so tethered to in Slayer to intentionally deliver rhythms "with more meat to them." "I really wanted to do the kinds of beats that nobody else in metal is using," he says, citing the songs "Silent Stranger" and "Empress (Of Rancor)" as examples of how groove can work its way into the metal framework.

"These things have always been inside of me," Dave insists, "but I was never really able to bring them out before, either because of pressure put on me by others in the band or because I was too worried about other peoples' expectations of what Dave Lombardo should play. I'm still in metal music, but I'm into so many other things, too, and I think a lot of these influences can work well together if you just experiment. And that's what this band is all about."

Matt Peiken



Alex Salca

THE OFFSPRING

Ron Welty of

When the Offspring were playing one of their first gigs in Provo Utah Ron Welty was busy reading behind his kit. No, it wasn't a punk 'zine he was trying to read as Dexter Holland and the boys ran through their set; it was the names of the beats he was supposed to play. As he laughs at the memory, Ron explains that he didn't really have the time to learn how to play the drums, let alone the songs the punk band from Orange County was belting out. "I sat there and stared down at the paper I had written the beats on," Ron remembers. "We named them things like 'the slippity beat.'"

But what's it really like going from playing in front of twenty-five people in Provo to thousands at festival shows around Europe? "Twenty-five? It wasn't *that* many," Welty answers. "But playing for so many people now is definitely a trip." Ron admits that the change *has* been a little difficult. "We're settling in and getting used to it all. It was scary going on stage with people actually expecting something out of you." Meaning no more reading during the show.

The band played 227 gigs in support of their multi-platinum album *Smash*, which prepared them well for the recording of *Ixnay On The Hombre*, their latest release. "It seems that we're growing as a band," Ron says, "and this album is definitely one of the best things we've ever done. The tempos are better and my timing is getting much better."

For his part, Ron has a simple approach to all of the band's music: "I just concentrate on the feel instead of putting in any tricky stuff. When I play it's all about the emotion and putting a lot of balls behind it."

David John Farinella



EdShaughnessy will be on a three-week US tour with the former *Tonight Show* band in October.

Joe Franco recently recorded a track on Diana Ross's new album as well as for a new band on A&M called Fat. Also, one of Joe's finest recorded performances, 1995's *Mojo Bros*, (with T.M. Stevens and Al Petrelli), is now available in the States on the FTP label.

Nick Vincent was recently in the studio with Tito & Tarantula (of which he is a member), Devo, and Corey Stevens, and on soundtracks for *Meet Wally Sparks*, *Somebody To Love*, and

Tonic's Kevin Shepard

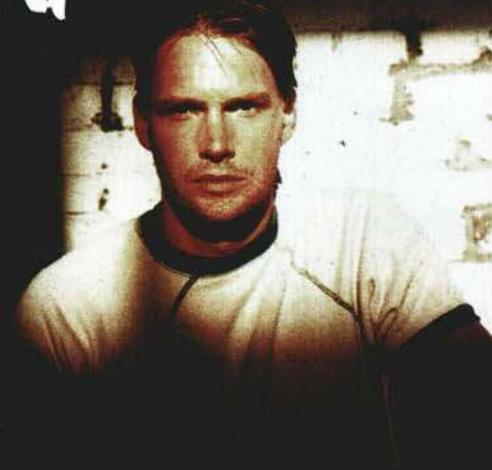
Sitting tall and strong behind his drumset, Kevin Shepard often tilts his head back, seeming to lean right into the beat, as he plays with his Tonic bandmates on the band's recent club tour. From the familiar "Open Up Your Eyes" to the yet-unreleased but just as impressive "Irish," Shepard shows a great ability to capture groove and mood on his four-piece.

Shepard, now twenty-nine, started drumming at age thirteen when he and some friends—none of whom played instruments—decided to start a band. He randomly picked drums. "It was good for me because it was an emotional outlet at the time," he says. "I was going through my parents' divorce, so it ended up being a savior for me."

Kevin eventually quit drums to concentrate on sports, and it wasn't until he had graduated from the University of Southern California and was contemplating a career that he picked up the sticks again. "I was horrible at first," Kevin admits. "But by the end of two years I was the house drummer at the (Hollywood) Kibitz Room. I made a lot of good contacts and met friends on that scene—that's where I met up with (Tonic bandmates) Emerson Hart and Jeff Russo."

Hart, Russo, Shepard, and Dan Rothchild came together as a band in 1993, originally calling themselves Radio Flyer. One name change and a couple of years later, Tonic hit the studio in early 1995 to record *Lemon Parade* for Polydor. "That period was a huge learning curve for me," Shepard says, "because I had never really played in the studio. I was fortunate to have Jack Joseph Puig (Black Crowes, Belly, Jellyfish) producing our record. He was a great teacher and I learned a lot. But I'm anxious to get back in the studio for the second record. A lot of the stuff you learn the first time around doesn't soak in until you've been out on the road for a long time. Then it sinks in."

Harriet L. Schwartz



Danny Clinch

Tom Hambridge Running Solo

Tom Hambridge has carved out a rather nice niche for himself in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Considering the fact that he's done records with Catie Curtis, Leslie Smith, the Chennielle Sisters, Dennis Brennan, and Allen Estes and toured with Peter Droge, and is currently touring with Jonatha Brooke & the Story, it's amazing he's had time to devote to a solo career. After ten years and four albums as drummer, producer, singer, and chief songwriter for T.H. & the Wreckage, Tom decided to record an album with some other musicians he's met along the way. *Still Running* is the result, a multi-media CD-ROM as well as a traditional audio CD.

"I wasn't locked into a band situation with this record," Tom says, "where I needed to write with certain people in mind. On this one, I could just write a song and then think, Wow, I bet somebody like Steven Paul Perry, who played with John Hiatt, could play slide on this, or I'd like Reeves Gabrels from David Bowie's band to play some wild guitar on "Trashman." As for the sound of his music, Hambridge describes it as rock with tinges of country and blues, a la John Cougar, Bryan Adams, or Steve Earle.

When he handles the opening slot for some of the major acts that come through the area, Tom actually hires a drummer and sings out front. "It was tough at first," he admits. "You feel as though you're standing there naked. The first time I did it was at a sold-out show, opening for the Fabulous Thunderbirds. I thought, 'If I'm going to do this, I just have to do it. I can't ease my way into it.'"

Ease is not really a part of his solo experience at all. "The role of sideman is a comfort zone to me," says Tom, who fills his calendar with a mixture of both roles. "I can just get on the bus, read my itinerary, and be there. I know what to do. But the fact that it's so easy to fall into makes me know I shouldn't let that happen. When I do those opening slots and see my music go over, I know I have to keep pushing myself."

Robyn Flans

(E)

Dream With The Fishes.
Kelly Keagy is on Night Ranger's first album in nine years, *Neverland*.

Dave Femia is on Dogma's debut album, *Feeding The Future*.

Ally Lambert is on Cecil's debut album, *BombarDiddlah*. They are currently on the road.

Lee Levin is about to begin a world tour with Julio Iglesias.

Chuck Burgiani and **Crystal Taliefero** are currently on tour with Enrique Iglesias.

Dan Hickey is finishing up a world tour with They Might Be Giants. He'll be recording a new album with them shortly.

(W)

Burleigh Drummond recently recorded three new tracks to be included on a "best of" album by Ambrosia.

Dave Triebwasser is on tour supporting the release of Pond's third album, *Rock Collection*.

Mint Condition has been on the road with drummer/percussionist **Chris Dave**.

Will Calhoun has been doing gigs with his band AZA, featuring Bernie Worell, T.M. Stevens, and Bobby Watson.

John Dittrich is now part of the Buffalo Club, a new band with a self-titled debut album out on Rising

(S)

Tide.
Victor DeLorenzo is now drumming for Jill Sobule. They recently taped a *Hard Rock Live* program for VH1.

Jerry O'Neill is on Voodoo Glow Skulls' recently released *Baile De Los Locos*.

Micky Dolenz just got back from a tour of the UK with the Monkees.

Congratulations to Jessica and **Tommy Igoe** on their recent wedding.

Congratulations to **Chad Smith** and his wife Maria on the birth of their daughter, Manon St. John Smith.

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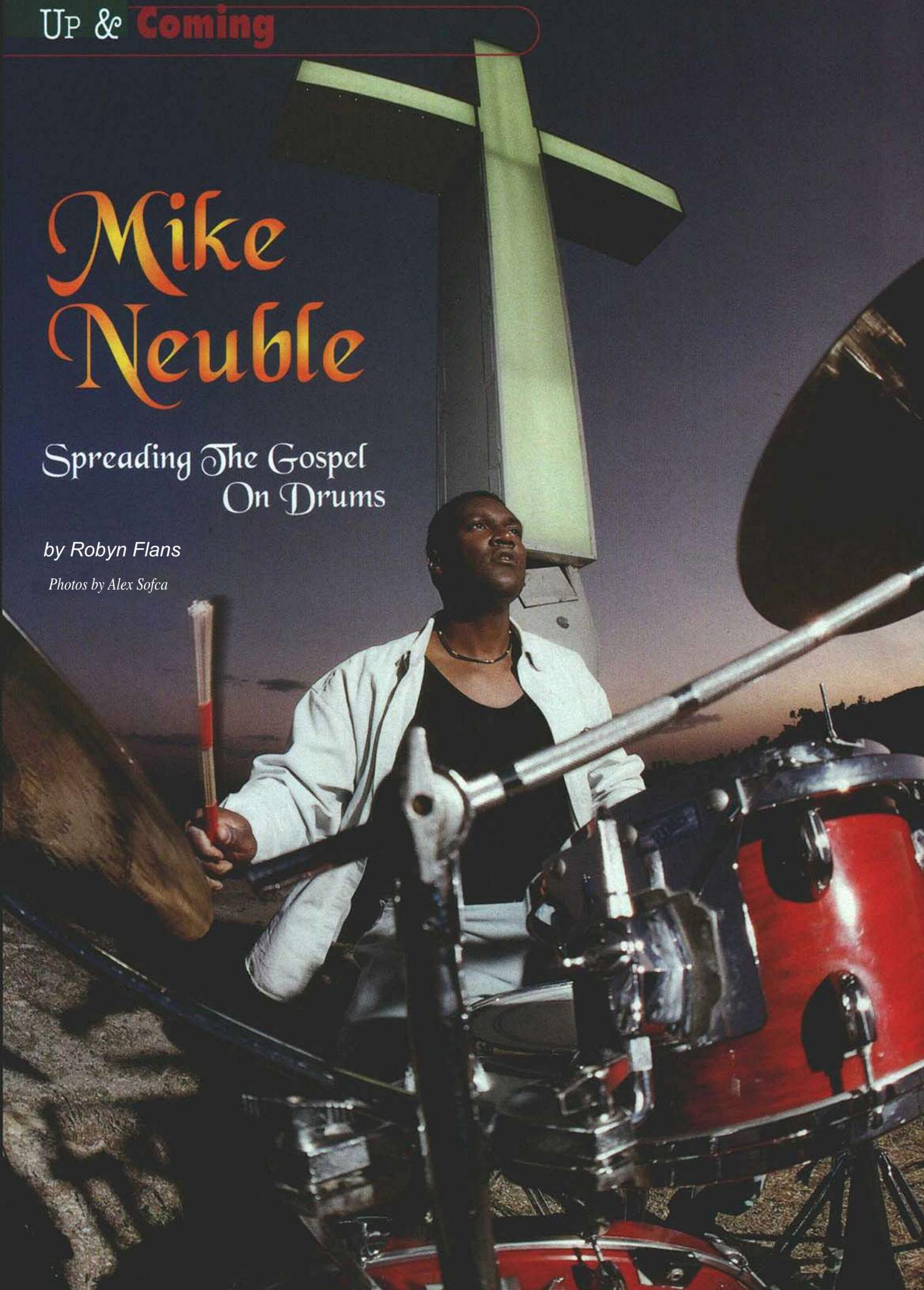
UP & **Coming**

Mike Neuble

Spreading The Gospel
On Drums

by Robyn Flans

Photos by Alex Sofca



Mike Neuble is one happy human. He gets paid to play music for God, which is the fulfillment of what he feels to be his purpose on earth. "The difference between gospel and secular music is who you're playing for," he says. "It's not just the artist you're backing. You're giving glory to God. Without him I'm nothing; we're all nothing without him. He gives us the talents we have, to use to the best of our ability. I'm not downing secular music, because God can be there as well. Music just has different titles."

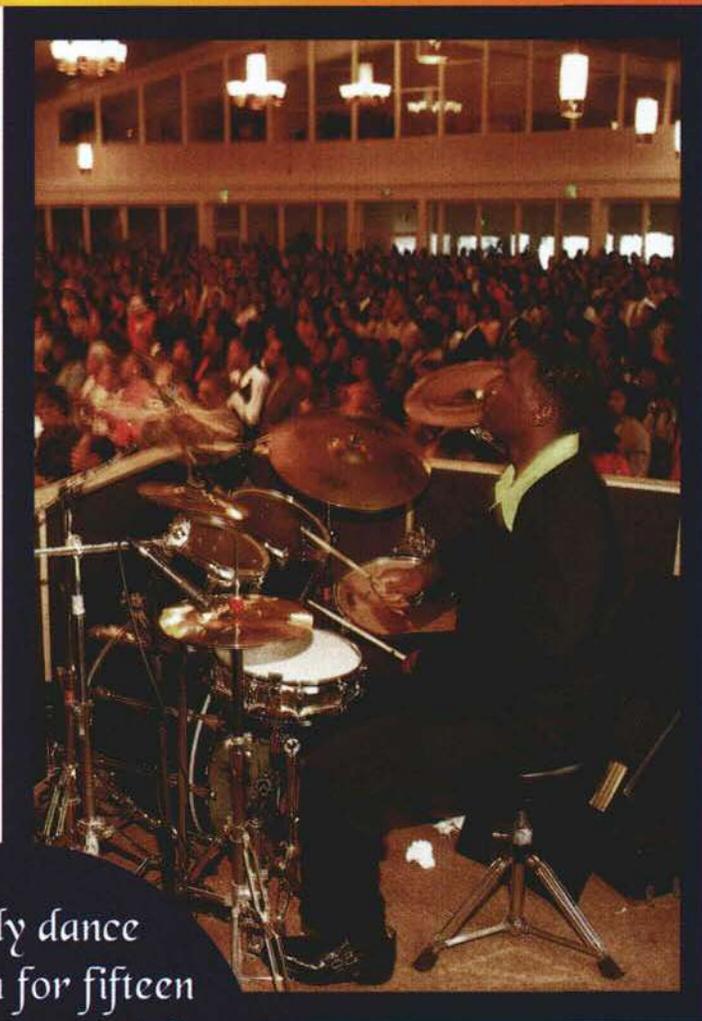
Growing up in Southern California, Mike began playing bongos in church at the age of five. His brother Jimmy, six years his senior, started out on congas, and when he moved to the drums, Mike added the congas to *his* repertoire. When Jimmy finally settled on the bass, Mike moved onto the drums, using the knowledge he had gained by watching his older brother on the kit and by playing to records. Mike was also inspired by such drummers as Joel Smith (with the Hawkins Family), Derek Schofield, Eric Morgan (who plays for Kirk Franklin), Kevin Bronson (with the Tommys), Cheron Moore, Buddy Rich, Dennis Chambers, Ricky Lawson, and Jonathan Moffett. It didn't take long for Mike and Jimmy to get noticed as a drums-and-bass team. "If the drummer and the bass player are locking, that's the meat of the band," Mike says. "And that's what we've done."

Mike was only thirteen when he and Jimmy began traveling on the weekends with Dannibelle Hall. He is very grateful for how encouraging and supportive their parents were. "I'll never forget our first trip out of town on an airplane to New York," he recalls. "We were blown away. And then Dannibelle said she was going to take care of our food, rather than give us a per diem. That was a big mistake," he laughs. "We weren't shy when it came to eating—we were teenagers. She ended up saying, 'I'd rather clothe you guys than feed you.'"

Working with Hall helped mold Mike's approach. "We didn't have a lot of rehearsal, so I had to develop a style quickly," he says. "My style became 'pocket'—just giving her the meat of the song. My brother played that way, too, so we matched. Whatever he was doing, I was doing, to make it fat. Playing a pocket is just holding a groove and then hitting the corners and breaks when they're needed, without coming *out* of the groove. The pocket is the meat of the song, and people can feel that. And if they can feel the groove, they're with you."

"If you're interested in pocket playing, I would strongly suggest listening to a lot of albums," he continues. "A lot of rap albums have that steady groove, like a drum machine. Or you can actually program a drum machine, with just the basic kick, snare, and hat without a lot of different double beats. Lock to that, and do the same thing the drum machine is doing. It's all about developing your ear."

Music and church remained Mike's focus throughout his youth, even when schoolmates exerted peer pressure. "It's hard for kids,"



"A holy dance can go on for fifteen to thirty minutes. You have to develop some endurance before you can play that!"

he says, "because they feel like if they *don't* go over and smoke that cigarette, they're not in with the 'in' crowd. Some kids turn to gangs to fit in. I'm not saying I was an angel all through school, but I never got into drags, and I've never smoked a cigarette in my life. You can see from different people you read about and see on the news, drags not only take you down, but take your family with you.

Using drugs brings your whole morale down, and it brings your bank account down. *And* it ages you. I've seen guys I went to high school with who look like grandfathers already. My advice to young kids is please don't try it."

Setting an example is important to Mike, although he knows not everyone lives up to what they profess to believe in. "The Bible says many are called, but few are chosen," he says. "A lot of people say they're Christians—and just because they do something unchristian doesn't mean they're not. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory."

"There is counterfeit in everything," Mike continues. "On the road, even in the gospel field, you're constantly approached by women. You have to be nice, but push yourself away and say, 'I'm married....' Even when I wasn't married, I didn't have any rela-

tionships with women on the road. It helps when you're traveling with people who have the same philosophies. We guys would go have fun together. When you're playing gospel music, you have to set yourself aside. Being a Christian means you strive to be Christ-like. It's hard, it's a struggle, but you pray and move on."

Fifteen years ago Dannibelle Hall, who had been a background singer for Andre Crouch, suggested Mike and Jimmy to the gospel great, who was in need of a band. It was a dream come true for the Neubles. Mike was only eighteen at the time. "I used

to study Andre Crouch's albums," he recalls. "Bill Maxwell was the drummer, and I would study his moves and play everything like he would play it, which is what was needed for that gig. Andre likes a clean pocket and a good feel, and for the songs to build. If you're all over the place, then you're kinda in *his* place."

Mike averages a few gigs a month with Crouch, and usually does a couple of European tours a year with him. Most recently, Mike cut a track for Crouch's upcoming album release. "With Andre, I do your urban-type gospel with a little funk

in it, along with worship music. He gives you a mixture of everything. I also play regularly with Daryl Coley, who has more of a jazzy-type voice, and with Kurt Carr, who is more hip-hop gospel."

Of the recordings he's done, Mike says the ones most representative of his playing are Daryl Coley's *When The Music Stops* and *Right On Time* (a live performance on record and video), and Kurt Carr's *Surely: West Angeles Saints In Praise, Volumes 1 and 2*.

For the past seventeen years, Mike has been on staff at West Angeles Church of God in Christ, in Los Angeles, where he receives a salary and benefits. It also affords him the opportunity to stay in town. "My family is very important in my playing," says Mike of his wife, Wanda, and his three daughters, China, Chira, and Chantal. "If you're having a problem at home, you're not able to minister on your drums or play for the artist you're with—because your heart is hurting and your mind is not there. Then you start losing gigs because you're not with it. You have to have a good understanding with your wife, and she has to understand what you

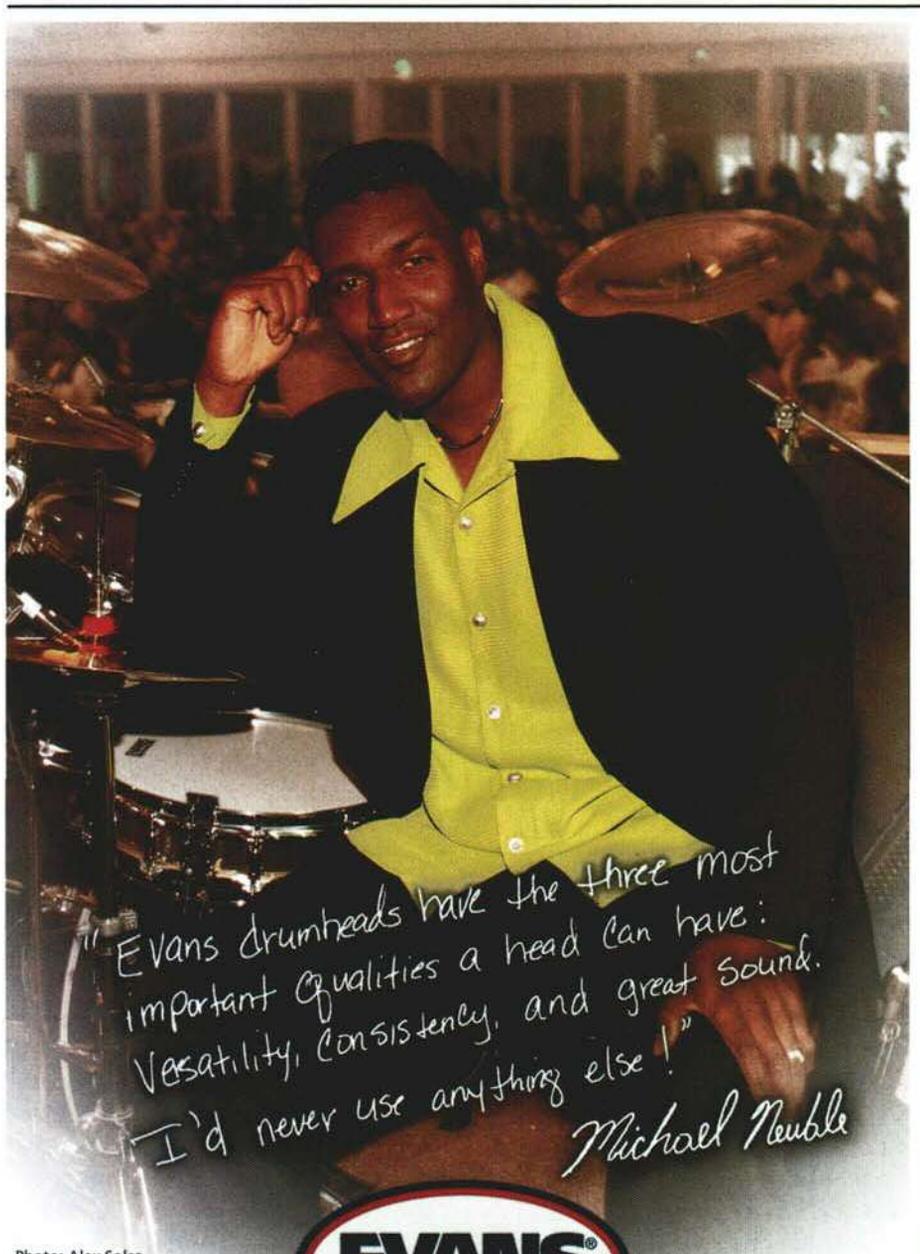


Photo: Alex Solca

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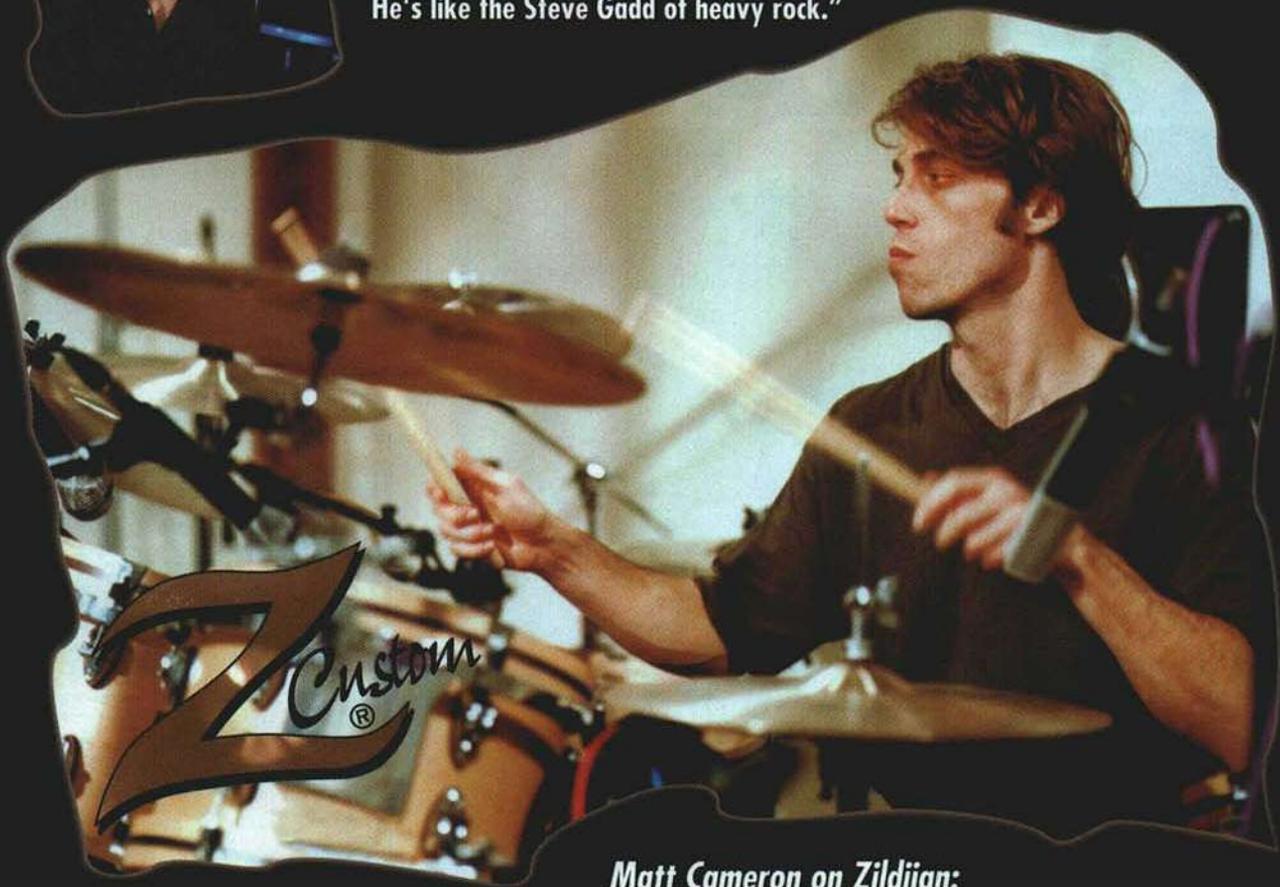
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"Matt comes at you from nowhere with incredible odd-time stuff."

White Zombie's John Tempesta on Matt Cameron



"Matt's one of my favorite players. What I love about him is his capacity to play with such force and feeling, he's such a loose player, with the ability to come at you from nowhere with incredible odd-time stuff. He's like the Steve Gadd of heavy rock."



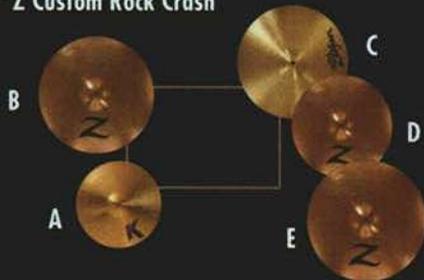
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- E. 19" Z Custom Rock Crash



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do. At one time I thought my wife didn't understand. Actually, she always understood, but I didn't. I was thinking, 'I'm going out on tour in order to bring money into the family.' Yeah, but if I'm always gone from home and not spending quality time with my kids and my wife, that's not good. Whenever I travel, I try to include Wanda. Sometimes the finances may not be there to do that, but I always want her to feel a part of it. When the church went over to the Bahamas, my minister of music, Judy McCallister, made it possible for Wanda to go with me."

When he's in town, Mike rehearses with the church group on Saturdays. Then they play for four worship services on Sunday morning and one in the evening. It's a good Workout, because the music encompasses many styles: jazz, hip-hop, and even a blues groove.

"For the most part, I play by ear," Mike admits. "The majority of gospel musicians do. A lot of them read as well, but the changes and chord progressions are a lot different. What I mean by that is, in secular music you have a basic form—verse and a straight vamp; there aren't many parts to

the song. In gospel, you have a chorus, the vamp, then maybe you go back to the chorus and then to the melody of the song—it goes through a lot more changes. There are a lot of chord progressions involved in gospel music, so it's more ear and feel.

"You have to remember that we used to communicate through the drums back in Africa. Certain rhythms *meant* something. A lot of gospel music was originated way back, too. My pastor, Bishop Charles Blake, may start singing a song from before my time. I have to rely on my ear and follow him. He's really good at giving tempos, but sometimes he may not know the exact tempo he wants, which is where I come in. I'll give him a tempo and if he can feel it, he'll sing it.

"Judy McCallister is the best at praise and worship," Mike continues. "I have to be really attuned to what's going on, because praise and worship is just surrendering your all to God. A lot of it is unrehearsed. Judy may sing a song for the first time, so that's being attuned to the Holy Spirit. But if you're in that place, you just feel it. It's beautiful and I truly enjoy playing it."

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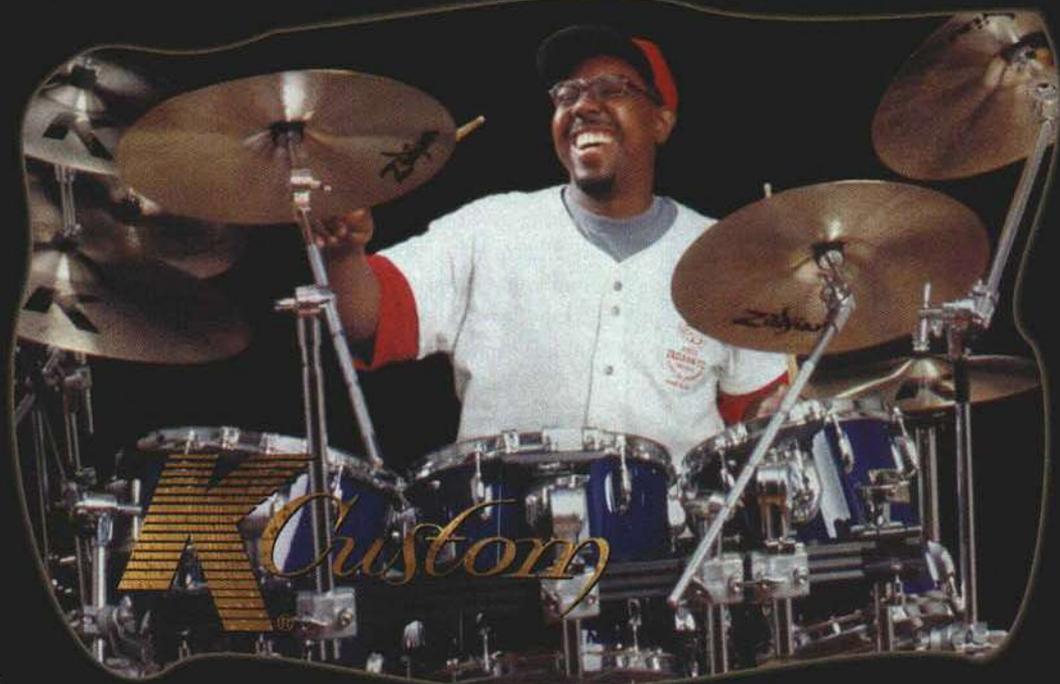
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Sonny Emory on Marvin "Smitty" Smith



"Smitty is an incredible player and person. Those qualities have to go hand-in-hand. That makes Smitty all the more inviting to the listener. Smitty is always pushing the envelope, seeking new experiences. And he does it with intense passion and love for drumming."



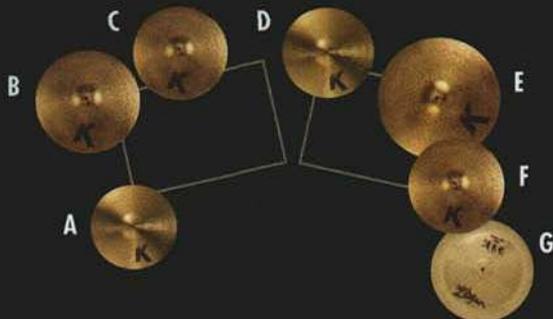
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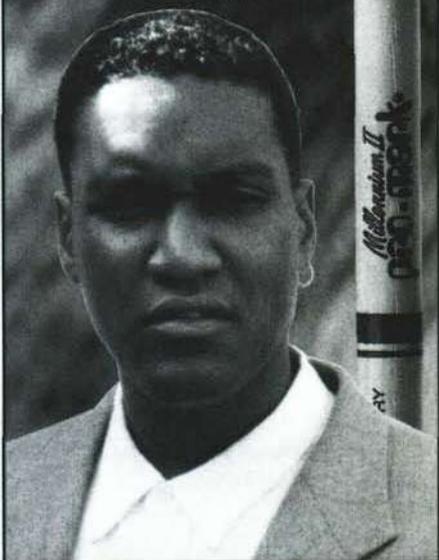
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Some of the music is actually quite frenetic, Mike says. "A holy dance can go on for fifteen to thirty minutes," he explains. "You have to develop some endurance before you can play that, because it's real intense; you're constantly going at a fast pace. Cheron Moore taught me how to get my rest in between some of these shout sections. He taught me how to do some flams on the cymbal and snare to keep the tempo going—and get breathers while I'm doing it—and then go back to the 'up' tempo."

Mike currently endorses Sabian cymbals, Pro-Mark sticks, Evans heads, and Grover percussion. He is grateful to those companies for seeing a benefit in working with a gospel drummer. "When most companies hear that a drummer 'works in a church,' they think of the little church on the corner," says Mike. "They don't realize the magnitude of the market. Our church has a membership of 17,000 people!"

Mike's job at the church allows him the freedom to work with artists, and to tour. For example, he will be absent for a few months this summer to be part of the evangelical group Promise Keepers. He couldn't be happier, and he advises anyone to pray about their dreams. "Pray about the

desire of your heart, even if it's playing secular music. Pray about it and pray you get with a good artist. I've said to some secular musicians, 'You may be playing secular music, but let God see your light.' Whatever it is you want to do, ask God. He's going to give you the desires of your heart. Without him I would have done none of this.

"A lot of major artists are members of our church," Mike continues. "Michael Bivins from New Edition is one; Stevie Wonder is another. I was able to play for Stevie, Magic Johnson, and Denzel Washington. It's a blessing to be able to minister to these people."

Mike takes the ministering aspect of his work seriously. "It's important to always have a good attitude on the job," he says. "There have been times I was tired, but I still spent that quality time with people because this was their first time seeing me. If they come to see me play and then they want to talk, and I say, 'Man, not now,' I've lost them. I'm a minister on the drums. They're feeling that music and the healing within it."



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Joey Baron

Q After reading your cover story in the July 1996 issue of *MD*, I rushed right out and purchased a copy of your *Tongue In Groove* album. Your drumming is magnificent, and your compositions are fantastic. But the feature that initially grabbed my attention was your massive drum sound. Looking at the photos in the *MD* article, it's hard to believe that your huge sound comes from such tiny cymbals and drums. Could you explain how you go about tensioning your drums, and whether studio techniques (close miking, reverb, effects) have much to do with the sound on the CD? Also, could you please outline what you look for in cymbals?

Robert Coxon
Valentine, NSW, Australia

A Regarding heads and tensioning: I use *Ambassador-thickness* heads, with no muffling on any drum. My bass drum batter is loose to the point of having almost no tension. The toms are on the loose side. On *Tongue In Groove* my snare was tuned medium on some pieces and tight on others.

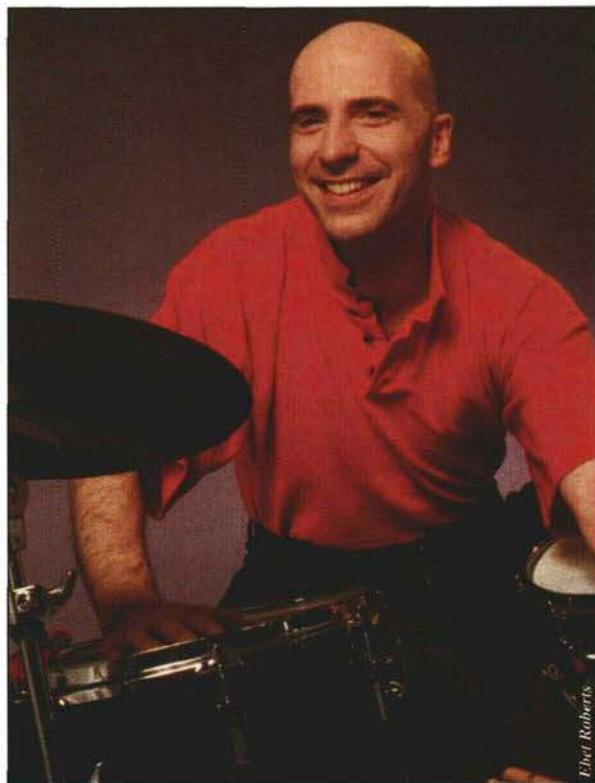
Usually the batter heads are looser than the bottom heads on the whole set. This relationship accentuates the attack sound. When I want less attack and more ring or tone, I reverse this relationship. I've spent many hours exploring the tuning capabilities of each drum in my set, then exploring the combinations and the blend of all the drums together. Additionally, the ability to draw the desired sound *out* of an instrument is crucial, and that relates to how you strike a drum as well as how it is tuned.

For recording, I try for a realistic docu-

mentation of the way it sounds in the studio. In order to get this I use overhead miking, close miking, and room ambient mic's, along with reverb and EQ. On *Tongue In Groove* the reverb and EQ were minimal, and only occasionally was close miking used to bring out details during the more dense sections of the music. What you saw in the *MD* photos was exactly what I used on that record, along with a 15" swish/sizzle cymbal off to the side of the floor tom.

Regarding cymbals, I look for versatility: a cymbal that can crash as well as ride, hi-hats that "sizzle" ride as well as have a good "chick" sound that blends with the rest of my set. I prefer small cymbals that *sound* large, and I tend to like lower-pitched cymbals as opposed to thick, telephone-bell-ping types of cymbals.

When I travel on the road, 98% of the time I don't carry any cymbals, so I wind up playing a different set every day. Sometimes I'm given a choice; sometimes it's just a matter of "this is what we have." If I have a choice, I'll select the ones with the qualities I've outlined. But I generally tape up the ride cymbal specifically so that it doesn't ring, because I find that constant ringing from a ride cymbal covers up tones that I would like to hear coming from the other instruments. A lot of times cymbals get in the way. I want a ride sound that



allows more space for the sustain of an upright bass, for example. Taping the cymbal also brings more focus to exactly what is being played on it, rather than just a sustained ringing sound for days. This has become a "signature" sound for me—which I can create on almost any cymbal just through the use of tape.

I also have a crash cymbal in my setup that I like to use as a ride. It has a rather "loose" sound. Between it and the ride, I have a lot to work with. Then there's a lot that can be done with the hi-hat. I try to get as much sound as I can from as little equipment as possible.

Thanks so much for your enthusiasm.

Jim Keltner

Q I've been a major fan of yours since 1973—which was three years before I officially picked up a pair of drumsticks! One thing I've particularly noticed is your ability to execute a buzz roll. I can tell that your chops are somewhat N.A.R.D. rudiment-like. In your own studies, who were some of your influences, and what lesson books did you use? What helpful hints would you suggest to get a clean buzz roll? Also, what was your drumset in the '70s?

Darrin DeGuia
Henderson, NV

Q Your performances on projects with Little Village and on Nick Lowe's *Party Of One* are fantastic. As a drummer in the middle of augmenting my cymbal setup, I'm very interested in knowing what type of China cymbal you used on "Shting Shtang" on *Party Of One*. I've never heard a China cymbal with such depth and sustain. Were any special effects used in the recording of that tune? Also, what types of brushes did you use on the song?

Lars Hanson
Milwaukee, WI

A Thanks, guys, for the compliments Darrin, the only way I know to improve your buzz roll is to practice on a good pad as often and for as long as you can. Also very important is to make sure your grip on the sticks is working *for* you and not *against* you. (Any good teacher can check that for you.)



I personally learned by watching and listening to a lot of drummers, and then practicing ferociously. Listen to some Art Blakey records—that will make you want to practice your roll. The main books I studied out of were Ted Reed's *Syncopation* and Benjamin Podemski's *Standard Snare Drum Method*. But I'm sure there are many great new ones to get into.

In the '70s I played mostly on a Ludwig bass drum and toms, with lots of different snare drums: Ludwig, Slingerland, Gretsch, Rogers, and Yamaha.

Lars, I'm glad to hear you liked the Little Village CD and Nick's *Party Of One*. "Shting Shtang" is one of my personal favorites. The brushes I used were given to me by my good friend Larrie Londin. They're crimped in the middle of the fan, so they have a little more "whip" to them. The China cymbal was a 22" Paiste 2002 with a fairly low-pitched "cough." I don't use Chinas as much today as I did in the past, but the sound of this one and the one on Randy Newman's "You Can Leave Your Hat On" are my two very favorites.

No special effects were used on the "Shting Shtang" recording—just good, solid recording technique. Dave Charles engineered Nick's project. (Lee Hirshberg was the engineer on Randy's.)



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Whither Mode Plagal?

QHow can I find the Mode Plagal CD reviewed in your April '96 issue? Local record stores have no info on it.

Mike Lee
via Internet

AMode Plagal is on Ano Kato records, a Greek label. Their address is P.P. Germanou 19, 546 22 Thessaloniki, Greece. Their US distributor is North-Country Distributors, Cadence Building, Redwood, NY 13679, (315) 287-2852.

Mission Impossible

QCan you tell me who the drummer was on Lalo Schifrin's theme from *Mission Impossible* (the original TV series), and who played the military snare and cymbal during the episodes from 1966 to 1973?

Leslie Packer
via Internet

AWe went to LA studio veteran Joe Porcaro for this one. His reply is as follows: "It's impossible to say who played on the 'original' theme recording, because so many guys were involved with the show over the years. Additionally, with each new season, the theme was re-recorded, and a different player would do the session. I can tell you that over the years, drumset players who performed on those sessions included Larry Bunker, Stan Levey, Shelly Manne, Alvin Stoller, and myself. The famous bongo part was performed on various sessions by Emil Richards, Larry Bunker, and Kenny Watson. The military snare drum, bass drum, and cymbals were played over the years by Kenny Watson, Emil Richards, and myself.

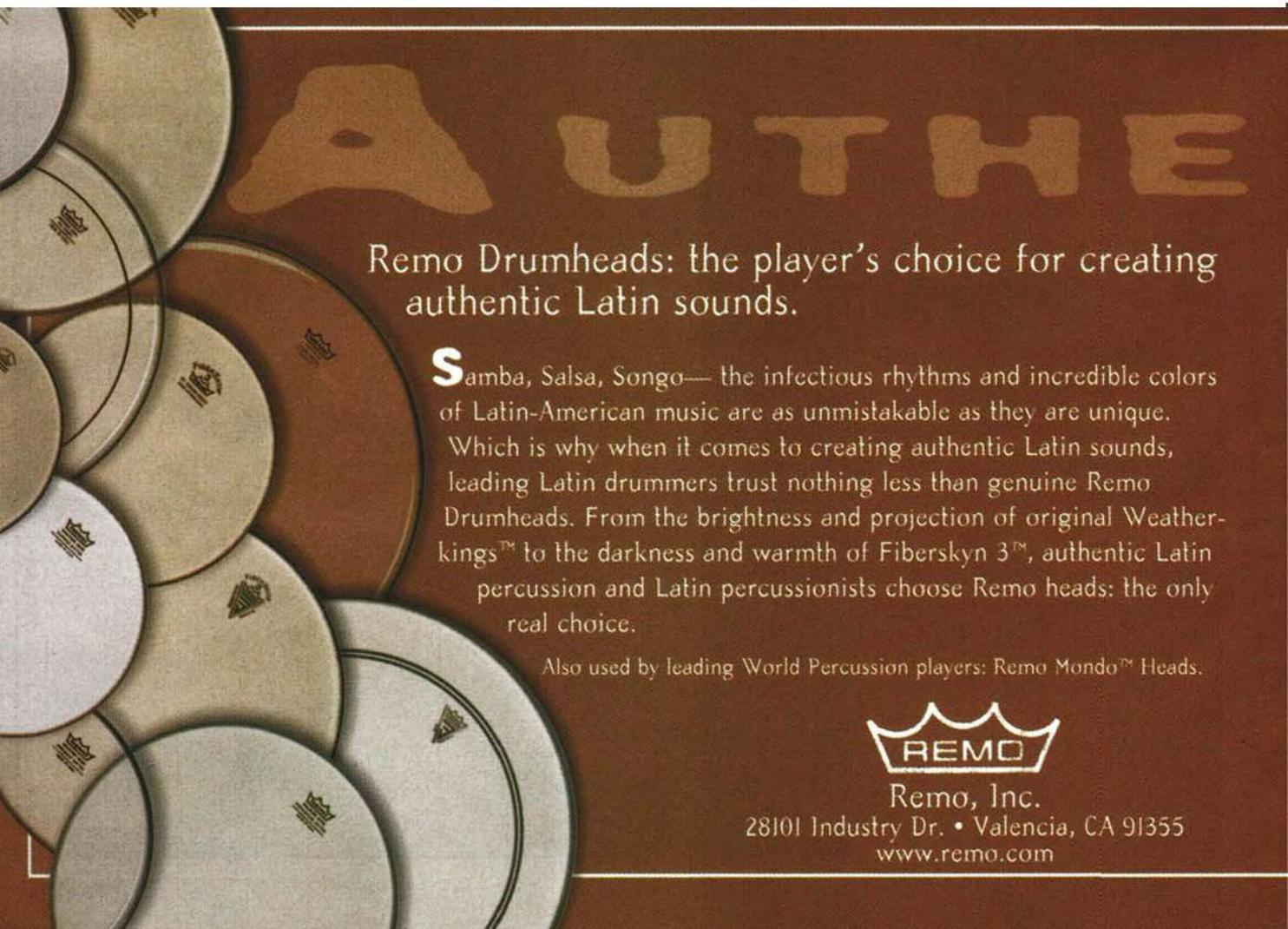
"The show's underscoring also used lots of timpani (played by Lew Cindor, Emil Richards, and myself), tabla (Milt Holland, Kenny Watson, and myself), and vibes (Gene Estes, Kenny Watson, Emil

Richards, and myself). Who played what in any given episode was determined simply by who was available for that week's recording session."

Mystery Superstars

QAfter reading a letter in the June '96 *It's Questionable* section regarding Tama *Superstar* drums, my curiosity got the better of me. I have a four-piece jazz kit with serial numbers starting 82000. I take this to be the year of manufacture, indicating 1982. I was under the impression that the shells were maple, not birch as described in the June article. The shells of my drums have reinforcing rings, and I have been told that the shells could have come from Camco, the company that Tama took over. So I wonder if you can shed some light on the wood used and the origin of the drumkit.

Keith Gilroy
Sudbury, Ontario, Canada



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A Tama's Paul Specht replies, "Oh, this is a good one! Although I have seen a few of our old *Imperialstars* with reinforcement rings, I have never seen a *Superstar* kit with them. But our even more knowledgeable Tommy Kato here tells me that there were *Superstar* kits with rings when the line first came out. However, they were rare—at least in North America. As far as your assumption that the serial number indicates the year of manufacture, most of the time you'd be right. But unfortunately that system was not used in every instance, including your case. The reinforcement rings on your *Superstars* indicate an earlier date of manufacture—probably around 1978. *Superstars* are made of birch, and although we did inherit some Camco shells when we took over the building here, your kit's shells would have been crafted in Japan.

Weather Precautions

Q I'm a busy drummer working in two bands in the Chicago area. We gig

throughout the year, and unfortunately that includes the winter months, when wind-chill factors can bring temperatures to 40° below. Are there precautions I can take to keep drumheads from splitting, soft cases from cracking (which I am experiencing), and other problems that occur during transport in severely cold weather? I have a pickup truck with a cap, so the drums are not in a heated area during transport. Any advice would be appreciated.

Gregg Landrey
New Lenox, IL

A One thing that might help to extend the life of your soft cases (and the drums within them) is the installation of a "boot" that connects the back window of your pickup truck to the front window of your cap. This would allow heat from the cab of the truck to travel into the cap, giving some additional protection to the equipment within. "Boots" are usually available from (and can be installed by) the same dealers who sell caps and/or RV supplies. You might also consider adding insulation to

the top and sides of the cap.

You should be aware, however, that there are limits to the amount of cold that any equipment can take. Soft cases, for example, are intended for medium-duty transport applications—including moderately hot or cold environments. You may need to consider hard-shell flight-style cases for additional durability against ultra-cold temperatures.

Odd-Size Tuning

Q Tuning a set of drums is one of those things that many of us have to work at. It's also surrounded by myths and voodoo. My question is a simple one: Are even-sized drums (10", 12", 14", etc.) easier to tune than odd-sized drums (13" or 15")?

Gary D'Ercole
Waltham, MA

A Speaking purely in theory, no one size of drum should be easier (or more difficult) to tune than any other, since the process is the same for all sizes. However, drummers

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Horacio Hernandez
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often find difficulty getting a "good tuning" with odd-sized drums because of the way they figure into the overall relationship of drum sizes on a kit. In this case it isn't tuning the drum itself that's problematic, but rather getting it in tune with the rest of the drums. For example, if the other two rack toms on a kit are 10" and 12" in diameter, it may be difficult to get a 13" rack tom tuned to a pleasing interval. On the other hand, if the 13" rack tom is paired with a 10" rack tom, and the floor tom on the kit is a 16" drum, there may be no problem at all.

Ironically, entry-level (and many professional-level) "packaged" drumkits have featured 12" and 13" rack toms and 16" floor toms for many years. Drummers have come to understand this particular relationship as a result, and often have no problem with the tuning of any of the drums. More than anything else, the ease with which any size drum can be tuned depends on the ear and the tuning skills of the drummer tuning it.



