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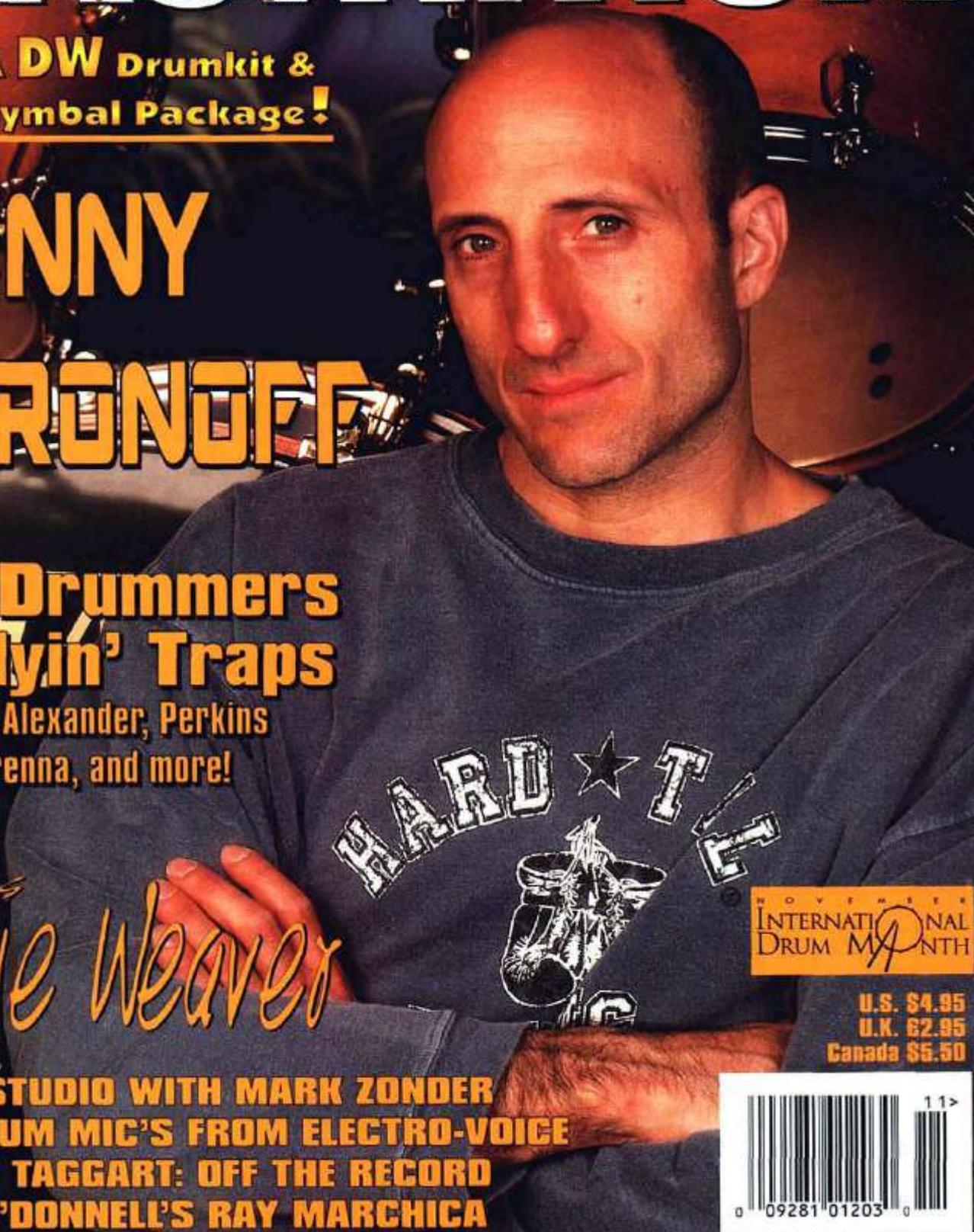
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