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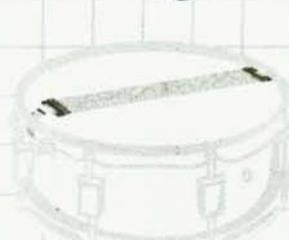
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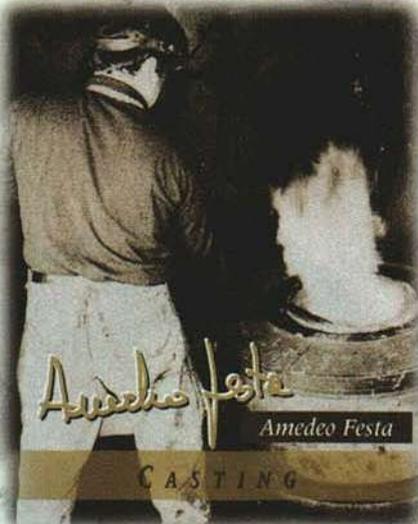
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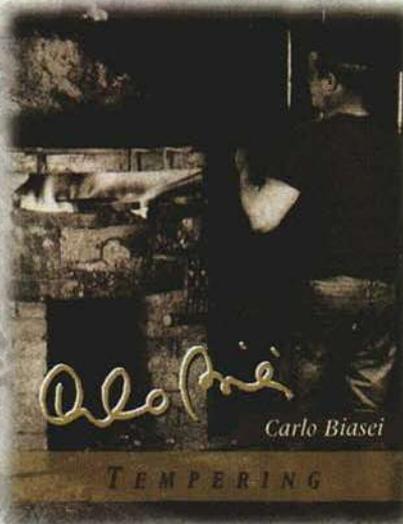
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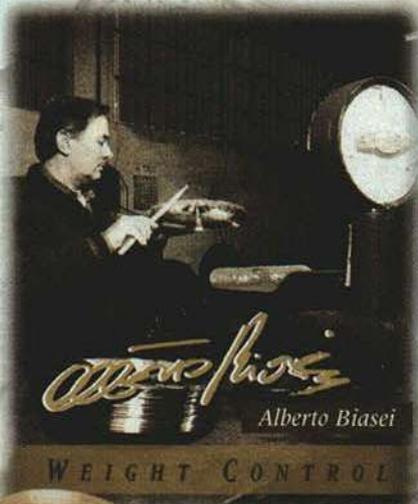
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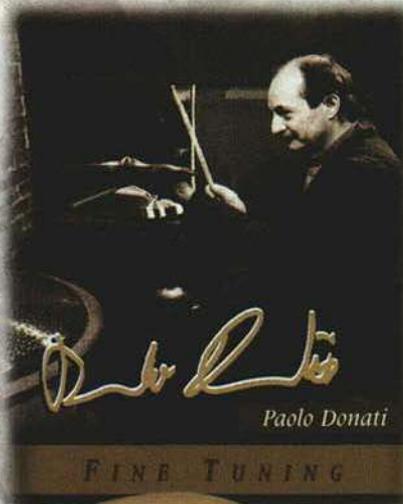
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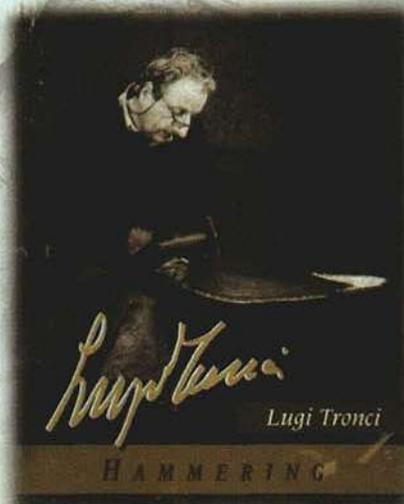
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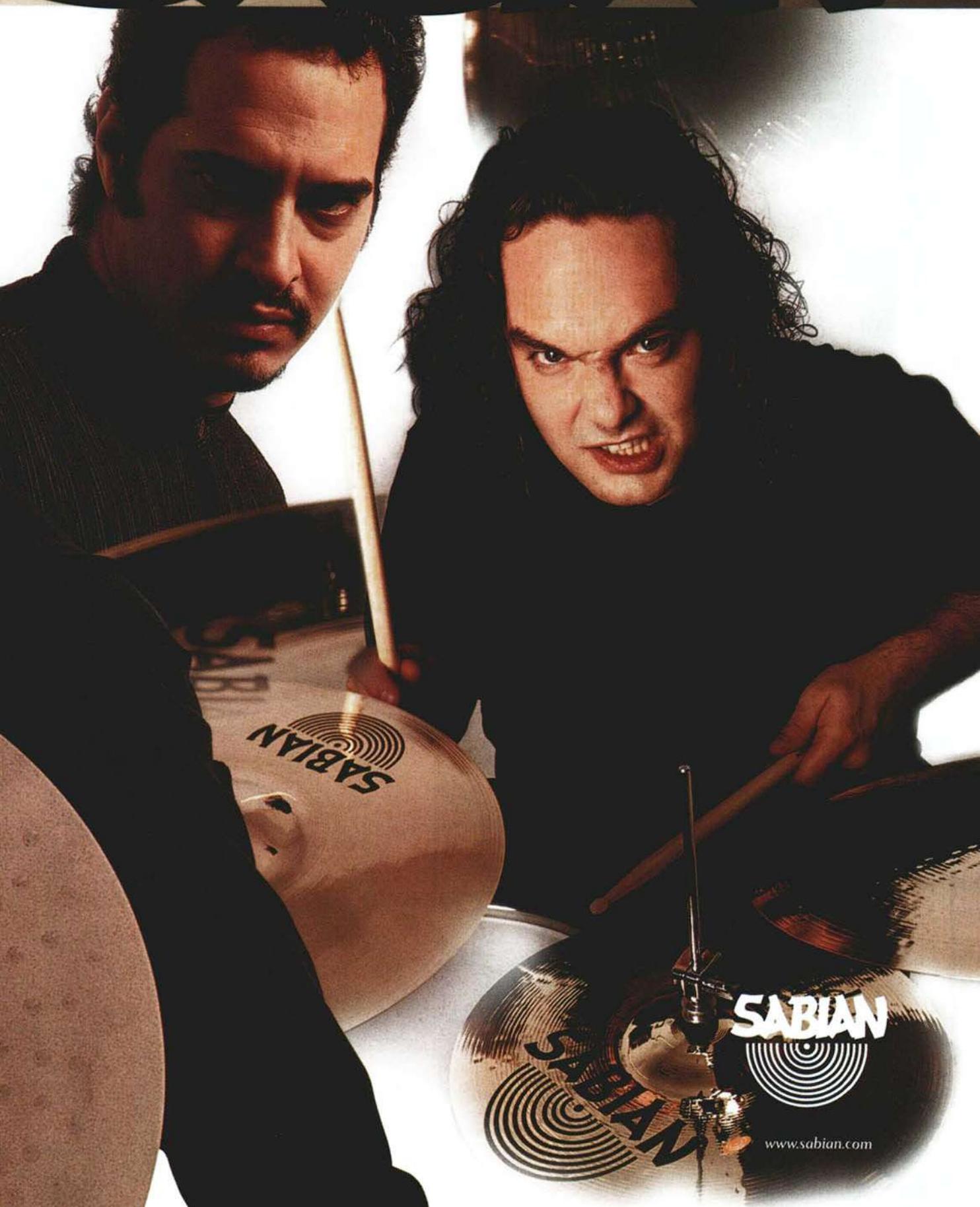
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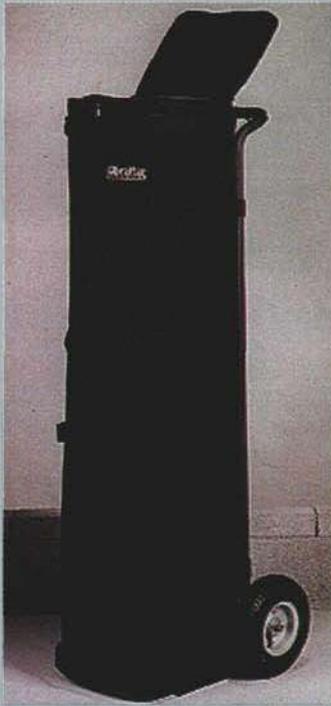


www.sabian.com

Bag 'Em Up...Move 'Em Out Gibraltar Hardware Transport Systems

Getting there may not really be half the fun when you have to schlep a lot of hardware, but these new bags from Gibraltar might make the trip a little easier.

They're made of 1,200-denier fabric and feature three-sided ABS plastic inserts to prevent punctures and also to maintain the shape of the bag for easy loading. High-density foam lining, nylon interiors, heavy-duty zippers, soft-grip handles, and 500-lb.-test straps are also featured. Models include three sizes of "square" hardware bags (24", 48", and 52" long) priced from \$129.50 to \$165.50, tubular bags (36" and 54" long) priced at \$119.50 and 149.50, a pedal bag (\$99.50), a seat/accessories bag (\$79.50), and a bag/cart combination with an aluminum frame and pneumatic tires (\$99.50).

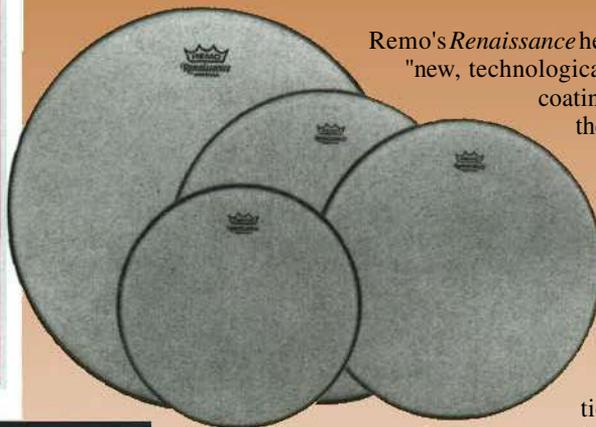


GHC Hardware Cart



(From left): Gibraltar's GHB-S (24"), GHB-M(48"), and GHB-L (52") bags

It's The Coating That Makes Them Sweet Remo Renaissance Drumheads



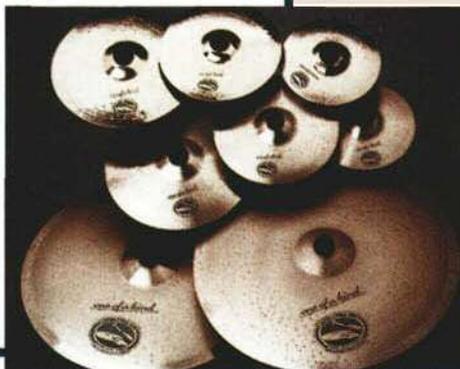
Remo's *Renaissance* heads featured a "new, technologically advanced" coating applied to the top and bottom of the drumhead film. The new coating is said not to degrade "under even the harshest playing conditions, significantly increasing

heads' durability." The coating is further claimed to act "as a natural filter that enhances the acoustics of each drum by bringing out more of the middle without decreasing the top or bottom ends of its tonal spectrum," resulting in a "deeper, richer, more full-bodied sound." The new line of heads consists of *Diplomat* (thin), *Ambassador* (medium), and *Emperor* (heavy) weights for 14" snare batter and snare-side, as well as custom timpani heads with insert rings for 18" through 32" timpani. Heads will become available for 6" to 20" toms and 18" to 40" bass drums "as demand and production capacity increases."

Status Cymbals Meinl One Of A Kind Cymbals

Meinl now offers drummers the opportunity to own unique splash, crash, ride, and hi-hat cymbals. Special hammering, milling, or other procedures determine individual, "one-of-a-kind" sounds for each cymbal—ensuring that no other drummer will have an identical-sounding model. A 10" splash lists for \$184, a 16" crash sells for \$368, a 20" ride is priced at \$478, and a pair of 14" hi-hats is priced at \$515.

Meinl has also introduced three versions (*Low*, *Medium*, and *Power Bell*) of their 8" *Classics Bell* model (available with or without rivets), and 16" and 18" *Classics* Chinas.



Small But Mighty Grover Power-Picc Snare Drum

Grover Pro Percussion's new *Power-Picc* is a 5x10 snare drum designed to be mounted from a hi-hat or cymbal stand. It features eight plies of maple with an outer ply of imported Italian wood chosen for its grain pattern and rich finish. Finishes available include four bird's-eye patterns (natural, cobalt blue, carmine red, and sage green) and two burl patterns (deep plum and Amazon green). The drum features Grover's *Performance Snare System* non-spiral snare wire, die-cast "coffin-style" lugs with rubber bushings that allow the shell to vibrate freely, precision bearing edges, 2.3 mm hoops isolated with nylon washers, and a nodal venting system that places an air-dispersion vent in the drum's "sweet spot" (near the bottom drumhead) to produce a fast transient attack.



Hey, If It's Good Enough For Neil... Earthworks TC30K Microphone



The Earthworks *TC30K* in use on Neil Peart's drumkit



The *TC30K* microphone from Earthworks is a multi-purpose omnidirectional mic' said to be excellent when used in pairs as overheads, or for close miking—especially for the bass drum. With an acoustic input peak of 150 dB peak and frequency

response from 9 Hz to 30 kHz, the mic' is further claimed to possess exceptional time coherence and imaging characteristics. It carries a retail price of \$500; a matched pair is sold in a cherry wood box for \$1,000.

Want To Get Your Hands On Some Electronic Percussion?

Buchla Hand Percussion Controller

Bringing the new to the old, the Buchla Hand Percussion Controller (available from E-mu Systems) features non-contact optical sensing technology that allows the drum to track motion in different positions around the head. This allows the drum to be played using traditional hand-drum techniques, while triggering sounds with what the company terms "extraordinary dynamic sensitivity." Those sounds can then be controlled by pressure and movement. The unit, designed by electronic instrument pioneer Doff Buchla, will retail for approximately \$2,000.

Whack It...Slap It... Step On It...Play It. B.Rad Percussion Talkit VP Drums

The *Talkit VP* drum from B.Rad Percussion now comes in two models: the *VP-S* stick drumset and stick percussion model, which uses a standard plastic drumhead, and the *VP-H* (shown here), which has a pre-formed, custom-mounted goatskin head (synthetic heads available soon). Both versions feature foot-pedal-controlled variable-pitch mechanisms and 24x10 hour-glass-shaped hardwood shells. The *VP-S* is priced at \$875 and includes a rounded rim and a Gibraltar L-rod tom mount bracket; the *VP-H* lists for \$925 and includes a conga-style L-bracket mount. A demo tape and photo are available for \$6.



And What's More...

Scott Davidson Music offers more than 1,000 drum and percussion recordings, videos, and books. Specializing in both out-of-print and in-print percussion recordings, the company's extensive, categorized catalog contains "everything from Art Blakey to Zakir Hussain."

New Camion brand accessories (from Universal Percussion) include three cymbal bags priced from \$29.95 to \$79.95 (depending on padding, pockets, and other features) and a *Junior Jamm* three-piece beginning drumset designed for very young players, priced at \$189.

The SKB line of molded plastic cases now includes two new stand cases: the 48x19 *SKB4819W* model and the 48x10 *SKB4810W* model. Designed for transporting bulky drum, microphone, speaker, or lighting stands, the cases feature built-in wheel systems, rugged lockable latches, recessed

handles, and molded bumpers for durability that meet ATA Category 1 specifications.

Zildjian is now offering *Real Cymbal Dog Tags* cut from actual cymbals made from the secret Zildjian cymbal alloy—complete with lathing and hammering marks. The tags come in the authentic configuration for military LD. tags, and feature the Zildjian logo laser-etched on one side of each tag.



Making Contact

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Web: www.zildjian.com

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Earthworks, Inc.
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E-mu Systems, Inc.
1600 Green Hills Road, Suite 101
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fax: (408) 438-8612
Web: 222.emu.com

Gibraltar
(Kaman Music Corp.)
PO Box 507
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Grover Pro Percussion
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tel: (617) 935-6200
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Meinl Cymbals (US)
20301 Elkwood St.
Canoga Park, CA 91306
(818) 772-6543

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28101 Industrial Dr.
Valencia, CA 91355
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fax: (305) 378-6669
Web: www.skbcases.com

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'97 Tama Rockstar

Time for a change....

Raymond Herrera
of Fear Factory.

For over ten years, Tama's Rockstar drum line, the drum line that first offered pro features at an affordable price, has continued to evolve and improve. But the new 1997 Rockstar line has more upgrades than ever before...better hardware, better heads, new finishes, new lugs, a whole new look and sound. But we didn't change everything. Tama Rockstar shells feature the same strong 9-ply construction and five year warranty as our Starclassic and Artistar sets. And Rockstar still offers the great comprehensive selection that allows you to create just about any set-up you want...from a three piece stripped down club kit to a mega-monster arena set.

So if you're looking to make a change in your drums, make sure it's a change for the better...the new 1997 Tama Rockstar.

The sound and power of Philippine mahogany shells with a beechwood inner ply and Tama's precision cut bearing edges

New one-piece high tension lugs and tom mounting brackets are die-cast for even greater strength.

1997 Rockstars feature the same MTH900 modular tom holder as our Starclassic and Artistar Custom drums. Can also be easily converted to a combination cymbal/tom holder.

Accu-Tune hoops are more rigid than standard hoops for better tuning, but are 20% lighter in weight.

Rockstar's new upgraded heads ensure great drum sound practically right out of the box.

Model shown: RSC7228DSGW (Sugar White)

TAMA

For more information on Tama Drums and Hardware, send \$3.00 (\$5.00 in Canada) to:
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Mapex Black Panther Snare Drums

by Chap Ostrander

One color...many different sizes and sounds. Mapex's new snares are a different breed of cat.

Mapex USA has recently introduced their new family of snare drums, the *Black Panther* series. As their ads quoting Henry Ford say, "You can have any color you want...as long as it's black." While this is essentially true, there is much more to the *Black Panthers* than shell color. The drums are offered in birch, maple, bird's-eye maple, steel, aluminum, and brass shells, and are available in several different sizes. Combined with different styles of hardware finishes and hoops, each category of drum takes on its own "signature" look.

Let's start off with the features that are common to the whole family. The drums are supplied with coated *Ambassador* heads on top and *Ambassador* snare heads. The hoops are either die-cast or 2.3 mm *Power Hoops*. Four types of strainers are utilized: two die-cast side-throw models (one full-sized and a smaller one for some of the piccolo and soprano drums), a vertical-pull model that includes rollers underneath for extending the snares past the width of the snare head, and a simple but effective small strainer for the

WHAT'S HOT

- wide range of sizes and materials creates varied acoustic possibilities
- drums have lots of "headroom" for intensive playing
- entire line is priced affordably

WHAT'S NOT

- low-volume snare response requires special tuning in wood models

thinnest piccolos.

The die-cast side-throw model is of a very straightforward design, with an adjustment knob on top of the housing. The housing contains a nylon guide block that holds the lower part of the strainer. While the adjustment knob is loose and moves freely on the vertical pull strainer, the knob on the side-throw strainer requires a bit more pressure. This is because there is a spring between the knob and the lower part of the housing, which serves to keep the adjustment in place. I favor this feature because I like to know that the adjustment I make is going to stay in place after I set it.



Left to right: bird's-eye maple snares with chrome (top) and black (bottom) hardware, aluminum, brass, and birch snares, and maple snares with brass (top) and chrome (bottom) hardware

Jim Esposito

Except for the piccolo models, each drum has an adjustable butt plate. The vertical strainer doesn't allow you to adjust the snares while it is engaged, so it's nice to be able to make that adjustment from the other side while the snares are on. The lever of the side-throw strainer doesn't get in the way of the tuning knob per se, but it just feels easier to tweak the tuning on the side opposite the strainer. (Note: An adjustable butt plate also allows you to "center" the snares on the bottom head without having to loosen the adjustment and fiddle with it.)

The vertical-throw strainer was all business. I've read snare drum reviews where strainers of this design tended to release when the snares were tensioned too loosely, but this was definitely not the case here. The lever goes into place, and that's that.

The snares (twenty strands on all models) are held in place with plastic strips. However, they do have holes for use with snare cord. They also have channels, so that if cord is used, the snares will lie flat. Another nice touch is that drumkey-operated screws are used at both strainer and butt ends, enabling the player to make repairs or changes without having to hunt for a screwdriver.

I'm impressed by the lugs on these drums. With the exception of the piccolo drums, the lugs are single-sided, with a set for each head. The piccolos need double-sided lugs due to space restrictions. The casings are die-cast and compact, with nothing inside them but a threaded insert and a nylon wedge to hold it in place. The design of the lugs gives the drums a rounded, "warm" look. These drums don't exhibit sharp edges, but instead give the impression of being very solid.

The lugs are isolated from the shell via nylon spacers, as are the strainer assemblies and butt plates. There are also nylon washers on the tension rods, which afford a smooth feel while tuning. The logo badge is held on with four screws, and backed with a nylon spacer as well. The single air vent is bolted on, which means that it won't work loose and rattle over time.

The overall manufacturing process is very well thought out. Each lug is shaped to fit the curvature of the shell, and each is secured to the shell by one screw (two on the piccolos). On the wood shells a small pilot hole in the shell matches up with a pin on the upper part of the lug, which keeps it aligned. The pilot hole does not penetrate the shell. This process isn't needed for the metal drums, since the shell is stiffer and holds the lug in place. No internal or external muffling is supplied.

Now on to the particulars of the different shell types.

Into The Woods

The wood drums all feature laminated 6-ply shells, with staggered seams and no reinforcing rings. They are offered in widths of 5 mm, 6 mm, or 8 mm, depending on the thickness of the plies,



Jim Esposito

This close-up reveals the beauty of Mapex's bird's-eye maple finish.

with a bearing edge of 45°. The snare beds on the wooden drums deserve comment, because they're longer than average. The bed on most snares measures about 4" to 5". The beds on the *Black Panthers* cover a length of about 12". I'm not sure of the concept behind such a design. (If you talk to five drum technicians about snare beds, you're likely to get ten different theories.) I do know how it affected the sound of the drums that I heard.

At first I found it difficult to get full snare response at very low volumes. If I tuned the batter heads and worked with the snare tension to achieve such a sound, the drums wouldn't perform well when played louder. However, through a happy accident that occurred when I was reassembling a maple drum after changing its hoops, I discovered that the snare response could be dramatically improved simply by bringing the tension of the snare-side head up about a half-step. What a difference! The response was right there, down to a soft touch. On the high side of the volume scale, these drums simply *would not* choke. Each had a full-bodied voice with total snare response through the range of medium-loud to triple forte (*fff*).

So my conclusion is that although you definitely have to work to get the range of snare response you want from the Mapex wood-shell drums, it's in there. They can be tuned to perform well at low volumes, and from medium volumes on up they simply sound *great*. (As an aside, the metal-shelled drums have more conventional snare beds, and therefore offer good response at lower playing levels without the need for special tuning.)

On the inside, the wood shells are virtually unfinished. I had no problem with the quality of the sound that the drums produced as they were, but it occurs to me that an unfinished shell has nothing but potential. If the player wishes to change the sonic characteristics of the drum, he or she can take advantage of various options available today, with the application of a sealant, polyurethane, or even fiberglass.

The outside of the shells are finished with a flat black stain that

allows the grain of the wood to show through. A striking contrast is created when the quality of the flat black is combined with the different hardware finishes and hoops. In other words, each drum possesses its own "signature" look (owing to the style of hoop and color of the hardware in its makeup) while staying within the *Black Panther* family. (Please note: The style and color of hardware has been predetermined by Mapex. This includes matching coatings for the hoops, lugs, tension rods, and snares. In other words, you cannot order a drum with your choice of hardware color.)

The birch snare comes with an 8 mm shell, in 5 1/2 x14 and 6 1/2 x14 sizes. The shell is fitted with chrome hardware and 2.3 mm *Power Hoops*, and is one of two in the line that utilize the vertical-pull strainer. The sound of the drum is characteristically dry, with less sustain than the other wood types. The snare sound is sharp

employs the vertical-pull strainer. The voice of this drum is rich and loud, with a bigger sound than that of the thinner maple snare. The 6 1/2 x14 that I played had a sound that would work equally well in a concert hall or a rock venue. The ring of the drum was easily controlled with a *Zero Ring* or small bits of duct tape. Rimclicks and rimshots were both clear and cutting.

More attention was paid to the finish of the bird's-eye maple snares. Where the other maple and birch drums have flat finishes, the bird's-eye drums are much smoother, with barely detectable seams. I had to remove the head from one of them just to find the outside seam. The thinner-shelled drum (6 mm) features black chrome hardware, black-coated snares, and die-cast hoops. These are offered in nine sizes, ranging from 3 1/2 x12 to 6 1/2 x14. The 6 1/2 x14 drum that I played possessed a sound similar to that of the 5 mm maple, but somewhat darker. I attribute the darkness of the

sound to the coated black snares that come with the drum. Although I would recommend trading the hoops from die-cast to 2.3 mm *Power Hoops* to open up the sound, I wouldn't rash to change the snares. This drum definitely has its own character—an uncommon voice, if you will. It may not be everybody's cup of tea, but you should check it out nonetheless.

The 8 mm bird's-eye maple has chrome hardware and die-cast hoops, and comes in four sizes, from 3 1/2 x13 to 6 1/2 x14. The same relative difference holds true between the two bird's-eye drums as between the two standard maple snares. The 6 1/2 x14 drum that I sampled sounded very much like the 8 mm maple snare. I felt that the sonic difference between the standard and the bird's-eye maple drums was minimal, with the bird's-eye drums having a slightly higher voice. The cosmetic effect of the



The vertical-pull strainer at left is used on birch and *Orion Custom* maple drums. All other models employ the side-throw strainer shown at right.

and bright, and gives the impression that the drum is tuned higher than it is. My sample was a 6 1/2 x14, and it was very responsive, with little need for muffling. Rimclicks were sharp and clear, and rimshots were lively and almost metallic in nature.

The thin maple drum (the *Orion Traditional* model) has a 5 mm shell with 24 kt gold hardware and die-cast hoops on the 13" and 14" sizes. The available sizes range from 5 1/2 x12 to 6 1/2 x14, a total of five models. The snare sound was full and warm, though not as loud as the thicker-shelled maple drum. I played a 6 1/2 x14 and found the sound to be a little boxy. The drum had a fair amount of ring to it, but it sounded closed-up. On a hunch, I traded the die-cast hoops for the 2.3 mm *Power Hoops*, top and bottom, to see what difference it would make. This really opened up the sound of the drum. It still was not as big as the 8 mm drum, but it was crisper and cleaner.

The thicker maple drum (the *Orion Custom* model) has an 8 mm shell with chrome hardware and die-cast hoops, and is offered in five sizes, from 3 1/2 x13 up to 8x14. This is the other drum that

bird's-eye grain is undeniably striking, however. It makes for a very attractive finish worthy of its own line.

Testing Their Metal

The aluminum snare has a black anodized finish and is fitted with black chrome hardware and black coated snares. It's available in four sizes, from 3 1/2 x13 to 6 1/2 x14. An aluminum shell is, by its nature, dry and not as reflective as steel. That quality is embodied in this drum. The coating on the snares seems to add to that dryness, giving the drum the sound of having cable or gut snares. When I traded the black-coated snares for a set of gold-plated ones, I heard a slight difference in the crispness. I'm not saying that this quality is a negative one, just that you need to shop for the sound that you want in a snare drum. In this case I feel that the black coating on the snares is a positive contributing factor. The 5 1/2 x14 drum that I played had a lot of character, with little need for muffling. Rimshots and rimclicks were clean and powerful.

The steel-shelled snare is finished in black chrome, with

chrome-plated hardware and die-cast hoops. It comes in four sizes, from 3 1/2 x13 to 6 1/2 x14. The shell has a triple bead around its center and is the first of two shell types to have a glossy finish. The drum that I sampled was the 3 1/2 x14 piccolo (not included in the photos here), and I have to say that it embodied everything you could want from a drum that size. It had great snare response at all volumes, a quick voice, a fabulous brush sound, and rimshots that were lightning-sharp. The sound was always under control, but if you wanted to open up and let loose—no problem. From a whisper to full volume, the drum had great sound with no choking whatever. Having sampled the piccolo, I'm sure that all the steel drums sound great.

Finally, the brass drums are finished in black brass (also glossy) with 24 kt gold hardware and die-cast hoops on the 13" and 14" sizes. Seven sizes are offered, ranging from 3 1/2 x12 to 6 1/2 x14. The brass drum has a warmer sound than the steel snare, but it still retains that metallic voice and body. I was fortunate enough to have two of these drums to sample: a 5 1/2 x12 and a 6 1/2 x14. I loved them both.

The 12" drum had a full, rich sound to it. It was definitely not a "coffee can with snares," but rather a serious drum with a high-quality snare sound, albeit with a higher voice. I took the drum on a gig doing a local production of a Broadway show, and it had more than enough sound to fill a medium-sized auditorium. As is natural with a 12" snare, cross-stick rimclicks suffer, but the rimshots were sharp and clear, and the drum had fine snare response from the slightest touch to the heaviest. The other brass drum I played (the 6 1/2 x14) would obviously be more at home in larger venues where a bigger sound would be called for. Rimclicks on this drum were high-pitched and cutting, and rimshots were powerful and metallic.

Earlier shipments of *Black Panther* snares were supplied with chrome drumkeys, but I am told that future shipments will come with matching black chrome keys. It seems only fitting.

Conclusions And Prices

Given their acoustic variety, their performance parameters, and their quality of construction, the *Black Panther* snares seem to offer something for everyone. Rock players will obviously benefit from the "headroom" that the drums offer. On the other hand, my wife, Adrienne (who is the touring percussionist with Solid Brass and the timpanist for the Princeton Chamber Symphony), found them equally applicable for use in orchestral settings. (She particularly favored the wood-shelled drums, with a special nod to the 6 mm bird's-eye maple snare.)

For the past nine months, Mapex has been a wholly owned company (as opposed to being handled by distributors). As such they are now solely responsible for the quality of their products, and for the customer service that goes with them. The company seems open to comments and would welcome feedback from customers. The drums are backed with a lifetime warranty.

Now for the really good news! The list prices of the *Black Panther* snares range from \$287.90 for the 3 1/2 x13 steel piccolo to \$629.90 for a black chrome brass drum with 24 kt gold hardware. So not only do these drums represent a full line of individual voices, but they are well within affordable limits for today's consumers.

Mapex USA is stalking the competition with their new *Black Panther* snares. In the company's own words, "The *Black Panther* series is the most comprehensive snare drum line ever manufactured." Given the range of choices that I saw, I would have to say that I agree.

Spaun Drums

by Mark Parsons

The Spaun Drum Company is the brainchild of two men who met a few years ago: Brian Spaun and Dave Pimentel. In retrospect, their talents and interests seemed to dovetail almost perfectly into the skills needed to design and build a line of premium drums—Brian did drum repairs, refinishing, and customizing, while Dave had a background as a machinist. Both were also dedicated drummers and both had a desire to build quality drums with unique features, but at an affordable price. They formed a partnership, did design and prototype work, and by early 1996 were shipping their first kits.

The Spaun Drum Company focuses on one line of drums, and in a sense focuses on *one drum* (albeit in different sizes and colors): All their shells feature the same materials, construction, number of plies, and type of bearing edge. All of their drums use the same custom-designed lug, and the same type of steel hoop is used on all snares and toms. (The bass drum hoops are maple.) The same

WHAT'S HOT

- double-cut 45° bearing edges
- unique lug design
- excellent quality and craftsmanship

WHAT'S NOT

- large logo badges distract from the beauty of the shells

throwoff and butt is used on all sizes of snares, and all Spaun drums feature the same satin hand-rubbed finish (available in a variety of hues).

This "boiling down to the essentials" philosophy doesn't mean that Spaun isn't willing to make changes when the need arises. I found three things to "nit-pick" about on our test kit—and in each case they'd already implemented changes in their current produc-

tion to correct the situation.

Our test kit consisted of an 18x22 kick, a 5 1/2x13 snare, 7x8, 8x10, and 9x12 rack toms, and a 14x16 "hanging" floor tom. All toms were supplied with RIMS, which we mounted on DW stands for this review. (Spaun doesn't sell stands or pedals.) We were also given two additional snare drums to review: a 5x12 and a 5x14. All heads were Cannon *Attack* models, though Spaun will ship with whatever heads the customer desires from Remo, Evans, Aquarian, or Cannon (which pretty much covers the gamut). The toms had *Thin Skin 2s* on top and *1-Ply Thin* heads on the bottom (both clear). The kick had a clear single-ply *No Overtones* (integral muffling ring) on the batter side and a black *1-Ply Thin Bass* resonant head on the front with an offset 4" hole. The snares had *1-Ply Medium Coated* heads on top and clear *Snare Side Mediums* on the bottom, except for the 13" snare, which had a *Snare Side Thin* on the bottom.

Construction And Features

When Dave and Brian were building prototypes, they experimented with different shell configurations (5-ply, 6-ply, 8-ply, with reinforcing rings, without rings, etc.). They decided that the sound they were looking for was best achieved by using 8-ply maple shells without reinforcing rings, so that's the shell design all Spaun drums are built upon, from 6" toms to 26" bass drums. (Drums are available in a variety of depths for any given diameter.)



Along with this shell they chose a rather unusual bearing edge: a double 45° cut that puts the actual edge in the center of the shell's eight plies. This reduces the *effective* diameter of each drum slightly, avoiding the possibility of the bearing edge coming in contact with the collar of the head rather than the flat part (which Spaun states can sometimes happen with drums having a single 45° cut, making them difficult to tune in the lower ranges). Under examination the bearing edges proved to be very precise. Both the inside and outside cuts were very clean and smooth, and running my finger around the actual point of the edges revealed no dips, bumps, voids, or other flaws of any kind. Well done!

The lugs are unique to Spaun, having been designed from scratch by Dave and Brian. Machined from solid brass, they consist of a cylindrical body with a threaded insert pinned in place. The insert "floats" within the body, making it less likely to become cross-threaded (according to Spaun) than a solid lug that has threads tapped directly into the body. Double-ended lugs for snares 6" and less in depth are identical, except they're drilled to accept an insert at both the top and bottom. All lugs are attached to the drum with a single, small Allen bolt in order to minimize contact between the hardware and shell.

All of the review drums except the kick and the 14" snare came with high-quality, chrome-plated, heavy



Spaun's uniquely designed machined-brass lugs

5x14 snare in natural finish, with black hoops

(2.3 mm) triple-flanged hoops. I much prefer this gauge of hoop over the thinner flanged hoops you frequently see, and while they're not die-cast hoops, they go a long way in terms of sound and ease of tuning, while keeping the cost under control.

The hoops on the 5x14 snare were a different story. Spaun offers optional black or brass plating on drum hardware, and the 5x14 came dressed in black. This was fine, except the hoops were decidedly different from the rest. They seemed thinner, and they were pulled out of round at each of the slotted "ears" that accepts a tension rod. You could see by casual observation that the hoop wasn't making full contact with the head collar at each ear, and running your finger around the inside of the hoop felt more like tracing the inside of a rounded stop sign than a circle. When I questioned Spaun about this they said they'd originally purchased those hoops because they came already plated, but after seeing the quality control (or lack thereof), they've decided to pass on them. For current production they're having the 2.3 mm hoops plated domestically, so there should be no problem by the time you read this.

The snare throwoff was a decent, if somewhat generic, side-throw unit. I've seen smoother throwoffs, but this one was solid and quiet, and it worked fine. It also allowed the user to adjust the tension while the snares were engaged, which is more than can be said about some expensive front-drop designs. The bass drum was fitted with nice, heavy-

duty spurs. I found myself frustrated by the lack of any sort of memory locks (either on the pivots or the telescoping extensions), but before I even mentioned it, the folks at Spaun informed me that these spurs have been changed to the same design that DW uses (including memory locks). So this small inconvenience will be eliminated on future drumsets.

Appearance

Because the review set we were sent was Spaun's "NAMM" kit (used as a trade-show display and demo kit) I was warned that it might have minor finish flaws, but actually it seems to have held up very well. Although the finish *appeared* to be a traditional hand-rubbed satin oil finish, there's more to it than that. *Exactly* what, I don't know (Spaun considers it something of a trade secret), but it did seem somewhat tougher than other oil finishes I've seen.

(Mind you, this is *not* a "high durability" finish on the order of a plastic wrap; it'll still show dings and bumps and other evidence of rough handling.) Spaun also claims this finish has acoustic benefits, inhibiting shell vibration less than a heavy lacquer finish. More about this in a minute.

The kit was finished in "blonde" (natural maple), and the combination of the natural wood (with its understated satin finish) and the small brass lugs added up to what I thought was a very classy-looking set of drums. So much so, in fact, that I thought Spaun's rather large, black, rectangular logo badges distracted from the natur-



5x12 snare in cinnamon stain finish

al beauty of the shells. I understand that a manufacturer (particularly a new one) wants to display their name as much as possible, but I think if I were going to order a set of these drums I'd ask to have the badges left off and let the prominent logo on the front of the bass drum serve as the product identifier. (All this is a matter of personal taste, of course.)

I've already mentioned the black hardware on the 14" snare, but from a visual point of view I thought it was sharp, adding a contemporary look to the drum. As a note, when a customer orders the optional brass or black plating, *everything* except the brass lugs gets plated—including the snare wires and tension rods.

The 5x12 snare was finished in "cinnamon," a warm, orange-tinted stain that shows the wood grain nicely. I *really* like the looks of this drum; I'd love to see a whole kit in this color. And while a cinnamon-stained drumset with black hardware might be a bit much (unless your band was based on a Halloween motif), I think a snare in this shade with black hardware might be striking.

Sound

Good looks will only get you so far; sooner or later you've got to put up the sonic goods. (Or, to butcher a famous quote, "it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that *ring*") Happily, the Spaun drums sounded as good as they looked.

Out of the box the kick had a big, ringy, aggressive sound when played wide open (relying only on the integral muffling ring in the batter head for dampening). The drum arrived with the front head tighter than I normally prefer, but before I dropped the tension I tried a muffling technique Brian suggested: placing a bath towel in

the drum with the longer dimension from front to back so that it lays against the bottom of both heads. This provided just enough dampening to remove a little of the ring, but left a nice punchy tone that cut well in a rock/funk context. My usual kick prep (lowered tension and minimal dampening against the batter head only) brought out a beefy fundamental that I really enjoyed.

Each of the snare drums had its own personality. Let's begin with the 5x14. I'll start by stating that this is not usually my favorite size of snare, from any maker. In 14" drums I prefer either a 3 1/2" to 4" depth or 6" to 7" (depending on the type of music). But I must say that this ten-lug drum did a credible job of covering the bases at either end of the tonal spectrum. I wasn't exactly knocked out by its character (not as much "wood" as I expected) or its projection, but I think this may be partly due to the poor hoops. I didn't have a 14" 2.3 mm hoop on hand to see what the drum would sound like with the currently offered hardware, but I *did* install a die-cast hoop out of curiosity, and the sound improved markedly (indicating that the drum itself is fundamentally sound).

The 5 1/2" snare, on the other hand, needs no excuses. This is the drum that "goes with" the review kit (and is the one I spent the most time playing), and it's easy to see why. In the lower ranges this drum had plenty of depth and body. As I raised the tuning most of the body remained, allowing me to achieve a very bright sound with plenty of "pop" that also had an underlying thickness to it. Rimshots were strong and cutting, and snare articulation (aided by the thinner bottom head on this drum—probably 2 mil instead of 3 mil) was quite good. Wide open, it had plenty of ring (which to me is a plus, since you can *always* get rid of it). Adding

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a muffling ring tightened it up considerably, leaving the crisp/fat backbeats solidly in place. Very nice.

The little 5x12 snare was also a delight, although of a more specialized nature. In a low/mid tuning range it surprised me by producing a fairly acceptable "standard" snare sound, but why bother? It's in the upper ranges that it really shines, so that's where I kept it most of the time. The first time I hit this drum after tuning it up I got a big grin on my face and I broke into the opening riff from "Two Princes" by the Spin Doctors. (Yup, it's *that* sort of drum.) I wouldn't want to use it as my main snare on every song, but it would be nice to hang it on the left side of your kit as an auxiliary drum, and occasionally place it in the primary position when you really want to whip up the funk.

The toms had that singing quality we've come to expect from quality maple shells: a big, warm sound with substantial sustain. The 10" tom in particular had a sound that belied its size. It sounded like a 12" drum, and I could easily see using it as the mounted tom in a standard-sized four-piece kit. Swapping the top heads to single-ply coated models (Evans *Uno 58s*, not unlike *Ambassadors*) produced a bright, lively tone that would work well in a recording session or in a jazz situation.

As to whether or not the finish made a sonic difference, I couldn't say. I've heard lacquered drums that sounded similar to these (and ones that *didn't*), but in any event the minimalist approach to the finish certainly didn't *hurt*. My general impression was that these drums will do just about anything you ask of them, which is no mean feat.

Availability And Price

At this time Spaun has approximately a dozen retailers, with the majority on the West Coast and a few on the East Coast. If you don't live near a dealer you can contact the manufacturer to discuss purchasing factory-direct. Each kit is made to order, with a current turnaround of eight to ten weeks from the time the order is placed until the drumset is shipped.

The prices for our review kit are as follows: The 18x22 bass drum sells for \$1,045, the 5 1/2 x13 snare goes for \$450, the 7x8 tom is \$325, the 8x10 tom is \$350, the 9x12 tom is \$375, and the 14x16 tom is \$520. RIMS for the toms cost between \$75 and \$85 each (depending on size), bringing the total for the six-piece kit to \$3,380.

The 5x12 snare retails for \$395, and the 5x14 snare (including plated hardware) lists for \$500. Pricing for the optional plating is \$50 for snares, \$45 for toms, and \$75 for floor toms and bass drums.

Along with the price list came a chart listing the retail prices of other high-end manufacturers compared to Spaun, including the total cost of purchasing a standard-size five-piece kit from each. Although the chart doesn't take into account actual street prices, it certainly lets you know that these drums are *quite* reasonable within that rarefied genre.

When Brian and Dave started out, they drafted a mission statement of sorts, the essence of which was to craft premium-quality drums at an affordable price. Well, it certainly looks like they're doing it!



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A Tribute To Tony Williams

by Bill Milkowski

"There ain't but one Tony Williams when it comes to playing the drums. There was nobody like him before or since. The band revolved around Tony...Tony was the fire, the creative spark."

—Miles Davis

That just about says it all.

The news of Tony Williams' passing on Sunday, February 23 sent shock waves through the jazz community. He had entered Seton Medical in Daly City, California on Thursday afternoon, complaining of lower abdominal pains. Doctors had diagnosed gall bladder problems and performed minor surgery on Friday, February 21. There were no complications and Williams was scheduled to go home that Sunday. Early morning chest pains escalated in severity, culminating in a fatal heart attack. Attempts to resuscitate him failed.

Bassist Ron Carter, Tony's longtime rhythm section mate going back to the great Miles Davis quintet of the '60s, had played a trio gig with Williams and pianist Mulgrew Miller in December of 1996 at the Birdland nightclub in New York. As he recalled of Tony's condition, "He didn't say he was ill at the time. He wasn't planning on having an operation when we talked. And as far as I could tell, he was in good health and equally good spirits."

That trio gig, however, was unceremoniously panned by the *New York Times*, which raised Carter's ire. "That was a terrible review. The writer said the drums were too loud. Well, he missed the whole point of Tony's playing. It wasn't the volume, it was about the power of the drums. He had more power than anyone I had played with before. Critics often mistake volume for power, which does Tony a great disservice. All I can say is, drummers who read the reviews and don't know Tony's playing live should not take those critics at their words. And in fact, Tony was not loud, he was powerful. The two are not the same by any means. Tony's power and musicality on the drums were unparalleled."

Indeed, Williams himself attested to his fondness for whacking the skins with abandon in a 1992 *Modern Drummer* interview: "Drums are meant to be loud. Volume, physicality, and aggressiveness are part of what drumming is all about. And when I play loud, it sounds good, I think."

The trio (with Ira Coleman instead of Ron Carter) was scheduled to play a week-long engagement at Catalina's in Los Angeles the week of Tony's passing. Rather than cancel, Tony's spiritual drumming father Roy Haynes subbed, cutting short a vacation in Barbados in order to make the gig and pay his respects to the memory of the great Tony Williams.



Joost Leijen



Tony in his youth



Tom Copi

1967



Tom Copi

1970



Born in Chicago on December 12, 1945, the son of a tenor saxophonist, Tony Williams grew up in Boston and began studying with Alan Dawson at age eleven. By thirteen, he was sitting in frequently with organist Johnny "Hammond" Smith. As a teenager he worked around Boston with Sam Rivers and also played in the house rhythm section at Connelly's, where he backed visiting headliners. One such headliner who came through town was hard bop alto sax great Jackie McLean, who was amazed by the sheer intensity and creative daring of the sixteen-

players love to play with great drummers, and I could definitely hear right away that this was going to be one of the baddest motherfuckers who had ever played a set of drums."

Tony made his debut with Miles on *Seven Steps To Heaven*, splitting drum duties with Los Angeles drummer Frank Butler. That May 1963 session actually represented an interim phase for Miles. It wasn't until the beginning of 1965, after Wayne Shorter replaced

providing an exciting, interactive foundation for Miles and Wayne to build on.

"I was beginning to realize that

"Tony was not a loud drummer, he was a powerful drummer. The two are not the same by any means. Tony's power and musicality on the drums were unparalleled!"
Ron Carter

Tony and this group could play anything they wanted to," Miles wrote. "Tony was always the center that the group's sound revolved around. He was something else, man."

Williams made a sensational impact internationally with Miles, flaunting prodigious technique coupled with a spirited sense of freedom that allowed him to shift nimbly from urgent 4/4 swing to adventurous time displacements, implying beats while injecting intricate counter rhythms and other rhythmic devices on top of the pulse of the music. He was very fast, and his cymbal tones were separated with crystal clarity. He often played pieces without consistently closing his hi-hat on the second and fourth beats, as had been the status quo with previous Miles drummers like Kenny Clarke and Jimmy Cobb.



1975

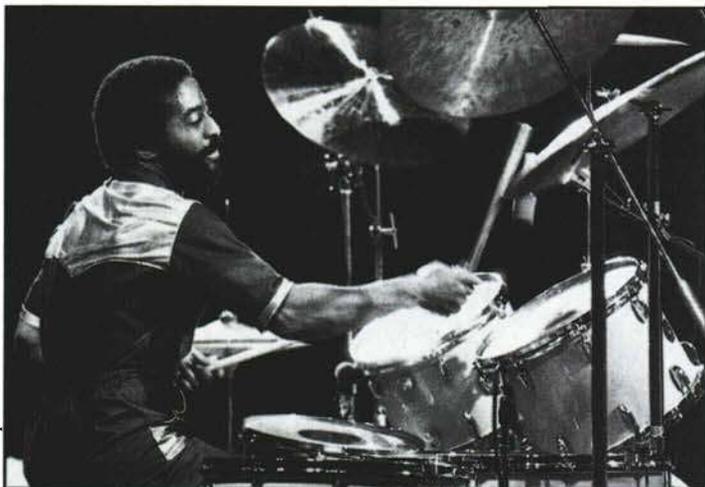
year-old drummer. Tony eventually moved to New York in December of 1962 to work with McLean, and in May of 1963 he got the call from Miles.

As Davis wrote in his audacious autobiography: "I heard this great little seventeen-year-old drummer who was working with Jackie McLean named Tony Williams, who just blew my mind he was so bad. I wanted him to go to California with me as soon as I heard him, but he had commitments to gigs with Jackie. He told me he had Jackie's blessing to join my band after they finished those gigs. Man, just hearing that little motherfucker made me excited all over again. Like I said earlier, trumpet

tempos while changing rhythms, textures, and moods spontaneously, bobbing and weaving as one with the music like a skillful prizefighter. Given their versatility and lightening-quick responsiveness, they had a significant role in shaping and arranging the music on the bandstand from night to night,



1976



1977

Instead, he kept time with the ride cymbal, using the hi-hat only for bursts of color and texture. Furthermore, he colored the group sound with an endless variety of cymbal splashes, snare fills, and polyrhythms on all the drums and cymbals, always

marked by a tremendous sense of inventiveness mixed with confidence. Tony's sheer virtuosity and sense of creative daring set a new standard, extending the techniques that had been employed by drummers like Philly Joe Jones, Art Blakey, and Louis Hayes.

According to trumpeter Wallace Roney, a mainstay in Williams' quintet of the '80s and early '90s and a bandmate in the recent Miles Davis tribute band, Tony's technique was mind-boggling up until the very end. "It's amazing to see a person with that much command of the instrument. He was creative and melodic and musical...he was all of that times ten. But he was also technically spectacular. He was like an avant-garde Buddy Rich. He combined that type of technique with all the imagination of the avant-garde, the swing of Philly Joe Jones, and the melodic precision of Max Roach. So man, you didn't know what he might pull out at any given moment. And to see him get around that drumkit so effortless-

ly—it was breathtaking. He was a perfect example of somebody who could and would do anything he wanted to on his instrument. As a matter of fact, a lot of times he had to hold back, I think,

because he felt like he would lose the band sometimes. This was a guy who could technically do anything that he wanted—anything he thought of he could instantly play."

Pianist Mulgrew Miller, another regular in the Williams quintet of the

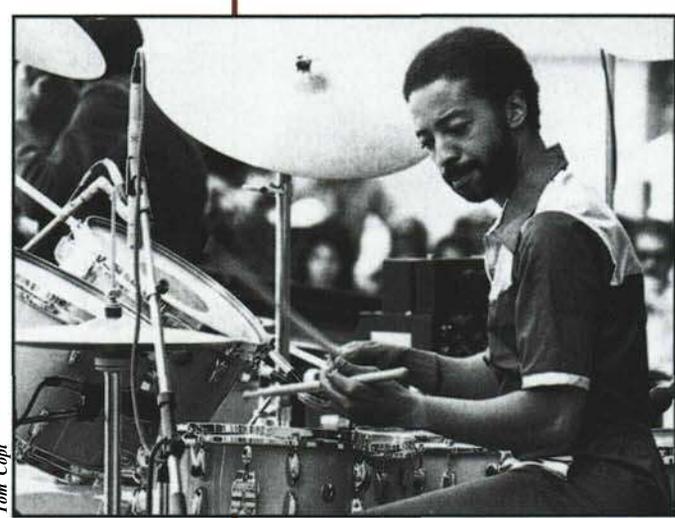
"Tony used to have this problem with drummers who would apologize for their instrument, as if playing the drums wasn't enough. He hated that attitude. Tony loved the drums and pushed them out there. That was his thing"

Wallace Roney

'80s and early '90s, concurs with Roney's assessment of Tony's incredible gifts. "It was impossible to be bored on the bandstand with Tony," he offers. "There was no night during my whole time with that band that I didn't find him awesome. That's pretty much unique in my experience, and I've worked with a lot of band-

leaders and in a lot of bands. But on any given night, Tony's lowest level was awesome. And he would rise above that. I'd never seen anybody who was 'on' like that every night. He was a true virtuoso. Tony also brought an intelligence factor to the drums that was probably as high as there had ever been, just in terms of his conception."

Williams made an immense contribution to the Miles Davis quintet of the '60s as both a catalytic force and as a composer. (His compositions "Pee Wee" from *Sorcerer*, "Black Comedy" from *Miles In The Sky*, and "Hand Jive" from *Nefertiti* stand the test of time.) During his six-year tenure with Miles, Tony also moonlighted on a number of classic Blue Note sessions, including Hancock's *Maiden Voyage*, McLean's *One Step Beyond*, Andrew Hill's *Point Of Departure*, and Shorter's *The Soothsayer*. He performed on Eric Dolphy's landmark 1964 album *Out To Lunch*, and the following year debuted as a leader on Blue Note with *Life Time*, which showed his affinity for the avant-garde of the day. His follow-up on Blue Note, *Spring*, featuring saxophonists Sam Rivers and Wayne Shorter along with bassist Gary Peacock and pianist Hancock, straddled the line between convention and abstraction.



Tom Copi

1978



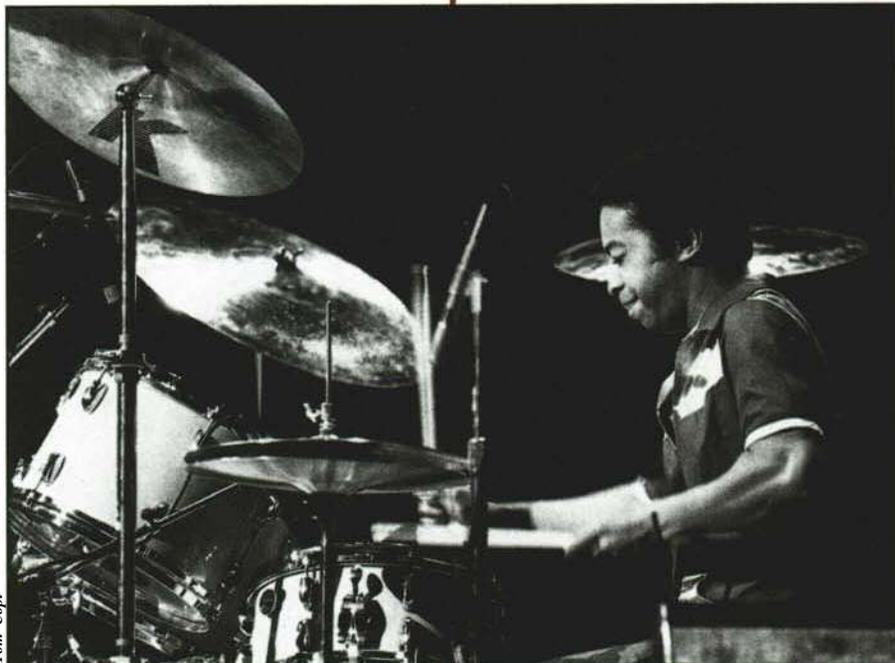
In 1969, Williams left Miles Davis to blaze his own trail with the influential jazz-rock group

Lifetime, which featured organist Larry Young and guitarist John McLaughlin. As Tony told me in 1992, "I got into Jimi Hendrix and Cream back then, and that was some of the stuff that influenced me when I decided to leave Miles. I wanted to create a different atmosphere from the one I had been in. So I said, 'What better way to do it than to go electric?' And that's how Lifetime started."

The band was wildly experimental, a kind of cross between the hip Hammond B-3 organ groups that Williams had played with in his youth and tumultuous jam-oriented rock bands like Cream and MC5. "I thought, 'Gee, that would be a nice way to do it...organ, guitar, and drums,'" Tony recalled, "but do it real aggressively, with a lot of rock 'n' roll kind of feeling, energy, power... BAM!"

In his role as drummer/bandleader of Lifetime, Tony broke new ground behind the kit, summoning up equal amounts of bombast and sizzle on music that joined rock's raw, ear-splitting energy with jazz's spontaneity. Their best moments can be heard on 1969's *Emergency!* and the 1970 follow-up *Turn It Over* (both recently compiled along with material from 1971's *Ego* and 1973's *The Old Bum's Rush* on the Verve two-CD set *Spectrum: The Anthology*).

After McLaughlin left to form the Mahavishnu Orchestra, Lifetime went through a number of personnel changes through the '70s, ultimately settling on a lineup dubbed New Lifetime that included bassist Tony Newton, keyboardist Alan Pasqua, and guitarist Allan Holdsworth, an incredibly fluid player whose sinewy legato lines assumed a sax player's role. Their best work together can be heard on 1975's *Believe It* and 1976's *Million Dollar Legs*. Material from those albums was recently compiled on the Columbia two-CD set



Tom Coppi

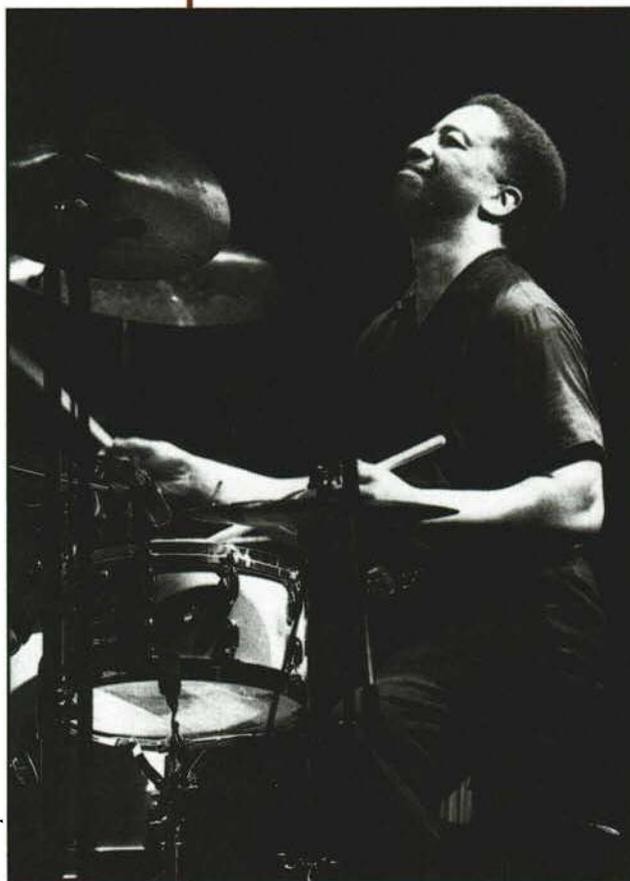
1982.

The Collection. (Several years later, Tony would return the favor by appearing on Holdsworth's *Atavachron* album.)

Williams' swan song for Columbia was 1978's *Joy Of Flying*, a wildly diverse project that teamed him with a cast of all-stars including keyboardist Jan Hammer, rock guitarist Ronnie Montrose, saxophonist Tom Scott, keyboardist Brian Auger, guitarist George Benson, tenor sax great Michael Brecker, and avant-garde icon Cecil Taylor.

In the late '70s, Williams toured internationally and recorded with VSOP, the reunited Miles Davis quintet with trumpeter Freddie Hubbard in place of Miles. In

1982 Tony toured in the US, Europe, and Japan and recorded a double album with the Herbie Hancock



Tom Coppi

1989

quartet, featuring Ron Carter and twenty-one-year-old trumpet sensation Wynton Marsalis.

In 1985, Williams returned to the Blue Note label with *Foreign Intrigue*, an album that combines neo-bop with touches of funk and features vibist Bobby Hutcherson and Tony's longtime rhythm section mates, Carter and Hancock. This session is also noteworthy for introducing a new crop of young lions: trumpeter Wallace Roney, saxophonist Donald Harrison, and pianist Mulgrew Miller.

Miller's own musical vision was greatly affected by that gig with Tony: "Being on the bandstand with someone like Tony, just by the sheer force of his musical personality, his dynamic level and thrust—that had an impact upon everything else that was happening on the bandstand, myself included. We all had to rise up to his level. It affected rhythmically how I would play things and philosophical-ly how I began to think about things. As a matter of fact, my experience with Tony validated and confirmed some things that I had been thinking about all along, and kind of affirmed my focus in a certain direction."

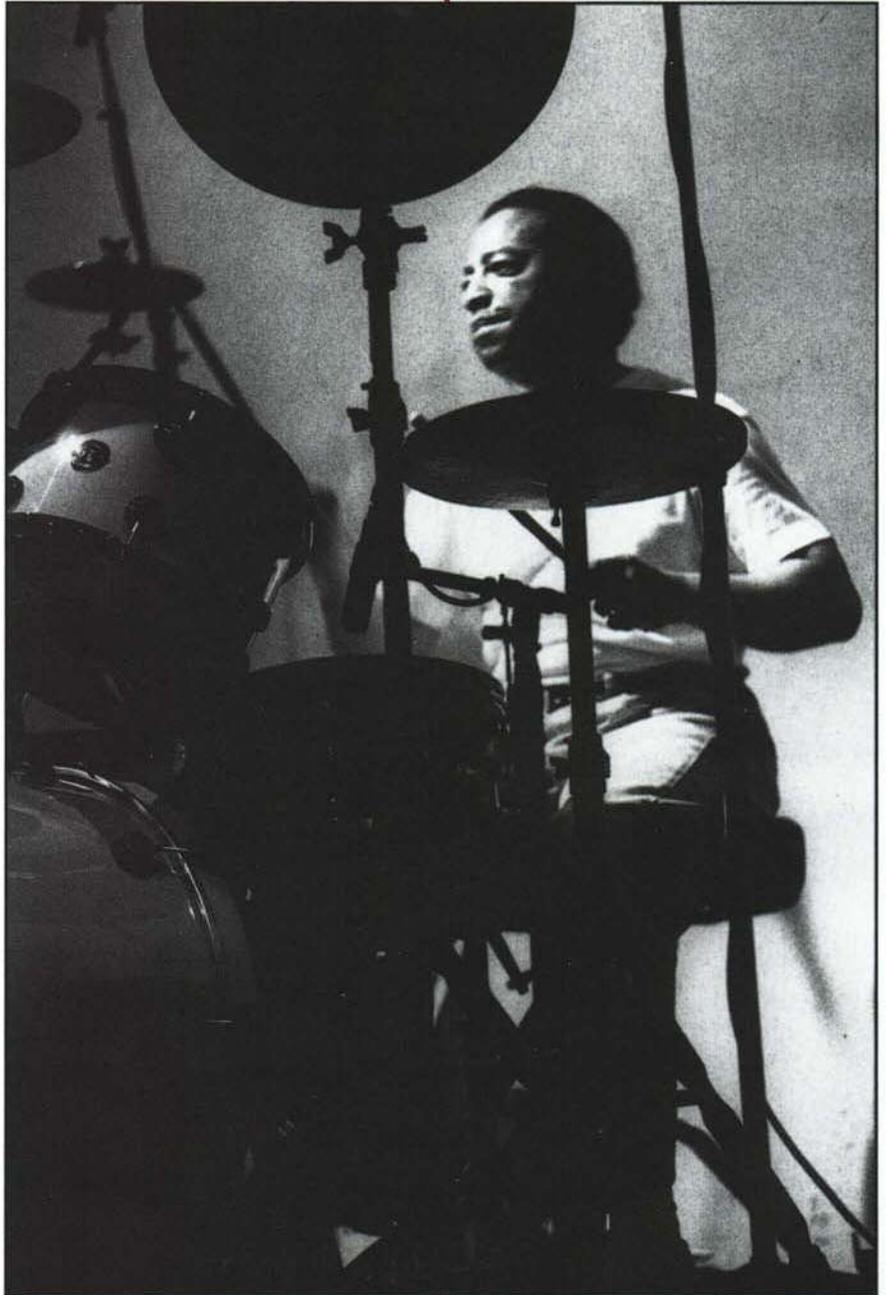
Williams toured through the '80s and early '90s with a solid lineup of Roney, Miller, saxophonist Bill Pierce, and various bassists, first Charnett Moffett, followed by Bob Hurst, and eventually Ira Coleman. Together they recorded five more superb, swinging albums for Blue Note—1986's *Civilization*, 1988's *Angel Street*, 1989's *Native Heart*, 1991's *The Story Of Neptune*, and 1992's two-CD set, *Tokyo Live*, which included stretched out renditions of previously recorded Tony compositions.

Trumpeter Roney remains solid in his belief that the Williams quintet was a significant force in the '80s. "Tony Williams was who I always wanted to play with. Of course, Miles was my hero, and I listened to that band so much since I was six years old. So I already thought the world of Tony when I joined the band. But he more than surpassed my expectations.

"When I first joined Tony's band I played a little different from how I wound up playing," Roney confides, "because I was fearing what critics might think. I thought the critics might say, 'Well, he's with Tony—

was so familiar to me—sometimes I couldn't help it, I'd go ahead and stretch the boundaries.

"So one night Tony called me and



Tom Coppi

1996

they're trying to get that Miles and Tony thing together.' So I purposely played more Clifford Brown-ish and early Miles-ish. I was playing the changes as accurately or as melodically as can be expected, but on the blues I would let go and stretch because it

said, 'Listen, man. You know the way you're playing on the blues, the way you're stretching? I want you to play like that on all the songs. You know, like the way Miles plays. Don't play the chords straight up and down; that doesn't do anything for me. I need to

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hear more than just what the chord can offer. Miles could take one note—like an altered note—and it would set the whole mood.'

"And I said, 'Yeah, you're right. But I didn't want people to think we were trying to be a cliché.' And he said, 'Man, screw those people. Your only obligation is to make the music sound good, not to what some writer thinks. I know what you're doing and I know where you're coming from, but I need that. Man, that's what made Miles so great, and Wayne and Trane. They played more than what was just required by the chord changes.' So when Tony gave me that green light, I went with it. He gave me the go-ahead to be myself. It became more challenging for me, and then I looked at myself and said, 'I don't care what people say, because I know that as an artist I have grown.' And sure enough, the more I started venturing, the more he loved it. We began sounding more like what he had been doing with Miles, but it was definitely an organic and very creative development."

In 1995, Williams reunited with Carter, Shorter, and Hancock in yet another Miles Davis tribute band. This time out, Wallace Roney substituted for the missing Miles. "As amazing as Tony was in our band—and I definitely saw some amazing stuff—when he was with his brothers, Herbie and Ron and Wayne, I saw a different Tony. Then he

was playing with his equals. Everybody could, and did, go to the next level."

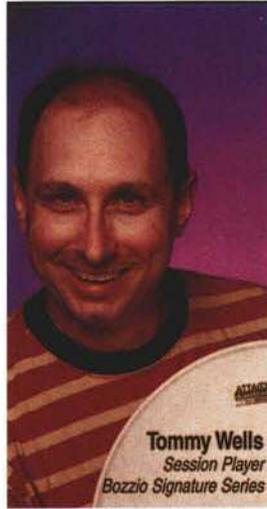
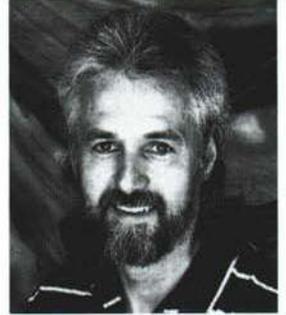
Roney says that Tony was particularly inspired by Carter's suggestion that they alter tempos and vary the program from night to night. "After that," recalls Roney, "Tony played differently, man. He played like he had played with

Miles. He played just as strong but he put more emphasis on playing each cymbal beat clearer. And he would play all the stuff in between the bass drum and the snare drum with the cymbal beat keeping the time. He was



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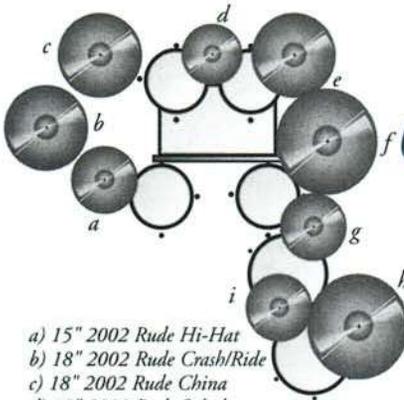
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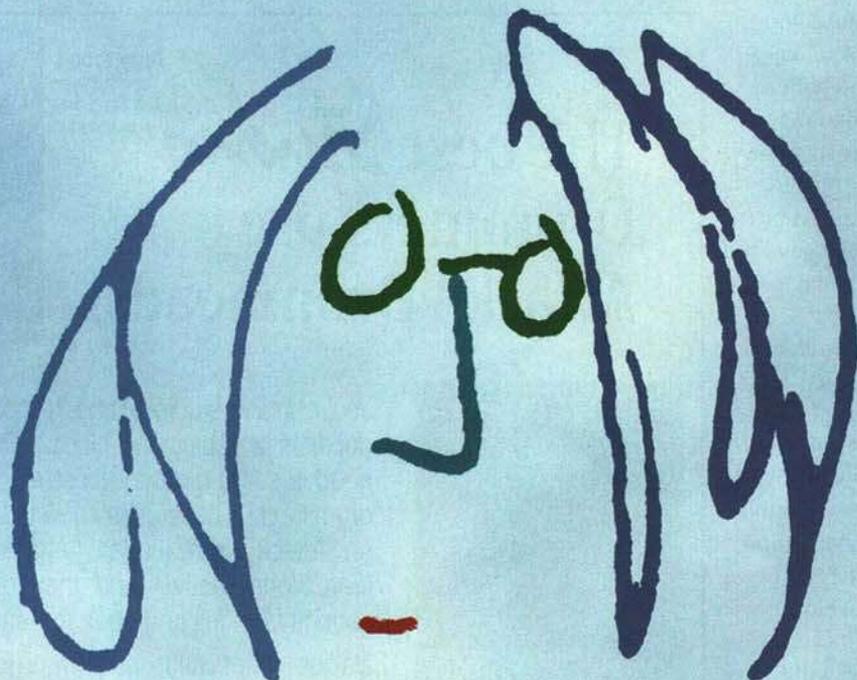
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1. Each song submitted must be contestant's original work. Songs may not exceed five (5) minutes in length. No song previously recorded and released through national distribution in any country will be eligible. **Contestant may submit as many songs in as many categories as he/she wishes, but each entry requires a separate cassette, entry form, lyric sheet, and entrance fee. One check or money order for multiple entries/categories is permitted.** (Entrance fee is non-refundable. JLSC is not responsible for late, lost, damaged, misdirected, postage due, stolen, or misappropriated entries.)
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6. To insure anonymity for judging purposes, entrant's name should appear only on the entry form. Do not put name or address on cassette or lyric sheet. Cassettes and lyrics will not be returned. Winners will be determined by December 15, 1997.

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with the Miles tribute band. As he recalls, "We rehearsed every day because those guys loved to play. At night I used to hang out with Herbie and Tony, and during the day I would hang out with Wayne and Ron. And at rehearsals Tony would imitate different drummers, just for fun. He would take a Philly Joe phrase and speed it up, then play it on different parts of the drums, break it up between the different floor toms in different parts of the beat. Oh man! And then Wayne would imitate Sonny Rollins and Trane. Then I would imitate early Miles or Clifford Brown or Lee Morgan. And Herbie would imitate Bill Evans, Red Garland, or Bud Powell. We had a ball, man."

Tony's breakthrough as a composer came earlier this year with *Wilderness*, an orchestral project featuring Michael Brecker, Pat Metheny, Herbie Hancock, and Stanley Clarke that was ultimately more about mood than chops grandstanding. (See the final interview with Tony in this issue.)

"The interesting thing about Tony as a composer," says Mulgrew, "is that it presented new challenges to an improviser, because Tony, not being a melodic improviser, was more or less prone to writing things as he heard them. So if something had a nice compositional sound to it, that's what he wrote. He didn't think in terms of what a soloist would have to deal with. So as an improviser or soloist you would have to

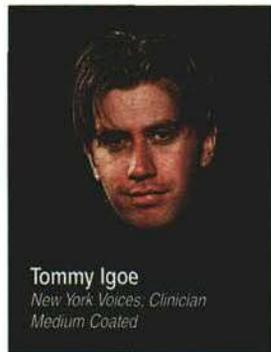
look at the tune and say, 'Okay, now how can I shape this in a way that I can apply my language to it?' He didn't write tunes like a person who understood II-V-I. It was a challenge to play all of that music, and it got you onto new pathways."

During his six-and-a-half-year tenure

with Tony Williams, Miller also got to be close to the great drummer. He offered these insights into Tony's complex and largely misunderstood personality: "I think with most artists, the public at large doesn't get to know them



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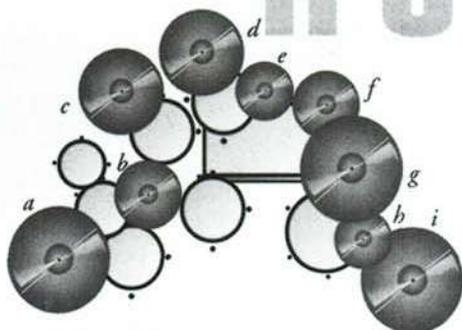
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personally that well, unless it's an outgoing figure like a Dizzy Gillespie or Art Blakey. But I think Tony was just like so many other people that I know in the world. He was searching for personal happiness, and I think that I saw growth during the time that I knew him. I saw him become more happy and more receptive to people. And I think what a lot of people did not perceive in Tony was that there was a lot of humanity there and a lot of concern *about* humanity.

"Tony was probably one of the most intelligent people I've ever known," he continues. "I don't think Tony ever finished high school, but he was always on a quest for knowledge. That's one of the things that really struck me about him—his hunger for knowledge. Race car driving, gardening, scuba diving, piloting airplanes—he was always investigating new things. Tony wanted to know about everything."

Roney fondly recalls his long road trips with Tony during their quintet years together. "We used to go on the

road, and he and I knew all the old jazz records. We'd be driving along and sing all the solos off of *Milestones*. We'd start with 'Dr. Jekyll.' We'd sing the melody, we'd sing Miles' solo, we'd sing Coltrane's and Cannonball's solos, we'd sing Red Garland's solo and Paul Chambers' solo—and Tony could even sing Philly Joe's part. From there we'd go to 'Sid's Ahead' and 'Straight No Chaser,' then we'd do the other side of the record. Then we'd go all the way back to Miles' Prestige recordings, and we'd sing all the solos to *Birth Of The Cool*. We'd go for hours singing songs and seeing which one of us was gonna mess up. Mulgrew and Bill Pierce would look at us like we were crazy."

Roney also shared endless hours with the drummer talking about music. "We talked about things that I always dreamed of talking to Tony Williams about—his influences and heroes when he was coming up. He loved Art Blakey, but Max Roach was his biggest hero. And I'd ask him about how he developed certain things. I learned a whole

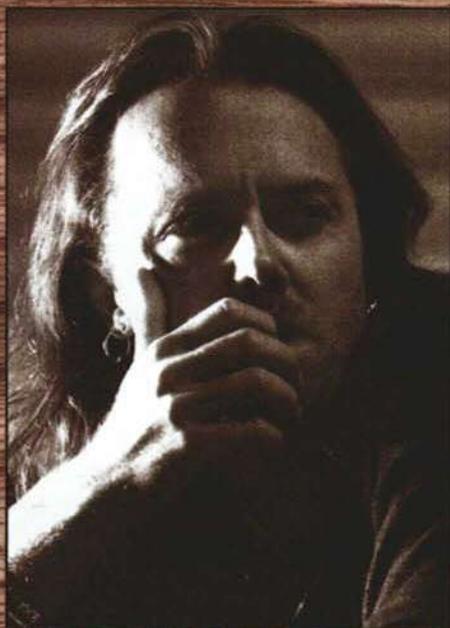
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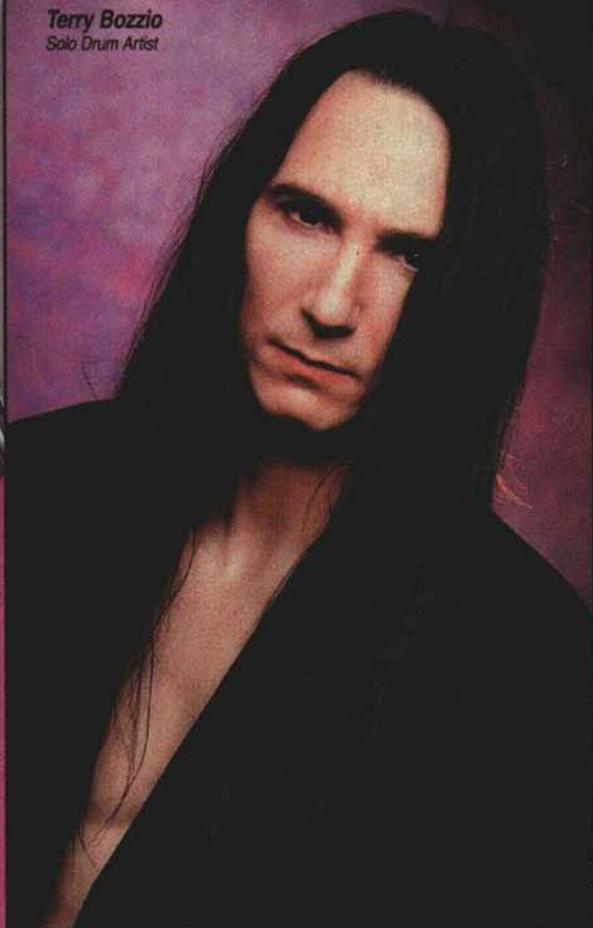
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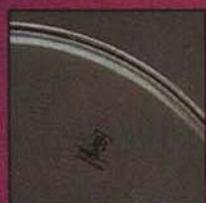
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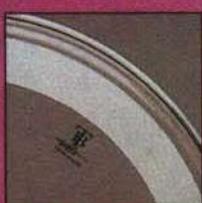
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lot about Tony on those road trips, both as a musician and as a person."

Perhaps the biggest impression that Roney came away with was Tony's undying love of drums. "Tony was an artist, but he was also a pure drummer. And he used to have this problem with drummers who would apologize for their instrument. He said some drummers used to act like playing the drums wasn't enough, like they were somehow embarrassed to play the drums. They would say, 'I play drums but I also play piano and do this and that,' as though drumming wasn't enough. Tony used to hate that attitude. He loved the drums and he pushed the drums out there. That was his thing. 'I'm a drummer who is an artist. I'm an artist who is a drummer.' And he was here to display the beauty of what the drumset can do.

"Tony's obsession with the drums went beyond just playing the drums," Roney continues. "He wanted to take the drums technically as far as he could, so his creative ideas wouldn't be limited. I know people can be overwhelmed

by how beautifully he interpreted the music, but he also definitely loved playing the drums."

Roney relates a story about Tony being conferred with the honor of torch bearer for the drum legacy. "When Papa Jo Jones was still around, he told Tony, 'Listen, we laid our hands on you,' 'we' meaning Tony's peers and those who came before him. They passed the drum legacy onto him. Tony was in charge at that point. Papa Jo said, 'Whatever you feel you should do with the drums, we picked you to be the one.' I asked Tony about it one day, and he put his head down very humbly and said, 'Yeah, that happened. He said I was the chosen one.'

"That's something that people should know, that Papa Jo chose Tony to be the one to carry on what happens with drumming. And Tony, to me, is the greatest drummer that ever lived. He fulfilled everything that Papa Jo and Max would've wanted him to be."



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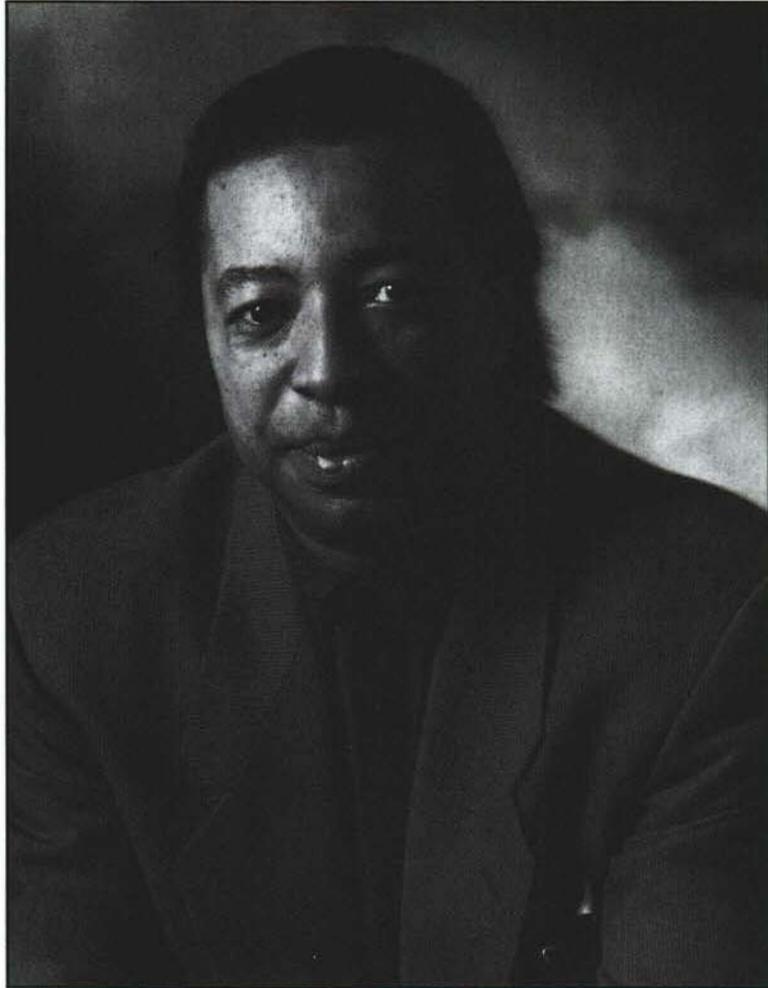


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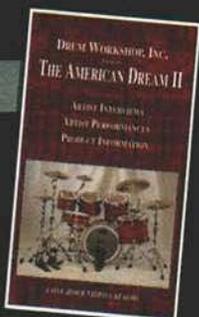
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Tony Williams

The Final MD Interview

by B I L L M I L K O W S K I

In mid-December of last year, Tony Williams came to New York to play a week-long engagement at the Birdland nightclub, located in the heart of Times Square. It was a rare trio gig with long-time rhythm section partner Ron Carter on bass and Mulgrew Miller, a key member of Tony's superb quintet of the '80s and early '90s, on piano. The night I attended they swung mightily on mostly standard fare, finishing their blazing set on a buoyant note with Bobby Timmons' "Dis Here," a tune closely associated with the great alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley. Tony played loudly and proudly throughout the set (too loud, according to the *New York Times*). But then, he never was one to make any apologies for the way he played. As he told me in a *Modern Drummer* interview back in 1992: "I like to play loud. I believe the drums should be hit hard."

Between sets, I spoke with Tony backstage. He looked strong, if somewhat overweight, and seemed content with married life. (Colleen, his wife of three years, was in attendance at this gig.) He was in genuinely good spirits and exuded that typical Tony vibe—two parts ebullience mixed with San Franciscan consciousness and a touch of macho swagger.

I had conducted a phone interview with Tony earlier in connection with his latest recording project, *Wilderness*, on the newly formed Ark 21 label. It was his first release since 1992's *The Story Of Neptune*, the last of six excellent albums by him on the Blue Note label. Unlike propulsive bash-athons like Lifetime's *Emergency!* and *Turn It Over*, or revelations in timekeeping like the series of landmark recordings by the Miles Davis quintet of the late '60s (*Miles Smiles*, *Sorcerer*, *E.S.P.*, *Nefertiti*, *Filles De Kilimanjaro*), or classy swinging vehicles like *Angel Street*, *Native Heart*, and *The Story Of Neptune*, *Wilderness* is a romantic, enchanting, and highly ambitious orchestral project that showcases Williams' often overlooked compositional vision. The following contains excerpts from a lengthy and very casual interview with the late, great Tony Williams.



Rick Malkin



BM: How did this *Wilderness* project come about?

TW: Actually, it all sprang from the piece "Wilderness Rising." I put that together thinking of it as a hymn, and it just manifested into so many other ideas. I had been working on the piece since 1994. And as it became more complete I played it for my orchestration teacher [Dr. Oily Wilson, head of the music department at UC-Berkeley]. He suggested that it would sound great in the orchestra, so I decided to make it an orchestral piece. And it kind of grew from there.

Once I started orchestrating it, I wanted to hear more of it. So I asked composer John Van Tongeren to write variations on different sections of "Wilderness Rising," and he came up with "Infant Wilderness," which is a varia-



Steve Mundinger

Teching for Tony: Scott Garrison

by Robin Tolleson

"Tony was very demanding and could be intimidating to a drum tech," says Williams' manager, Greg DiGiovine. "But Scott Garrison was the best tech Tony ever had, by far his ultimate favorite." Garrison, who has worked for Narada Michael Walden, Steve Smith, and Billy Cobham, and when in town is on staff at Drum World in San Francisco, kept detailed equipment inventory lists for Tony, with serial numbers of all his gear. Williams kept S.I.R. lockers in Tokyo, London, Paris, Los Angeles, and New York, and Garrison knew the complete contents of each one at all times. "Tony wouldn't go anywhere without Scott," says DiGiovine. "Tony's peace of mind depended on whether or not Scott was there."

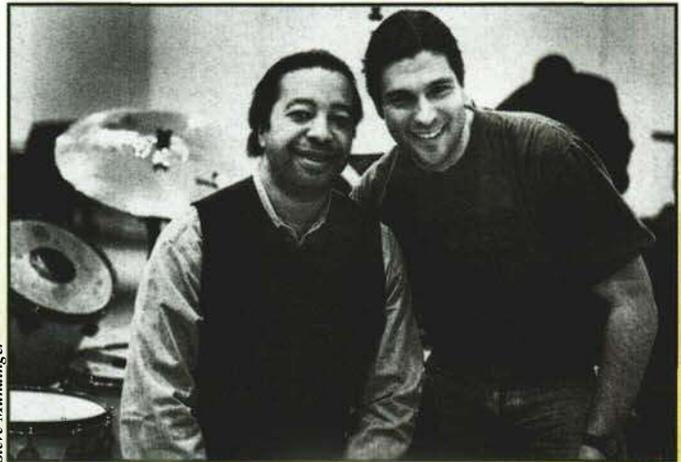
RT: How did you first get hired by Tony?

SG: Three years ago I had an interview at his house. He was adamant and very professional about how he wanted his gear. He said, "I need it set up *exactly* like this every single night." The kit he showed me was the double bass set with the three floor toms, three rack toms, and the side tom. I looked at it and said, "I can do this." I pulled out a tape measure and charted everything. And as soon as he saw me pull

out the tape measure he left me alone. He went, "Okay, I think I've got the right guy."

I had everything dialed in to a sixteenth of an inch at every show. All I asked was for five minutes with him when he'd first sit down, because you can set up that ride cymbal in the exact same place every time, but one night he might have wanted it shifted a tiny bit. It was important that it sat right, that it looked right from the audience, and that everything was proportioned correctly. After all these years he had tailored his kit to how he moved his hands, how he played, and how he sat.

He admitted that I was one of the few people he'd worked with that took notes. I would take notes everywhere we went. When we were recording *"Wilderness"*, I sat next to him in the studio with a note pad in front of me. He would think of stuff, tell me, and I'd write it down, and then we



Steve Mundinger

would review the notes later. It could be anything from, "Don't forget, we need to get this microphone for this," or "Remind me to do this on this next song," to "God, I forgot to call so-and-so." I became more than just the guy who set up his drums.

RT: Was Tony excited about the *Wilderness* project?

SG: He was ecstatic. I remember going over to his house to talk about equipment or mic's or something, and he sat down at the piano and played the intro to *Wilderness*. He worked on that music for a long time. It was a fantastic thing with the



tion on the 3/8 section of "Wilderness Rising." "Wilderness Voyager" is another type of variation on "Wilderness Rising." And "Sea Of Wilderness" is a more abstract version of "Wilderness Rising."

BM: Does this concept come out of *The Story Of Neptune*, where you were also dealing with variations on a theme?

TW: No, this is something that has gone on with me for years. I'm interested in a record being a whole complete thing, not just a series of unrelated pieces. It's just a concept that I've liked, where you have pieces that are connected in different ways. And that concept didn't start with *Neptune*. It's just that idea of looking at things over a larger arc rather than just local events.

BM: This is such a far-reaching project. It's so ambitious and goes in so many directions. Were you concerned that it

might scare away those people who are needing it to be a single thing that they can more easily market?

TW: That's true, it could happen that way. A lot of people want everything to be in their comfort zone. And if it's not they're either threatened by it, they're fearful of it, or they resent it. I understand that. I'm just glad that there was somebody who wanted to do it and do it right. We put it together, mixed it, did the artwork, and now it's out on the street. I'm just so grateful for that.

Now, the other part of it is, I was talking to Pat [Metheny] the other day and he said, "You're going to have to get ready for all the slings and arrows of the jazz community."

And I'm ready for that. I mean, I've been through it so often in my life.

BM: Yeah, people must've been outraged when you came

"There's so much mediocrity out there..listeners want more than that. I hope I've given them more than that."

orchestra—the whole session was great. I was sitting next to Tony on the floor and we would talk in between takes. Stanley Clarke was in front of me, Michael Brecker was to my right in a little sound booth, Herbie Hancock was across the way. Pat Metheny was in a little sound booth with his guitar. Tony knows them all, and it was just friends making a record. He was extremely happy. That project came from Tony's heart.

Do you remember anything interesting about the *Wilderness* sessions, tech-wise?

SG: We had changed the cymbal setup, but we kept the 15" K bottom hats. He didn't use a top and a bottom hi-hat cymbal, he used two bottom cymbals. Tony was always looking for cymbals that would sound good as a set, and if he hit just one you'd know which one it was. That cymbal would have a different sound than the others.

When we went to record *Wilderness*, I ordered a new setup from Zildjian, had it delivered to Los Angeles where we were recording, and left the old setup at home [in Northern California]. He asked, "Where are the old cymbals?" I said, "I left them," and he looked at me like, "Your life is about to end." He was very upset for a moment. But five minutes later he came up to me and said, "I'm glad you didn't bring them down. I want to do new stuff, I want to try the new cymbals. I'm just so used to those that I wanted to have something to fall back on."

I was always pushing him to try new things. I wanted to change his heads and tune them differently, and we got into discussions about that. It was never arguments or total disagreements, just, "Hey, Tony, what do you think of this? Well, what about that?" I'm sure that I miked his drums differently than he had before. I'd double-mike his bass. I just came from a different perspective.

RT: What do you remember most about Tony as a boss?

SG: He was just fantastic. I was working with Tony Williams. He never made it, "I am, therefore you do." And he always asked me. He'd say, "Could you help me out? We're going to do this show, could you give me a hand?" It was never bossing, never like that. He treated me like a person, and he made it happen.

RT: What was the last show you did with Tony?

SG: We did Yoshi's [Oakland, California] and then we did an interview at a news radio station on Long Island. Then we came back and were prepping to go to Catalina's [Los Angeles] and then back to New York to do an album with Max Roach and Ginger Baker, and then sub for Anton Fig on the Letterman show.

RT: When did you last see Tony?

SG: I saw him before his surgery. I got a call, "Tony's in the hospital for gall bladder surgery." "What? What do you mean he's in the hospital?" It was a Thursday night and I ran up to the hospital to see my

friend, and he said to me, "I can't believe that you're here." I said, "Well, I spoke to my mom, and she sends her love," and he smiled. Colleen [Tony's wife] and I sat alongside his bed for an hour or so, just talking about everything. He wasn't enjoying the fact that he was there. It was like a major wrinkle in the things that he wanted to be doing right then.

I was talking to him about this 18" bass drum and some new pedals we were going to try out. I made some jokes and he made jokes, and I said goodnight. I spoke to him on Saturday, and he told me, "I just sold my gall bladder." I said, "Alright!" He said, "I'm going to stay in, so give me a call on Sunday. We'll figure out when you can come over, and we'll discuss all the stuff coming up, who's flying where, what we're doing." I called him on Sunday and nobody picked up, so I figured that Colleen had just turned off the phone because they were resting. He died that day....

RT: There never seemed to be any letup in Tony's playing.

SG: His theory was that people were there to hear music and see a show. He always put out one hundred percent, and that's what he asked of me and of [pianist] Mulgrew Miller and [bassist] Ira Coleman, and we did it. Tony would put out energy, and people would pick up on it and put out energy on top of that, and just go. Tony would ask as much as he could of you, and it never hurt. He was great. I just miss the man.



out with Lifetime.

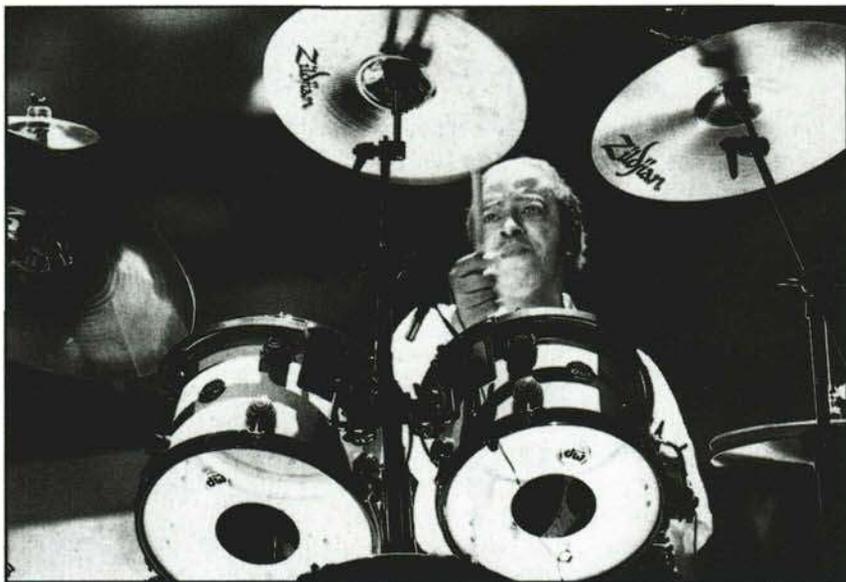
TW: I gather they were.

BM: And yet there's a whole other generation that viewed Lifetime as a touchstone for some music that was deep and meaningful for them...like me.

TW: Me too. It was something that had to be done at that time. But I'm so used to it [negative criticism]. I expect things like that to happen. I have to do things and I know that there's going to be a certain level of people that are going to cry out, "Why did you have to do *that*?" And it's very curious.

BM: There is a cinematic vibe to this new project. The opening piece, "Wilderness," almost functions as an overture, and the rest of the music conjures up wildly different images.

TW: That's what I was trying to do. I could've sequenced the record in different ways, as you can probably gather. But the sequence that I finally settled



Steve Mandinger

on, I think, is the best one for what I tried to portray.

BM: And just like a movie, it takes different turns and twists along the way.

TW: Well, it's supposed to be a journey. That's the idea of it. It's a story in my head and it's almost like a movie, but

without the film. All the pieces play a part in this journey that you go through from beginning to end. And hopefully by the end of it you'll want to go back to the beginning and go through it again.

The whole thing is about people and

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"The drumset is an American invention—it's an American treasure—but it isn't afforded the dignity that people afford, say, the harmonica."

their quest—especially immigrant people—which is part of the whole story that I've written out. it's another part of our American heritage—the immigrant voyage, going from one land to another. "Sea Of Wilder-

ness" represents that idea of being in the middle of the sea, that point in time when you've left the known but you haven't gotten to the unknown.

BM: That state of being in process.

TW: Yeah, you know, that void, that feeling inside when you haven't arrived yet to where you're going but you know you can't go back. Now that can be scary or that can be kind of calming. The tune "Wilderness Voyager" is part of this storyboard that I followed for the

album. The whole thing is like a book I wrote, and in this particular story of "Wilderness Voyager," these people have to take this train trip across the country in turn-of-the-century America.

BM: So you've actually scripted out something?

TW: Yeah, just to guide me on this trip of the record. Again, the idea is that it's not some kind of arbitrary music or idea. I'm telling you this to let you know how serious I am when I put something together, that it does have a concrete meaning to me.

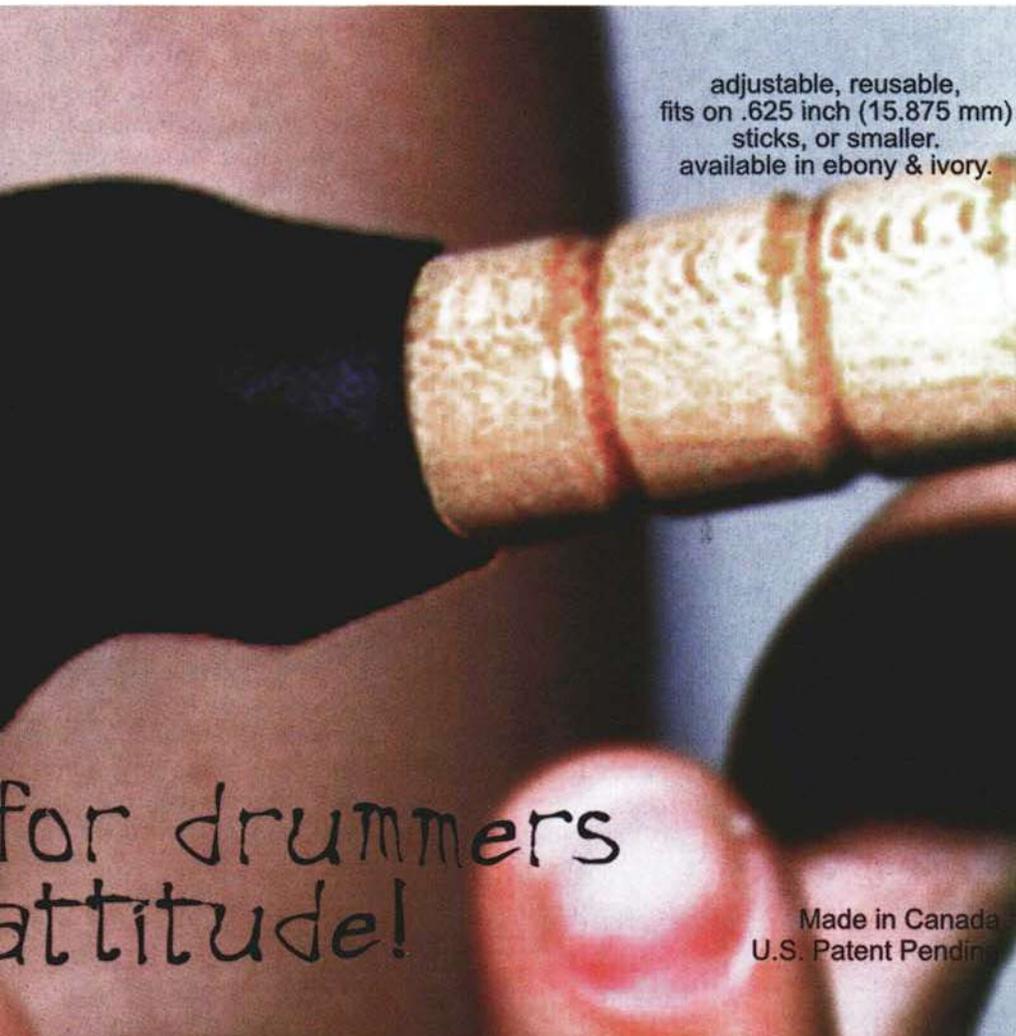
BM: You've assembled quite an amazing band for this project.

TW: Yeah, it was sort of like a godsend

to get all these guys together with all their different schedules and companies and management, and all the legal stuff. I'm so blessed to be able to do it.

BM: That's quite an undertaking just on the business end.

TW: I'll tell you, this project has been like a mountain of work to get it done and out on the street—business work and emotional work. And, of course, people have their own expectations about putting together a record with musicians of this caliber. The typical response is, "Well, why don't you get the guys together and jam?" And that turns me off. Of course, when you get those guys together it's going to sound great, just everybody falling out of bed. But I wanted to give the guys in the band something more to do than the typical thing. That didn't seem right. I wanted to make it more than just us getting together and playing some standard



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jazz tunes. It was important to me to make this something bigger than that...and also for the listener. Because the listener, I believe, sees through things like that. They want more. There's so much mediocrity out there. And I hope that I've given them more than that.

BM: Well, you must feel very gratified. It's quite a beautiful product—great music, great packaging. And I'm inter-

ested in the quotes strung throughout the booklet—thought-provoking and poetic in their own way.

Oh yeah, I rounded up all those quotes to give people an idea of what it means to be "wilderness."

BM: And *your* quote is most profound: "The unique wilderness of our soul is an infinite frontier."

TW: Well, thank you. I wanted to put something on there to give it a more personal touch.

BM: Do you feel like this is an artistic breakthrough for you?

TW: Sure, yeah. It's the first time I really got a chance to hear something that I've written and orchestrated. That alone is a big step for me, especially coming from where I come from and feeling like I've been fighting my way uphill.

BM: Against what, the perception of being a drummer?

TW: Maybe that. A lot of things. Against myself more so, I think. Just my own imperfections...the things that people have inside them that hold them back, like being your own worst enemy—things like that.

BM: We all have that tragic flaw.

TW: Yeah, and that's why I like to learn and study, because I really understand that it's helpful for me to just keep going and following my dream. All my life there have been people who told me what I can and cannot do, or what I'm not supposed to do. If I listened to those people I would never have made this record. That's the way it's been all my life. So maybe I'm fighting uphill against that kind of stuff, too.

BM: In our previous interview together [July 1992 *MD*] you mentioned that drummers don't get respect in general, that there's a stigma about drummers.

TW: Well, everybody knows that. I mean, the drumset is an American invention—it's an American *treasure*—but it isn't afforded the dignity that people afford, say, the harmonica. That's just a fact of history.

The whole concept of the drumset itself is unique—unique throughout the world. The drums of Africa, India, and Japan—they're not played with the feet and hands at the same time. What we have is a unique configuration in the musical history of the world. And it isn't really afforded the kind of dignity that it should have.

BM: But there's a whole legacy of drum royalty, from Baby Dodds and Big Sid to Art Blakey and Max Roach, and beyond.

TW: I'm not questioning that. Of *course* there is. I'm talking about how drums and drummers are perceived in people's minds. I mean, do you know that there is a fear of drums?

BM: Hmm...I don't suffer from it.

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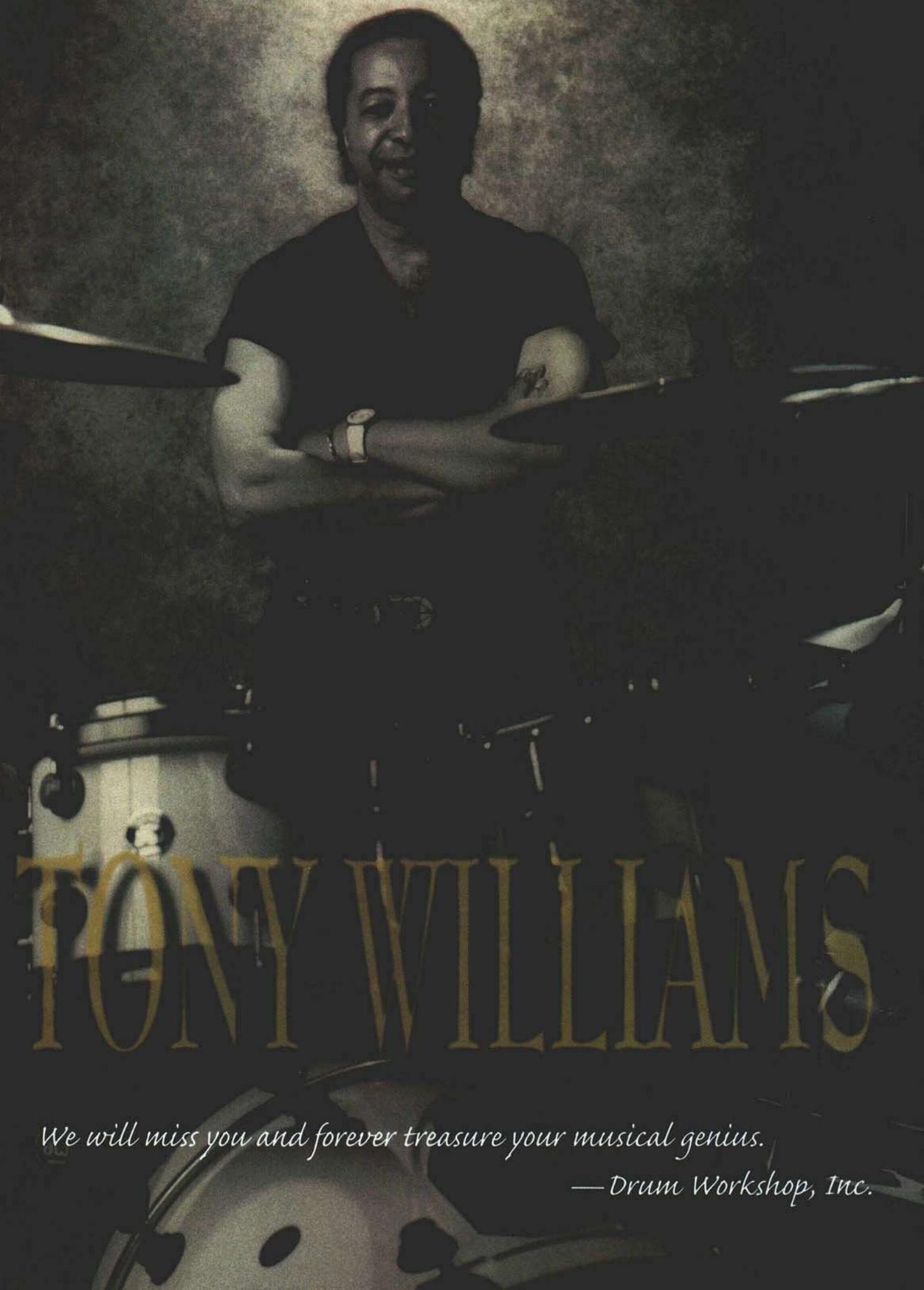
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TW: Well, that's good. I don't either. But there is, and it's been documented. I'm just talking about

how drummers and drums are perceived by the mainstream.

BM: What is it based in?

TW: It's based in myth and folklore and stuff like that. I mean, I had some woman at a Hertz counter ask me one time, "Why do drummers take drugs?" She didn't ask me whether or not it's

true that drummers take drugs. To her it was a fact, a natural thing. Drummers have been perceived since the beginning as the crazy person in the band, the wild man, the least educated. I can't go into why and the whole chronological order of how it came to be that way, but we all know it's true.

BM: You haven't played a lot of brushes on your records, but you do on your new release, on Stanley Clarke's "Harlem Mist '55" and Pat Metheny's

"The Night You Were Born."

TW: Well, if you look at what I've done on other people's records, I play brushes. But there was never a need for them on *my* records. Now there's a need.

BM: You played brushes on "Poinciana" from *The Story Of Neptune*.

TW: Oh yeah, that's right. It's just something else that I'm interested in portraying. I'm also working on double bass drums now. So I'm working at different things in my drumming—portraying or fleshing out other aspects of my playing.

BM: You've never played double bass drums before. What brought it up?

TW: It's just something to keep me off the streets at night—just something to do. In the '60s I used to play a set that had an 18" bass drum with one tom on the bass drum and one floor tom. And over the years that has grown, basically, because of my ear, because of what I want to hear. The first change I made was to go from an 18" bass drum to a 24" bass drum. That's because I couldn't hear the smaller drum after a while. I started playing things I needed to hear. I needed to get a physical response from what I was playing. When I got to a bigger bass drum, all of a sudden I got this impact back into my chest.

Basically everything that I've tried to do or change was because of a need I had, either in my ear or something physical I was going after. So double bass drums is just another one of those steps.

BM: What else have you been learning lately?

TW: I'm learning gardening and more business stuff. It's always fascinating dealing in the music business with record companies and lawyers. So I'm learning something every day.

BM: Getting back to the new album, I understand there's a story behind the tune "Gambia."

TW: That's another piece I've had for a long time, a piece I've lived with for a bunch of years. This was my opportunity to let it go, to let it breathe. Gambia is a little sliver of a country in Africa that I traveled through in 1972. I went there to do a film for Willie Ruff, a bass player who used to be part of a duo from the '60s called the Mitchell/Ruff duo—Dwight Mitchell and Willie Ruff. By the

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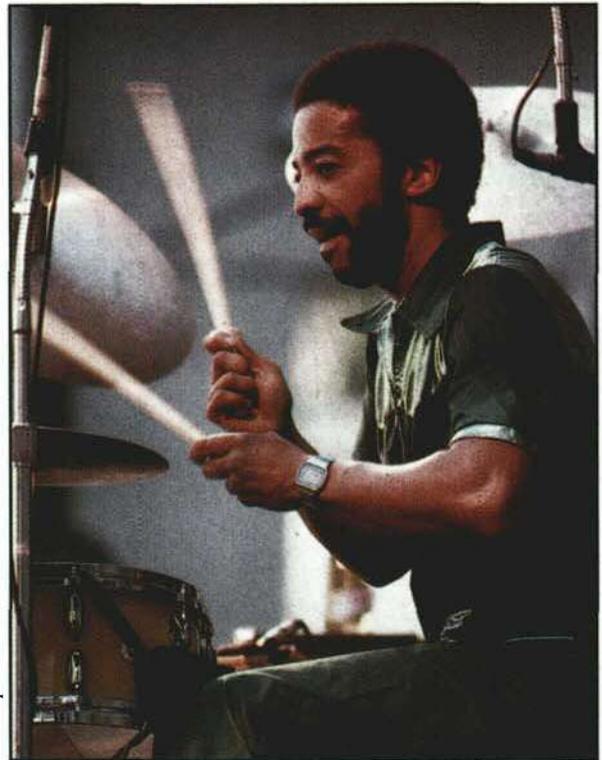
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time I met him, Willie was teaching at one of the universities on the East Coast. He wanted to take me and Dwight Mitchell to Africa to do a documentary film about taking a modern drummer back to old Africa and having him meet an old world drummer. We flew from New York to Senegal, stayed there for a bunch of days, then drove down to Southern Senegal. And to get there you have to drive through Gambia. And that's where the piece came from.

BM: So the seeds of that song have been in you for twenty years?

TW: Yeah, the melody and bass and drum parts have been going on inside of me for that long. I've finally put it to rest.

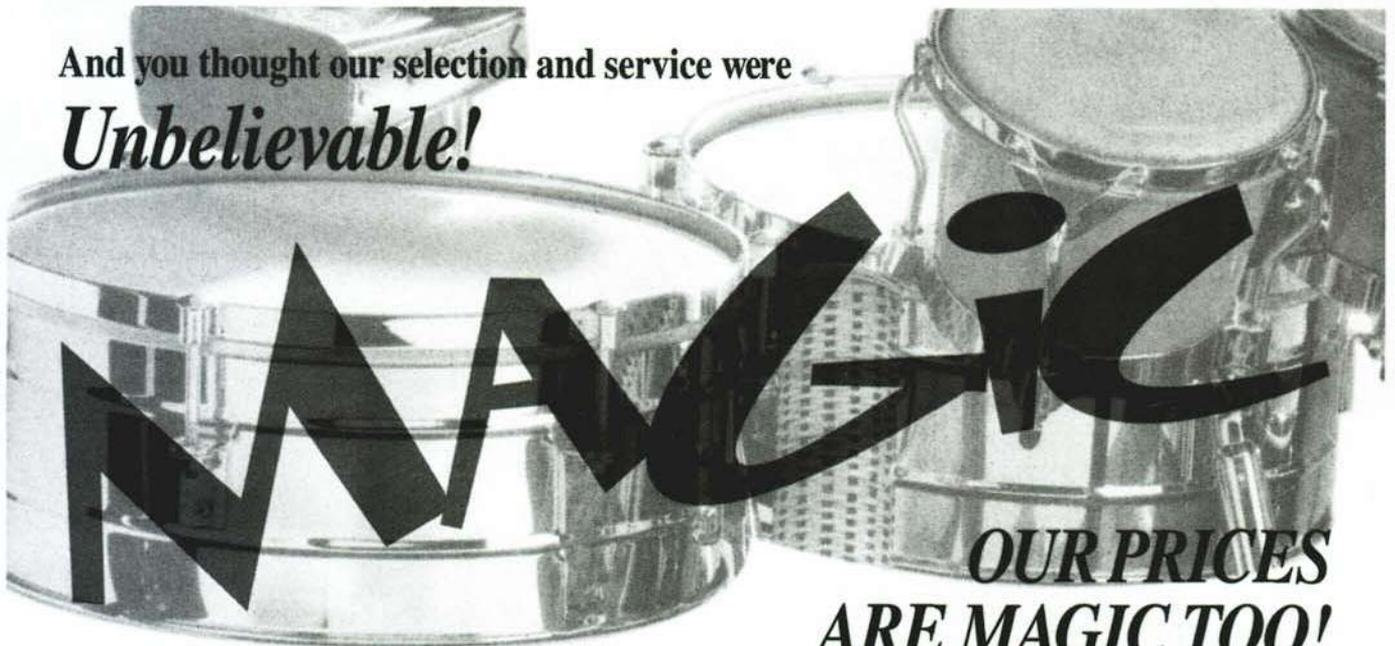


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BM: Is there anything else that you'd like to address about this new project?

TW: Yes. I'd like to mention one of the

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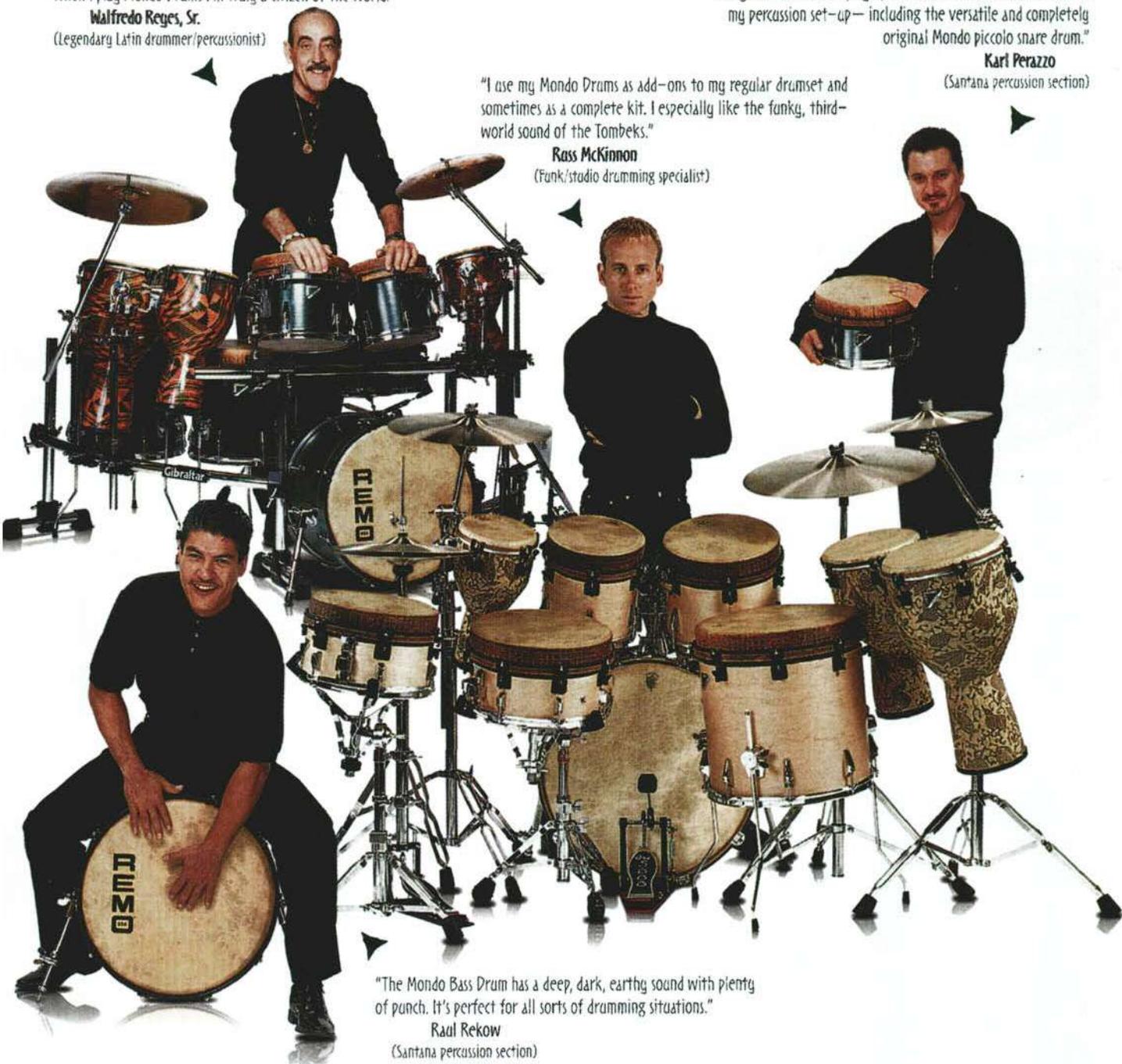
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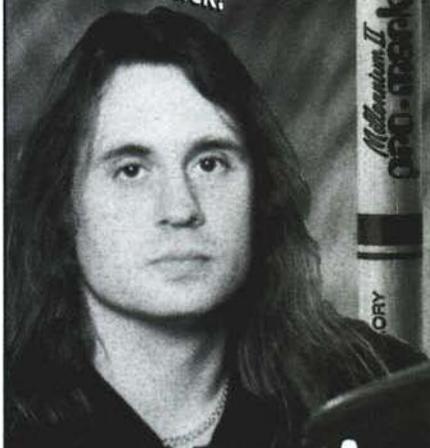
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people behind the scenes, engineer John Richards. What I needed for this project was an engineer who really knew how to capture a big orchestra sound, rather than somebody who is only familiar with recording jazz or pop records. I remembered that years ago there were guys at different studios in New York who were legendary for capturing a fifty- or sixty-piece orchestra with just two or three microphones. But a lot of them didn't keep up with the technology of today. So I needed somebody who had that expertise but who was also current with the technology. And John Richards was the guy. He's very much a part of the mix in this whole project.

Another guy I'd like to mention is John Van Tongeren. He was a composer who had been recommended to me but whom I had never met before. It was one of those things where there's a lot at stake but you just leave it up to the right elements to come together. It's like a leap of faith. With John Van Tongeren, I knew what I wanted and said, "Look,

can you do this?" And he said, "Sure." And when I first heard his variation on "Wilderness Rising" I was thrilled. This was one of those things that I've learned over the years, that you have to let people have their head. You just let them do what they do and generally it turns out great.

BM: Isn't that what Miles did?

TW: Yeah, uh-huh.

BM: That's something that people eventually come to realize. A lot of young bandleaders might be very full of themselves, and because of that they're a little too controlling.

TW: That's true. And that doesn't just apply to young musicians. A lot of *people* who have been around a long time—not just in music—have a hard time trying not to control things around them that are uncontrollable. They don't have faith in the goodness that's around them.



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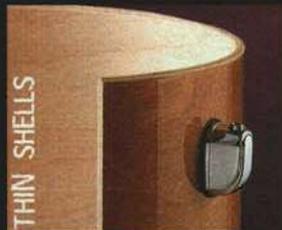
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Tony Remembered

Jack DeJohnette

"It is quite a shock to the world that the great musician, drummer, and composer Tony Williams has left us. He gave us a lot of wonderful drumming and music, and I feel like he had more to say. He was one of my influences, and you can hear some of him in my playing today. We were pretty good friends, and I'll miss him. It's sad that he's gone, but it's great that he came through here and gave us such great inspiration."

Peter Erskine

"I think all of us got the wind completely socked out of us by the news of Tony Williams' passing, because one of the pillars of our world is suddenly gone. I'm certain that, like me, countless others were confident of—and indeed depended on—the fact that Tony was going to be around for a long time.

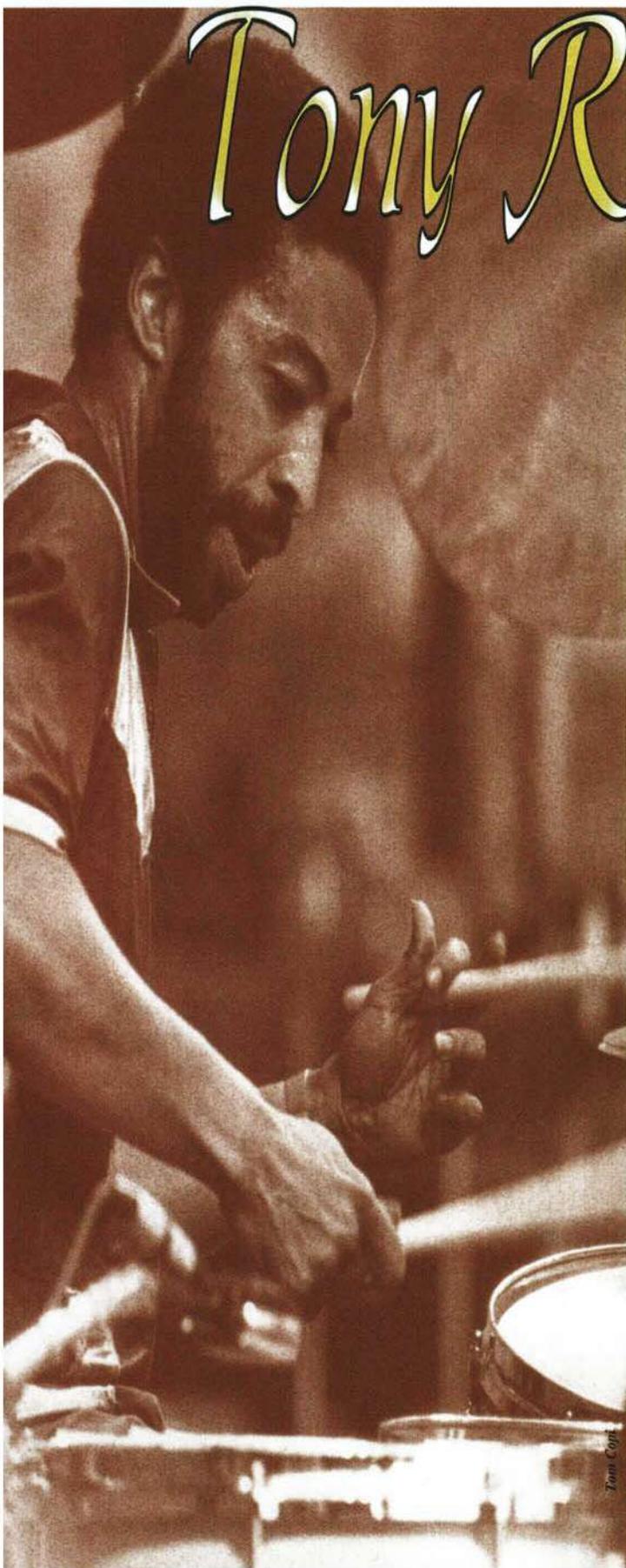
"I'm glad that he was able to realize his dream of writing and recording his music with an orchestra; it stands as a magnificent testament to the man's musical life, in addition to his drumming, which was evolutionary and revolutionary, reactionary *and* visionary, and extraordinary—just plain hipper than anything else to have come along.

"If I may quote some of what Pat Metheny sent me: 'One of the main reasons I became a musician was because my brother Mike brought home *Four & More* when I was about eleven. That did it for me. Of course, Miles was the greatest, but it was that drumming that really flipped me out. I heard that ride cymbal and my life hasn't been the same since. There is no doubt that the majority of musicians and fans who will be touched by Tony probably

haven't even been born yet, and his impact will be felt for literally centuries to come. Let's face it, anyone who picks up a drumstick from now to kingdom come will have to deal with him one way or another.'

"In addition to Tony's drumming representing that 'all things were possible'—and what better comment could be made about an artist?—Tony also represented excellence. Anecdotes abounded about drummers who would go to him for lessons, hoping that he would show them how he did some of that stuff, but he would insist that they really be able to play their instrument first. As I understood it, he might say something like, 'So you want to know how I played such-and-such with Miles? Let's hear your double-stroke roll first.' I always admired that.

"To paraphrase the late Don Grolnick: 'If there is a heaven, then it must be the place where a person lives on in the thoughts and memories of others.' That being so, we know that Tony Williams is indeed in heaven now, for his presence can never leave our hearts and minds."



Tony Cop



Terry Bozzio

"A whole lot of drummers wouldn't be where we are without what Tony contributed. He's *the* main influence in my life. What he did is unparalleled. Nobody ever did anything like that—not as fast, not as good, not with that feel, not with that sound.

"When I was trying to figure out what I meant in the scheme of things, it was like, Okay, maybe I can play X-amount of Tony Williams licks, but where do I make *my* statement? So I started to get into the linear thing and gave the ride cymbal a heave because I figured Tony had said everything there was to be said on it. That helped to define me and get me away from being just another white guy who plays Tony Williams licks.

"Tony once came to see a Missing Persons show in San Francisco. I had a standing rule to never let me know before a show if anyone famous was in the audience, because I always thought that if I knew I had to play in front of someone like Tony Williams, I would be so nervous I would choke. So I came off stage, and I'd had a pretty good night, and Warren, our guitarist, said, 'Hey Terry, guess who was in the audience—Tony Williams!' Tony came backstage and was really complimentary and friendly.

"He was trying to do some different things around that same time, and had some new-wave punk-rock groups. Unfortunately, his record company wasn't interested in releasing anything like that from him because they didn't think it was his thing.

"A couple of years later I saw him in LA at the PAS convention, and he asked me how things were going. I was being my usual self-critical self and started complaining that our album *Rhyme & Reason* hadn't sold very well, and he grabbed my arm and said, 'Yeah, but that was a *great* album.' It meant a lot to me that someone I respected so much was complimenting my work. That's the kind of thing that can help you keep going when you start having doubts.

"I remember the first time I saw him play live. When he opened up a single-stroke roll, it was like everybody's hair blew straight back. I knew I was never again going to worry about some jerk telling me I play too loud. Tony would obliterate the band with his singles. It was phenomenal.

"It was impressive to watch how he would physically move between his drums and cymbals in ways that were awkward and very physically difficult, as opposed to doing the typical things that we all learn when we're coming up because they're easy. But that's the way he thought. He was unique.

"Tony could have coasted the rest of his life on his accomplishments as a drummer, but he went back to school to learn more about music and get more serious about composition. I really admired that, and I aspire to that as well—to be a composer who can write some interesting music. So on so many levels he has been a major inspiration to me."

Vinnie Colaiuta

"He is my hero—*period*—because of what he represented to me as a musician, and the way that he hit me emotionally and intellectually when he played. He was a genius on the drums. When somebody is that gifted, what they have to say to you hits you on a level that resonates deep inside in a unique way. It's a combination of so many factors that, after a while, it almost becomes inane to try to isolate things that people usually talk about, like technique and touch. I'm talking about a synergistic thing that hits the right frequency; he was tuned into the muse. From the earliest to the most recent things he had done, it was true artistry.

"The first time I remember running into him was at a PAS convention at Universal. I was sitting at a table, we met, he sat down, and we talked. He was real personable. Can you imagine me—here's my hero—and I didn't know what he'd be like, and he just sat down like it was no big deal.

"When I was on the road with John Patitucci, we opened for Tony when he was playing with VSOP, which could be pretty scary. I ran into him at the bar one night during the tour and I had to tell him what he meant to me. That seemed to make an impact on him and it broke a lot of the ice, and after that, he'd call me on the phone every once in a while.

"I played right before him at a Zildjian Day a few years ago and then I wanted to watch him. I managed to crawl across the stage so I couldn't be seen, and I was lying down right behind the drums, watching him.

Afterwards, we took a van back to the party at the hotel, and from the time we got into the van until we got back to the hotel, he had me in stitches.

"Tony's passing marks an end of an era to me. It's of such importance that I can't even fathom it. It is such a stupid, unnecessary loss, but his music will always live on. What he stood for and created will always be flowing through us."

Dave Weckl

"I received the news about Tony's death while on tour in Japan, and I am still numb

and in disbelief. Tony was one of the innovators and geniuses on the drums, and a very girted musician. There's not a night that goes by, while on stage, somewhere in the set, something I play is not inspired by the thought of what Tony Williams might play in a given song at that moment.

"Words can not express my feelings for the loss of this great person, especially the timing of his passing, seemingly far too soon. The drumming world has lost one of the great ones. My condolences go out to his wife and all his family.

"The spirit of Tony and his music will live on. If you don't know his music and drumming, please search it out. The rewards will be plentiful."



Rick Malkin



Dennis Chambers

"Tony and I did a clinic together in Florida in December. He did a ten-minute snare drum solo. I have it on videotape, in fact. Ten minutes! He played great.

"The only thing I can say is, if it weren't for people like Tony Williams, there wouldn't be people like Billy Cobham or Jack DeJohnette. Jack loved Tony, Gadd loved him, Vinnie loved him. We all loved him. We all loved the way the guy played. I'm just glad I was around to see him.

"I saw Tony play in Baltimore with Miles once when I was seven years old, and it was just unbelievable. From that moment until now I've definitely learned a lot by listening to him, and learned how to use my imagination. He was always going for things that people never even thought about. Tony was always thinking behind the drums. You could hear it. Thanks to people like Tony, we all got the message about that. Play right from the heart, be thinking all the time, and use your imagination to get certain things out.

"I never thought of him dying so young. I feel bad for younger guys who may have seen him at clinics but really don't know what it was all about, like when he was with Miles, Lifetime, VSOP, or his own band. They'll never know what that's about. Sitting there and watching Tony, how he manipulated tones, how he dealt with the drum tones, the melodic thing, the cymbals, the straight 8ths on the hi-hat.... I guess it's up to us now."

Alison Perry



Steve Smith

"Every time I saw Tony play it was a shock, like, 'God, I thought I was prepared to see him, but this guy is really in another zone.' I never got used to that. I would fantasize, like, 'How would Tony play this?' I'd try to get into that creative spirit, that head space that he could be in. It was obvious that he was thinking differently from any other drummer I'd seen. He had great chops, and there are very few drummers who have incredible virtuosity *ana an* amazingly creative mind.

"Tony was well informed on the whole tradition, and he played out of the tradition, but he also made a unique contribution to it. Ana I don't see anybody else taking it further than he's taken it. Obviously, what he did with Miles was very transformative to jazz drummers all over the world, and when he did *Believe It* he inspired rock 'n' roll drummers as well as fusion drummers.

"He would challenge himself. More than most drummers, he would go for stuff that he wouldn't make, and then look like he was pissed at himself. I remember that look. But he'd challenge himself to play on the edge, and I loved that creative spirit."

Louie Bellson

"Tony Williams was one of the greatest drummers of all time. Tony was an innovator. Even as young as he was, he bridged the gap; Tony played like the old-timers *and* the young guys. He was one of those players who had a distinctive style. Duke Ellington used to say that when you talk about a great player, all you have to do is listen to one play and you can identify *that* person right away. Tony Williams was such a musician.

"I was very fond of that young man. His father brought him to an Ellington concert I was performing at when Tony was tiny; I think he was seven. When his dad introduced him to me, I said, 'He's a drummer.' He looked like a drummer even at that young age. Tony and I remained friends from then on. The last time I saw him was at the Grammys. We hugged, and he said, 'I'm starting to use two bass drums,' and I said, 'Don't do that. There's too much competition now.'

"Every time I heard Tony play, it made me want to go home and pick up the sticks. He encouraged me to keep on playing. Tony was just in his prime and ready to show us with more great drumming, more music, more ideas; he had so much more to say. But what he *did* do was amazing."

Bill Bruford

"I'm not sure a day's gone past since I first heard Tony as a kid that I haven't thought about him or sensed his presence in some way. His playing was wind, waves, tides, ebb and flow, and it's as though his death has caused even those elemental forces to quiet. They'll get noisy again, like Tony would have wanted, but not for a while. He too was an elemental force, monumentally untamed, and it is inconceivable that his sound will never be heard again, live, on this earth."

Steve Jordan

"You had to be nuts not to love Tony's playing. I started listening to him when I was very young. My father had every Miles Davis record and I used to listen to them all the time.

"*Seven Steps To Heaven* was very instrumental in my vision of drums. His sound, that 'great Gretsch sound,' the tone he got out of the drums, how he could bend time, and just the music he got out of the drums was quite unique. He was playing with Miles at seventeen, so my goal was to do something significant by the time I was seventeen or eighteen. His timeline was very important in terms of influencing me to really get serious about the drums.

Ginger Baker

"I first heard Tony with Miles. He came out when he was very young, still a little baby, and playing *incredible* drums. We did a thing together in 1986, which actually got me back into music. I was in virtual retirement in Italy when Bill Laswell asked me to do an album with Johnny Lydon [Public Image Ltd.'s *Album*]. Half of the album was me playing drums and the other half was Tony. They didn't list the personnel on the album—who played on what track—and it was quite extraordinary because everybody thought that I was Tony and that Tony was me, which would *never* happen if we were playing jazz. But we were playing different sections on an unusual sort of album. That was really complimentary to me.

"I bumped into Tony occasionally. We had a great mutual respect for each other. We did a gig at the Opera House in Verona, Italy last year—Tony, Max [Roach], M'Boom, and me. It was very cool. The plan was we were going to record that material in New York this spring. In Verona, it was more like a drum battle thing, but I wanted to get into the African thing where the drummers all play together. I was talking with Elvin [Jones] last night, and I haven't seen Elvin for years and years. This is the problem. Time goes by real quick, and we don't get together as much as we should, you know."

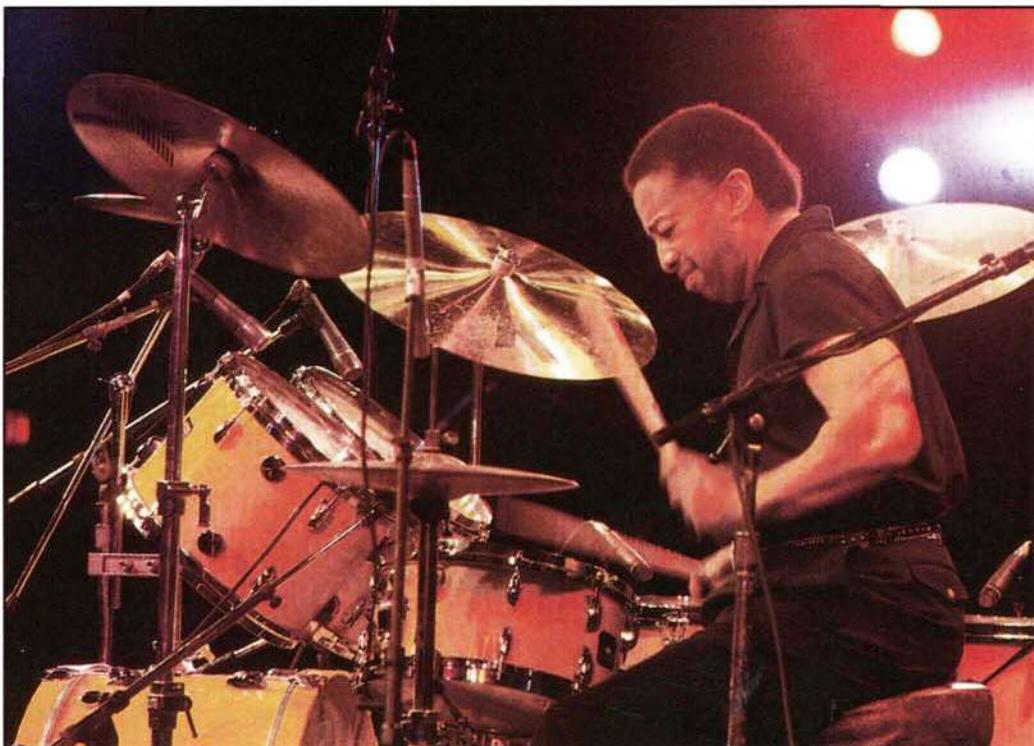
Max Roach

"Tony was very special to me. I knew him when he was a little boy, when his father used to bring him to the clubs in Boston. And even though his feet couldn't touch the pedals, he could play the arrangements of all the bands, Jazz Messengers and the others. He knew all the drummers' parts. He was phenomenal.

"The drumset is really a four-limbed monster, and Tony learned how to tame it at a very early age. And he put some other spins on it that I had never heard anybody do. He played the total drumset, the one-man-percussion band, which is an American innovation, and did some wonderful things with it. The way he handled the drumset was beyond category. He could do anything he wanted with the instrument, and he had become a consummate musician. I hope people remember that. He was a consummate musician because he played lyrically.

"I'm just hurt that he left us when he did, but he left a powerful image out there. In my own mind, he will live forever. To be honest with you, I was glad to be in his company. He always made me feel like I was very special. He belongs up there with the ranks of Dodds, Sid Catlett, and Buddy. He was destined for the pantheon of the great ones."

Rick Malkin



Anton Fig

"I was once driving along Route 1 in California, and had this radio station barely coming in. I heard something and thought it was Miles, but I wasn't sure because the radio was cutting in and out while I was driving through the mountains. But I heard just enough—I could hear me ride cymbal. I said, 'I know that cymbal, it's Tony.' They finally announced that it was Miles' *Live At The Plugged Nickel*.

"Tony came on the Letterman show and we set up right next to each other and played. I held the time down and he did all his stuff on top, and it was very nice. I was struck by his power. Like when you play a last chord and have to hold it there, he seemed to have so much in reserve and was able to bring the intensity way up. He had such a defined musical language. He would sit behind the drums and make a whole other civilization out of it. You never thought in terms of, 'Well, now he's doing a double-stroke roll or a paradiddle.' You knew he was, but he would just turn it inside out or around or backwards—like it was forging ahead, exciting and quirky at the same time. He was playing great, with that same kind of cocky assurance he always had."

Ed Shaughnessy

"I first met Tony in a Sam Goody's record store in New York in the '60s, when he had just joined Miles. I remember that he was shopping for world music, Indian music, African music, and I immediately knew he was a mile wide, which, of course, was expressed in his brilliant playing.

"He left a legacy of drumming that, in a sense, was the last really great contribution to jazz drumming. I think young players should particularly take notice of the great contribution that Tony, Ron Carter, and Herbie Hancock made in what I used to call the 'elastic rhythm section' of Miles Davis, circa the '60s. They changed rhythm section playing as a unit and made an indelible impact.

"He and I became quite friendly over the years, and I was a big fan: I went out of my way to go hear him play. I loved Tony very much as a person, as well as a great artist, because he had such a great heart."

Carl Allen

"It was frightening when I first heard Tony when I was thirteen. I was always impressed with his dexterity, power, and independence. I still marvel at his consistency. He would take an idea, a motif, a rhythm, and base a whole set of phrasing off of that. He had a lot of rudimental things happening, and his playing was very crisp and clear. I really enjoyed his music with his own quintet; you got to hear how he developed his writing and how that affected his drumming. That inspired me to not write like a drummer. His composition 'Sister Cheryl' is a masterpiece.

"I played a tour with Benny Green opposite Tony and his group for six weeks. I knew him before that, but out of respect, I always kept my distance. But then we became closer. I was able to open up to him and I felt like a kid. On one particular night, as he's smoking a big fat stogie, I asked him, 'Tony, do you ever get stumped and not know what to play?' He inhaled a big draw from this stogie, and looked at me and said, 'No, I don't.' And blew the smoke in my face. It was cool. I couldn't get mad, every night this cat was so consistent and so incredible. In fact, he would always open a set with a drum solo. He was always trying new stuff. It was like watching history in the making."

Chad Smith

"Tony was so original and unique, and at such a young age! Any drummer who doesn't own a record that Tony Williams is on, whether it's *Seven Steps To Heaven* or stuff from his Lifetime groups, should be ashamed to call himself a drummer. There are only a handful of guys who really shaped and changed the way drums in music were approached. Tony was one. I

always wondered, though, why he played those black dot heads on the tops and bottoms of his drums. But Tony is definitely one of the fathers of drumming."

Lenny White

"Tony was not a drummer, believe me. Drums were just the way he communicated. He was a consummate artist. You have fantastic, master drummers who play the rudiments and the same type of things, but Tony developed a whole new *language*. There were sounds that he created using parts of the drumset that we never thought of before.

"I will spend a lifetime trying to hear what he heard—not play what he played. Anybody can listen to a record and study what he did and almost emulate what he did, but to hear what he heard to make him play that, *that's* what made him the genius that he was. Tony transcended any kind of music he played, and the music became 'Tony Williams Music,' whether it was rock 'n' roll, fusion, or jazz."

David Garibaldi

"Tony had quite an influence on me. He was one of the guys I really, really admired, who I tried to pattern myself after in a way. I followed what he did musically throughout the years, and then had the good fortune of meeting him here in the Bay area because we both taught at Drum World in San Francisco. We got to be pretty friendly. We would talk and sometimes we'd get together and play. It was

really great.

"To me, Tony was not only somebody who had a lot of firepower. Obviously the guy had tremendous chops, but he was one of the most musical drummers I've ever heard. He could really make *music*. That was a good lesson right there—teaching people how to make music with the drums."

Gregg Bissonette

"I was devastated when I heard that we lost Tony Williams. He's been the greatest influence on all of us drummers. I feel so lucky that in the last year and a half I'd had the chance to fly up to San Francisco from LA to study with him four or five times and become good friends with him. I even got to play double drums with him. Just over a year ago, I took a drumkit over to his house and we played double drums all day. He said he hadn't played double drums since 1963.

"Every question I asked him, he came back with tenfold answers and ways to try things. One thing he said was, 'If I look out in the audience and see someone and I want to get a direct message to them musically, I just think about a straight line. Don't sugarcoat the statement; play it out and play it with all your heart. I want to know that my statement gets right to the point.' He also said that a great drummer to him is one who on Monday night can play with Prince, Tuesday night play with the Jay Leno big band, Wednesday night play a cocktail set with brushes, the next

A Mass for Tony

The life of Tony Williams was celebrated by family and friends at a Mass of Christian Burial held at St. Ignatius Cathedral in San Francisco on Friday, February 28. Father Charles Gagan was the celebrant, and Micheline Steacy was the cantor. Pallbearers were Max Roach, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Wayne Shorter, Stanley Clarke, Ginger Baker, and Vince Wilburn. Among the musicians paying their respects were Joe Henderson, Carlos Santana, Bobby Hutcherson, Armando Peraza, Michael Shrieve, Armand Zildjian, Eddie Marshall, Lenny White, William Kennedy, and Steve Smith.

During the service, several of those closest to the drummer offered tributes. "Tony was no 'yes man,'" said Tony's wife, Colleen. "He was the real thing. Tony's dedication was a gift from God. He was not only a consummate musician, but a consummate human being. He strove for excellence in every area."

Colleen Williams confided that the week before his death, her husband had received three speeding tickets. "Tony loved velocity," she said to warm laughter. A few minutes later, Wayne Shorter agreed, recalling how whenever Miles Davis would call the up-tempo "Joshua" during one of their sets, Tony would respond, "Yeah!" "But," Shorter was quick to point out, "to me velocity is not the same thing as speed. Now Tony's velocity is eternal."

"You have no idea how much I learned from this young man," Herbie Hancock said. "Tony was like a brother, and he became a teacher." Ron Carter recalled how he was unofficially appointed Tony's "guardian" when the seventeen-year-old drummer joined Miles' band. "We will never again hear drums played with that kind of honesty, power, and will to improve with every performance," the bassist said. An emotional Max Roach said he missed his friend, that Tony had "tamed the four-limbed monster," the drumset, by the age of thirteen, and that he belonged in the pantheon of the great ones like Louis Armstrong, Baby Dodds, and Big Sid Catlett.

As Williams' casket was carried past his mother, Alyse Janez, Colleen Williams, and the solemn gathering of mourners, a quartet consisting of Hancock, Carter, Shorter, and trumpeter Wallace Roney performed Williams' composition "Sister Cheryl."

Williams was laid to rest at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery, Colma, California. Contributions and donations can be made to the family c/o: Tony Williams Memorial Fund, PO Box 1429, Pacifica, CA 94044.

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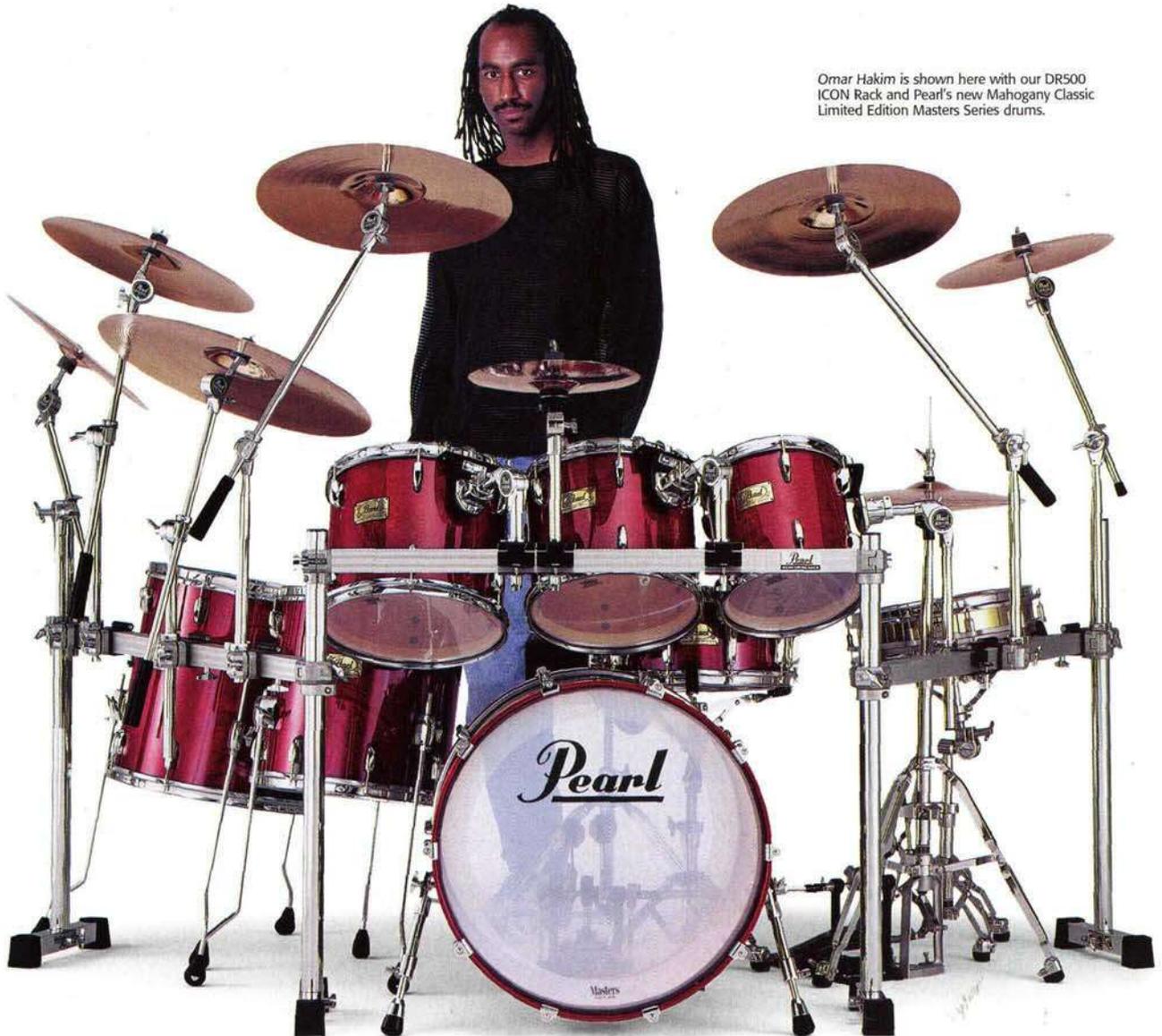
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night play with Garth Brooks, and the next night play a gig with Metallica."

Billy Cobham

"It was 1964 when I first became aware of Tony Williams. I was in New York at the time and heard him on *Seven Steps To Heaven*. I was twenty years old, he was eighteen. It made a major impression on me. He was a peer, someone who had made it and made it *big time* with Miles. It gave me the belief that, if a peer of mine could make it, maybe there was a chance for me if I worked hard, was diligent, and tried to learn from the good and the bad things. Tony had a personality and sound all his own, and that was what stood out for me. That inspired me to develop my own sound.

"I never did get to know Tony all that well on a personal level. What stands out for me is that over the years that we were in proximity of each other, there was a mutual respect. That was very special to me because I didn't think Tony had a lot of respect for too many people. I sure had a lot of respect for him.

"I respect what Tony stood for in jazz, in terms of the way he went about playing the music. Not everybody was in agreement with his presentation, but the positive thing was he wasn't afraid to take chances. I feel his approach to playing was unabashed; he wasn't bashful about *anything* as far as the music was concerned."

Terri Lyne Carrington

"I don't think any jazz drummer can help being influenced by Tony. I listened to a lot of Tony's work, especially the early stuff he did with Miles, which is my favorite Tony Williams. I never tried to copy it, but the influence was so strong just by listening to those records that every now and then I hear myself playing something influenced by him. It seeped in, and I noticed it especially when I was playing with Herbie. It's interesting because I wanted to be able to play like myself, but Tony's influence came through unintentionally.

"I don't think we really understand why things happen the way they do. On a level that has nothing to do with music, Tony's death makes me really appreciate every moment I have, because even someone as great as Kim couldn't escape a tragedy. We walk around thinking we're invincible, but when something like this happens to somebody who is so loved and respected, it makes you really think about the quality of your life."

Danny Gottlieb

"What can you say when an icon in your chosen field passes away in such an untimely, unexpected, and premature fashion? Tony Williams was one of our drum heroes, and it is still such a shock to think that he is no longer with us. He was

an absolute inspiration to so many of us.

"Anyone who has played an instrument realizes how hard it is, and how much work and dedication it takes to find your own voice. Tony was able to discipline himself and use his talent to the fullest potential, and at such an early age. It's amazing to listen to the Miles records when he was in his teens.

"There are so many interesting things going on in every recorded performance by Tony. I hear new things every time I listen to any of the records with Miles. What a legacy of recorded performances he has left us!

"I had met Tony a few times, but my favorite memory of him was from a festival in Perugia, Italy in 1987. I was playing there with Gil Evans and was taking pictures of drummers for a German magazine, just for fun. Because I was taking photos I was able to sit right in front of the large outdoor stage, about ten feet in front of Tony. I'll never forget that experience of being so close to Tony's powerful playing."

Jim Keltner

"I've had two major musical life-changing experiences: The first one was seeing Elvin play with Trane when he came to LA for the first time supporting the *My Favorite Things* album. The second one was watching Tony play with Miles at the It Club in South Central after the album *Seven Steps To Heaven* had been released. I feel bad for those who will never have the opportunity to experience up close the power, finesse, and beauty of Tony Williams."

Tris Imboden

"I'll never forget playing at one NAMM show with Cecilia Noel & the Wild Clams. I was about to launch into my solo when my hi-hat started jumping back and forth. I was trying to do this three-pedal thing against a one-handed ostinato. I looked up, kinda panicked, and who did I see? Tony Williams. That only served to make me *more* nervous—I almost blew it. Luckily, I limped through the solo. For me, he was always so incredibly *bad* that it was intimidating to have him watching me. He was the last person I needed to meet eyes with when I was on the verge of choking!

"I was stunned when I first heard Tony. He was so imaginative and explosive, yet always so cool. Even as a teenager, he defined hip. He was, as a drummer and musician, a true visionary and will be sorely missed."

Peter Donald

"Tony and I shared the same teacher, Alan Dawson. Tony had studied with Alan a few years before me when he was very young, and he was already a name in Boston by the time I began lessons. At any rate, sometime in 1969, when Tony was in

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town with Lifetime, I received a phone call from him asking *me* for a favor: Since Alan was out of town that week, could I please show him how to work on the Marvin Dahlgren/Elliott Fine book *Four Way Coordination For The Drumset?* At the time, I was one of the few students who had spent any time working in the book—about six months—so Alan had recommended me.

"I could play through most of the book slowly, but I hadn't really incorporated it comfortably into my playing. So I showed Tony what I could do and he, of course, said, 'Fine. But how do you use it in your playing?' 'I *don't* really—yet.' 'Well, there's some pretty hip stuff in here. I think I'll check it out.'

"Note that this book, when first published twenty-eight years ago, was revolutionary. I remember the day Alan got it in the mail. We were both floored at this logical yet totally original approach of treating each limb equally and avoiding the usual drumset patterns. It is a text that can take years to master.

"A few months later, Tony came back to town and I went to hear him. While I had continued my struggle with the book, he seemed to have completely absorbed it into his playing. He captured the essence of the book and made music out of it in an incredibly short time. It was a humbling and inspiring experience."

Rod Morgenstein

"When I was graduating from high school, the choral teacher gave me Tony Williams' *Ego* album. I had never heard drumming like that. It wasn't so much the licks that turned me on, but just that indescribable thing called feel and touch.

"It seemed like Tony was taking chances every step of the way, 'cause you'd hear these single strokes that would go from triple piano to triple forte, and in the midst of it you'd hear the sticks hitting the rim. It's just this controlled 'out-of-controlness' that was so cool. And then throughout the record he would go into that swing pattern that's not swung. Most of the jazz that I had heard, small-group-oriented or big band, always had a swing feel, but his was somewhere in between a triplet-shuffle feel and a straight-8th feel. He wasn't laying it down like John Bonham, but he also wasn't swinging like most jazz drummers. It was his own voice, totally new and off the beaten track.

"I always got the feeling that he had no plan, no preconceived notion of what he would play, and however he felt that day was what was going to come out. Nobody does that. That's nery, and that's part of the charm of his playing."

Bill Stewart

"I'm especially fond of his 1960s playing with Miles Davis and some of the early

things with Jackie McLean and the records he made as a sideman, like *Point Of Departure* with Andrew Hill.

"I always loved Tony's sound. His cymbal sound was really articulate, especially during that early period—very dark, but very clear. And I loved the sound of his drums.

"Tony superimposed different meters, and he did things that drummers before him didn't do. He had great independence and a clear sound on the drums. He got a certain tone that was uniquely his own just from the way he hit the drums. I'm not sure how he got it. And the way he interacted with the musicians, particularly the chemistry between him and Miles, was remarkable. Miles would leave a space and Tony would fill it up. That was perfect for Miles because he was never one to play a lot of notes. Tony would come up with the greatest things to put in that space."

Michael Shrieve

"When I first heard Tony I decided to quit college, except for big band, and practice all day, every day. Tony was young and daring and I aspired to play like him. I can't tell you how many times I practiced to *Four & More*.

"I used to drive up to the Both And club in San Francisco to see Tony with Miles Davis. The buzz that was out about Tony

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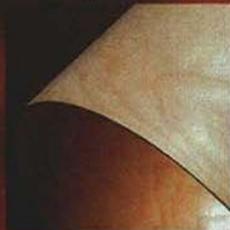
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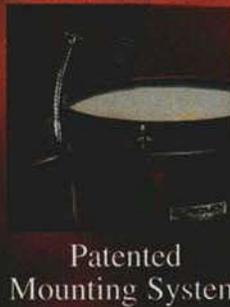
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at that time was unbelievable. The confidence and command was beyond anything you could imagine for a seventeen-year-old kid, and Miles was so proud. He was just beaming all night long. I can clearly remember the way Tony played with time, and the extreme dynamic range he played.

"Later, when I was in Santana, I tried to bring some of Tony's influence into the band's music, much to the record company's chagrin. Record sales went down, but Carlos and I loved it. When we were in New York we would finish up at the Fillmore East and hustle over to see the Tony Williams Lifetime with John McLaughlin and Larry Young. Oh man, that was exciting music. We were screaming.

"Tony was the bridge between the earlier jazz tradition of Philly Joe and Max Roach and the forward-moving avant-garde movement of the '60s and '70s. He is a man who will always be remembered in mythological terms. He is the stuff of legends."

Clarence Penn

"The way Tony played so explosively had a big effect on my playing. I think that came from his love of Stravinsky, who I like too. He listened to a lot of classical music that incorporated pastoral sounds with big, booming percussive explosions. I think that

Tony was creating that same effect with the various groups he played with.

"Tony also taught me that you don't have to sound like somebody else to be recognized. He knew how Papa Jo and Philly Joe played, he knew all those cats, but you could tell he hadn't been studying anyone in particular. He had his own voice although he knew what all the master drummers did."

Cindy Blackman

"When I first saw Tony I was sixteen, and he was so amazing. Right then I knew the direction and sound I wanted to have and the kind of passion I wanted to have in my music. His affect on me has been total, not only technically, but conceptually. It seemed that he could say anything on the drums that he wanted at any given moment. It takes incredible virtuosity to do that.

"I heard extraordinary sounds from Tony; the depth and warmth of his sound struck me. Even when he wasn't playing something technically difficult, the beauty of what he played always stood out to me. *Filles de Kilimanjaro*, *Miles In The Sky*, *E.S.P.*, *Miles Smiles*, *Emergency!*—those were some of my favorites. Tony is my absolute hero. I loved him and will always look up to him."

Jon Christensen

"He's been one of my favorites since the '60s, because we grew up around the same time. He's been with me all the time. Up here [Norway], when there was a record coming out with Miles and Tony Williams, we rushed down to the record store to buy it; we didn't need to listen to it first because we knew it would be fantastic.

"Tony's sound was one thing, but the rhythmic thing is what I first got interested in. When you are looking for something new, the smartest thing is to look 'inside' the drumset. That's what I think he did, breaking up the cymbal rhythms and changing them all over the drumset."

Greg Hutchinson

"When I first heard Tony it was on a Sam Rivers record. What impressed me was his creativity and his drive and the way he played the phrases—he didn't always end them predictably. That elevated the music to a higher level. And playing the drums the way he was playing them, at that age, at that time, when no one else was playing like that, was incredible. He truly was coming from someplace else. He was very special.

"I loved his quintet records on Blue Note, all the Miles records, the Lifetime stuff. If I had to pick one, though, it would be *Nefertiti*. After hearing that I began

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Kenny Washington

"Tony was one of those people who would try anything when it came to music. He was always experimenting. Luckily he had Herbie Hancock and Ron Carter, who were into the same thing: 'Let's see what happens.' It really changed the whole face of jazz drumming. Plus his use of colors, the way he would use the cymbals—that hadn't been done before. And Tony wouldn't necessarily play '1' all the time, coming out of a chorus, for instance. He might not play anything, but you could tell he knew where he was within the form.

"I feel Tony was misunderstood by drummers. He played so outrageously different from everyone who had come before him, but he had done a lot of studying: He knew Philly Joe and Max, but he did things according to his own gospel. A lot of younger drummers don't realize that he did his homework. Tony knew all the records that Louis Hayes did with Horace Silver, he could sing all the solos, both the drum and horn solos. Max expanded on the typical ride cymbal pattern, then Tony expanded on it even more. People will continue to be enthralled by that. He had such a beautiful cymbal sound. It was like being on a magic carpet."

Danny Carey

"I think I discovered Tony Williams' gift in a different way than most. It was actually due to Bill Bruford's praise in a *Modern Drummer* cover story that I bought a Tony Williams Lifetime record [*Believe It!*]. Up until that time my drumming world was pretty much ruled by prog-rock influences, and I was bound and determined to find out what made these guys 'tick.' After I purchased that Tony record I felt that I not only found the 'what' that makes them tick

but also the 'why,' the reason to 'tick' in the first place.

"I listened to that record over and over until I literally wore it out. This playing was like nothing I had ever heard before. Not only was Tony's command of time 'omnipotent,' but it was all so musical and so beautiful. I was truly inspired. (Little did I know at that time that this was a tiny tip of an iceberg of inspiration I could chip on for all my playing years.)

"I went out and bought every record I could find with Tony's playing and received such an education from it. Tony brought the whole jazz scene alive for me because he 'rocked.' He was my link that connected deeper into traditional jazz than most of the other fusion players, so he opened my eyes to a whole other world (Miles, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, etc.). Over the years I've realized how much Tony I hear in so many of my favorite players, like Terry Bozzio, Bill Bruford, and Vinnie Colaiuta. It's amazing how saturated the drumming community is with his influence. His sound will echo for ages through all of us.

"The last time I saw Tony play was at a drum clinic and it was truly a heartwarming event. Even though he was fielding very simple and very technical questions, he was still filling the room with so much love for music and respect for the drumset it was inescapable. I left that room with more desire to play than ever before.

"I thank Mr. Bruford for the kindly advice twenty years ago, and I thank Tony Williams for expanding the horizons of love, music, and the drumset."

Billy Drummond

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what Tony did, I could hear everything he was doing. There wasn't anything left to be confused about. I couldn't do 99% of what he played, but I knew what it was. It enabled me to go for it.

"The sound he got on the instrument, the touch and the clarity he had, and his freedom of ideas were amazing. He amalgamated all the cats that came before him, but you didn't think There's Max or Art.' Tony wasn't copying, but he copped. He changed my life."

Louis Hayes

"I met Tony when I was appearing with Cannonball Adderley in Boston. I had never heard him play, but we just liked each other as two individuals. We'd talk in my room, then I met his mother and father. His father was a saxophonist. Tony and I began practicing together. He always had a direction he wanted to go in, an individual direction of his own to develop. I think he developed his cymbal beat from me. As far as his concept, it came from listening to Roy Haynes and Alan Dawson.

"When Miles asked me to join his group, I couldn't because I was new to Cannonball's group, so I recommended Tony. After that we would practice together at the Vine Lodge in California when I was with Cannonball and he was with Miles. Those hot summer days—the other

people would be swimming, but Tony and I would be practicing.

"Tony was one of the hardest-working musicians I ever had an opportunity to be around. He would practice all day. His main interest was music and developing what he wanted to get together. He didn't have too many other interests at that time. That's why he developed to such a high level. He had a great mind. At a young age he had a concept and he knew exactly what he wanted. He couldn't be swayed."

Ralph Peterson

"My relationship with Tony grew over time. I went from being awestruck to getting in touch with his human side. I'll never be able to adequately put into words the influence and the impact that Tony had on my life. He will be sorely missed by me, and by everyone who has ever enjoyed his music. It is my hope to continue the tradition, and live up to the high standards that he set."

Roy Haynes

"A friend of mine who went to Tony's funeral in California said one of the photos on display was of Tony giving me a hug. I remember when I first met him in the Roxbury section of Boston at a club called Connelly's. He was fifteen or sixteen then, before he worked with Jackie McLean. He was a young fellow wearing a cap and

with a toothpick in his mouth. When I first heard him play I asked him to sit in; he just rolled so distinctly. Tony had a natural feeling for the instrument. He knocked me put.

"Tony and I were close, though we didn't have to talk a lot. We would just say a few words—there was an understanding between us. The last time we spoke was after he played at Birdland the last time. I had a dream about him. So I gave him a call, but this time we talked a long time. We talked as if we knew it was going to be the last time. We talked about his mother and father, what he was like when he was very young, and playing drums. And he mentioned he really liked playing at the new Birdland; it reminded him of the old days. He saw a lot of people that he hadn't seen in a long time.

"After Tony passed, I went to LA to play a gig at Catalina's that was supposed to be his. It was so spiritual, playing with Ira Coleman and Mulgrew Miller. I didn't know if I would be able to handle it, thinking about him. I always thought that when I left I would leave a set of drums for Tony. Here, this guy cuts out before me. It's something, man."

Quotes compiled by Robyn Flans, Rick Mattingly, Ken Micallef, Robin Tolleson, and T. Bruce Wittet.



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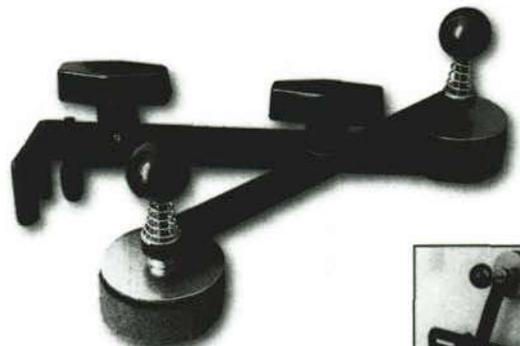
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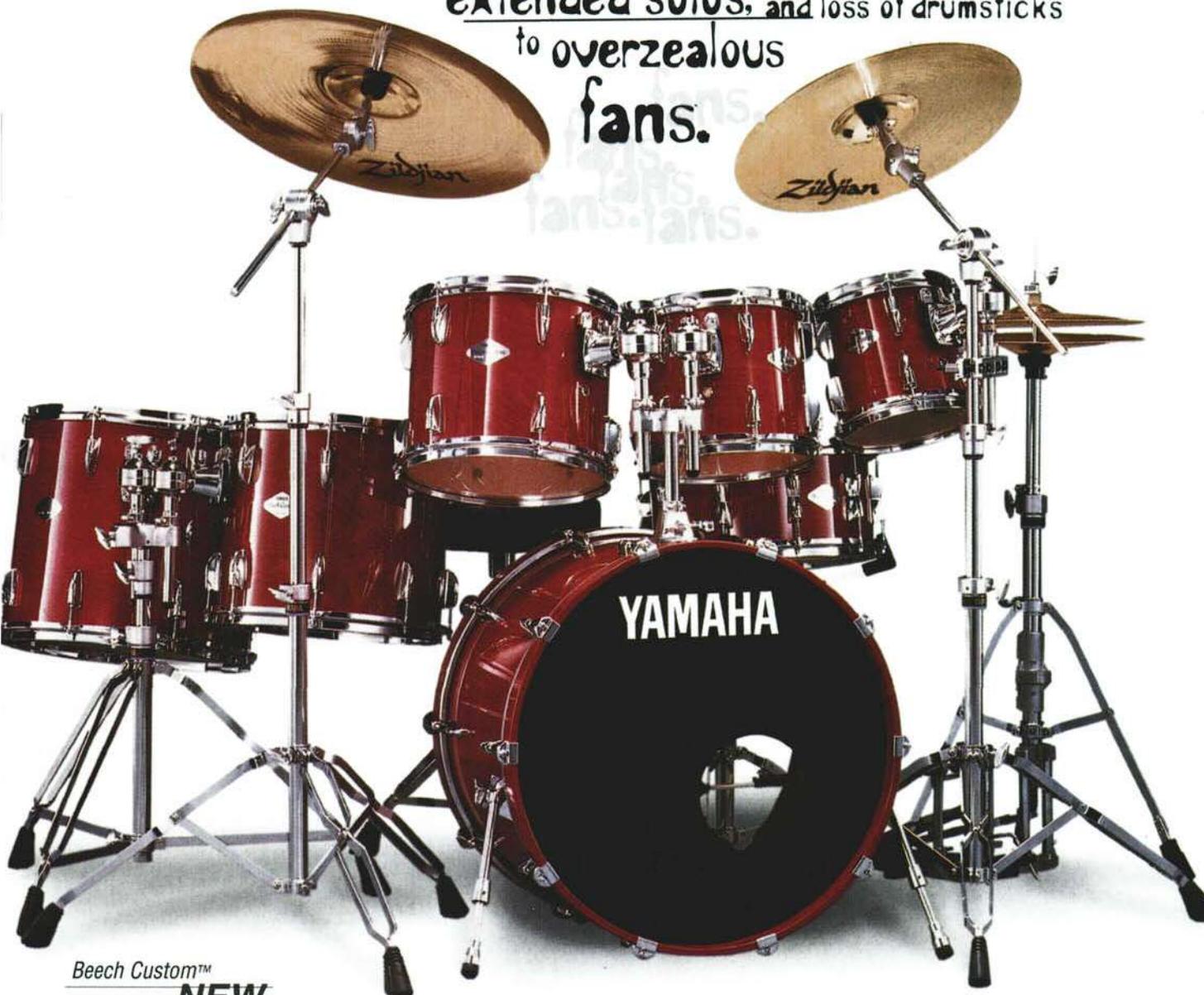
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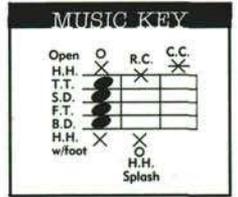
The first time I heard Tony Williams was in Barney Lane's dorm room at North Texas. It was the first week of my freshman year, and Barney was my source; he was a transfer student, had been doing jazz gigs, and knew a thousand LPs.

Every night after the practice rooms were closed, Barney would play selected cuts of his favorite drummers. He would tell me, a jazz novice, exactly what was happening in the music, why it was happening, and why it was *hip*. Barney was turning me on to all of his special finds—Grady Tate, Mel Lewis, Eric Gravatt—guys

who were really playing but weren't household names. Then he realized just how green I was: "You mean you haven't heard Tony?" he said with disbelief. The next thing I knew he was playing "Seven Steps To Heaven," "Walkin'," and "Joshua," all from the live Miles Davis recording *Four & More*, and my life was changed for ever. The following day I went to the record store and bought every record they had with Tony and Miles.

In the twenty or so years since that night, I've heard a lot of music and played some myself. I continue to enjoy and study the work of all my favorite players.

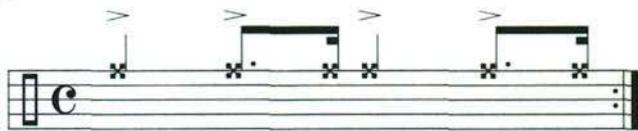
But after all these years of living with Tony's playing, I must admit that I'm not much closer to unraveling the mystery of how he arrived at such an *original* concept, so fully formed, at such a young age. But I do know that whenever I feel at a loss for what to practice, all I have to do is listen to some Tony. Suddenly I become very inspired.



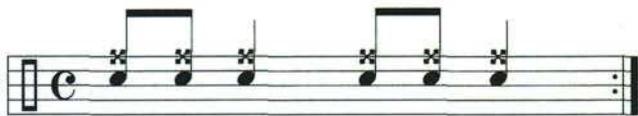
Early Approaches

Here is an interesting quote from Tony Williams that appeared in a *Modern Drummer* interview in 1984: "When I was a kid, for about two years I played like Max Roach. Max is my favorite drummer. I don't know if I've ever said this clearly and plainly, but Max Roach was my biggest drum idol. Art Blakey was my first idol, but Max was the biggest. So I would buy every record I could find with Max on it, and then I would play exactly like him—exactly what was on the record, solos and everything. I also did that with drummers like Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones, Jimmy Cobb, Roy Haynes, and all of the drummers I admired. I would even tune my drums just like they were on the record."

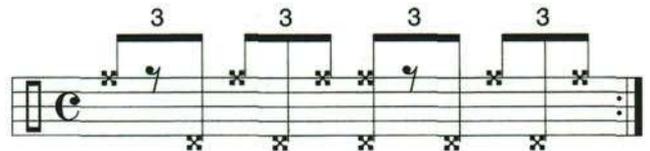
One can hear very faint similarities to the players Tony mentioned as his main sources (though you certainly don't hear anyone else's licks). At slow tempos his ride cymbal beat is phrased kind of tightly and on top of the beat, like Jimmy Cobb's.



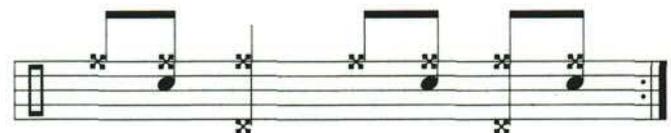
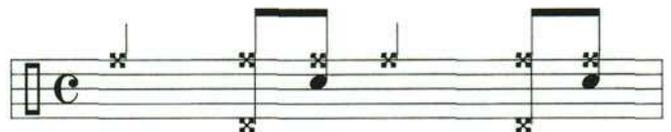
His occasional use of unison snare and ride cymbal figures is reminiscent of Roy Haynes' approach.

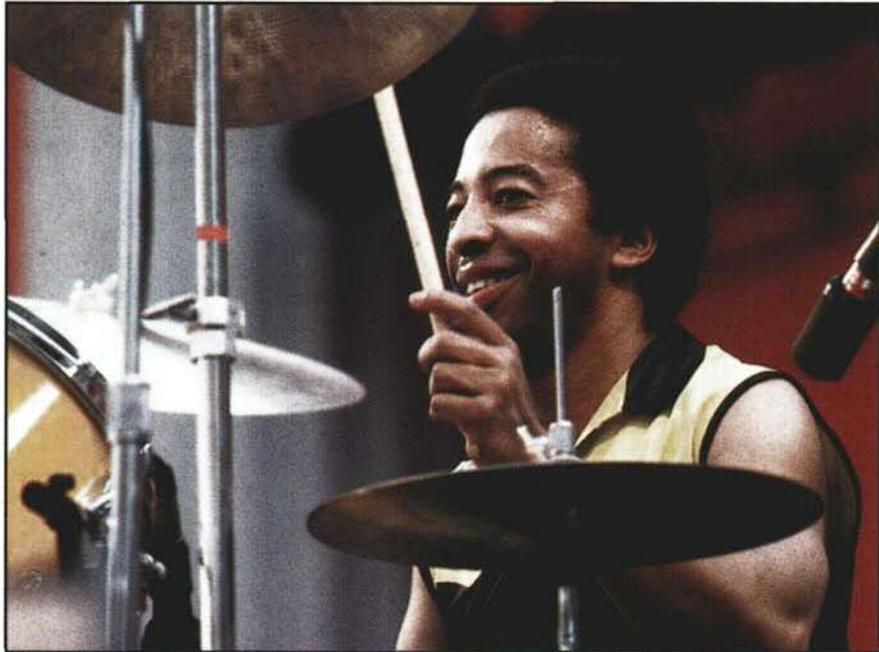


His irregular use of the hi-hat reminds me of ideas from both Art Blakey and Roy Haynes.



His up-tempo ride cymbal phrasing is very "flat," and he plays a lot of five-note ideas, similar to what you hear from Shelly Manne's playing years earlier.





Tom Coppi

The "snap" and virtuosity of Tony's solos communicates the same kind of feeling of command of the instrument that I hear from Max Roach and Philly Joe Jones. However, these comparisons are a very small part of the picture to me, not even as apparent as the shadow of a ghost. I seem to remember

Tony saying in an old *Down Beat* interview that he had learned to play like his idols, and then created his own voice by playing all the things that his idols *weren't* playing.

My main impression of Tony is that of a master who *invented his own super-sophisticated language* for the drumset by blending bebop ideas with more abstract concepts of playing, ideas that he had heard in the avant-garde scene, while at the same time infusing the music with the energy of rock. This amalgam was not just a new way to play the drums, but a completely new way to play *music*. It appears that Tony made it his responsibility to take the music in a new direction by playing it exactly the way he wanted to play it. Fortunately Tony found in Miles Davis a leader with the temperament and the vision to encourage these explorations. But every band that Tony worked in sounded special due to his "go for it" attitude—he loved to take chances. And through his playing he compelled his bandmates to really stretch.

"Nefertiti"

On the following page is a transcription of Tony's playing of the song "Nefertiti" from the Miles Davis recording of the same name. "Nefertiti" is a sixteen-measure form, and this is the second version the band recorded on that day in June of 1967.

If you listen, you will notice that this performance is somewhat unusual in that there are *no solos* during the entire 7:49 take. I understand that the first take on this tune, done just prior to this one, was among the most amazing things that the band ever played, but due to some technical problems in the studio the tape was unusable. Upon learning that the first take was lost and that they would have to play another, the musicians were quite disappointed, and no one felt like soloing on this second take. However, what you do hear on the second take is prime Tony Williams; he completely directs the shape of this amazing performance by leading this slowly evolving, trance-like tune through a series of intense climaxes.

The accompanying transcription begins near the top of their ascent, at 5:20 into the piece, which is the beginning of the tenth chorus, and it continues for three choruses. Looking at this transcription will definitely give you some new drumming ideas. The "licks" are there for you to sift through, but I think

your degree of understanding and appreciation for Tony's level of musicianship will be infinitely more enhanced if you get this recording and listen to the entire tune—and the entire CD.

While there isn't space here to analyze each and every aspect of Tony's amazing thirty-plus-year recording

career, in regards to this transcription, I'd like to point out some of his main conceptual innovations and stylistic tendencies. This sixteen-bar song is structured as two eight-bar phrases, and drummers traditionally would subtly delineate eight-bar sections by playing some sort of fill at the end of the eighth and sixteenth bars to show these musical landmarks. A big reason Tony's playing always sounded so fresh was that he almost never spelled out the phrases in such a symmetrical fashion. He intentionally avoided playing a big "1" at the top of a phrase, preferring instead to create deceptive cadences. He did this in several different ways:

- A) by playing a fill that sounded like it was going to end on the "1" but continuing past the normal resolution point to a later accent
- B) by playing a fill that climaxed early—very often on one of the two most unsettling points in the measure—the & of beats 1 or 3 before a big 1
- C) by ending his fill, either before or after beat 1, and returning to the ride cymbal without playing any accent at all, giving us the "build up" but not the resolution "crash."

You can see examples of these techniques in bars 4, 8, 9, 16, 20, and continually throughout the chart. All of these devices kept the music from "resting" too much; they pushed it forward in search of a real resolution.

Other innovations include Tony's use of "odd" groups of notes, like the five-note motif he explores in measures 13 and 14, and his use of metric modulation, or the variable-speed phrase, as in the shift from bar 21 to 22. Measures 25-27 are an emotional peak in the performance. Notice how Tony's energy changes the music, and then how he releases that energy in bars 28-32.

Measure 33 is the beginning of the third transcribed chorus (6:30 on the CD). At this point Miles and Wayne Shorter stopped playing the melody. Observe how patient Tony was, as well as the dramatic effect of his diminuendo and crescendo in measures 33-36. This chorus became a drum interlude before the melody returned, and Tony shaped it beautifully.

To end the song, the band played the melody one final time. Tony wound the intensity up briefly, then went way down, ending the tune by playing very softly and simply—just as the song began.



1 *mf* Buzz

9 *f*

17 *mf*

25 *ff*

mf



33

41

The Sound

Tony's unique sound and touch were important factors in his music-making. His sound was very clean, which is directly from the bebop tradition—the bass drum and toms tuned fairly high and very open, snare drum tight and crisp. Tony's articulation on the drums and cymbals was impeccable, and his consistent sound and touch contributed to his intense time feeling.

Tony's ride cymbal had a beautiful combination of great stick definition, more of a "tick" than a "ping," in contrast to a broad, dark cushion of "wash" underneath. His crash was higher-pitched than his ride, responded quickly, and was never used as a second ride. In fact, throughout his career Tony never changed his ride cymbal in the middle of a tune; every soloist received a similar sonic backdrop from which to work. In addition, his hi-hats were on the heavy side and created a dark, full sound.

After Miles

Upon leaving Miles' quintet in 1969 Tony formed his own band, Lifetime, with guitarist John McLaughlin and organist Larry Young. This band was a *power trio* and perhaps the first true "fusion" band. During this period Tony's playing became even more aggressive and virtuosic. Their recordings, *Emergency* and *Turn It Over*, are very raw-sounding but must be checked out because they contain some of the most ferocious and outrageous drumming ever heard.

In 1975 Tony released a great session with a new band, featuring guitarist Allan Holdsworth, entitled *Believe It*. At this point Tony introduced a completely different drum and cymbal sound, which was geared for the louder, more groove-oriented

music of this band. As a leader, Tony continued in this fundamental creative zone, in addition to doing numerous more straight-ahead special projects and record dates, until 1985. He continued to refine this basic drum and cymbal sound for the remainder of his career.

In 1985 Tony formed a new quintet with the same instrumentation as the Miles Davis quintet that he had been a member of in the '60s, and returned to recording and touring as a leader in the jazz arena. While Tony continued his mastery of the instrument, his playing was now more "inside"—there were fewer deceptive cadences and the vocabulary was more familiar—almost like he had mastered all the wild stuff that he had been doing earlier. But in mastering that vocabulary, some of the urgent "spark" was taken out of it. The focus of this group, and most of Tony's later energy, seemed to be towards presenting his newly refined, highly developed compositional skills. (This band was captured on the fantastic concert video *Tony Williams New York Live*.)

Tony had, through continuous work and study, become an excellent composer, and he played his own compositions with an awareness of dynamics, pacing, and form that one would expect only from the master musician he truly was. While Tony will be sorely missed, the answers to any questions that one might have about how to play music can be found in each and every one of his recordings.

Thank you Tony.

Other aspects of Tony Williams' musical contributions are discussed in John Riley's new book, Beyond Bop Drumming, available from Warner Bros. Publications.





A Lifetime On Track

The Recorded Legacy Of Tony Williams

by Mark Griffith

In retrospect, one can say that every drummer who came before Tony Williams paved the way for him, and few drummers since have lived up to the standards he set. No one will ever fill the void that was left on February 23, 1997; nonetheless, Tony set a standard that we should all try to live up to. Here we will look back on the best of the best, the recorded works of Tony Williams.

In the early '60s, Tony played on many outstanding Blue Note recordings. The first of major significance is Jackie McLean's 1963 release *One Step Beyond*. The reason that this recording is so important is that it embodied the essence of what Tony was throughout his career: a driving force.

When Tony was young, he (by his own admission) tried to play exactly like Max Roach, Art Blakey, Philly Joe, and Roy Haynes, but he knew that this imitation was part of an evolutionary process. On *One Step Beyond*, the emulation process had ended, and the driving force, and subsequent forward motion, had begun. This is what Tony was all about.

Tony knew that in order to become great musicians, we must experiment, take chances, and be creative. He also knew that there would never be another *Milestones* by Miles Davis, or *Study In Brown* by Clifford Brown and Max Roach. These were timeless classics, they were his favorites, and they inspired him to play the drums. If he was to do the same for others, he would have to do something new, something no one had ever done before. This is what he did on *One Step Beyond*.

On the song "Saturday And

Sunday" you can hear the whole history of jazz drumming coming together in the music that Tony was creating. The teenaged Williams took the drive of Papa Jo Jones, the melodicism and finesse of Max Roach, the unconventional use of the hi-hat and floating ride cymbal beat from Roy Haynes, and the sheer power of Art Blakey, and mixed them with the new angularity and spontaneity of Andrew Cyrille and Sunny Murray. These influences are also evident on the mystical "Ghost Town," and on the explosive "Nomadic" from Grachan Moncur's 1964 release *Some Other Stuff*.

Tony played on many great records during this period. Two other outings from '64 are Eric Dolphy's *Out To Lunch* and Andrew Hill's *Point Of Departure*. Dolphy had recorded with Ed Blackwell earlier in the '60s, and although Williams and Blackwell were two of Max Roach's prime disciples, Tony approached Dolphy's music very differently from Ed. The stunning aspect of *Out To Lunch* is how much space he left. Tony often approached the drums in these avant-garde sessions as a comping instrument, contrary to the approach of filling up the music with a layer of rhythm. We all know that Tony had the technique, but more than that, he had the musical taste to know when—and when not—to use it. Every rhythm, and each note Tony plays, is essential and very musical.

On *Point Of Departure*, Tony's drum role is more traditional. There are more notes and less space, and Tony took an active role in directing the music. This direction was ultimately the responsibility of the leader,

Andrew Hill, one of jazz's great conceptualists, but Tony took the wheel and guided the ship. His drumming is ferocious and unyielding, but in a very musical way.

Clearly Tony's approach to these two recordings was very different, but in both cases it was exactly what the music needed. When Tony let the music evolve around him, beautiful music was always created, and when he was actively guiding that music, it was always sure to go someplace spectacular. This is a monumental achievement for any accompanying musician. But Tony Williams was destined to become more than an accompanying musician. These two musical concepts are ideas that would guide Tony's career as a leader.

Life Time, Tony's first recording as a leader, is a subdued recording of dialogs within a group setting. But on *Spring*, Tony's second recording as a leader, his drumming runs the gamut from subtle and understated to strong and aggressive. The drum solo composition "Echo" is beautiful, and taken with the other four compositions (all Tony's), *Spring* is a very important representation of '60s "free-form" jazz expressionism.

For a more traditional recording done around this same time, check out the excellent *Fuchsia Swing Song* by Sam Rivers. In this muscular quartet, Tony sounds very strong. This actually may be a good recording to check out before listening to the more spatial music that Williams did with Dolphy and Hill.

Miles Davis formed the first of the quintets featuring Tony Williams in 1963. In Miles' words, "He [Tony] just blew my mind. I could definitely hear



comping," or "breaking up" the time. He was composing a timeflow, and often altering the pulse within that timeflow. The elasticity that Roy Haynes and Elvin Jones had introduced was being stretched to its limits.

On the other hand, Tony's playing on the ballads on these recordings is equally stunning in their sensitivity and musicality. And let us not forget the amazing feel of Tony's mid-tempo bounce on "There Is No Greater Love." I have never met a drummer who was not terrified and astounded the first time he heard these recordings.

On "Four," listen to Tony's sound when he keeps time on his half-open hi-hats. No one had mastered that sound so well since Papa Jo Jones. Tony's overall sound was exquisite. People often talk of Tony's sound, but they forget that much of that sound was in his touch. It was a perfect balance of gentleness and aggressiveness. And his sound was in his hands. In Miles' band Tony never sounded top-heavy, bottom-heavy, or heavy-handed. Sure, Tony had amazing technique, and the proof was in what he played. But with his technique he was also able to really control his sound, and his instrument. The *Complete Concert: 1964* is a must-have, must-study, all-time classic.

All of Miles' studio recordings—particularly *E.S.P.*, *Miles Smiles*, and the later *Miles In The Sky*—are masterpieces. But the posthumous *Live At The Plugged Nickel* box set is, to put it simply, monumental. Tony's solo/intro on "Agitation" is fascinating, his original take on the straight-

that this was going to be one of the baddest guys to ever play a set of drums." And in 1964 Miles' predictions were proven true. Tony played on two of the most remarkable jazz—and jazz drumming—recordings ever. These recordings were first released as two LPs, which are now available on one double-CD set: *The Complete Concert: 1964 (Four & More And My Funny Valentine)*.

From a jazz drumming standpoint, these recordings contain some of the scariest and most daunting performances ever. Up until then Tony had been exploring space, playing in freer

contexts, and creating musical soundscapes. Now, in Miles' band, he brought these explorations to more familiar compositions, and he was playing these tunes faster than anyone could ever imagine.

Never mind Tony's spectacular solos on these recordings, just listen to his timekeeping. Check out the tune "Walkin." Listen to the ride cymbal patterns, then listen to the bass drum punctuations, then listen to how his snare drum and hi-hat intertwine in his comping. The interaction among his limbs is truly amazing. Tony was not merely "riding and

Tracking Them Down

Here's a list of the albums mentioned, including label and catalog information. Following the list are several sources you might want to check for hard-to-find releases.

Jackie McLean: *One Step Beyond*, Blue Note TOCJ4137. **Grachan Moncur III:** *Some Other Stuff*, Blue Note TOCJ4177. **Eric Dolphy:** *Out To Lunch*, Blue Note CDP746524. **Andrew Hill:** *Point Of Departure*, Blue Note CDP784167. **Tony Williams:** *Life Time*, Blue Note CDP 7 84180 2; *Lifetime Spectrum: The Anthology*, Verve 314537075-2; *Spring*, Blue Note CDP 7 46135; *Emergency!*, Polydor 849 068-2; *Turn It Over*, Polydor 24-4065; *The Collection*, Columbia CK 47484; *Angel Street*, Blue Note CDP 7 484942; *Civilization*, Blue Note CT 85138; *Wilderness*, Ark 21 724385457128. **Miles Davis:** *The Complete Concert: 1964*, Columbia C2K 48821; *E.S.P.*, Columbia CK 46863; *Miles Smiles*, Columbia CK 48849; *Miles In The Sky*, Columbia

CK48954; *The Complete Live At The Plugged Nickel*, Columbia CK 66955. **Don Pullen:** *New Beginnings*, Blue Note CDP 7 91785 2. **Gerri Allen Trio:** *Twenty One*, Blue Note CDP 7243 8 30028. **Various Artists:** *In From The Storm*, RCA 09026-68233-2. **Arcana:** *The Last Wave*, DIW903.

(For a more in-depth look at Tony's recorded works see Mark Griffith's *OnTrack* articles that appeared in the February and March 1996 issues of *Modern Drummer*.)

Tower Records Mail Order, (800) 648-4844; J&R Music World Mail Order, (800) 221-8180; Audiophile Imports, (410) 628-7601; Third St. Jazz and Rock, (800) 486-8745; Rick Ballard Imports, PO Box 5063, Dept. DB, Berkeley, CA 94705; Double Time Jazz, PO Box 1244, New Albany, IN 47151; Scott Davidson Music, (302) 529-1081.



8th soul jazz beat of "Eighty-One" is classic, his stylings on "Footprints" changed the way that we all play in 3/4, and his elastic timeflow on "Dolores" is amazing. Of special note is that in Miles' company, Tony was encouraged to write. "Hand Jive," "Black Comedy," and "Pee Wee" were early compositions by the drummer.

At the age of twenty-three Tony began to put his writing and bandleading skills to the challenge. With the formation of the Tony Williams Lifetime he managed to follow Miles' lead and create a new genre of music. Lifetime, an organ trio featuring Larry Young and John McLaughlin, is credited with originating jazz/rock fusion. The ensuing records *Emergency!* and *Turn It Over* changed music. I highly recommend the new collection released by Verve called *The Tony Williams Lifetime: Spectrum*, containing selections from these two recordings as well as the forgotten *Ego* and *The Old Bums Rush*, most of which appears on CD for the first time.

In 1975 Tony re-formed Lifetime with new members (most notably guitarist Allan Holdsworth) and recorded the truly amazing *Believe It*. This is now available with that group's second release, *Million Dollar Legs*, on Sony's *The Collection*. *Believe It* did for rock drummers what *Four & More* did for jazz drummers: It completely reestablished the vocabulary and changed the job description of the drummer in that genre.

In the '80s Tony picked up where Art Blakey had left off, and in the tradition of Max Roach, Art Taylor, and Roy

His Final Recording



In September of '96, Tony Williams went into the Sony Music Shinanomachi Studio in Tokyo, Japan, to record tracks using their new "direct stream digital system." These recordings, which would turn out to be the drummer's last, are featured on a brand-new release, *Young At Heart* (available in the States as an import).

This recording features Williams with his trio (Ira Coleman on bass, Mulgrew Miller on piano) playing mostly standards and a few originals. Tony's drumming here is fabulous; at times gentle and sensitive, at others fiery and bombastic. These tracks also show that his technique had not diminished one iota. (His singles never sounded better.) And thanks to this new digital process, the recorded sound here is superb. "Tony-philes" will love it. (Available from *Audiophile Imports*, (410) 628-7601.)

Haynes, began leading his own band of young jazz players. Many of today's brightest stars fell under his guidance. The two most spectacular recordings of this band are *Angel Street*—complete with outstanding drum interludes and one of Tony's greatest compositions (and grooves), "Red Mask"—and the terrific *Civilization*, which will someday be a classic.

In the last ten years Tony had been working more with his own bands, but he still made a few excellent "freelance" recordings. Since Tony prided himself on his versatility, let's look at five very different recordings. First, Don Pullen's *New Beginnings* is a welcome flashback to the '60s that nonetheless avoids rehashing old ideas. This is an original-sounding piano trio. On Geri Allen's *Twenty One*, a more traditional piano-trio recording, Tony is tasteful and supportive. On *In From The Storm*, Tony breathes new life into Hendrix classics, supporting guitarists such as Steve Vai, Carlos Santana, and Steve Lukather, as well as an orchestra. In 1996 Tony stood face-to-face with today's avant-garde (Derek Bailey and Bill Laswell) with the group Arcana on *The Last Wave*. This is a very different recording, proving again that Tony's drumming crossed all stylistic barriers. Finally, Tony's recent release, *Wilderness*, documented a major musical accomplishment: His legitimate composing and arranging for orchestra.

With Tony's passing, many of us lost a hero, an influence, and possibly the sole reason we started playing drums. Thank you, Tony, for the inspiration.



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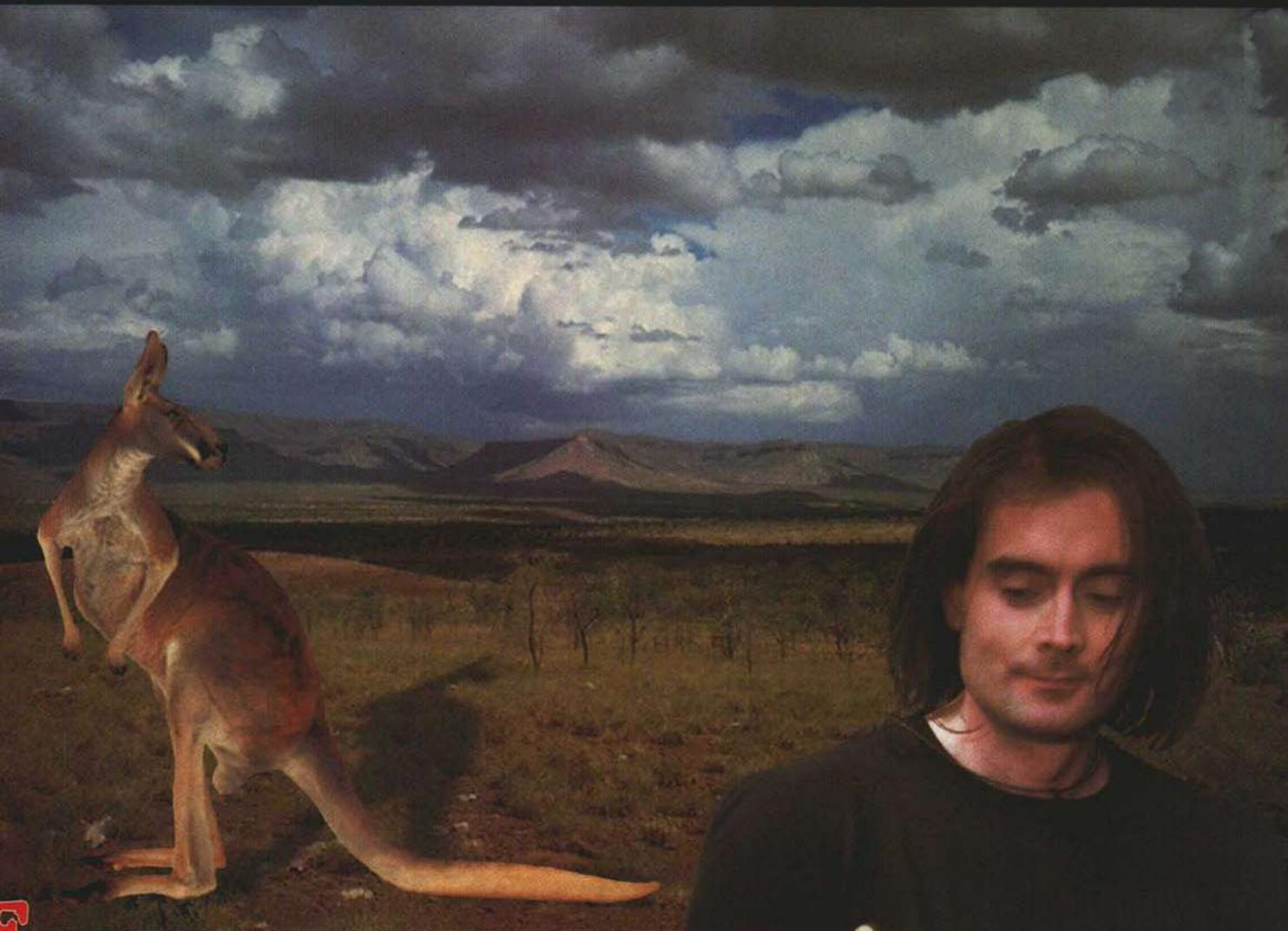
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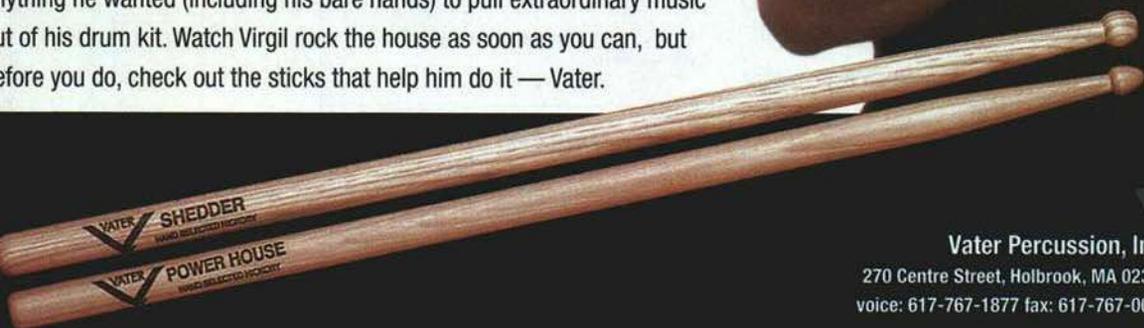
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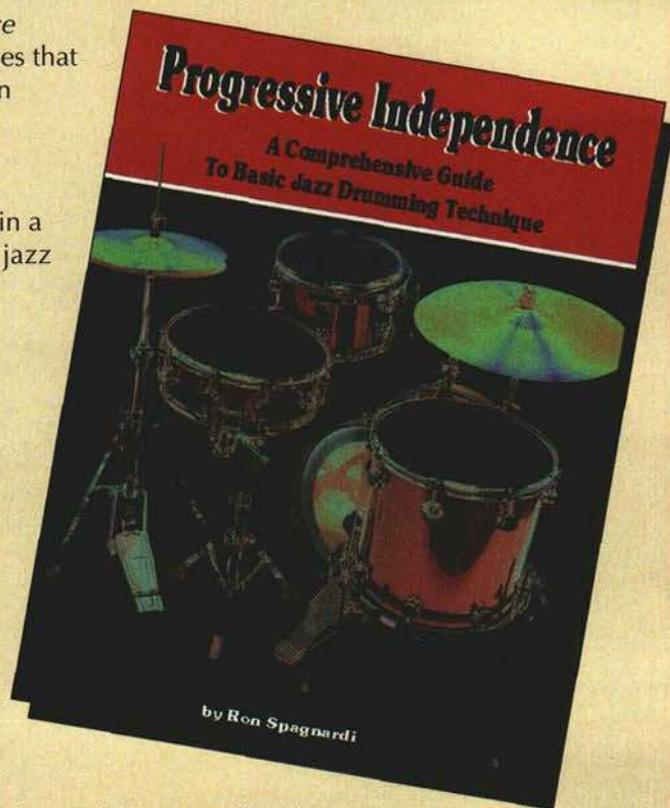
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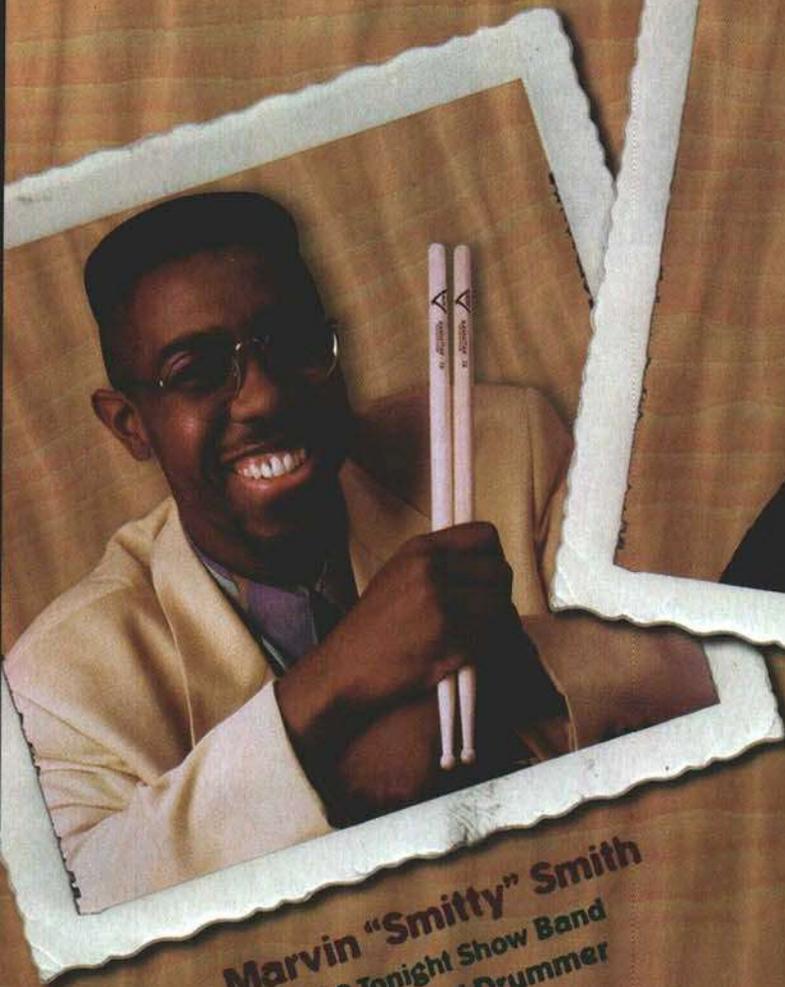
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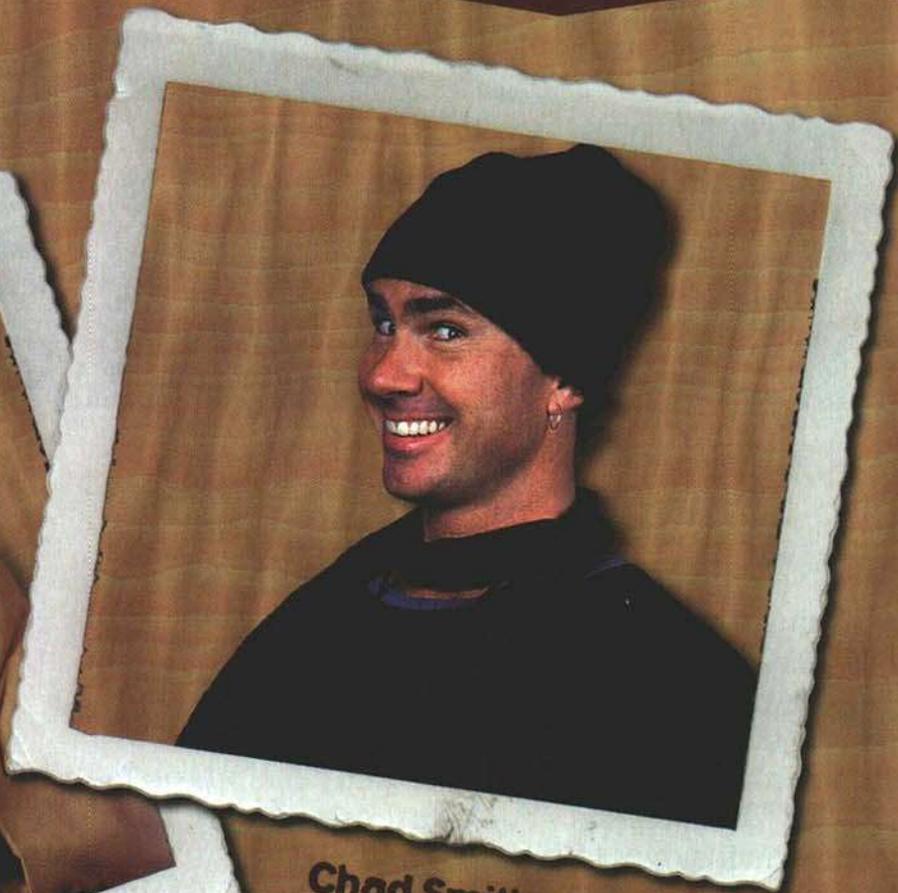
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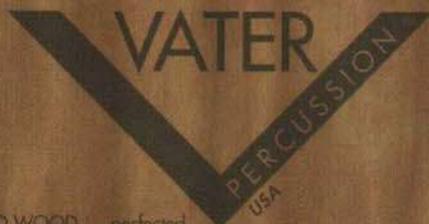


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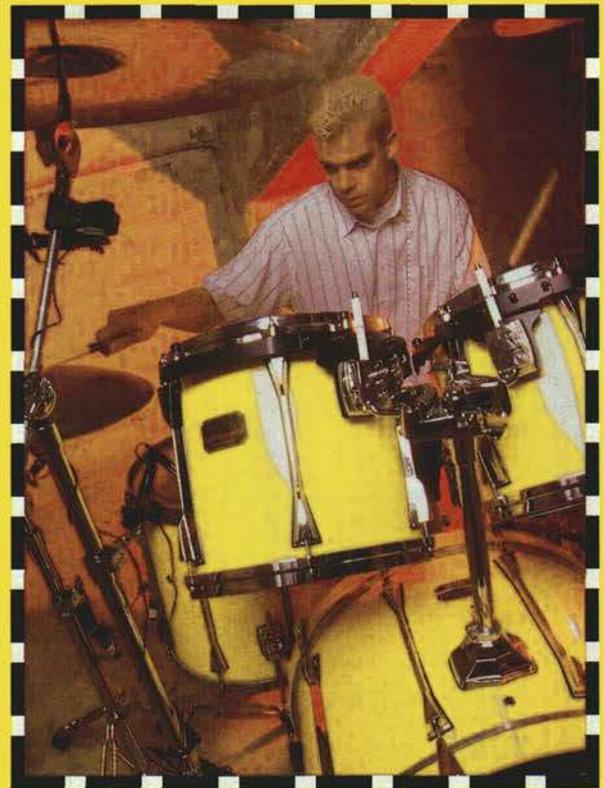
John Stanier's dad is a tenor sax player and his mother is an art critic, and the two used to throw some of the swankiest, most Swingin' parties in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "We constantly had music in the house," John recalls. "And when my parents had their friends over to play, I would always sit around and watch the drummer, who was just this mammoth, fat guy. The music was this *free jazz*, and it was such a weird environment to be around. But it also totally hooked me on music."

John credits his parents with his passion to play music, and he grew up through school marching bands, participated in drum corps during high school, and then studied orchestral percussion at the University of South Florida. It was an academic upbringing that ultimately led in one direction—straight to hardcore.

Enamored as much by the lifestyle as the music, Stanier dropped out of college and moved to New York City, where he spent a year doing little more than taking in the scenery of the underground. Seemingly fruitless hunting expeditions in the *Village Voice* classified ads finally led him to guitarist and songwriter Page Hamilton. Their band, Helmet, quickly wove itself into the fabric of

wrapped too tight?

photos by Morrison + Wulffraat





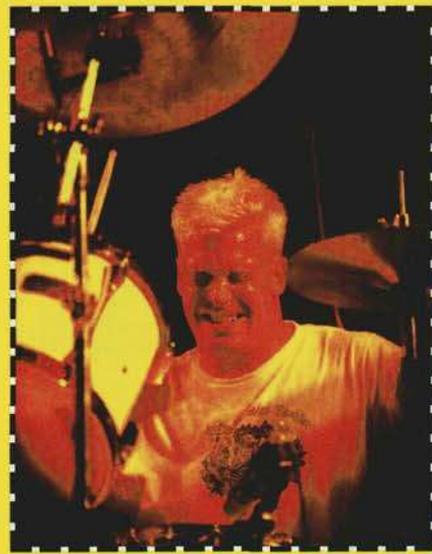
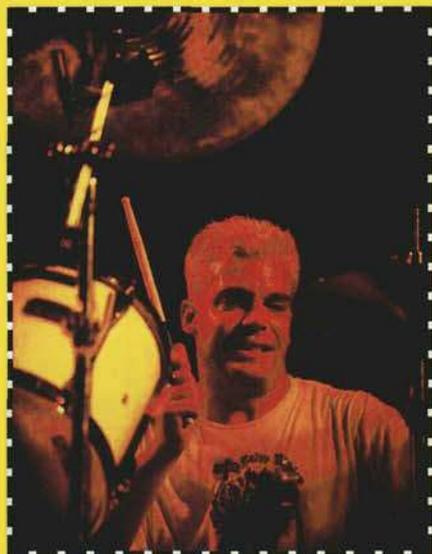
New York's independent music community. They had no clue their brand of straight-ahead, white-punk, riff-rooted rock would soon become the target of a major-label bidding war.

"A lot of kids may not remember this, but around ten years ago, bands like us never even considered signing a major-label record contract," Stanier says. "Bands like Sonic Youth, Husker Du, and the Butthole Surfers were the guinea pigs of the mid-'80s, the first of the underground bands to get major-label attention, and Nirvana and the whole grunge thing hadn't happened yet. I think that in a lot of ways our success has as much to do with timing as talent."

Since signing a six-figure deal with

Interscope in 1992, Helmet has pulled its hardcore fanbase into the mainstream, going gold with its major-label debut, *Meantime*, then turning heads with the musically off-kilter *Betty*. Stanier keeps the head banging on Helmet's new disc, *Aftertaste*, an unfiltered dose of no-nonsense aggro-rock. And as in past years, fans can expect to catch the band in a variety of venues—Helmet has toured with everyone from the Rollins Band to Korn, and later this year they'll be out with Marilyn Manson.

If audiences have difficulty pinning down Helmet, so does Stanier, who says the band is a constant source of amusement—and amazement.



MP: You guys have been lumped in with the skater crowd, the punk crowd, the alternative crowd.... Now you're attracting more of a metal label. Does it throw you off as a band to perform under such varied bills?

JS: Not at all. We've played with so many different people and bands over the years, which has been good because people haven't been able to just lump us into one category. We like playing for as many different audiences as we can—especially this time around—to try to reach the unconverted. It's been pretty

interesting going out with Korn. Their audience is really young—a lot of Johnny-come-latelys, as far as we go. We toured quite a bit for *Betty*, but we haven't had a new record out in two and a half years, and probably half of the people coming to shows on this tour have never heard of us.

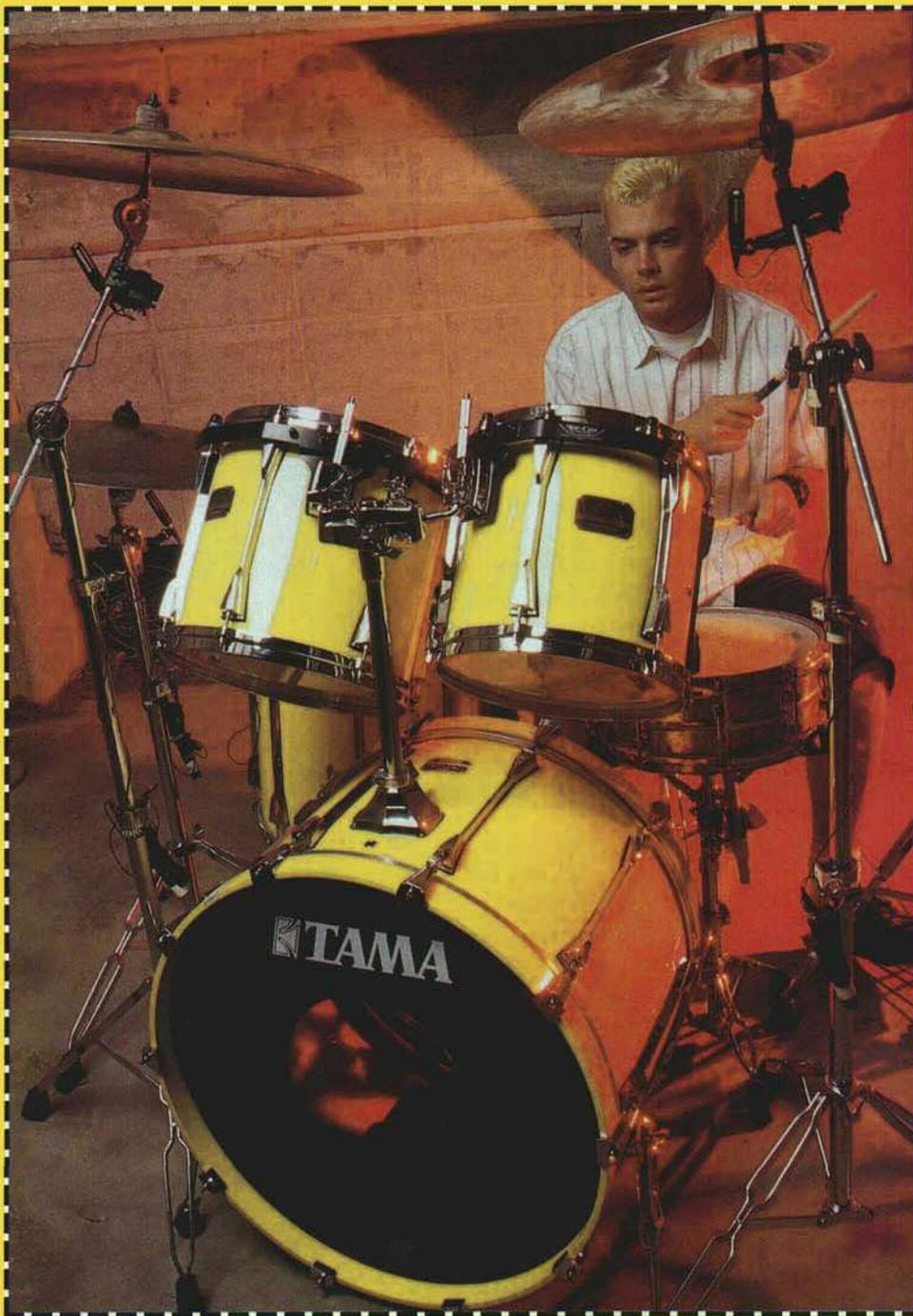
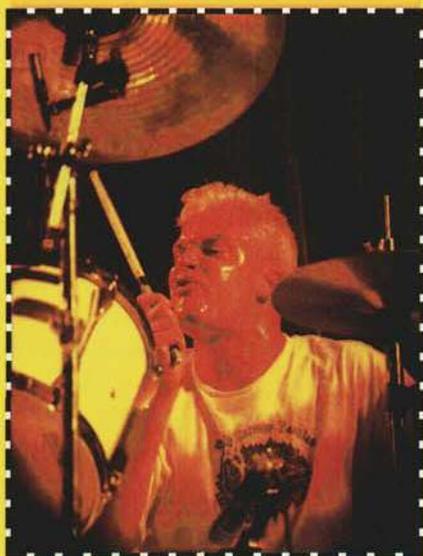
In a way, that's kind of frustrating, because we've been making records and doing shows for seven or eight years. We had a gold album [1992's *Meantime*], and the next album did really well, especially in Europe, but a lot of people *still*

don't really know much about us. In another way, though, it's good, because we're not tied to any trend and we're still fresh. So hopefully the new record will turn on a whole bunch of new people.

MP: *Aftertaste* is much more straight-ahead musically than *Betty*, more to the band's roots. Was that by design or by accident?

JS: Well, it depends what you mean by straight-ahead. Some people might take that to mean radio-friendly and soft, which this record definitely *isn't*. It's maybe the purest rock record we've ever

"To tell you the truth, I hate improvising or playing off-the-cuff. I've never considered myself a very 'jammy' drummer, and I don't respond well when somebody says, 'Okay, play something.' "



done, but it's funny how people are now looking back at *Betty* as this experimental record. Sure, it had its little moments, but the majority of them were just jokes. I don't think it represented any significant musical departure. We wanted the mood on the new record to be completely different from *Betty*—completely different from anything we've done before—and I think we got that.

The thing about *Aftertaste* is it doesn't have any fat on it, and I think in that sense it was intentional. And really, everything about this record was deliber-

ate, which was one of the reasons it took us a year and a half to make. Page is the main songwriter, and he never writes on the road. It's just too hard for us to be inspired and creative when we have all this other crap going on around us. So, typical for us, nothing really happened for the new record until we put *Betty* behind us.

MP: Do you think, as a band, you guys made great strides musically between *Betty* and *Aftertaste*!

JS: Absolutely. *Meantime* was a really successful record for us. It was really our

second record, but it was our first major-label release, so there were a lot of pressures and expectations about what the next record would be like. Don't get me wrong—I love *Betty*; I think it's the shit. But I think we kind of needed to get *Betty* out of our systems, and once that was over with, we were able to free ourselves of any outside expectations for the new record. We just went in, had fun, and made a record that feels really natural to us.

MP: How did that translate to your personal performance on the record? Were

you a lot more spontaneous this time around?

JS: Not at all. To tell you the truth, I hate improvising or playing off-the-cuff. I've never considered myself a very "jammy" drummer, and I don't respond well when somebody says, "Okay, play something." In fact, we're a very anti-jam band. That's half the reason we don't write on the road, because that just doesn't come naturally to us. I don't think we've ever written a song from just jamming. I think a lot of that is because we're just so different as people—our ages, our musical tastes, our backgrounds.

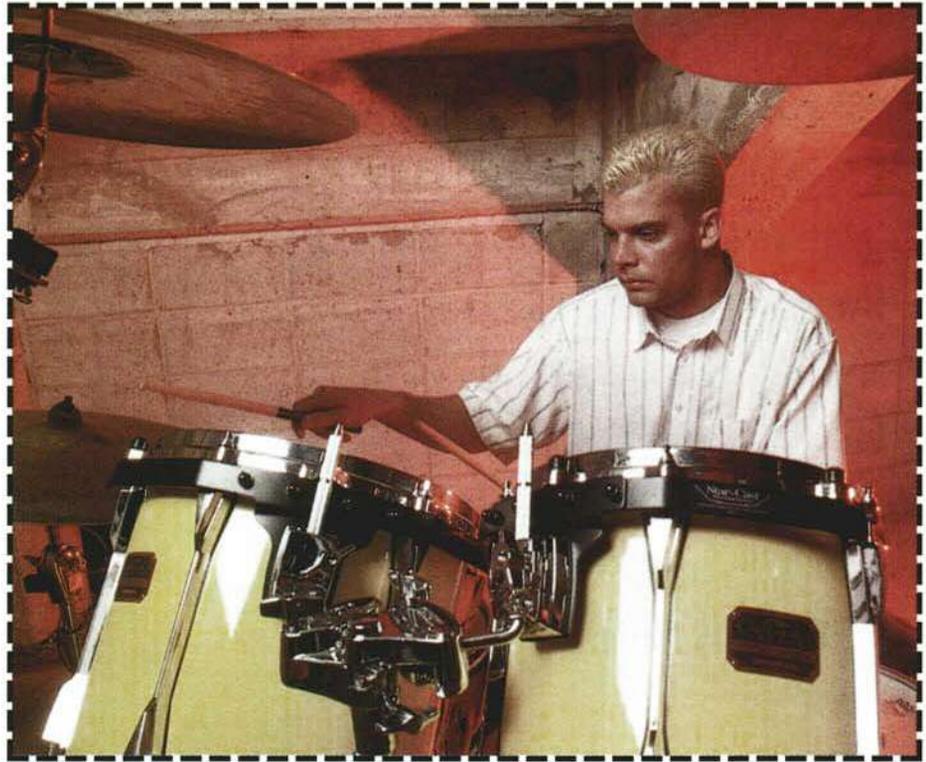
MP: I'd think the rudiments and skills you picked up through school and drum corps would have given you the tools to handle any musical situation. Given your schooling, what made you so driven to put the complexities of music aside and concentrate on playing in a hardcore band?

JS: First of all, I can't stress enough what that kind of education did for me. Drum corps was harder than any sport I ever played. It's not for the weak, and it develops a lot of discipline, but I totally enjoyed it. In college I had this professor named Robert McCormick, who had studied with avant-garde percussionist/composer Harry Partch. He got me into mallets, which made an impression on me.

But college and corps—that was more brain food for me than anything else, more subliminal. I never took drumset lessons or studied the drumset in any formal way, and in college I lived two completely different lives. By day I was studying these intricate orchestral pieces and transcribing a Rimsky-Korsakov piece for glockenspiel, and at night I was in a hardcore band. At that time I was really two different musicians.

I guess in school I played a lot more thoughtfully, and I paid more attention to dynamics, almost approaching it like chemistry or math, whereas when I played rock I was like a caveman. I'm really glad I went through that, but after a while I got sick of jumping back and forth over that fence. I wanted to be in a band, so I dropped out of college before my junior year and immediately moved to New York.

MP: Why did you feel you had to drop out of college to pursue music? You were already playing in bands down in Florida, so why not just stick it out there?



JS: There was a really big scene in Tampa, but the bands weren't really getting anywhere, and I didn't feel like hanging out another two years to get my degree when I knew that all I wanted to do was be in a band. I figured that if that's what I wanted to do, I either had to go to New York or LA to make it happen.

But I didn't want to be a rock star. It may sound funny, but I wanted to be in a band that was totally starving and struggling. I just wanted to go through that experience. At that time, alternative hadn't happened yet, and there was no market for hardcore. The biggest rock bands out there were bands like Winger and Warrant, and nobody in the hardcore or underground

scenes thought about signing record contracts. But there was a lot of great music out there and I wanted to be part of it. And to me, that also meant living the hand-to-mouth lifestyle.

So I went to New York and hung out with the only guy I knew there, this kid I went to high school with, and he hooked me up with a job at this advertising agency art department. Pretty soon I had two jobs—I still starved, but I managed to go out to the clubs at night. I got to see a different band every night, and it was a really fun time. I started playing in three different bands, but they were all pretty dumb. Then I saw Page's ad in the *Village Voice*.

Page and I got together and just hung out awhile. He bought my roommate's guitar and we started playing, just screwing around with a couple of other guys, and it took a couple of times for me to realize there was something special going on. Page wrote this song called "Born Annoying," which was our very first seven-inch, and it was this really crazy song in 7/8. We were auditioning bass players and we told ourselves we'd take the first guy who could play that song. Henry [Bogdan] came in with this big eight-string bass and just blew up the amp, but he played the tune, so that's how we became a band.

We all have different backgrounds and

"I'm always trying to straddle that fine line between, say, Bonham and Peart. You can be a technically great player, but if you don't do what's right for the music, you're going to sound foolish."

different tastes in music, but there's this central area where we all seem to meet to make our music. Henry and Page are from the West Coast, and they very much come from straight-up hardcore backgrounds. There was a very brief period where I got into progressive rock. Rush is still my all-time favorite band, but I've always been more into straight-up rock bands like Sabbath and the bands from the late '70s and early '80s.

MP: There was a huge bidding war for you guys in the late '80s. Did that take you aback at all?

JS: A lot of it was just pure luck—being in the right place at the right time—because all of a sudden, indie bands started getting all this attention and the majors wanted to be part of that. As far as we were concerned, we were just stoked to get our first seven-inch out on Amphetamine Reptile, which was sort of this cool, elitist indie label out of Minneapolis. Then we hooked up with another indie for *Strap It On*. And we were perfectly happy to have a couple of things out and to be touring in a van.

But the majors started signing up a lot of these indie bands and buying up whole labels, and we suddenly went from being this cool indie band to the "next great thing." That was pretty weird because there was also this extreme backlash going on, with fans and within the industry. At this point, the indie scene got super-elitist and more about the image of being independent, rather than having anything to do with the music. And we had to make a choice to stay indie or take a step up. It's not like we changed as a band. *Meantime* was our first record for Interscope, and it would have been the exact same record if we'd stayed with an indie. In fact, the hit song from that record, "Unsung," had already been released by AmRep as a seven-inch.

MP: Page seems to write from a rhythmically solid foundation, so in some ways that also dictates what you're going to play, doesn't it?

JS: In some ways, yeah. There are times I really lock in with the rhythm guitar or vocals, which might make the part more aggressive, and there are other times I'll

Current Taste

Here are the records John says he listens to most for inspiration.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
Rush	Permanent Waves	Neil Peart
Return To Forever	No Mystery	Lenny White
Rush	Hemispheres	Neil Peart
Rush	Power Windows	Neil Peart
Government Issue	Yon	Pete Moffet
Don Caballero	For Respect	Damon Che
Led Zeppelin	Physical Graffiti	John Bonham

settle into what the bass is doing. I guess I'm always trying to straddle that fine line between, say, Bonham and Peart. The worst thing I could do in our style of music is overplay. You can be a technically great player, but if you don't do what's right for the music, you're going to sound foolish and make the music fall apart.

MP: In what ways do you think you've evolved as a musician during your time in Helmet?

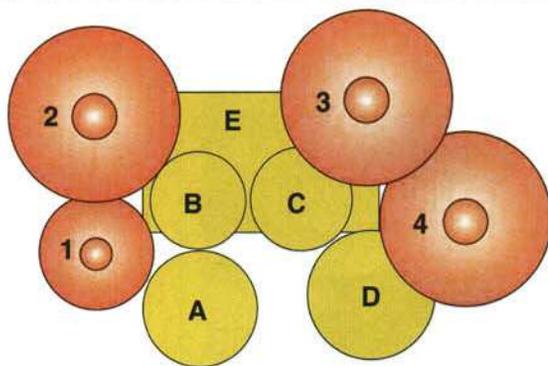
JS: I don't think my parts have become any more intricate, but I think I've just learned when to hold back and when to go nuts. In some ways, that's very subjective—everyone's going to have a different perspective on that—but it also comes

I know that in my early days I used to just slam it out. I think I've learned to be a better rock musician over the years. I still play very physically, but I also hear other things in the music that maybe I didn't hear six or eight years ago, and that just comes from experience.

MP: Your drum sound on the new record seems much more up-front in the mix than ever before, especially the attack on the kick drum. Was that intentional?

JS: Yeah, but not necessarily on my part. Our engineer, Dave Sardy, is real mic' crazy. We actually put two 24" kick drums together, placed three or four mic's at various points inside them, and stuck an isolation blanket at the end. We recorded in this

John's kit



Drumset: Tama *Artstar II* in yellow sunburst finish

- A. 5x14 brass snare
- B. 11x12 tom
- C. 12x13 tom
- D. 16x16 floor tom
- E. 16x24 bass drum

Hardware: Tama, including an *Iron Cobra* bass drum pedal

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 14" *K* hi-hat
- 2. 22" *A* Custom ride
- 3. 22" *A* Custom ride
- 4. 22" *Earth* ride

Heads: Remo *Falams K* on snare batter, clear *Pinstripes* on toms and kick

Sticks: Regal *Quantum 3000* model

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really large room at Capitol Studios in LA, which has the distinction of being where both Sinatra and Slayer have recorded. I don't really know how it all affected the sound, and I never thought about the attack on the kick until you just mentioned it. But since you noticed it, I guess it did make a difference.

I also just got a brand new kit from Tama, an *Artstar II*. I've never been particular about the drums I play. I know this will sound bad, especially in *Modern Drummer*, but it really doesn't matter to me whether I play the *Rockstar*, *Swingstar*, *Artstar*, or whatever else they've got. I mean, I'll play whatever's thrown up there. But I've been playing Tama for years and I've always been happy with their drums. I suppose it would make more of a difference if I was in a different kind of band. But when you're in a really loud rock band like Helmet, as long as the drums sound good, that's fine with me.

MP: As you've progressed as a band, has the recording process become more involved or time-consuming?

JS: Not really. I have a love-hate relationship with the studio. What I love is getting it over with and having cool new music, but I can't stand the pressure that goes along with recording. It always seems like we're changing parts here and there at the last second, and that's always the toughest part for me, because I really like to know what I'm doing before I go in there to cut my tracks.

I consider my style to be very deliberate. I don't write my parts out or anything like that, but I definitely think about my parts and what I'm going to play while we're putting the songs together. I want to know what my beats are going to be and how I'm going to play them—even things like fills and rolls—and I don't mess with things much once we've brought the songs into the studio. That's a big reason why we work pretty quickly in the studio. We've never taken very long to cut our records, maybe four to five days to do the basic tracks.

MP: That's surprising, because your playing has the kind of energy you don't normally associate with that kind of planning, especially on the new record. How do you manage to be so locked in to your parts and still keep the energy level high and natural-sounding?

JS: We all record together as a band—drums, bass, and guitar—and the music just brings it out of me. The bottom line is it's fun to play, and I think with any kind of music, you have to enjoy it and bring feeling to it if it's going to sound natural. I hit my drums and play just as hard in the studio as I do in a show, and it doesn't matter whether the parts are planned or not. That's just something you can't fake. The tape doesn't just pick up volume; it picks up *how* you play.

Another thing I consider is that I have to play these parts live for a hundred shows a year, and I want to record something that's going to stand up to the test of time. On this tour, we're playing songs all the way back to *Strap It On*. This is stuff we've been playing every night for six years, and I just never get sick of it. Sure, if I had to record *Strap It On* again, there are lots of things I would do differently, simply because I've grown as a player. But in a way, I feel almost spoiled being in this band, because I've never had to compromise. There's never been a dull moment—musically or otherwise—and I'm really grateful for that.

MP: I've heard you're sort of Helmet's historian, that you have a pretty thorough scrapbook dating to the band's first shows.

JS: Yeah, everyone's making a big deal of it, but it's true. I'm the only one in the band who bothers to take pictures, and I've been keeping a tour diary since our very first tour, so now I have six years' worth of journals. I'll pull one out every once in a while and remember some of those drunken moments or maybe just marvel at how far we've come along.

I mean, I never expected that I'd answer an ad in the *Village Voice* and have it lead to anything like this. It's been pretty amazing. It's sort of a chore to keep doing the diaries, and it's kind of a lame activity when you think about it. But in twenty years, we'll have forgotten a lot of this stuff, so I think it's important that *somebody* documents it.





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Progressive Independence

Part I: The Snare Drum

by Ron Spagnardi

In jazz drumming, "coordinated independence" refers to the ability to execute separate rhythms in each hand and foot in a *coordinated* manner, yet totally *independent* of one another. More specifically, it refers to the ability to execute various rhythmic figures on the snare and bass drum against an uninterrupted time pattern on the ride cymbal and hi-hat. This ability is an essential part

of jazz drumming.

In this three-part series we will offer several exercises to help you develop basic snare drum, bass drum, and combination snare/bass drum independence. This month we'll focus on the snare drum.

Quarter-Note Patterns

The following exercises will help you develop a feel for playing straight quarter notes with the standard time beat. Be certain that you're playing all four parts of each exercise precisely as written. Repeat each exercise as many times as necessary until you can play it smoothly and accurately.

8th-Note Patterns

The next set of exercises utilizes 8th notes, 8th-note rests, and quarter notes in the snare drum hand. Remember that all 8th-note figures are to be played with a "jazz interpretation." Therefore, 8th notes written under the time pattern as straight 8th notes will *always* be played with a triplet (swing) feel, in accordance with the triplet feel of the time pattern.

Triplet Patterns

Developing a relaxed, natural triplet feel against the time pattern is an essential aspect of jazz drumming. Be careful not to rush the time when the triplet occurs on beats 2 and 4 in the snare drum part. Take each exercise slowly, and strive for accurate placement of all snare drum notes against the time beat.

Triplet Partial

The following exercises involve the use of triplet partials—the three individual notes that make up the triplet group. Here, the second partial is counted as "an" and the third partial is counted as "a." To add more "lift" to the feel of these exercises, try placing a bit more emphasis on the third partial, and keep the time loose and relaxed.

Summary Exercise

This twenty-four-measure exercise uses a combination of the previous one-bar figures.

Next month, in Part 2 of this series, we will focus on bass drum independence. You'll see several exercises that are designed to help you increase your ability to play figures on the bass drum against the time beat. See you then.

This article was excerpted from Ron Spagnardi's new book, Progressive Independence (© Copyright 1997, Modern Drummer Publications). The book contains many more exercises and tips for developing your coordination skills.



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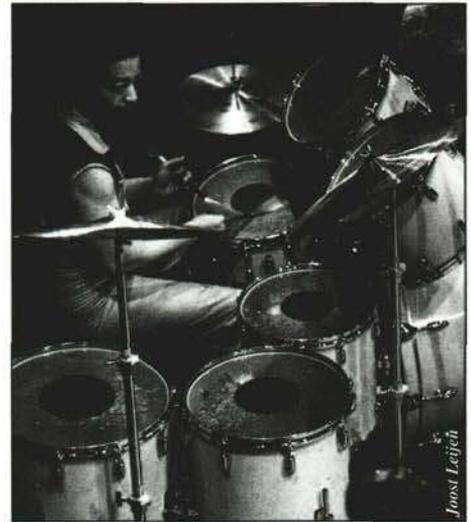
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Tony Williams: "Seven Steps To Heaven"

Transcribed by Skip Shaffer

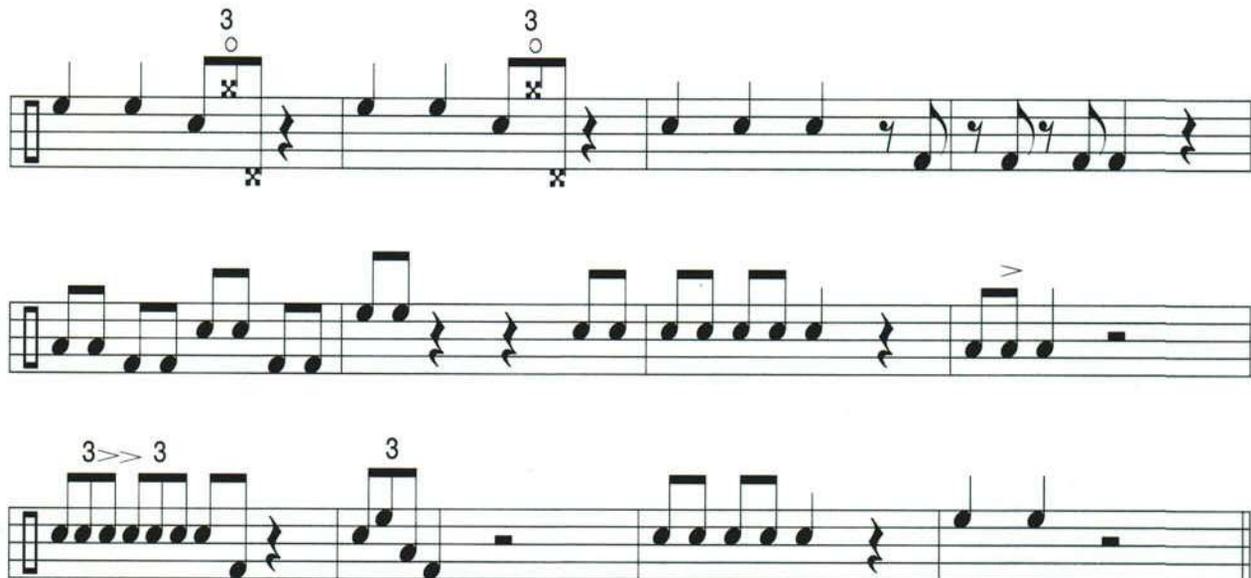


Joost Leijch

MUSIC KEY			
Open	O	R.C.	C.C.
H.H.	X	X	X
T.T.			
S.D.			
F.T.			
B.D.			
H.H. w/foot	X		

This month's *Drum Soloist* features the classic Tony solo from the title track of Miles Davis's *Seven Steps To Heaven* (Columbia CK 48827, recorded in April/May 1963). It's still hard to believe that a seventeen-year-old could play a solo this bouyant, tasteful, and rhythmically interesting—and deliver it with such confidence. Yes, Tony Williams was a genius.

$\bullet = 184$



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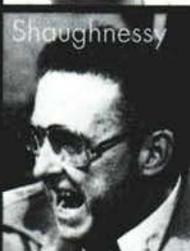
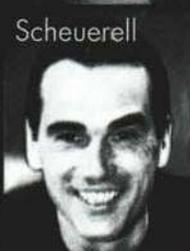
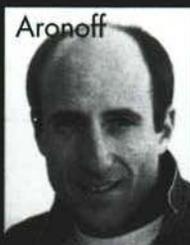
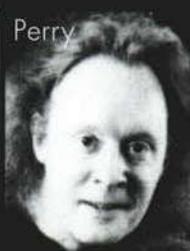
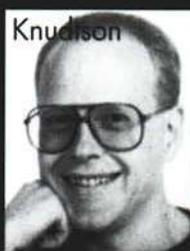
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The Flam Accent Challenge, Part I

by Chet Doboie

On the surface, the flam accent is a very straight-ahead drum rudiment, rooted in the traditions of military marching music, written in 6/8. However, the "blah-beh-dah, blah-beh-dah, blah-beh-dah" foundation of the flam accent proves to be an exciting springboard for creating some hip, syncopated rhythmic stories.

This two-part article presents a series of exercises designed to help you improve your flam technique. It also showcases some of the exciting flam accent variations used in today's "state of the

art" corps drumming.

Four basic devices are used to create the following variations: adding accents, removing accents on flams, moving flams, and adding flams. The result is a syncopated dialog between flams, non-accents, and accents that's funky and quite challenging.

Execute the non-accented flams from a "down" position (similar to a flamacue), and be certain to perform all non-accents from the down stick height.

1. 1.

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

2. 3.

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

4.

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

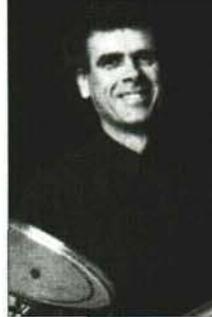
These variations are built by moving the flam to the middle note of the figure. In drum corps, the pattern in the first measure is known as the hybrid rudiment "tajada."

2.

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

3.

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



Ear-Opening Exercises

by David Garibaldi

MUSIC KEY

In my last article ("The Latin-Funk Connection," February '97 *MD*) we looked at the close relationship between the Afro-Cuban and funk drumming styles. In this installment we'll examine some exercises I've discovered in my continuing study of this subject.

Throughout my books and articles I've talked about expanding your ability to hear different rhythms through a concept called "permutation." For those of you not familiar with this term, it refers to a mathematical concept that can be applied to rhythm. Permutation is defined as "all the ways in which a sequence or order of numbers can be grouped." Take for example the sequence 1, 2, 3, 4 (as in four quarter notes). This order can be changed by moving number 4 to the place of number 1, creating the sequence 4, 1, 2, 3. The next permutation of this sequence is 3, 4, 1, 2, then 2, 3, 4, 1, and then we're back to where we started. Permutation can be applied to any rhythmic group or phrase in any time signature, and it is the best way I know to develop the ability to hear unusual rhythms.

For this article I've taken a one-bar Latin-funk groove in 4/4 that works with clave (either 3-2 or 2-3), and then permuted it by quarter notes. (Clave is a two-measure phrase, so we end up with a two-measure pattern.) The idea came from experimenting with permutating a basic songo drumset pattern.

The drumset components used in this groove are: right hand playing the rim of the snare drum, left hand on the snare drum, left foot on the hi-hat, and right foot on the bass drum. The pulse is a half note, which makes the groove sound like 16th notes.

All of the drumset voices and accents permute with the exception of the left foot on the hi-hat, which continues to play the basic pulse. If you hear clave with this, you'll notice it does not permute, it is part of the basic pulse.

Remember that these exercises are designed to help you hear unusual rhythms in relation to the basic pulse. It's very important that you count aloud as you perform the exercises. Also keep in mind that we're not adhering to the rules of tradition when combining styles; we're *adjusting* the rules to fit the situation.

$\text{♩} = 105$

1.

2.

3.

4.

As I was developing this article I came upon a way to connect each exercise with a turn-around that gets you to the next permutation. Exercises 5-8 are the same as 1-4, except that they include the turn-around measures. Repeat exercise 5 until it's comfortable, then play exercise A once, which connects to exercise 6. Do the

same for the remaining exercises. When you get to exercise D, this takes you back to the top of exercise 5. Repeat this until all of the transitions are smooth and you can feel the basic pulse strongly through all of the exercises. Enjoy!

5. **A**

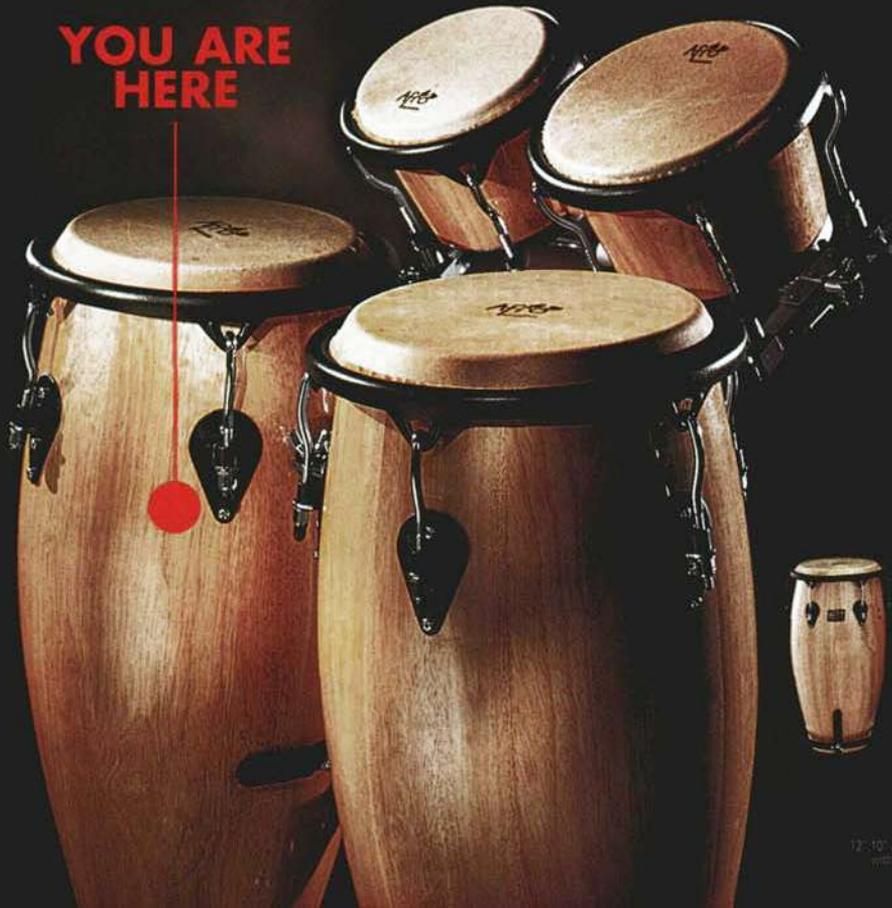
6. **B**

7. **C**

8. **D**



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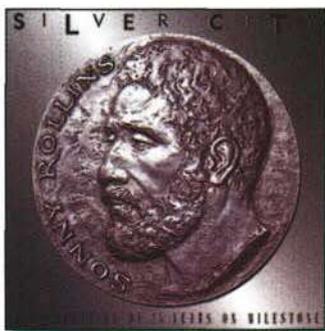
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with: Sonny Rollins (tn sx), Bob Cranshaw (bs), Mark Soskin, Tommy Flanagan (pno), Jerome Harris (gtr, bs), others



Sonny Rollins is *such* a complicated musician...one moment lyrical and romantic, the next challenging, exploring, and experimental. The two-disc set *Silver City*, a retrospective of Rollins' twenty-five-year history on Milestone, brilliantly displays how each of Rollins' drummers moves seamlessly from one idea or emotion to another, always supporting and augmenting the genius leader and setting the tone for each individual track.

Highlights: Jack DeJohnette plays beautifully on "Cabin In The Sky," "Where Or When," and "Tennessee Waltz," creating astonishing landscapes in support of the gentle ballads. Al Foster swings *so* hard on "Biji," always finding a way in, out, and around the half- and quarter-note phrases with extreme precision and beauty. On

"Someone To Watch Over Me," Steve Jordan's famous backbeat is left at the door; what walks in is some gorgeous brushwork on one of the loveliest versions of this classic you're likely to hear. "G-Man," an intense fifteen-minute Workout between Rollins and Marvin "Smitty" Smith, would make Elvin and Coltrane proud: Rollins pushes, pushes, pushes...and Smitty pushes right back.

Bow to the master, praise his musicians, and consider yourself lucky to know this music.

Ted Bonar

Bill Stewart*Telepathy* (Blue Note)

drummer: Bill Stewart

with Larry Grenadier (bs), Bill Carrothers (pno), Steve Wilson (al, sp sx), Seamus Blake (tn sx)

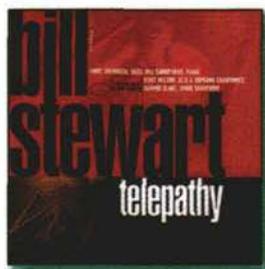
You may think you know Bill Stewart's rambunctious drumming from John Scofield albums like *Meant To Be* or *What We Do*, or on recordings by tenor titan Joe Lovano, organ swinger Larry Goldings, and R&B great Maceo Parker. You may even think Bill's debut, *Snide Remarks*, showed the square-jawed lowan at his best. Uh-uh. Nope. Foo-getta-bot-it.

Telepathy shows Stewart in a heavy growth continuum both as a writer and drummer. Recorded after four nights of playing this material live at NYC's Visiones, *Telepathy* is a dark, lustrous album full of high-octane improvisations and lush, cinematic explorations. Stewart's drumming here is chaotic yet incredibly controlled, bristling with witty remarks and creative flourishes.

"These Are They" and "Dwell On This" show the quartet in full-on mode, probing and questioning every inch of Stewart's textured tunes. Under dissonant melodies Stewart bounces, flutters, jabs, jumbles, snaps, and quakes with dexterous, amazing drumming. His hi-hats dance across the music like hummingbirds drinking from a flower. His cymbals, recalling Tony Williams, rise and fall in waves over deft stickwork.

This is moody music lurking on the edges of outside—but that's just where the musicians took it that particular day. Stewart's tunes provide lots of open space for him and his players to roam, and he has never soloed more, nor so freely. Stewart continues to surprise.

Ken Micallef



SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Readers might recall the article **MARK SCHOLL** wrote in MD's January '97 issue, "Flexing In The Groove: How Fitness Can Help Your Drumming." On his new CD, *Mark Scholl And The Screaming Tigers*, the drummer certainly displays an impressive rush of force; but equally admirable on this horn-driven rock instrumental CD is his restraint. There's hardly a spot where he's guilty of overplaying. Solid points for musical muscle, composing, and arranging by Scholl. (11113 Moorpark St., #201, Studio City, CA 91602, (818) 753-5062)

All serious musicians owe it to themselves to read **EVERYTHING YOU'D BETTER KNOW ABOUT THE RECORD INDUSTRY**, by R&B artist/producer Kashif and entertainment attorney Gary Greenberg, in which the authors confront topics like budgeting out recording sessions, dividing up songwriting credit, and negotiating a comprehensive recording agreement. (*Brooklyn Boy Books, PO Box 3029, Venice, CA 90294-3029*)

Avant-garde enthusiasts (way, way out) will enjoy the pure animal in **KEVIN NORTON'S** drumming, as he skittishly reacts and plunges ahead with bassist Mark Dresser and reedman George Cartwright on *Integrated Variables*. (*CMP, The Cadence Building, Redwood, NY 13679*).

Particularly valuable to the novice, the enhanced double-CD/book package **THE INSTRUMENTAL HISTORY OF JAZZ** (Encoded Jazz) provides a clear, concise musical time trip. Along the way we're treated to some of the greatest drumming in history, as well as selected discographies and representative musicians of each era, a videography, and "must have" CD lists.

Rating Scale

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

Tuatara

Breaking The Ethers (Epic)



drummer: Barrett Martin (plus pno, mrm, steeldr, cello, perc)
with Justin Harwood (ac bs, gtr, pno, vbs, perc), Peter Buck (gtr, dulcimer, mandolin), Skerik (sax, steel dr, vbs, perc)

With Screaming Trees drummer Barrett Martin at the helm, Tuatara's debut album is a tasteful, mature work in which players from four prominent alternative rock bands sidestep their distortion pedals and create dynamic, tribal, and psychedelic music. Though glimpses of European prog-rock abound (the sax melodies and abundance of mallet percussion strongly recall mid-'70s Gong), the playing is reined in by the musicians' willingness to serve their compositional and improvisational impulses with a minimum of self-indulgent noodling. Each of these twelve instrumental pieces is a meditation on a theme, where rich and varied rhythmic motifs lay the foundation for the tonal instruments and additional percussion to color and build upon. The almost exclusively acoustic sounds used on *Breaking The Ethers*



help the band arrive at a unified sonic identity, even though many different musical styles, such as rock, Latin, Middle-Eastern, Caribbean, and Indian, are explored. Martin cleverly combines tabla, djembe, steel drum, and marimba with his kit playing to arrive at what truly deserves to be called "world" music. Meanwhile, the spirit of the mighty John Bonham presides over many of Barrett's drumset grooves, in that he hits hard but remains funky, never wasting a stroke.

Breaking The Ethers has a casual, late-night/crack-of-dawn flavor that suggests the bandmembers' joy in leaving behind the pressures of their successful groups to cut loose and experiment. And Martin and Harwood's crystal-clear production allows Tuatara's delicate, atmospheric music to feel homegrown while sounding hi-fi. Thus, with this LP, Barrett proves himself a rare kind of musician—not only willing to depart from the music that brought him success, but unconcerned with stylistic boundaries or instant accessibility. (Tuatara won't likely get much airplay.) To the listener's delight, he is simply following his muse where it takes him.

Michael Parillo

GOING UNDERGROUND

These are interesting musical times. With the so-called "alternative" scene fractured into dozens of sub-genres, yet cross-pollinating at an encouraging rate, many artists are following their instincts into fascinating and uncharted territories. One result of this trend is a good deal of boundary-pushing drumming—some of which questions our basic ideas of the drumset's role in music. In this and ensuing issues of *MD*, we'll point out new CDs that explore the possibilities in fresh and challenging ways.

Chicago's Red Red Meat have released several pigeonhole-chal-

lenged CDs over the past few years. Their latest, *There's A Star Above The Manger Tonight* (Sub Pop, ★★☆☆), sort of filters latter-day Tom Waits and the Stones' *Exile On Main Street* through Peter Gabriel (III), prompting multi-instrumentalists **BEN MASSARELLA** and **BRIAN DECK** to create hobbling, disturbing percussion grooves that drive the beautifully sick moods, grooves, and lyrics.

Claw Hammer singer Jon Wahl gets a lot of print for his impossibly bothered vocals, but as their new *Hold Your Tongue (And Say Apple)* (Interscope, ★★☆☆½) proves, the big story here is the band's thundering locomotive of



Tom Roady

One Tribe (Road Hog)



Zendrum: Tom Roady, David Haney
with Gary Lunn (bs), Mark Douthit, Roger Williams (sx), Barry Green (tbn), George Tidwell, Mike Haynes, Bill Panning (trp), Pat Bergeson (hrm)

On the myriad recordings he's done, Nashville percussionist Tom Roady is known for putting his whole percussion arsenal to work, as well as displaying his instrumental and writing skills. The difference on *One Tribe* is that Roady plays each of the instruments from the Zendrum, the electronic hand drum seemingly inspired by Future Man's *Synthaxe Drumitar*. The result is quite organic, ambient, intense, mostly "live"—and the best example I've heard of the capabilities of the Zendrum as an earthy instrument.

Roady creates textural playgrounds that stand strong, like "Beneath The Spanish Main," augmenting the synth swells with triggered tabla, frame drum, bendir, and piano. There's a classy rumba that's all Roady's percussion in tribute to the late Chano Pozo, and a Peruvian romp that recalls the joy of the *Northern Exposure* theme. The horn tune "Thumbs Upon The Zen" sounds a bit mechanical, though; the Zendrum fares best on a more acoustic, heavenly feature like "Approaching The Millennium." Still, an intriguing and, more often than not, successful recording. (*Road Hog*, 105 Mockingbird Lane, Lebanon, TN 37087)

Robin Tolleson

Shiner

Lula Divinia (HitIt)



drummer: Tim Dow

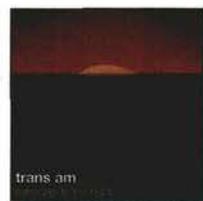
with Allen Epley (gtr, vcl), Paul Malinowski (bs)

Although *Lula Divinia* hasn't charted (not yet, anyway), for all they "get away with," Kansas City-born Shiner will be the envy of many musicians. Couched in Allen Epley's "alternatively" dark, angst-laden vocals, they get away with streams of clever lyrics and extended metaphors without sounding smarmy or self-conscious. Floated on thick arpeggia-



an art/punk sound. Drummer **BOB LEE** effectively propels the inertia and left turns with the liveliness of Clem Burke and the bombast of Dave Grohl.

Though sometimes treading dangerously close to passe prog-rock territory, for the most part Trans Am's *Surrender To The Night* (Thrill Jockey, ★★☆☆) adds



welcome style and variation to the bubbling American electronic/trance scene. Drummer **SEBASTIAN THOMPSON** shows some solid acoustic-kit work

here, but his strongest contributions are his sonic (kit? machine?) mutations and dedication to the rhythmic drone.

Adam Budofsky

tions and raw, wall-of-sound guitar, they also get away with odd meters till Tuesday, plus hooks and melodies that actually move, without sounding, respectively, self-indulgent or candyass-commercial.

Perhaps most enviable of all are the balls-to-the-wall drum parts. Expelled or defiantly truant from the less-is-more school of rock 'n' roll, drummer Tim Dow gets away with playing *lots* of notes (just like we'd all like to—if we could *get away with it*), gnashing and munching through beaucoup numerators with a progger's fluidity and a headbanger's rage. Except for a few unlocked moments in the slower, simpler "Lula," he deftly laces up the disk's many metric adventures and fills the spaces afforded by Shiner's lean instrumentation.

By way of *Lula Divinia*, Shiner grows the idea of "power trio" to prodigious dimensions, both in sheer sonic mass and in obvious scorn of the modest or repressed norms of the alternative/hard rock arena. Buy this! (*Hilt Recordings, 1617 North Hyne, First Floor, Chicago, IL 60647, tel: [773] 227-9228, fax: [773] 227-9268*)

Rich Watson

Strapping Young Lad City (Century)

drummer: Gene Hoglan
with Devin Townsend (gtr, vcl)

If anyone wonders what's happened to speed-thrash metal, look no further than the feet of Gene Hoglan, the demigod of double-kick ballistics, who kicks his sprints up a hair-raising notch with the new record from Strapping Young Lad.

City is by no means a joyous experience. Subtlety never enters the picture—nor does a breath of fresh air, for that matter—and the sonic quality is such a blur that the music is often a wash. In a way, though, that's all the more a tribute to Hoglan, who cuts through the sludge to deliver the most cleanly executed twin-kick work you'll ever hear.

On *City*, Hoglan's snare often gets lost in the mix, and you have to use headphones to pick up his impressive ride work. If nothing else, though, you can simply marvel at his feet.



Sixteenth-note rolls at 180 beats per minute is a walk in the park for Hoglan—and I'm not talking about ruffs, triplets, or one-bar fills. From the ballistic intensity of "All Hail The New Flesh" and three or four other cuts just like it, Hoglan can tear off for a minute or two without a hitch.

Hardcore purists should eat this up. But if this record is any indication, Strapping Young Lad doesn't provide a broad enough canvas for Hoglan to show off his hand work or his underrated musicality. Still, if nothing else, *City* is another one for the vault of Hoglan's mind-blowing footwork. (*Century Media, 1453-A 14th St., Santa Monica, CA 90404.*)

Matt Peiken

Ben Folds Five Whatever And Ever, Amen (Sony)

drummer: Darren Jessee

with Ben Folds (pno), Robert Sledge (bs)

The Ben Folds Five are getting a lot of airplay with their sophomore effort, sliding skillfully into a place in pop unfilled since early Billy Joel and Joe Jackson, with Beatle- and Queen-like harmonies adding to the luster. BFF's Darren Jessee combines Keith Moon's propensity for getting all the cymbals ringing at once and Russ Kunkel's sensitivity to lyrics and musical flow: He bashes when the time is right, but knows how to use the rest. Jessee plays a flowing, well-defined 6/8 on "Selfless, Cold & Composed," gets his ride cymbal roaring on "Kate," punches "Battle Of Who Could Care Less" with a radio-ready, forward-leaning beat, and lends a wild nightclub atmosphere to "Steven's Last Night In Town" with a Krupa-ish tom-tom chant.

Amen isn't as immediately catchy and upbeat as the Chapel Hill, NC's Caroline debut, and the band still has a few tricks to master. On the opening "One Angry Dwarf And 200 Solemn Faces," for instance, Ben pounds the keys like Jerry Lee Lewis while Jessee flails to keep up in a sort of "Battle Of Who Could Care More." When this band learns not to try quite so hard, though, they'll only improve their already impressive sound.

Robin Tolleson



VIDEOS

Hand Drumming Exercises For Unifying Technique

by N. Scott Robinson
(Wright Hand Drum Co.)

level: beginner to advanced
\$29.95, 80 minutes

This video explores new and original ideas for playing the "ubang," a clay pot drum with origins in Nigeria. Host Robinson makes it a point to say that his playing is a mixture of Indian, African, and Western influences, and that he does not intend to disregard the various

cultures. Rather, he hopes to inspire further research from the viewer.

The video is divided into four sections: beginner, intermediate, advanced, and a final section featuring performance. Part I details the drum itself, follows with a description of downstrokes, upstrokes, combined strokes, snapping strokes, and shell-tone strokes, and explains counting and subdivision of beats. Part II combines exercises from Western and Indian drumming by applying traditional snare drum rudiments to the ubang. Part III, perhaps the most interesting section, demonstrates Brazilian, Caribbean, and Cuban rhythms as applied to the ubang,

with the goals being independence and ambidexterity. In all, thirty-five exercises are clearly demonstrated on the video and written in the accompanying booklet.

The session ends with a performance by world music group Cushtunk, who demonstrate applications of the ubang and various other percussion instruments with bass and guitar. The picture quality is a bit blurry, but the sound is good. All in all, an interesting treatment of a unique musical avenue.

Victor Rendon

BOOKS

The Funkmasters The Great James Brown Rhythm Sections, 1960-1973

by Allan "Dr. Licks" Slutsky and
Chuck Silverman
(Manhattan Music/Warner Bros.)

level: beginner to advanced
\$29.95 (book with two CDs)

The 144-page *Funkmasters* tells the story of the JB rhythm sections with zest, humor, and reverence. The authors focus on twenty-three significant JB tracks. Each track, presented chronologically, is discussed for its historical importance, and the grooves are transcribed for drums, bass, and guitar. The stylistic commentary on the great JB drummers gives insightful perspective on their individual contributions to the evolution of funk/soul styles and how they ultimately influenced each other.

The CDs offer extended band-loops so students can sit in the feel. Individual parts are then clearly demonstrated. As played by the authors and company, the tracks aren't purported to be a replacement for JB's sound; the authors heartily advise grabbing the Godfather's CDs for the true testament. Just like James' grooves, there's no diddlin' or silly filler here; the book *hits it!* You GOT-ta, GOT-ta, GOT-ta Have It!

Jeff Potter

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If you'd like to appear in this section, send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), your influences, your current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, ect.). Feel free to include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it. We'd also like a list of the equipment you use regularly.

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Joe Porcaro & Ralph Humphrey

Partners In Education

by Robyn Flans

From 1981 to 1984, Joe Porcaro and Ralph Humphrey were the backbone of the Percussion Institute of Technology (PIT) in Los Angeles, as directors of curriculum. In 1995, however, new ownership brought with it changes to existing policy. According to Porcaro and Humphrey, the changes began to affect the old regime, and they were being treated poorly. They were no longer receiving their standard royalty for enrolling students, and their teaching tactics were being questioned. Just as they were resigning, however, a former PIT graduate, Hans Peter Becker, contacted them. He had started several mini drum school facilities throughout Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, and he was interested in creating one in Los Angeles.

Joe and Ralph are now excited to be in charge of the curriculum at the new Los Angeles Music Academy (LAMA), which opened in September of 1996 in Pasadena. They have already brought in instructors Mike Shapiro, Emil Richards, Jerry Steinholtz, Mark Shulman, Mike Packer, Sherman Ferguson, Tony Inzalaco, Aron Serfaty, Bill Hulling, and Glenn Sobel. They've also infused the program with their teaching philosophies, about which they are very passionate. (Plus, they joke, the parking is free for the teachers!)



RF: Let's talk about teaching philosophies. There are two issues: What is it important for a student to know, and what is it important for a drum teacher to know?

RH: I've been teaching so long that I feel like I've finally put it all together. If you're talking about drumset, you've got to talk about general drumset technique. It's more than just learning rudiments; it's learning how to move your limbs and how to understand rhythm—and then learning how to put all that on the drumset so it makes sense musically. You try to learn everything there is about music, but underneath it all is technique, which is a very broad term.

Teachers need to expand their ideas about what technique really involves. It's a lot more than just right-left-right-left-right-left. I try to get into it a little deeper. For instance: You play an accent, but *how* do you play that accent? When you move to another instrument, what makes you move to that instrument, and what

kind of sticking would you use? What I like to do in the technique class we've developed is show that stickings are a means to an end, and build the students' vocabulary of stickings. Stickings relate to being able to produce accents, being able to control unaccented notes and their phrasing, and being able to move around the drumset. That's one category of teaching. It's building vocabulary and getting the student into everything that relates to the drumset—balance, posture, independence, facility, motion....

RF: Can you describe the LAMA curriculum?

JP: We have what we call a "core" curriculum, which consists of sight-reading, playing techniques, jazz, ensemble, big band, small band, three horn bands, Latin drumming, Latin drumset, and rock drumming. Along with the core curriculum, we have what we call "ASRs"—applied sight reading—where we project music and the students sight-read. "APTs" are applied playing techniques. Ralph will give a playing technique lesson, and even though he goes over

it, when I teach my jazz class on a different day, there's an hour set aside for me to review the lesson the students had with Ralph. My jazz class entails forms and the musicality of jazz playing, with only a little bit of technique because Ralph's covering most of that. Then we do a two-hour ensemble jazz playing class that goes along with that.

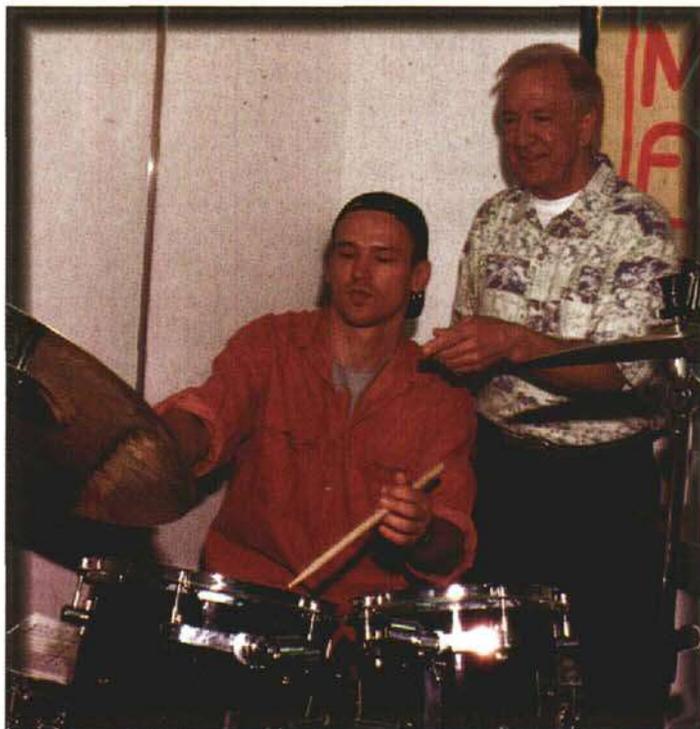
RH: The ensemble groups support the core classes and the drill classes that Joe described. Then each student gets a private one-hour session every week with Mike Packer. That time is used to make sure that they're okay with the classes they're taking and to focus on the basic problems they're having. Then Mike will come back to the classroom teachers and discuss any problems the individual might be having. So we have a lot of checks in the school. The school is still small, but I hope we can maintain those checks as it grows.

RF: What are some of the general pitfalls that teachers can get into when teaching drums?

JP: They forget to teach *music*. Like Ralph said, every core class involves playing techniques. When you're sight-reading, there are playing techniques involved. If you're doing rock drums or Latin drums, there are playing techniques involved. But in those main classes—jazz, ensemble, rock drums, Latin drums—the paramount factor with it all is music. Technique just enhances and supports it. We're trying to make these kids musicians first.

RF: How do you stress that?

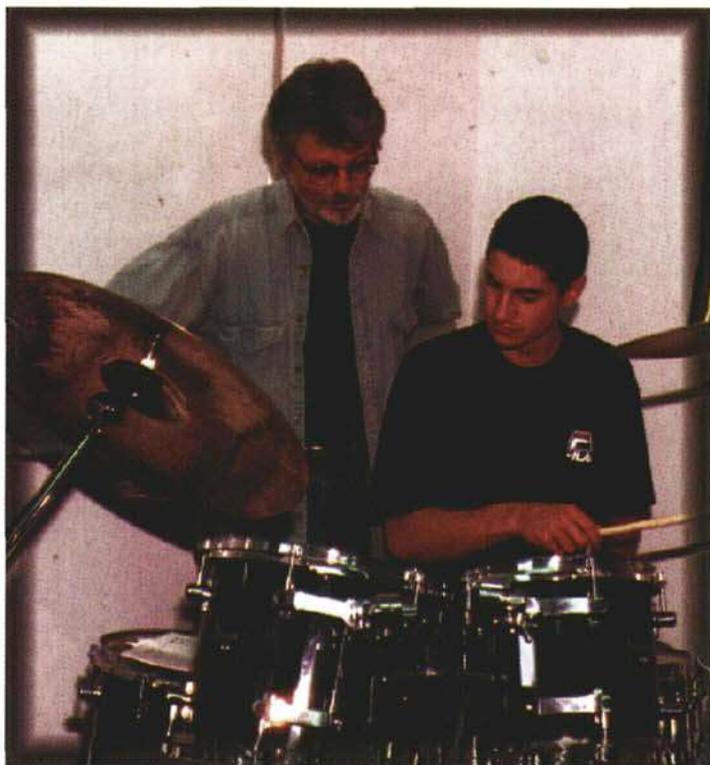
JP: It's pretty simple when you think about it. If you're in a jazz class and you're playing a song, the paramount thing is to know the song: its form, its structure, its phrasing—all the things that go with the musical part of it. Of course the technique part enhances it, but the main thing is to play the music. To be even a little more specific, let's look at the jazz class I teach. The first things anybody listens to in a drummer are the cymbal beat and the time. So we try to show them how to get musical with all that. It



entails learning song forms—all the different structures that are involved when you play jazz. It also means learning how to outline the phrases in songs through what we call cymbal turn-arounds, how to get musical when you're playing those turn-arounds, creating fills that involve rudiments or orchestrations, and things like that.

RH: The bottom line is that if students don't understand what the musical part of it is, there's no point in doing the technique. We stress *listening* a lot. We have a class that is devoted just to music listening, which every teacher will conduct, because every teacher has a different way to describe how you listen and what you listen for. It's to discuss the musical elements and the emotional content. Maybe we'll talk about technique and style, but it's really to try to make an impact emotionally and musically, to get students to discover what it's all about. All the core classes are directed toward that end.

JP: Just this morning, Jeff Hamilton called me and said he had a friend here from Amsterdam who wanted to take a lesson from me. We got together and the first thing I asked him was, "What can I help you with? What do you feel is still a hang-up for you as far as playing jazz drums?" He said, "I don't know, I just feel insecure sometimes. I'll be playing and all of a sudden I'll do something that just doesn't feel right." I put on Miles Davis's "Bags' Groove" and asked him to play along with it, just so I could hear where he was coming from. Within eight bars, I could hear what his major problem was. He had a nice cymbal beat, and everything was right mechanically, but he didn't know the form; he didn't know where to play his punctuations or his phrasing. He would do something in the third bar instead of in the fourth bar, or something in the ninth bar instead of the eighth bar. Even though you're naturally talented, when you do something out of place like that, your subconscious tells you something is wrong. I turned him on to this concept and said, "Listen to Kenny Clarke and how he punctuates the phrases with what we call cymbal turn-arounds."



After twenty minutes, this kid was a different drummer. He said, "Wow, I never knew this, I just played what I felt." All he needed was to know more about the music.

RH: Another pitfall that teachers may fall into is thinking that their students can get everything out of books. A book is nothing but a visual translation of the music, and the notes may not even be able to describe how the music sounds or is being phrased. You've got to make a connection between what's on the page and what you're hearing. You must also realize that the student is always interpreting what he's reading, it's not literal most of the time. I think every teacher needs to incorporate a certain amount of *listening* in his lesson, to whatever music that student happens to be into. I think a teacher also owes it to the student to expose him or her to music from other places, and to try to broaden the student's scope of what music is all about, instead of thinking, "Well, since rock is all he wants, that's all I'm going to teach him." I think it's important for a teacher to be educated and up-to-date with what's going on. I think some guys get stuck in what they do and that's it; they don't go any further. I get as much from my students as they get from me. I learn a lot from where their interests are, what they're listening to, how they play, and how they interpret things.

RF: You mentioned that each student at LAMA gets individual attention. Are there *general* problem areas that you find with students?

RH: Probably the biggest problem they have is not relating to the music. They may have some technique and some licks they've

learned, so they're on their way in that regard. But they don't see the whole picture—and a drummer, more than anybody else in the band, *needs* to see the whole picture. He needs to see the whole design because he's really supporting the band. He's setting things up, he's the driver and the motivator, and he's got to understand how the form works so he can make it happen. If he *doesn't* know that, it's not *going* to happen. If a drummer feels these things intuitively—and some do—that's wonderful. But if not, they have to go through the learning process. Usually a lot of it is getting them to hear melody, and to understand basic things like tension and release. Most forms are regular in terms of the music we play—four-bar, eight-bar, twelve-bar, sixteen-bar—so you get them to feel those segments and eventually they start getting it. *Then* they can bring technique in to support all that.

JP: The students really have to educate themselves about music theory. Most have no idea what's out there for them. You take guys like Terry Bozzio, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, Steve Gadd—all these great players. These are educated musicians. Terry goes to the library and takes out scores by Stravinsky. Vinnie knows so much about music theory, metric modulation, polymeters, and so on. That's what it's about. You can't change music theory; nobody's ever going to. *Styles* change, but music theory is music theory. A "C" scale is a "C" scale.

RH: Emil Richards is teaching a class he calls "Mallets For Drummers." He's got the drummers playing scales and basic chords on the vibes, and he's got them improvising. He's training their ear to understand the melodic side of music. Drummers



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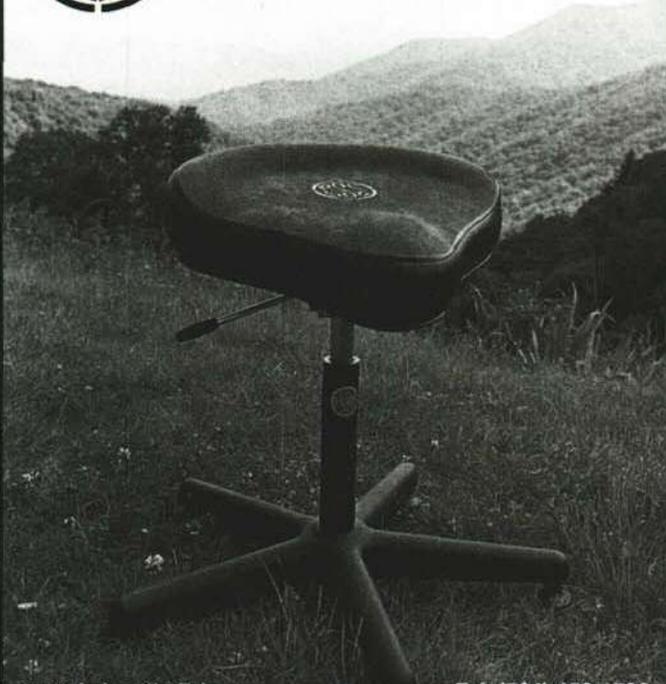


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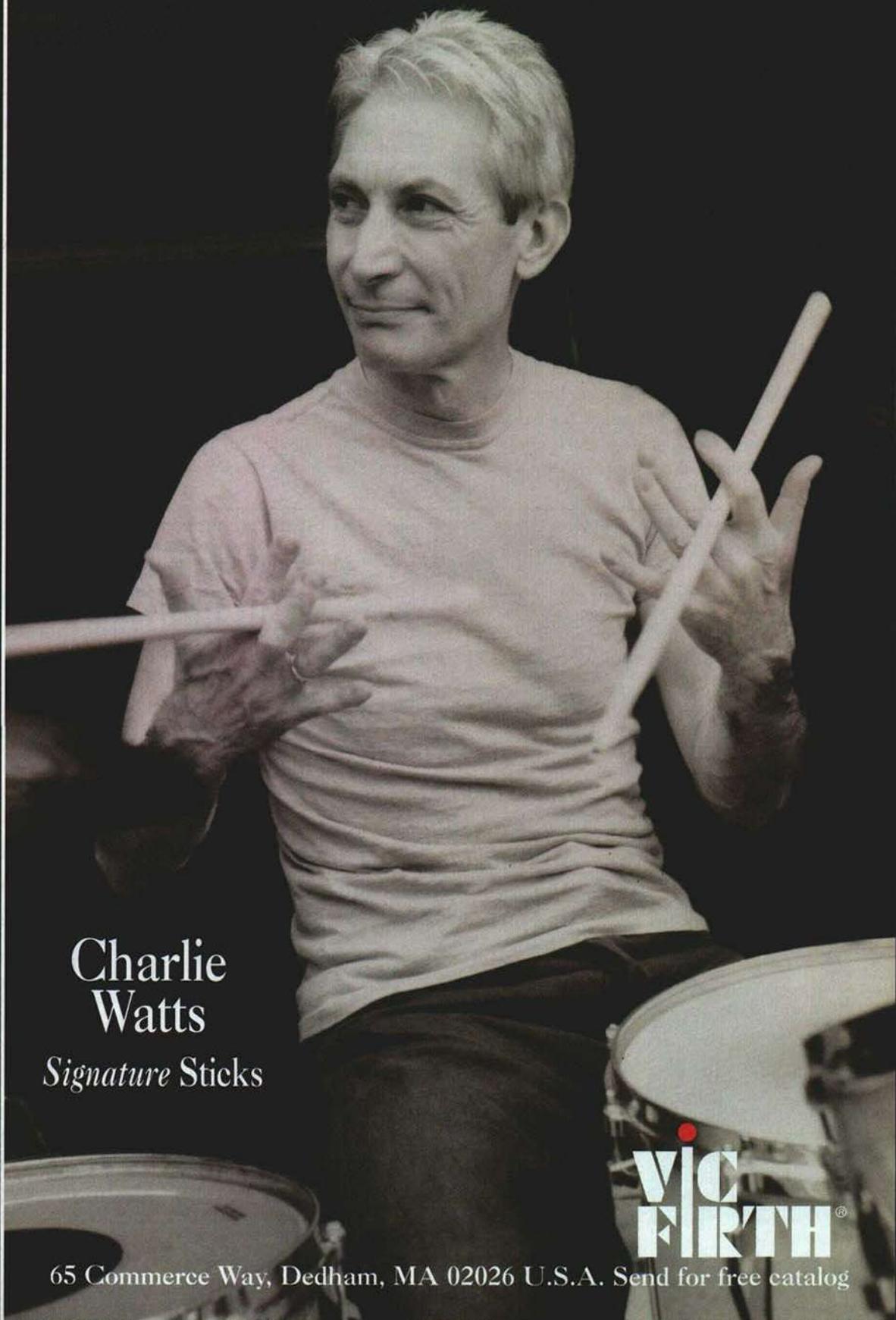
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sometimes think they don't have to know about that, but they really do. It's one more element we've added to the LAMA curriculum, trying to give drummers every chance to understand the whole picture.

RF: Are there common areas of difficulty that you find in technique that need special attention?

RH: Everybody understands 8th notes, triplets, and 16ths, but I think it's in the phrasing of those that students have problems, because phrasing relates to timekeeping. It's one thing to be able to play even 16th notes, it's another thing to make those 16th notes have a feel, and then to maintain the tempo at the same time. We talk a lot about if you've got two 16th notes in a row with the bass drum, why the spacing of those notes and the phrasing is different than if you played those same 16th notes in sort of a hip-hop feel. The technique of being able to place those notes properly and the understanding of where they need to be placed go hand in hand—understanding stylistically what you should do and technically being able to do it.

JP: A lot of students don't realize that when it comes to developing technique, it's a physical thing that takes time. Great drummers like Max Roach and Jeff Hamilton are very talented musicians, and they developed technique just through *doing so much playing*. Students have to realize that there is no shortcut to get where they want to with technique. I see kids going from teacher to teacher, thinking that some teacher has the magic wand that's going to give them technique in two weeks. I've also had some very famous studio drummers call me up and say, "Listen, I've

really got to get my chops together." My reply has been, "No kidding. Are you willing to pay some dues for two or three years?" Sight-reading is the same way; you have to pay your dues and put in the time. If you don't, you're not going to be a good sight-reader, because sight-reading has nothing to do with natural talent.

RF: There are many teachers who claim to have "the answer," yet are diametrically opposed to another teacher's philosophy. Where do your philosophical viewpoints lie?

RH: I learned what I do through doing. I took basic lessons, I was in the bands at school, and I studied mallets in college. But I learned the drumset by doing it. I never had a drumset lesson in my life. So what I do is from experience. Guys like Freddie Gruber or Richard Wilson are extremely systematic in their approach. I can't find fault with that, because they've tried to come up with a system that says if you start from square A and go to square X, you're going to be incredible. But you're only talking about a system of learning technique. I don't think it has as much to do with music as just being on a gig and playing does. I've seen some of the stuff Richard writes and it's incredible. It's very challenging and I admire it. But again, it's a little out of context with the real world.

RF: It seems to me that someone like that is a finishing school.

RH: Yes, and I think that's wonderful. That's really where Richard's expertise is valuable. You can't do that with a beginner. I learned what I do today by the doing, and I'm interested in sharing that with someone. To me, it's valuable that way. It's not like what I do was learned out of a book.

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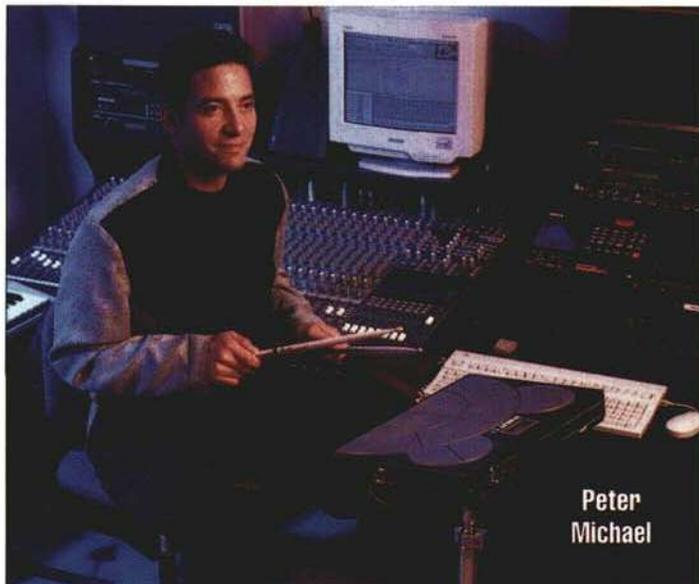
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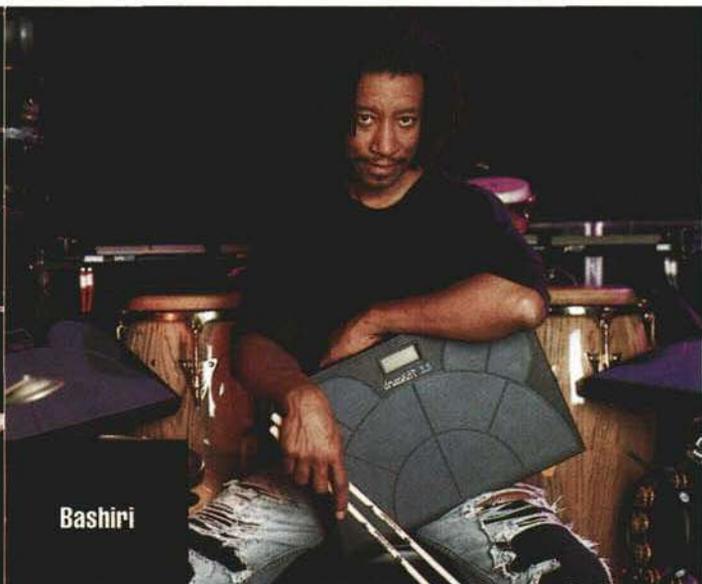


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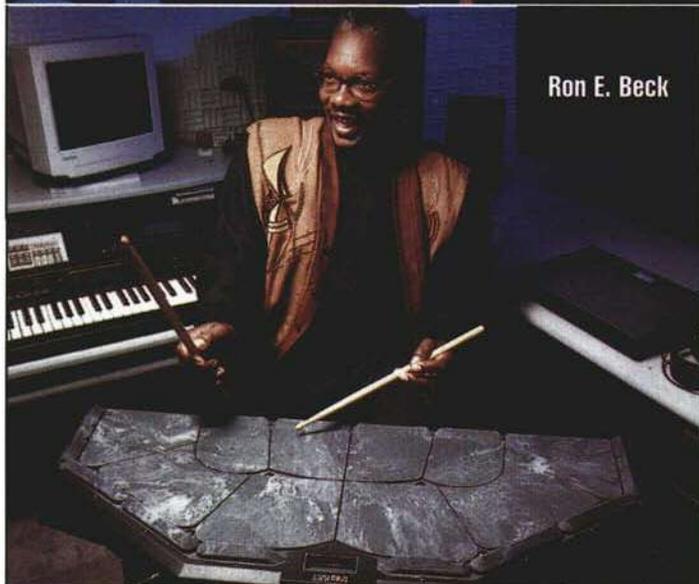
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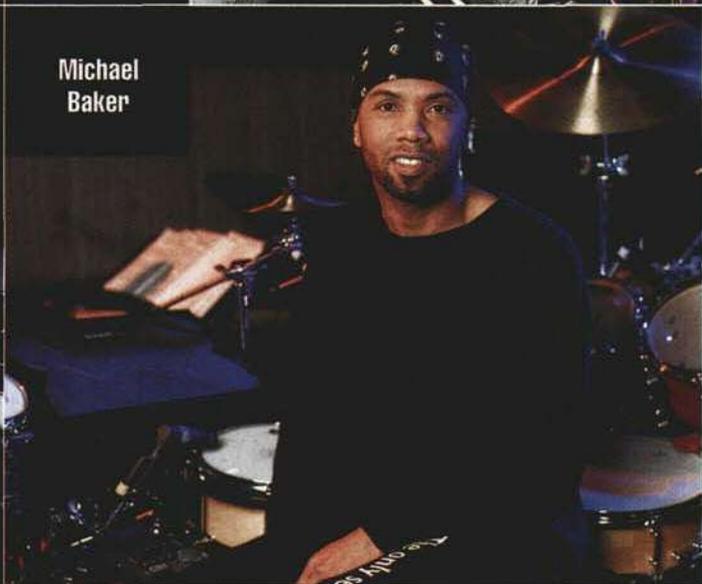
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RF: What about your philosophical approach, Joe?

JP: Mostly it's the musical part of it. I love to teach a beginner, especially someone who wants to learn jazz. If someone has been studying quite a few years, then it's really hard. They're molded into a certain way and it's hard to undo all of that. And I love it when a student comes to me and says they've been studying with Freddie or Richard. It gives me a chance to show them another aspect of drums that I can offer. I'm all for taking it *all* in from *all* areas.

Go to Richard, go to Chuck Flores, go to Ralph, go to Freddie, and put it all together. I heard stories of Buddy Rich learning the Henry Adler system, learning Moeller. Freddie Gruber got together with Buddy and showed Buddy a lot of things he was using at the end. Take it *all* in.

RH: Everybody has something to offer. Students run around because they're looking for some different things. My teaching used to be what I would call conceptual. People would come to me because they wanted to know more about the fusion

stuff, odd meters, etc. I had written a book based on that and on my experiences as a player in different situations, so I would give them what I knew. But as I continued to teach at PIT, I began to realize there was a more basic thing about drumming in general that had to do with sitting down at the drumset, how you address it, and where you start. I feel I'm actually more capable of teaching a beginner now than I was a few years ago. Metric modulation can come later. Right now, let's try to just move around the drumset and get a good sound. Let's focus on the heart of the matter, which is making music on the instrument—understanding what that's all about and using your technique to be able to do it.

RF: Have you guys ever had any philosophical differences about teaching?

RH: I don't think we've had any major disagreements. We'll sit down and Joe will present an idea. I might make some comments. Then he'll look at *my* stuff and say, "Ralph, what do you think about this...?" We'll just talk about it and hash it out.

RF: What kinds of subjects would create debate?

JP: We might talk about the Moeller technique, and how we are going to approach it. We teach an offshoot of that system. There are concepts of playing into the drum or off the drum, and we kind of changed that a little. We're using those motions, but we're still playing off the drum.

There are three basic strokes in the Moeller system, and it occurred to us that we could apply them to the teaching of the jazz cymbal beat. That's one of the hardest things to teach a drummer, if he or she isn't a natural to jazz. Through these strokes, we were almost immediately able to get students into a feel that they never sensed before.

RH: It's not just in terms of the rhythm, it's the motion that creates a feel. We try to relate all the technique we're talking about right to the music, otherwise the technique is just for its own sake. The last thing a teacher wants to teach is technique for technique's sake.



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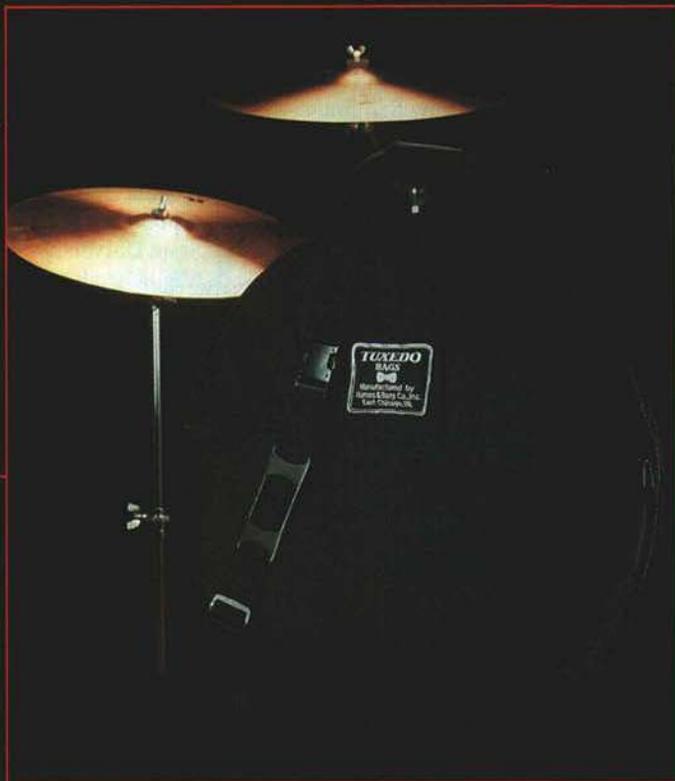
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Jason Gianni

New Jersey-born (but now San Francisco-based) Jason Gianni started playing at the age of eleven. Now twenty-four, he studied privately and in band programs throughout his school years, received a B.A. in percussion performance at the University of Delaware, and earned a master's degree in music from Penn State. He also studied at Drummers Collective in New York, where he gained input from Clayton Cameron, Dom Famularo, Horacio Hernandez, Pete Zeldman, Mike Clark, and Kim Plainfield.

With all of this varied educational background, it's not surprising that Jason's great strength as a player is versatility. Although he says he grew up listening to and playing progressive rock (making him comfortable with



polyrhythms and odd time structures), much of his studying and playing has been in the genres of fusion, Afro-Cuban, and jazz/big band. His demo tape reveals a

technical command (and a musical acuity) for every playing style, from progressive rock, to wedding bossas, to calypso, to greasy funk. He's currently putting this versatility to good use: He's touring with blues guitarist Percy Strothers, working with a Latin/funk band called Resin, and recording with a progressive rock band called Rules of Prey. (And in his *spare time*, he teaches at San Francisco's well-known Drum World drumshop.)

Employing a Yamaha kit with Zildjian cymbals, a Tama *Iron Cobra* double pedal, and various percussion toys, Jason's goals are simple: To continually better his skills so that he'll be successful "in this wacky world of music." He concludes: "I know I'll have made it when I grace the cover of *Modern Drummer* some day!"

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Tom Knight

At only twenty-eight, Atlanta's Tom Knight has already amassed a respectable resume of educational and professional credits. Both in high school and at Georgia State University, Tom distinguished himself, earning school-, state-, and even national-level awards as an ensemble player and soloist. At the same time, he pursued live performances in as many styles and situations as possible, from a tour with a heavy rock band to drumming appearances in both a NASA commercial for Pratt & Whitney and on an episode of the TV series *In The Heat Of The Night*.

Today Tom is a busy session drummer, working primarily with producer Dallas Austin (Boyz II Men, TLC, Madonna). Tom is on albums by Debra "Lou" Killings, T. Smith, N'Dea Davenport, Joi,



Adam Nitti & Liquid Blue, and Beehive, and on the soundtrack for *FLED*. He also maintains a private teaching practice, serves as an instructor at the Atlanta Institute of Music, and conducts clinics for

Yamaha, Vic Firth, and Zildjian (whose equipment he endorses).

Tom's playing style has been influenced by drummers as diverse as Neil Peart, Buddy Rich, Dave Weckl, Trilok Gurtu, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dennis Chambers, Jeff Porcaro, and "all those '70s funk drummers who laid it down so hard you couldn't help but dance." His technique (as displayed on his demo video) is clean, precise,

contemporary, and extremely musical. His goals include "recording on as many different projects as possible, and becoming one of the world's most sought-after session drummers!"

Mike Cassells

Mike Cassells of Kingston, Ontario, Canada describes his playing styles as "progressive jazz" and "contemporary big band."

The thirty-three-year-old drummer certainly has done his homework for those styles; he lists his influences as "Philly Joe, Max, Tony, Jack, Vinnie, Jeff Watts, and most especially Peter Erskine, Paul Motian, Joey Baron, Dave Weckl, Al Foster, and Bill Bruford." He's also played with such leading Canadian jazz artists as Kenny Wheeler, Brian Dickinson, Hugh Frasier, and John MacLeod in both small and big band situations. Mike is also a mem-

ber of the Travoltas, a group that tours all across Canada and is starting to make inroads in the US. He also maintains a "legit" career, doing such shows as



Evita, *West Side Story*, and *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Beyond all that, Mike is a talented composer and bandleader, with his own group, NoiZe ConTrol.

Their self-produced CD *Not Your Father's Jazz* demonstrates Mike's creativity both on and off the drums. (He wrote all the music, played on all the tracks, and mixed and produced the recording.) His playing varies from open and free to controlled and grooving—as the nature of each tune dictates.

Playing on a hybrid kit of Milestone toms and bass drum, a Pearl *Omar Hakim* snare, Zildjian and Sabian cymbals, Pearl hardware, and DW pedals, Mike looks forward to a career in which he can "continue to grow as a musician and continue to work in different areas of performing and composing music."

should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance 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

you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to *On The Move*, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.



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Drumming Web Sites Reviewed

by Matt Peiken

Editor's note: As Many readers are probably aware, Modern Drummer Online (www.moderndrummer.com) has debuted with great success. Yet there are hundreds of other online resources dedicated to virtually every conceivable aspect of drums, drumming, and percussion. This is the first in a series of columns exploring what you can see, hear, and learn by hopping on your computer and surfing the Internet.

Neil Peart once dismissed the Internet as the "World Wide Wank." But few can deny that as a tool for research and information, the Internet is a bottomless well. And depending on how deeply you want to dive, you're bound to come away with practical, useful, and entertaining tidbits that can ultimately enhance your life away from the mouse.

For proof, look no further than the world of drumming, where Web sites are dedicated to every imaginable rhythmic slant. Let's take a look at what you'll find at some of these sites.

Zildjian (www.zildjian.com)

Zildjian is one of many industry heavyweights using the Internet as a marketing tool. At Zildjian Online, you'll not only find



brochure-style information about the company's entire product line, you'll have access to sound and video clips and Zildjian's encyclopedic "Anatomy Of A Cymbal." You also get news and views, along with cymbal setups of Zildjian's endorsers.

There's also a directory to Zildjian dealers across the country.

Zildjian's Web site is visually appealing, though it could take a while for the sound and video files to make it onto your computer, particularly if you have a slow modem. You also need Apple's QuickTime (you can get the program free online) to see the video clips.

Zia (www.zia.com/MUSIC/instruments/)

For broader visions, check out any of the hundreds of non-commercial Web sites related to drums. A good start is a site called "Zia," where any musician is likely to find something of interest. Here you'll find links—online connections (see the Net Rudiments glossary)—to a wealth of information and resources specific to forty different instruments, some of which you've probably never heard of.

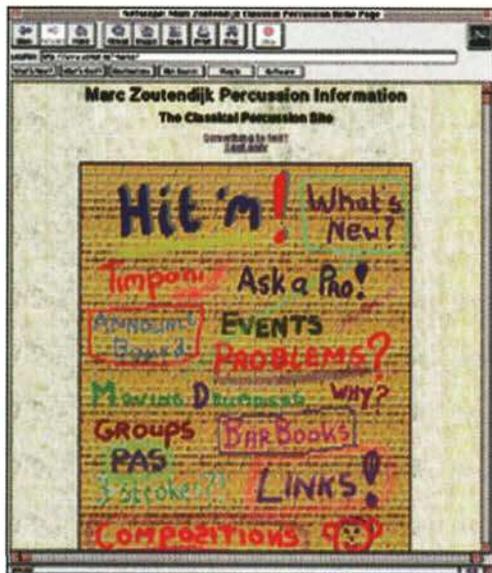
In the area dedicated to drums and percussion, you can find everything from drumming history to drummer jokes, along with connections to dozens of other sites related to drums and percussion. Go to Zia's homepage for biographical information on a range of artists, tour information, and song clips.



Classical Percussion (www.xs4all.nl/~marcz/)

A graffiti-laced wall greets visitors to the Classical Percussion site, put together and managed by Marc Zoutendijk, a percussion instructor at the Royal Conservatory of Music in The Hague, Netherlands.

Here you'll find charted exercises and solos, an "ask a pro" sec-



tion, and an illustrated column called *Drummer's Moves*, which dishes out ideas for physical movement and combinations around the drumkit. There are also lots of connections to other drumming-related sites, including university music

programs and Web sites put up by individual drummers and percussionists.

Drummer's Web

(valley.interact.nl.av.musweb/drumweb/home.html)

Though it makes a lofty claim by billing itself "the first Web site for drummers and percussionists," *Drummer's Web* is nonetheless ambitious. A recent inspection revealed exclusive interviews with Steve Smith and Dave Weckl and an article written by Bill Bruford, along with product reviews and news items,

including a preview of *Paradiso Van Slag*, the world drumming festival in Amsterdam and Hamburg.

With these and all other Web sites, content and accessibility can change with the wind. Steer your Web browser to search engines such as Excite (www.excite.com) and Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com) to find Web sites related to your specific areas of interest. In the next column, we'll look at what individual drummers are doing on the Internet.



Matt Peiken has contributed features and reviews to Modern Drummer magazine since 1990. His own Web site is at home.inreach.com/peiken. Reach Matt by e-mail at peiken@inreach.com.

Net Rudiments

For you "modern drummers" needing a little help with Internet jargon, here's a brief glossary of terms to get you up to speed.

Browser: A graphics program on your computer that allows you to navigate your way around the Internet and the World Wide Web. Browsers are pre-installed on most new computers, though you can get free browsers from your Internet service provider.

Download: To copy an audio, video, text, or multimedia file from another computer, through your computer's modem, onto your computer.

E-mail: Electronic mail. E-mail is available through commercial online services such as America Online or through most Internet service providers.

Home Page: The first page, or main page, of any Web site.

Internet Service Provider: A commercial company that, for a fee, rents you access to the Internet and the World Wide Web.

Link: A graphic or portion of text that, when clicked on with your mouse, brings you to another part of that Web site or to a different Web site.

Modem: A device that allows your computer to "speak" to other computers through common telephone lines.

Search Engine: A program, accessed free of charge through any number of commercial companies, that allows you to search for Web sites specific to the subject matter of your choice.

Web Address: The virtual address of a Web site. The Web address for *Modern Drummer* magazine is www.moderndrummer.com. Almost all Web addresses begin with the prefix <http://>.

Web Page: An area within a larger Web site, though some Web sites are made up of a single page.

SPEAK OUT: On Ride Cymbals

Modern Drummer Online (at www.moderndrummer.com) features a section called "Speak Out," where drummers are invited to give their opinions on various drumming-related topics. This month's topic was inspired by T. Bruce Wittet's excellent article, "In Search Of The Perfect Ride Cymbal," from the June '97 issue of MD. We asked drummers to speak out about their favorite rides and the players whose ride sound they found inspiring.

I use a 22" Sabian AA Rock ride. It's heavy (a little more than I expected) and it's as dry as the Sahara Desert! But it has an awesomely loud bell sound.

I'm going to get lambasted for saying this, but my favorite ride cymbal belongs to none other than the greatest and most influential rock drummer, the man who created modern rock drumming, a guy who hit the drums with the ultimate combination of power, technique, and finesse (not always in that order)—John Bonham, *rock god*.

Bonzo Wannabe

My ride cymbal of choice is the 20" Zildjian A Custom. It's the most versatile cymbal I've ever used. It works in the band I play with, a rock power-trio, but it's also been great in situations such as musicals and some of the swing stuff I play at school.

As far as picking a "name" cymbal that I like, it's tough because it varies from genre to genre, but I think that I'd have to go with Steve Gadd's ride sound.

(no name given)
Boston University

I'm playing in a progressive rock band that has a few pop influences, and for that type of music your normal choice for a ride would be a heavier cymbal, right? Well, my choice of ride is a 20" Paiste *Sound Formula Full* ride because of its versatility and loud, but still controlled, projection.

Drummers and records that have inspired me include Andy Sturmer of Jellyfish (*Spilt Milk* record), and Bill Bruford with

U.K. (*In The Dead Of Night*). Thanks a lot for letting me share my philosophy about ride cymbals.

Thomas Erlandsson
Sweden

I play several times a week in an alternative/pop cover band. The main requirement for this gig for a ride cymbal is versatility. It has to produce the widest range of sounds, from trashy to a tight ping. Many of the ride cymbals available today focus in a certain area of that spectrum but fail miserably on the broad range. I have various ride cymbals that I use, but I keep returning to my 20" Paiste *Colorsound 5*.

Joseph F. Foley

I have two main rides: One is an old 20" Zildjian K from my very first kit. It has sort of a washy sound that really blends with a band. It's great for jazz and funk. I also have the "big boy," a massive 22" Zildjian Z Power ride that is wonderful for loud, piercing pings.

One ride cymbal that has caught my ear is Chad Sexton's of 311. He is great on the kit, but his use of the ride cymbal and hi-hats really inspires me to let loose.

Dylan Newberry
Lindsay, TX

A family friend gave me his old ride cymbal when I first started drumming. He used to play in the Perth area doing a lot of big band jazz and rock during the '50s and '60s. The ride is a 21" Zildjian, purchased new in 1962. It has a warm jazzy flavor; a nice dry ride with a punchy bell. I treasure this ride. It's fifteen years older than me, sounds great, and has some heritage behind it.

Kim Wisniewski
Perth, Western Australia

Alex Van Halen's ride definitely stands out as one of my favorite ride sounds. I think he had a lot to do with bringing the ride out into the open and making it clearly heard. In terms of *playing* the ride cymbal, Neil Peart's ride patterns, especially the one he

plays on the song "Subdivisions," stands out as my favorite.

Sharad Mathur

Thanks to the excellent review that appeared in *Modern Drummer*, I recently purchased a set of Istanbul's Mel Lewis signature cymbal series. I was immediately impressed with the sound of the ride. It's extremely warm. I feel really comfortable playing this cymbal.

Peter Cedilnik
Ljubljana, Slovenia (Europe)

I use a 20" Sabian HH I got about ten years ago. It's been a great all-around cymbal for both rock and jazz stuff. My favorite-sounding cymbal (especially the bell) is the one Vinnie Colaiuta used on "Beat It With Your Fist" from Zappa's *Shut Up & Play Yer Guitar*.

Jeff Kersting

I currently use a 20" Zildjian A medium ride for rock, jazz, and fusion. It has a good deal of wash to it, and I use that to my advantage when it's appropriate for the music.

I think my favorite ride cymbal sound is the flat ride (Paul Wertico on Pat Metheny albums, and Roy Haynes' sound), but you need a bell for most playing situations.

Andy McWilliams

My main ride cymbal is a 20" Zildjian A medium. It gives a nice clear ride sound, but I can also lay into it without it becoming overbearing.

I have always enjoyed the ride sounds of Stewart Copeland, especially his bell work.

Dan "Scary" Braun

I've been using a 20" Paiste signature heavy ride. It's a good cymbal, very transparent, with a clear definition. But I'm still searching for that dream ride sound.

Currently, I think the finest cymbal sound out there is Bill Stewart's. Check it out on the new Larry Goldings CD, *Big Step*.

Morry Shapiro

I'm using a 20" Zildjian *Platinum* ping ride. I use it for both jazz and rock. I ride the bell a lot, and this cymbal has a great-sounding bell.

The artist who has inspired my ride cymbal sound is Carter Beauford of the Dave Matthews Band, not so much in sound, but in the way he uses it.

Magic

I use a 20" Sabian *HH* mini-bell ride for all of my jazz performances. It gives me a nice attack with a good tone, without a lot of overring. I would have to say that Ed Shaughnessy's cymbal sound has been a big influence on me.

Jimmy Gaspard
Beaumont, TX

I use a 21" Paiste 2002 ride. I bought it used with a few other cymbals and I love it. It's exactly the sound I want out of my ride—it has nice stick definition without too much wash, but it crashes really nicely, and the bell is amazing!

As far as a pro who has a ride sound I like, Vinnie Colaiuta's ride is great. Listen to that bell on "St. Augustine In Hell" off

Sting's *Ten Summoner's Tales*. That's an amazing ride sound.

Marty Rosamond
North Hollywood, CA

I am currently using two ride cymbals on my setup. One is a 20" Paiste signature flat ride, and the other is a 20" Zildjian *K Custom Dark*. This combo seems to work well in a number of genres from blues and jazz to rock to country. When it comes to ride cymbals, I don't think you can ever have too many!

Rob Hanson
Burlington, WA



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The Drummer As Recording Artist

Part 3: CD Production

by Hal Howland

In the previous two installments of this series, we looked at sabs & promotion and business issues pertaining to your recording project. This time we'll look at factors relating to the physical production of your CD, namely, cover design, printing, and CD technology, as well as the costs and a few caveats when dealing with the providers of CD-related services. Everybody ready? Tape is rolling....



As you consider how your new CD's packaging will look, remember that it must compete in the bins with lavish productions by stars who have hired the world's leading visual artists to design their covers. For proof that the greatest music in the world will not survive a bad album cover, ask a record dealer to show you some of the hundreds of fine, unsold recordings he or she will return to the distributors this month.

Producing a cover begins with choosing a graphic designer. By helping you realize your ideas and protect your budget and schedule, a graphic designer is to your CD's appearance what a record producer is to its sound—coordinating the work of photographers, illustrators, typographers, printers, and others in a complex process that will require your patience and careful attention. (Designers, like dancers, speak their own language and feel their own rhythm.) Much of this process now takes place on a computer, which provides opportunity for great creativity and flexibility at a reasonable cost. Find a designer with experience specifically producing album covers. For recommendations ask recording studios and musicians whose covers you admire. Contact designers (including famous ones) whose ideas seem compatible with yours. Try the yellow pages under "Art" and "Advertising." Above all, choose a designer with whom you feel a sense of partnership.

You will set the budget for design and printing, communicate ideas and information to help your designer create a cover concept, supply the text for the front and back covers, and approve photographs and designs. Later you will proofread typeset text (perhaps many times) and approve camera-ready artwork.

You have seen enough album covers to know what sorts of textual information should appear there. The trend today seems to be toward more art and less (or less intelligible) text. Only you can decide whether your audience is hip enough to reach for a cover that has little to say in words. But certain text is mandatory for copyright protection and essential for sales. Choose a catalog num-

ber that is long enough to be easily located in a record store's computerized inventory: A number of fewer than six digits may bring up scores of other titles with the same number. Apply for a Universal Product Code (UPC) so a clerk can quickly scan your CD for sale (Uniform Code Council, 8163 Old Yankee Rd., #1, Dayton, OH 45458, [513] 435-3870). Use the proper copyright notices. (See Part 2.) The CD manufacturer will supply your designer with the necessary universal compact disc logo. Don't forget to print your label's mailing address.

Allow eight weeks from the time you begin working with your designer to the time you receive camera-ready mechanicals, and another six to eight weeks for printing.

In our visually driven age, a black & white cover would have to make a powerful statement to catch a customer's eye. Therefore you will probably want to print four-color artwork, in which the three primary colors—red, yellow, and blue—are combined with black to create full-color art and photography. Additional colors are created by additional press runs. Photos must first be converted to halftones, wherein a grid of tiny dots is arranged in crossing lines. (The more lines per inch, the crisper the image.) Black & white photos can be printed using an additional color or as duotones, using two colors. Color photos and illustrations are converted into screens called color separations. Each element uses four halftones, one for each color.

Camera-ready mechanicals consist of all the line art (type, lettering, borders, rules, drawings) assembled on boards or flats. Photos and color illustrations are arranged separately, with their size and position indicated on the boards. Each layer of the mechanical is photographed to produce negatives, photos are converted to halftones, and all the elements are combined to produce proofs. It is imperative that you check your proofs carefully, since they represent your last chance to catch errors before printing. You may spot seemingly inexcusable mistakes and incorrect colors that will test your blood pressure like an out-of-tune guitar; just keep your sense of perspective.



Upon approval of your proofs, the negatives are exposed onto plates (one for each color) and the plates are mounted on a press. CD booklets are usually printed on white, seventy-pound, glossy paper ("slicks"). Covers are usually coated with varnish for a richer look and scratch protection. (Unvarnished paper has a nice satin finish, but the ink may scuff; ask for samples.) Then graphics are trimmed, and the fabricated covers are collated with your record-

ings. The time between delivery of mechanicals and final fabrication is generally four to six weeks.

Again, your graphic designer can recommend a printer and help negotiate a price; you can locate a printer in an industry directory (see below); or you can use a convenient one-stop service such as Discmakers—1328 North 4th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122, (800) 468-9353—or Oasis Recording—PO Box 7256, Silver Spring, MD 20907-7256, (800) 697-5734.



A CD is a polycarbonate disc coated with reflective metal and a layer of plastic. On one side of the disc, stored digital information is arranged on a spiral track that is read by a laser beam as the CD rotates in the player. The digital signal is then processed and amplified for playback.

Compact discs are mastered and manufactured using lasers, robotics, and high standards of quality control and cleanliness. Once the manufacturer receives your pre-master tape, an engineer will listen to it for discrepancies and verify the accuracy of the time code log. Next the PQ subcode (time, display, control data) is inserted. The digital information on your master tape controls a laser beam that exposes photosensitive material layered onto a glass master disc; the exposed areas become billions of microscopic pits. The glass master is then coated with thin electroconductive metal and checked for defects. Negative masters ("fathers") and positive masters ("mothers") make the stampers by electroforming. Glass masters are not transferable from one manufacturer to another.

Optical grade polycarbonate discs are made by injection molding. Each disc is coated with a thin layer of aluminum or silver (gold can be used for premium quality) and hermetically sealed with an ultraviolet (UV)-cured protective plastic coating; the label printing is silk-screened with UV-cured ink onto the plastic coating. Selected discs are checked for defects. Upon approval the CDs are packaged and shipped. The time between the arrival of your master and the delivery of manufactured product is three to six weeks. Shipment probably will be by United Parcel Service (UPS) or a similar carrier unless the weight exceeds 100 pounds, in which case truck shipment is cheaper. Be certain the manufacturer insures your shipment, and take time to verify that it has arrived intact; file any damage claim not with the manufacturer but with the carrier. Check a few CDs from different boxes and report any defects to the manufacturer.



By necessity you will deal with designers, printers, and manufacturers who are willing to serve the independent or custom market; that is, labels that produce fewer than five thousand copies of a given title. These firms may schedule your work around larger, more lucrative projects, but the quality of your final product should in no way be inferior to that of the major labels. Shop around, ask questions, request understandable cost breakdowns, and insist on approval at every appropriate step of the way. Agree in writing on quotes and delivery times and on responsibility for errors. As a rookie you will probably be expected to pay for services by deposit, with final payment due before shipment; you won't be extended credit or a discount unless you become a more

active label, and thereby a regular customer.

Designers, printers, manufacturers, and others who serve the music industry are listed in various directories. The most authoritative and accurate directory is the *Billboard International Buyer's Guide*, available from Billboard Directories, PO Box 2016, Lakewood, NJ 08701, (800) 344-7119.

Since artists of different disciplines tend to congregate, many musicians have friends who are pretty good with a camera or a paintbrush. And with the proliferation of desktop publishing, most of us know someone who could create a passable CD cover for little or no money. Love these well-meaning acquaintances, but work with the pros.

Fees for cover design (without lettering) start at about \$600. Logos and lettering fees are \$300 to \$700. A photographer or illustrator can charge \$100 to \$1,000 per day, with an additional \$100 for each different use of a particular shot, \$25 to duplicate for newspapers or magazines, and \$15 to \$40 per print for promo duplication. Commissioned illustrations range from \$25 to \$1,500. Typesetting, photocopies, and artists' expenses (materials, phone calls) may cost \$250 to \$500; converting copy from your computer costs \$9 to \$20 per page. The design and production of camera-ready mechanicals can cost \$2,500.

Printing costs include \$3.50 to \$15.50 per photograph to convert to halftones, \$300 to \$700 for color separations, \$45 per hour for stripping photographs, \$20 to \$35 for proofs, and \$225 to \$365 for one thousand to five thousand color slicks of your front cover.

In Part 4 we'll look at the recording process.



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Mino Cinelu

by Ken Micallef

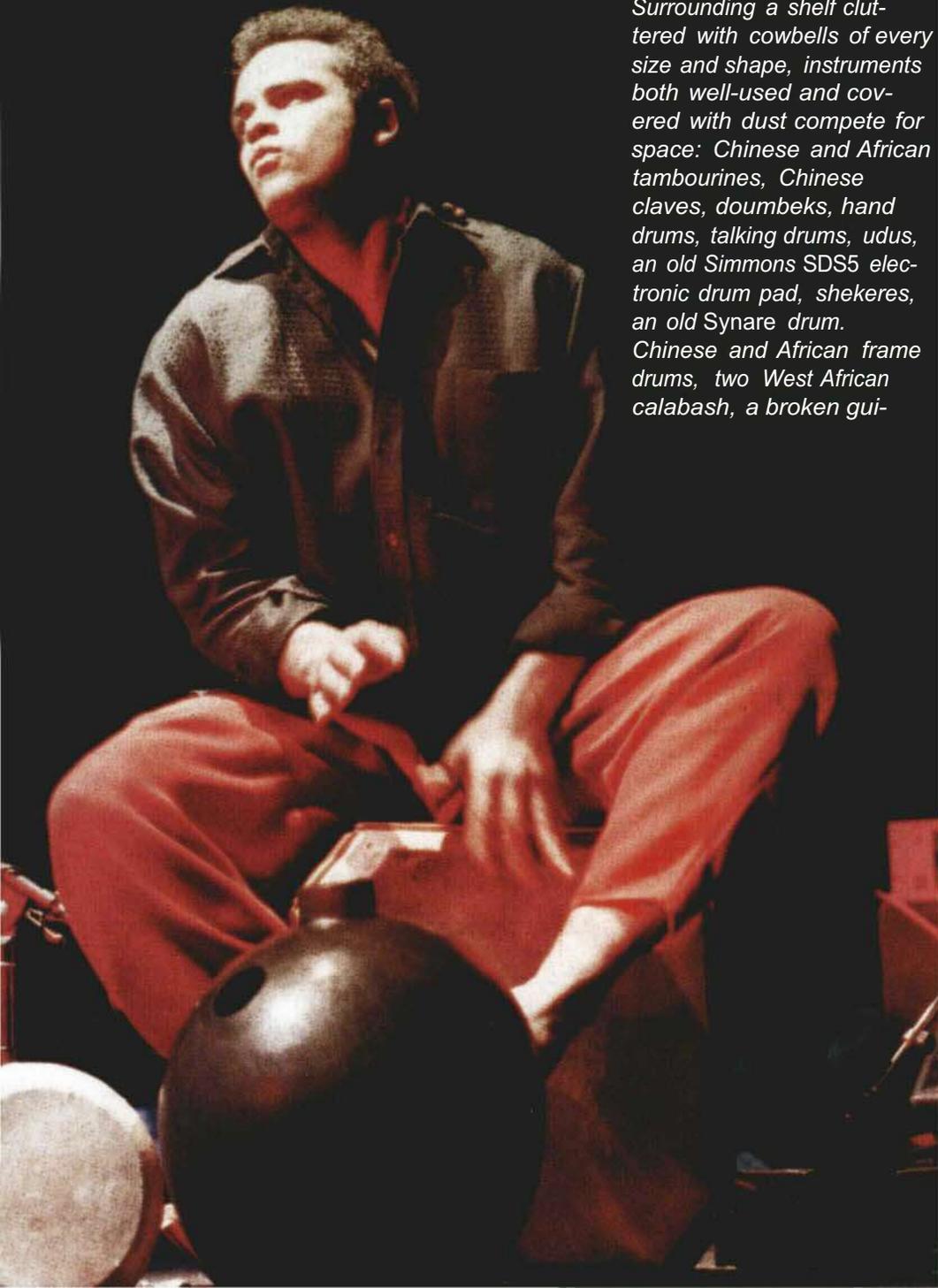
Mino Cinelu's Brooklyn apartment looks like the Smithsonian Institution of percussion. Crammed into a home recording studio off a sunny living room, exotic percussion from around the world gleams with candy-store fascination.

Surrounding a shelf cluttered with cowbells of every size and shape, instruments both well-used and covered with dust compete for space: Chinese and African tambourines, Chinese claves, doumbeks, hand drums, talking drums, udus, an old Simmons SDS5 electronic drum pad, shekeres, an old Synare drum.

Chinese and African frame drums, two West African calabash, a broken gui-

tarafoda from Portugal a '50s Gretsch guitar, a Turkish saz, a stringed instrument known as "the contrabass of Morocco," many cans of Cafe Bustelo and El Pico coffee, packs of Shabar sticks (originated in Dakar), Japanese ashtray-shaped bells used in Buddhist temple ceremonies, a traditional instrument from Quebec that resembles a wooden garlic press, African maracas, Egyptian frame drums, tin flutes, a didjeradoo and a djiperidoo (a Cinelu invention), and a 1940s Ludwig chrome-covered brass snare drum that Mino once used for doubling 2 and 4 with Omar Hakim.

But this Parisian-born percussionist is no mere museum keeper, Mino has recorded and toured with Miles Davis, Weather Report, Sting, Branford Marsalis, Lou Reed, Kenny Barron, Herbie Hancock, Gil Evans, Gong (!), and most recently, Pat Metheny. On his duet album with pianist Kenny Barron, Swamp Sally, Mino is a firestarter of feverish percussion. Written and produced by Mino, the album is a dissertation in modern percussion techniques, exploding with criss-crossing rhythms that are lithe and attacking, but never overpowering. Besides playing solo concerts around the globe, Mino is currently preparing to produce the next album by jazz pianist Jacky Terrason.



KM: You must travel all over the world looking for instruments.

MC: People are touched by the sincerity of someone—like me—who is looking for a special instrument to present to others. Many people actually *offer* me the instruments just because they know that I'm going to play them for people in other countries. I don't always play every instrument, but I will use them in workshops.

KM: What's the strangest place you've found an instrument?

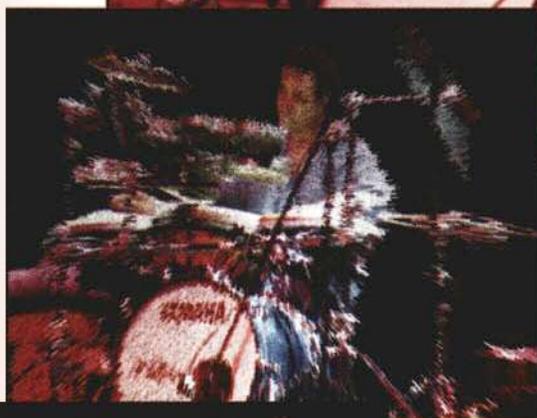
MC: Well, in Martinique I found some special drums down a deep ravine. We had a guy with a machete cutting a path for us. Then when I was with Sting in the Amazon, I was listening to a native flute that's played only in the presence of men. Women can *hear* it, but they can't look at it. That was bizarre. The chief of the village there wanted to wrestle me. He thought I was Sting's bodyguard. Luckily, he let me decline.

KM: How did so many African percussion instruments come to be popular in Europe?

MC: The tambourine and several other percussion instruments came into northern Europe during the Crusades, when Europeans were going into North Africa. Later, Europeans started incorporating Gypsy culture, which brought more percussion and different phrasing into the music. The flamenco came from the Gypsies and from North Africa, with the oud. Similarly, the Indians came to Spain and brought *their* sense of rhythm.

KM: Do some countries have percussion that is unique to that country, or is something like a tambourine a universal instrument whether it's from China or Africa?

MC: Instruments are often basically the same, but the techniques will change. For instance, you won't use the jingles in the Brazilian pandeira, which is the same size as the tambourine.



The classical percussionist also has a different tambourine technique. In India they use tabla techniques on the tambourine. The way they use claves in China is totally different than in South America. You get harder and heavier varieties of woods in Asia, so the sound changes as well. Wood found in Asia is far superior to wood from anywhere else in the world.

KM: You've played with a tremendous number of well-known artists over the years. How has your playing style evolved?

MC: I think I've grown a lot. There are things I do differently now. When I was young, I did a lot of djembe playing in African ensembles—in a raw, take-no-prisoners approach. I've mellowed. But I can still hang.

KM: On *Swamp Sally* with Kenny Barren, you overdub a lot of percussion. How do you arrange the different instruments?

MC: It's a form of orchestration. It's not just rhythmical; sometimes certain pitches just don't work. The metal sound of a cowbell might be too aggressive, so I might want to use a woodblock. There is an element of knowing the vocabulary I can use, like scales. Certain chords won't work with some percussion. Also, some instrumental ensembles just don't work. For example, if I'm using maracas, a shaker, and a shekere, one of them will not be heard.

KM: How do you choose what instruments to

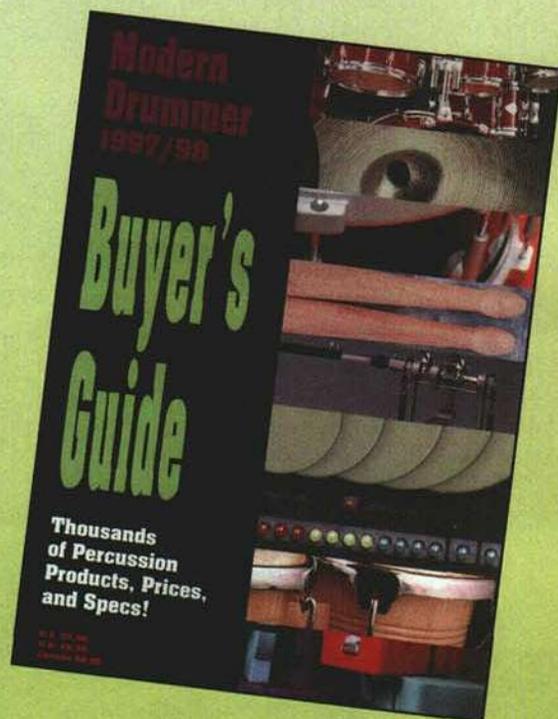
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take into a recording session?

MC: For each project I like to make a special setup as much as I can. I believe each composer is an individual, so I like to ask what the songs are about. For instance, I was in the second day of recording yesterday with Pat Metheny. Pat had sent me a tape of the music so I could match the tones. I had some Chinese bongos, which I knew fit some of his songs. I also brought in the Korg *Wave Drum*, bongos and congas, four djembes, and three different udus. I always knew Pat's playing, but I didn't know he was such a great composer. He didn't know I could orchestrate percussion parts like that. We were throwing sincere roses at each other. I like to be surprised like that.

KM: If someone called you for a gig cold, without the opportunity to hear the music beforehand, what would you take?

MC: I'll take a few tambourines, shakers, and hand drums. It's better to bring too much than not enough. The Korg *Wave Drums* are in almost every situation I do now. It's a new, different instrument, and an incredible tool.

KM: Speaking of tools, in your solo concert video you're using a very thin, long stick.

MC: That's the *Shabar* stick. I needed a stick that responds to everything: metal, skin, plastic, and wood. Regular sticks don't work on that kind of setup. With my technique I use my wrists, palms, hands, and fingers.

KM: Stepping back in time a bit, how did you come to play with Miles?

VIC: I was playing drums at Mikell's in 1979, in a cover band. I had wanted to get back to percussion, but people were calling me for drum gigs. Miles was sitting in the audience, but I didn't recognize him. I thought he was a nice old man who dug the music. So I left the stage while everyone stayed on, playing all their chops. I passed in front of Miles, and he grabbed me pretty hard on the arm. He said, "You're a bad mother." So I introduced myself. He must have thought I was either the craziest or the dumbest person he'd ever met. I could tell that everyone was looking at us. I didn't understand what was going on. Pat Mikell told me who he was. I went back, and Miles wanted my number. A week later the phone rang.

KM: What did Miles like to hear from the

percussion?

MC: He loved the finger-slide on the congas. We were doing a lot of modal music, so I was able to tune the drums for that. The first time I played hand drums with Miles was on "Jean Pierre." I played the melodies on the congas using the slide. On another occasion we were playing in Paris, and there was a power failure. Al Foster immediately brought it down with the brushes. Since I was playing congas on "Jean Pierre," I was right in tune. It was just Miles, Al, and me playing acoustically. I played the chords and the bass lines on the congas.

KM: Which of Miles' recordings did you play on?

MC: I did *We Want Miles*, *Decoy*, and *Star People*. At the end of that period, the band started sounding more and more like Prince. It did not make sense, though I like Prince. But when I was asked to sing "Chocolate Girl," it was time to go. Even so, what Miles did was very sincere. There was strength in the innocence of what was happening then. A lot of the young guys were sometimes in a hurry, but one note

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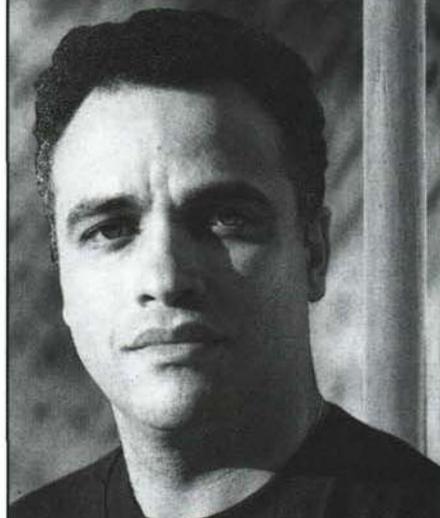
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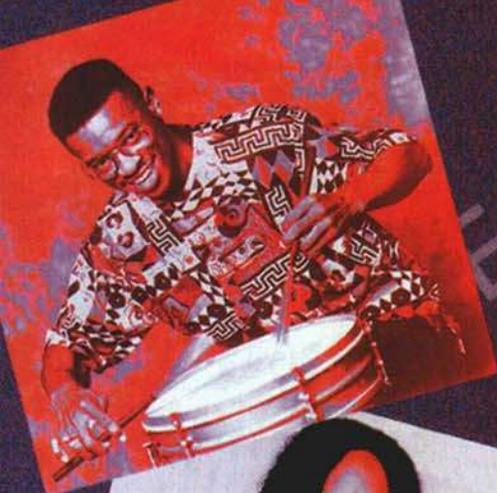
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from Miles' trumpet would calm everybody down. You didn't need a cue, just that one note. We would always follow that voice. That's what made that music so vibrant. Everybody would give for Miles. He was the type of person who would inspire you to do that.

You know, I always knew I would play with Miles if we ever met. It sounds pretentious, and it was not a quest, but I *knew* I would play with him. It just made sense. On the other hand, I *never* thought I would play with Weather Report. I changed my concept quite a bit with them; the music demanded that. To me it was a band of good players, but very cold. They like the fancy exotic display of percussion. I was surprised to see the intensity of the band, with Omar Hakim and Victor Bailey—and of course the genius of Shorter and Zawinul. *Sporting Life* with Weather Report was a good album.

KM: What has been your most gratifying gig?

MC: I've been so blessed, from Miles to Weather Report. Incredible memories. I had a good voyage with Kenny Barron, duets with Branford Marsalis, and some interesting memories with Sting. I was very happy with Sting's *Nothing Like The Sun*. I was really shocked by the freedom that he gave me.

KM: What are some of your upcoming projects?

MC: I may do a modern opera in France, and a movie score for Raoul Peck, a Haitian director. I can do it all here in my studio. I'm also planning a series of solo concerts in Japan.

KM: When you do a solo concert, what is your game plan to make it all work?

MC: It depends on the pieces I play, as well as the setup. I always know the tempo and the tuning. On one piece recently, I was using a bow to get harmonics. That lets me get definite pitches, sometimes three or four at a time.

Everything has to be in a certain place. I might use two Korg *Wave Drums*, a 20" Yamaha bass drum, chimes, and hand drums. It's a universe in itself. *Mino picks up a small egg shaker and creates a rhythm, while tapping a conga with a Multi-Rod.* I might start with that, but I know I will end up on the drumset. I'm using the djiperidoo on a new piece I'm going to perform in Austria.

KM: As you're playing various percussion in a solo concert, are you still conceptually in a single musical piece?

MC: That's the discipline. As you know, I have a lot of imagination, and I can drift away in a minute. So I have to discipline myself. Sometimes I don't know where I am—and I don't care—but I have to tell a story.

KM: Do you try to create a melody on the percussion in solo concerts?

MC: The goal is to make *music* and not to turn it into a demonstration. Anybody can develop technical skill, but music is beyond that. Music is about emotions and telling a story. It's much harder to do that with drums and percussion. It's a question of concept.



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Bass And Drums

The Inseparable Relationship

by Steve Jansen

The relationship between bass and drums can never be overstated. It is *such* an important part of modern music, to the extent that these days you can determine a great deal of the commercial potential of a track simply by its bass and drum content alone. That is incredible considering how, not so long ago, bass and drums were probably the least considered aspects of pop music.

I believe that Motown played a particularly important part in bringing the potential of the rhythm section to the foreground. The "groove" aspect became a recognized element in commercial music, and a kind of sexuality, known as "funk," was introduced into rhythm. As sex sells pretty much anything, it's only natural that sexual energy within music should be a large contributing factor to its popularity. This is still very much in evidence today, as we hear the sampled drum loop groove constantly being revised and reinvented over and over again. And the rap content that has been repeatedly incorporated is essentially "voice-rhythm," and quite clearly is rooted in ethnic origins and cultural identity.

Since the disco boom of the '70s, bass and drums have never had it so good in determining the "immediateness" of a track. One can, to a certain extent, relate it to the spirit of tribal dance music. The desire for people to display this physical performance (especially the young—as they still burst with the need to ventilate their individuality) is a direct statement of ego/identity and sexuality

within a society. Rhythm connects with and stimulates this physical and sexual side of our psychology, rather than the higher intellect that recognizes harmony and melody.

Dance is body language. If you like, it's a common denominator for the animal world—a seductive, colorful language without words—and at the same time it's a release, a disengagement from the everyday self for even the briefest of moments. Rhythm is a deep-rooted stimulant for these qualities within us, and can make even the most restrained individual writhe and wiggle about in public.

Have you noticed a type of music that emerged of late, which comprises of very fast programmed rhythms with bass—a kind of electronic dub—with a few extra analog synths for flavor? This style—known as "bass & drums"—is yet another version of the same: an abundantly clear message in music that says one thing—dance—and offers very little else. Our higher intellect is put on hold, and something more "instinctive" comes to the fore.

Next time you see a TV program with people dancing, switch off the volume. Without the inducement of audio, you suddenly see something quite different. When you are no longer aware of the musical trend, and can turn a blind eye to the fashion statements, you simply see people displaying some very bizarre behavior. Essentially, it's rhythm that's causing this.

Therefore, drummers do have quite an ancient and powerful contrivance at their disposal!

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Much of my early career was spent playing alongside Mick Karn in the group Japan. We were always a strange musical partnership. His bass style was a melodic, "swooping" one. He rarely rooted himself with what you might call solid playing, but preferred (and still does, I think) to be diving up and down the fretless neck, creating very melodic lines with what seemed like more off-beats than on. I enjoyed incorporating a lot of tom-tom playing into rhythm parts and always liked to mess with downbeats, for instance, continuing fills across them, putting a snare beat on them, or even leaving them out altogether.



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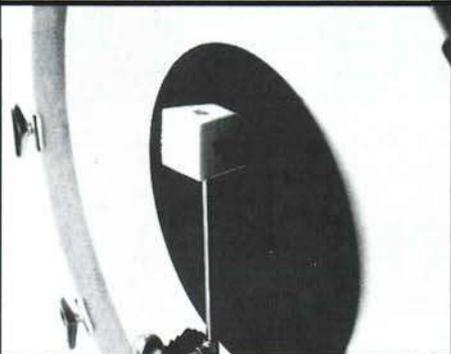
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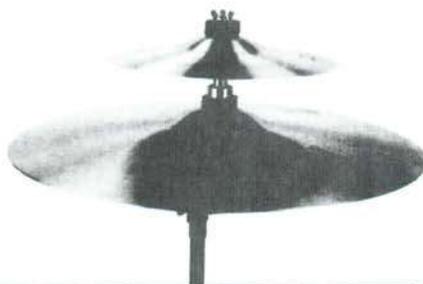
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There are many examples of this to be found on the last studio recording by Japan, *Tin Drum*.

As a rhythm section, this approach meant that we were continually at risk of leaving things "unsupported"—and on some occasions, it was only through finding key points to accentuate together that we managed (I hope) to sustain things at all. We both preferred to underplay the usual task of bass and drums. By that I mean that we attempted to "minimalize" the way in which a rhythm section would normally support a piece of music. This sometimes made it difficult to formulate song material, as it left a minefield of awkward, staggered "quirks"—we were learning as we went. Singer David Sylvian managed with this as best he could, and fortunately enjoyed working vocal lines in and out of rhythmic oddities.

Two of my personal favorite rhythm parts between Mick and I are "Sons Of Pioneers" (from *Tin Drum*) and "Pocket Full Of Change" (from Rain Tree Crow's self-titled album). Let's look at "Sons Of Pioneers" first. The bass line was the starting point for this particular track. This was not our usual method of writing together, so I tried for quite a time to come up with something as compelling and suspenseful as the bass line was.

My initial approach was entirely in the wrong direction. By using a bass drum and snare pattern, I was undermining the bass

line, causing it to seem less important than it actually was—even though rhythmically the combination may have been working. I eventually gave up on that approach and instead decided on a pattern played with soft beaters on the toms and a snare with its snares turned off. To my mind, the bass should really have been dominating the drums, and I needed to sit back and provide a platform on which the bass was able to walk freely.

I find this interesting because had I one day simply started playing that particular rhythm, I guarantee that Mick would not have come up with anything like the bass line of "Sons Of Pioneers."

'Next time you see a TV program with people dancing, switch off the volume. You suddenly see persons displaying some very bizarre behavior. Essentially, it's rhythm that's causing this. Therefore, drummers do have quite an ancient and powerful contrivance at their disposal!'

I'm sure he would have been inclined to play something much more staccato and rhythmically busy, and it would never have culminated in such a pleasing result. It therefore provided for me the important lesson of compromise within a band environment. The

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qualities another player brings to you can potentially effect you in many different ways, and if you don't allow dominance to be a part of that potential, then you can miss some very wonderful opportunities. Getting the very best out of your collaboration with another player requires that you really absorb—as well as propel—ideas.

Because of the bar lengths Mick had already determined for the bass line, it was necessary for me to devise a pattern that easily allowed the insertion of extra beats in the bar without disturbing the flow and gradual development of the piece. For me, the result is particularly satisfying because it does seem to flow well, it is very simple, and the vocal that materialized out of this sultry rhythm was something quite different for us at the time.

Another favorite of mine is "Pocket Full Of Change," from the *Rain Tree Crow* album. Again, simplicity is the thing here, but certain features make it work in a special way for me. First, this was the first time I had used a setup that incorporated two snares (Sonor *Hilite* and piccolo drums). I alternated between them for beats 2 and 4, which breaks the monotony of the two-bar pattern by giving it a "lilt" on every fourth beat. And the offbeat ride worked nicely because there was no drum stressing the downbeat at the top of bar one, which meant the bass drum and ride occurred together on the "&" after 1.

This track was written in the studio, basically beginning with this slow drumset momentum and David playing Hammond organ and ad-libbing a vocal. The mood of the piece was in a style we were immediately comfortable with. Then Mick came up with a deep and moody bass line that was working very closely with the

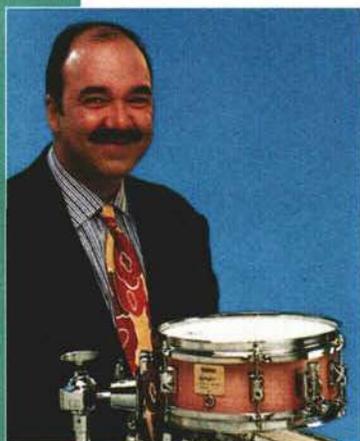
drums. Once we knew the track was working well and was something we wanted to take further, Mick and I then spent time concentrating on finding the best choice of beats for the bass to incorporate. Because we have such a close and longstanding relationship, he would allow me to suggest ideas that would help complement and drive the rhythm in such a way that was suitably minimalist. (This sort of imposition into another musician's territory can cause some awful rifts, so tactfulness—no matter how well you know one another—is highly recommended at all times.)

I particularly like the way the bass begins by playing with the bass drum and snare hits, but then occasionally moves off from them, which immediately creates a kind of mirror image of the drum rhythm. It's as though the bass and drums are really communicating with one another. Also, the bass "pumps" that accentuate the off-beat ride are very important to the momentum of this rhythm section.

These are just two examples that demonstrate how either the bass or the drums can initiate the rhythm section. But the importance lies within the *collaborative* relationship between the two. Some things happen instinctively, and can fall into place effortlessly. Others are not so easy and require hard work and imagination. The word of advice here would be: Don't give up easily on the latter! More often than not, when we push ourselves, we achieve results that are otherwise unobtainable. But always work closely together—as this is the very nature of the relationship between the two instruments. The payoff is that the output will reflect the level of input—and subsequently says a lot about you.



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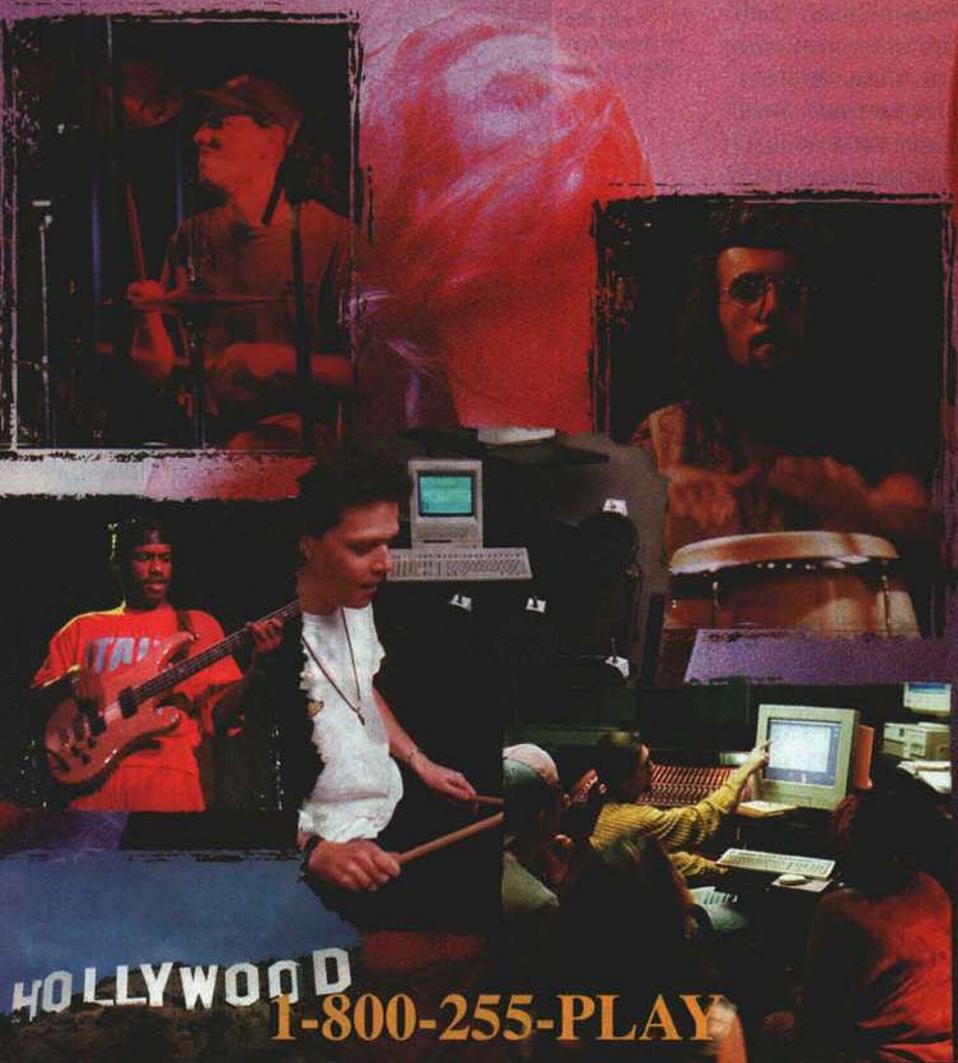
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Berklee Percussion Week '97

From congas to drumset to electronic percussion, drummers had free rein at Berklee College of Music's Percussion Week '97, from March 31 to April 5. Stars like Peter Erskine, Dave Samuels, and Giovanni Hidalgo led evening concerts, while faculty members held wide-ranging afternoon clinics. The entire week was dedicated to the memory of Tony Williams.

"The Percussion Week is great because it covers every style, and they have all the great drummers now," said Horacio Hernandez, the Latin drumset specialist who just took over the drum chair in Santana (and has previously recorded with Berklee professor and vibist Victor Mendoza). "This is an honor for me," said Hernandez, who capped the week by appearing with Phil Wilson's Rainbow Band at the Berklee Performance Center. There Horacio displayed his sense of power, swing, and syncopation (utilizing a foot-pedal cowbell). Mendoza and Allman Brothers percussionist Marc Quinones joined Horacio for the finale. Their set lent contrast to the performance of professor Steve Wilkes' "Six Drumsets," which featured accessible, diverse arrangements by six kit players.

One of the week's most anticipated events was the first major show by Einstein, the new trio led by drummer Jonathan Mover (long with Joe Satriani). Mover wowed fans with his attack on an eleven-piece kit surrounded by a gong and cymbals of all sizes. The band included singer-guitarist Stan Jankowsky and keyboardist Jani Mangini, and one performance highlight was the pinpoint insertion of the jam from King Crimson's "21st Century Schizoid Man" into the closing Einstein original "Guilty Party."

Faculty-based jazz rockers the Jon Finn Group—anchored by Rod Morgenstein-like powerhouse Dave Dicenso—dealt a strong overall set on their home turf. (Morgenstein had to cancel his own Percussion Week concert due to a blizzard that made travel to Boston impossible.)

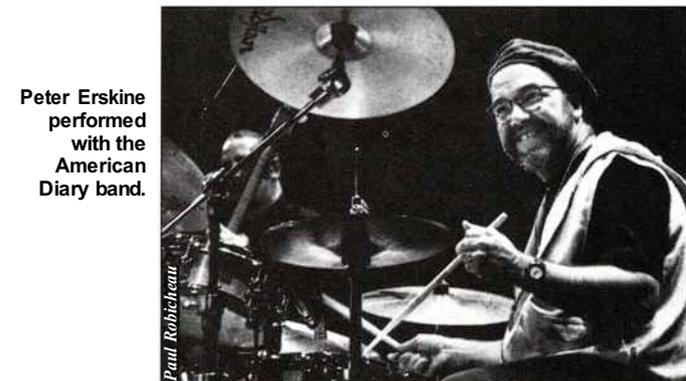
Double-bass professor Kenwood Dennard gave a solo tribute to Tony Williams and Alan Dawson, playing one-handed power grooves while manipulating keyboard electronics and chanting on a headset microphone. He followed a sublime outing by Peter Erskine with vibist Mike Mainieri's American Diary band, along with saxophonist George Garzone and bassist John Lockwood. While touring Berklee with Mainieri earlier that day, Erskine said, "If only they had this when we were students!"

Students got into the evening acts not only with the Rainbow Band, but also with a large ensemble (including several percussionists) that performed a program of Brazilian and Cuban music with conga master Giovanni Hidalgo. The brass-augmented arrangements were fresh and balanced, but the spotlight was on Hidalgo, who went from feathery tones to fierce, tom-like flurries on his five ash-wood congas.

The clinic series was highlighted by Casey Scheuerell leading the Berklee World Percussion Ensemble through the steps of a complex original piece. Other clinicians included Skip Hadden, Ian Froman, and Jamey Haddad (drumset), Ernesto Diaz (hand



Giovanni Hidalgo was featured within a large percussion ensemble.



Peter Erskine performed with the American Diary band.



The Percussion Week featured the live debut of Einstein, a progressive rock trio led by Jonathan Mover.



Marc Quinones (left) and Victor Mendoza (not shown) joined in the finale of a blistering Latin percussion performance by Horacio Hernandez (right).

percussion), Joe Galeota (West African percussion), Nancy Zeltsman and Janis Potter (marimba), and Mario DeCiuittiis (electronic percussion).

Paul Robicheau

Larrie Londin Memorial Scholarship Fund Program

Sabian, Ltd. and the Percussive Arts Society have announced the establishment of the Larrie Londin Memorial Scholarship Fund. Founded in memory of Nashville drumming great Larrie Londin, the fund was created with the participation of the Londin family to assist a select number of talented drummers and percussionists with financial awards against the cost of their music studies. The fund was established with \$36,000 donated by Sabian through the sale of a limited-edition *Larrie Londin Signature Ride* cymbal.

Scholarships are open to players of two age categories (seventeen and under and eighteen to twenty-four) who are enrolling in or are already active with a drum or percussion study program. For full information and applications, contact the Larrie Londin Memorial Scholarship Fund, Attn: Randall Eyles, Executive Director, Percussive Arts Society, 701 Northwest Ferris, Lawton, OK 73507, tel: (405) 353-1455, fax: (405) 353-1456, e-mail: percarts@pas.org.

Zildjian Featured On CNN's Pinnacle

The Avedis Zildjian cymbal company was recently featured on CNN's *Pinnacle* TV program. Broadcast over CNN's global network, the program profiles companies that are recognized leaders within their respective industries. The Zildjian coverage chronicled the history of the company, with film footage of Constantinople (the birthplace of Zildjian) and many of the great drummers of the past and present associated with Zildjian cymbals. The show further described how the business has been handed down from generation to generation, culminating with the designation of Craigie Zildjian as "heir-apparent." The half-hour piece went on to examine Zildjian's move into drumstick manufacturing, its attention to new product innovation, and the close relationship the company enjoys with many of the world's leading drummers.

Endorser News

Mapex U.S.A. (recently established as an independent distributor of Mapex drums) has updated its artist roster to include **Gregg Bissonette**, **Hal Blaine** (session great), **Walfredo Reyes Jr.** (Steve Winwood), **Danny Schuler** (Biohazard), **Tom Roady** (Nashville studio), **Grady Tate**, **Raymond Weber** (Harry Connick Jr.), **John Dittrich** (Buffalo Club), **Mark Dufresne** (Confederate Railroad), **Jeff Hale** (Waylon Jennings), **Raymond Herrera** (Fear Factory), **Bobby Huff** (Blackhawk), **David Lauser** (Sammy Hagar), **Jeff Ausdemore** (Nouveaux), **Brock Avery** (Marshall Crenshaw), **Monty Booker** (Brian White), **Nick D'Virgilio** (Genesis, Spock's Beard), **Darren Fair** (Terri Clark), **Dana Heidieman** (Jeff Carson band), **Lynn Massey** (Neal McCoy), **Bob Mummert** (Trace Adkins), **John Peck** (David Ball band), and **Bob Welch** (the Chantays).

New Zildjian drumstick artists include Tim Alexander (Laundry), **Hal Blaine**, **John Tempesta** (White Zombie), **Mike Kennedy** (George Strait), **Brian "Brain" Mantia** (Primus), and **Thomas Pridgen**.

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MD Giveaway Winners

Stuart Tucker of Hamtramck, Michigan is the grand prize winner in the Premier 75th Anniversary drum/cymbal/case/stick package giveaway that ran in *MD's* February, March, and April '97 issues. Stuart's prize includes a six-piece Premier *Genista* drumkit, a complete set of Zildjian *A Custom Projection* cymbals, a complete set of XL *Protektor* cases, and a Zildjian drumstick/T-shirt pack.

Second prize, consisting of a five-piece Premier *XPK* kit, Zildjian *Edge* cymbals, an XL *Protektor* cymbal case, and a Zildjian stick/T-shirt pack, went to **Dan Braun** of Buffalo, New York. Third prize—a Premier 6x10 *Soprano* birch snare drum, an XL *Protektor* snare drum case, and a Zildjian stick/T-shirt pack—was awarded to **Chauncey Davis** of Richmond, Virginia. Five fourth prizes (a Zildjian stick/T-shirt pack) were shared by **Frank Marquardt** (West Allis, Wisconsin), **Pamela Greenall** (Clinton, Maryland), **Jack Gildea** (Lansing, Michigan), **Jon Thatcher** (Greenville, Texas), and **Greg Misnik** (Hudson, Ohio). Congratulations to all the winners from Premier, Zildjian, XL Specialty Percussion, and *Modern Drummer*.

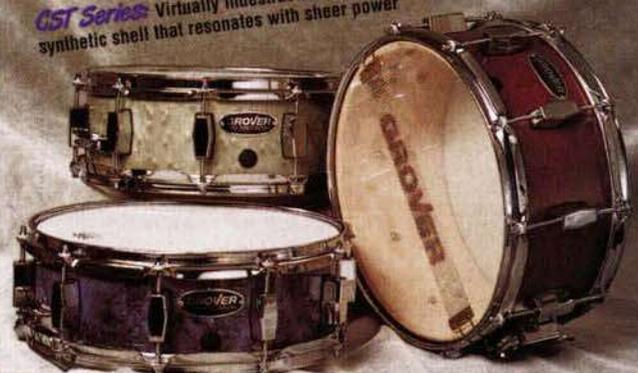


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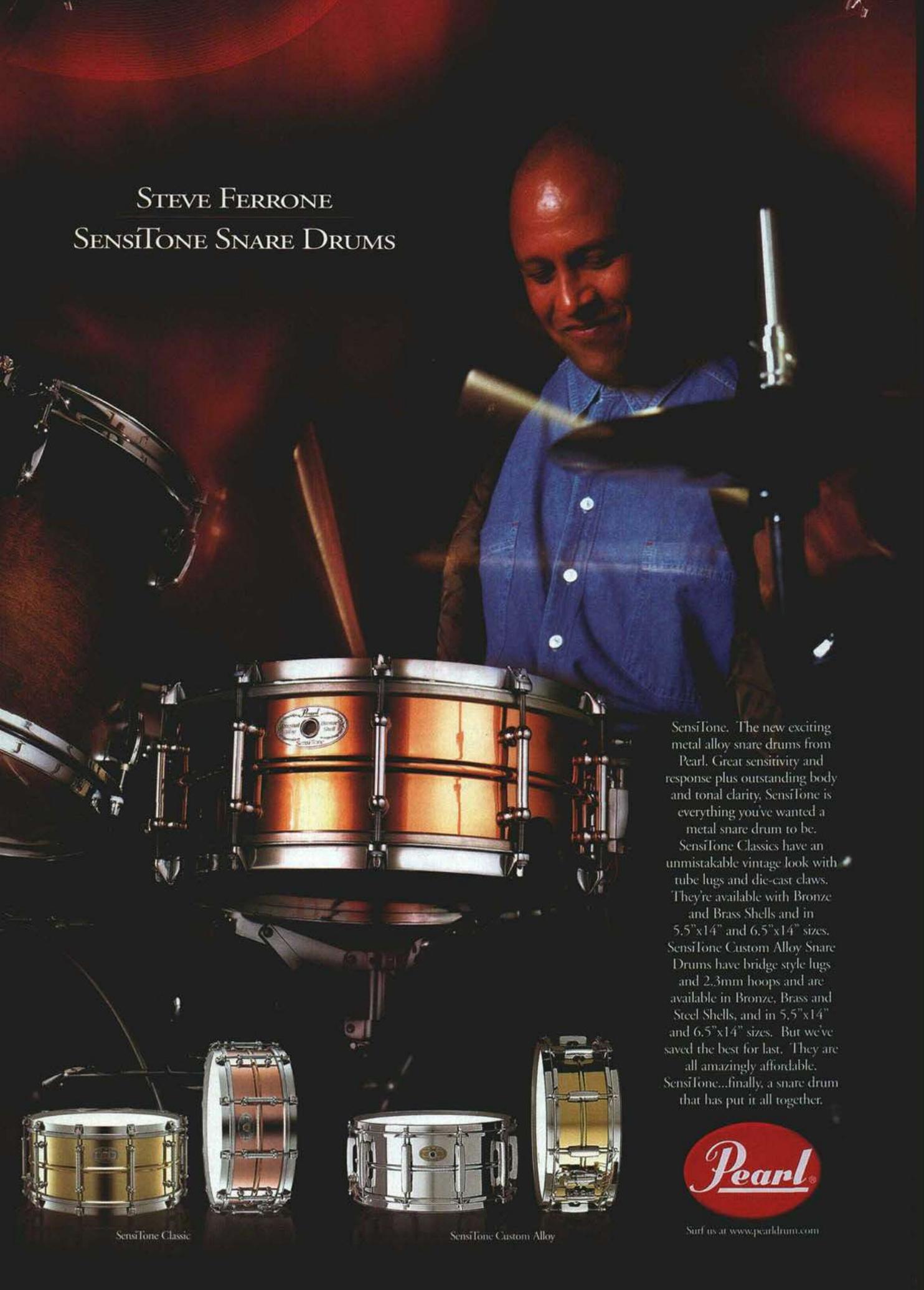
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This month's kit is a vintage beauty belonging to George Edward of Los Angeles, California. The drums all date from 1919 and 1920, and include an 8x19 birdseye maple single-tension bass drum with slunk calf heads, a 3x15 Barry snare drum, and 3x9 and 9x13 Chinese tom-toms with tacked heads. The cymbals include 10" spun-brass, deep-cup hi-hats on a 1920s Walberg & Auge hi-hat stand, a 10" K Zildjian cymbal made in Constantinople, a 13" Zenjian cymbal, a 13" Chinese cymbal, and a 10" Avedis Zildjian cymbal. George uses this kit regularly to perform with the Crazy Rhythm Hot Society Orchestra, a group specializing in the "society jazz" of the early '20s.



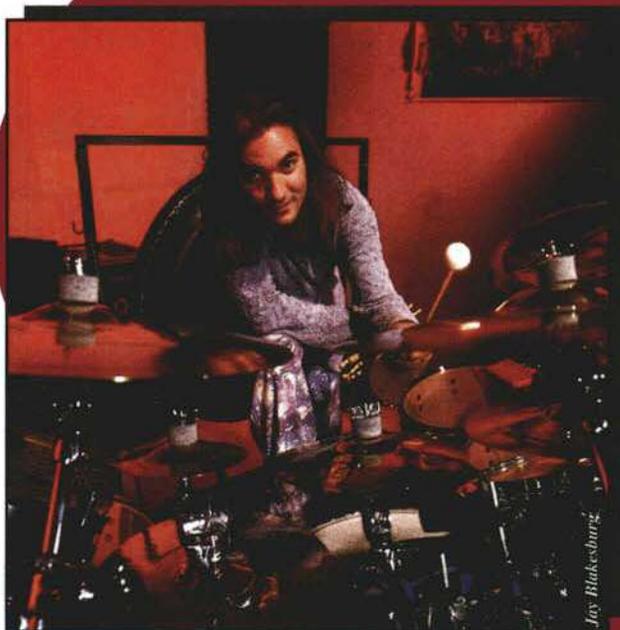
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 1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. 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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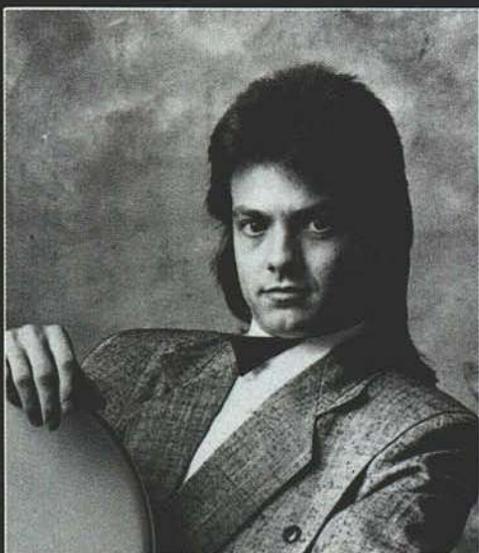
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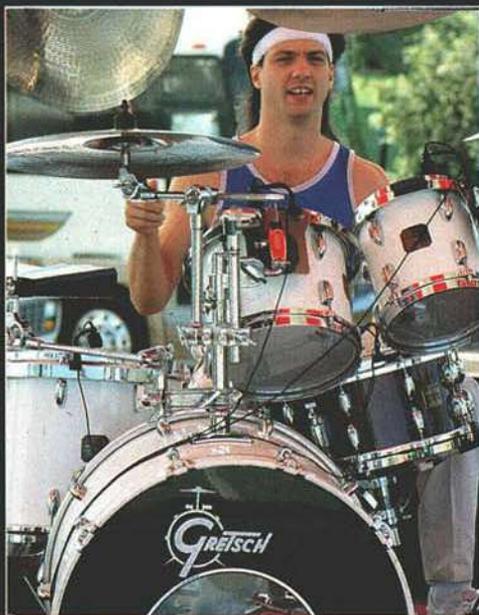
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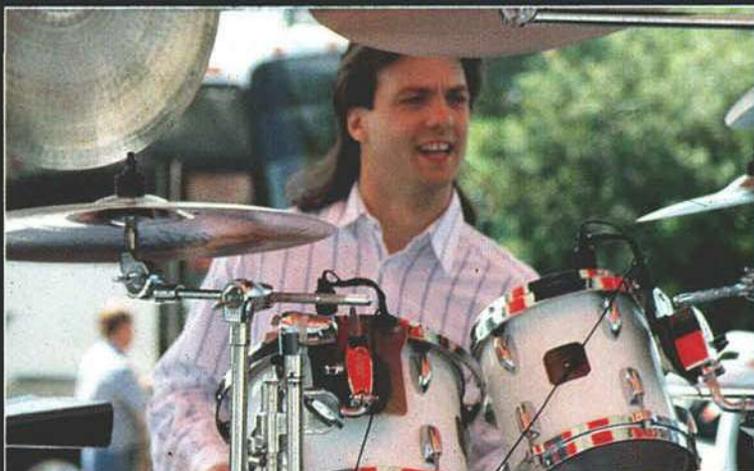
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"A big change has happened in my playing."

Tim Alexander talks about his Zildjian Drumsticks:

"Over the past few years my playing has been changing. I wanted to get to a different dynamic level and to explore new directions. I wanted my drumsticks to move with me and to respond to the change. Zildjian sticks have become an integral part of the change and are helping me move forward with my playing."

**Brand New
Tim Alexander**

Artist Series Drumsticks
See your local retailer.

Zildjian uses Select U.S. Hickory, state-of-the-art technology and design input from the world's top drummers to create the finest, most consistent drumsticks available today. Every pair of our sticks will feel like a natural extension of your hand, helping you to move forward with your playing....like Tim. Join the long list of top drummers that have made the move to Zildjian Drumsticks.



Adrian Young
5B & Super 5A
Nylon Tip
No Doubt



Kate Schellenbach
3A Wood Tips
Luscious Jackson



Kirk Covington
5B Wood Tip
Tribal Tech



Lonnie Wilson
2B Wood Tip
Nashville Session Great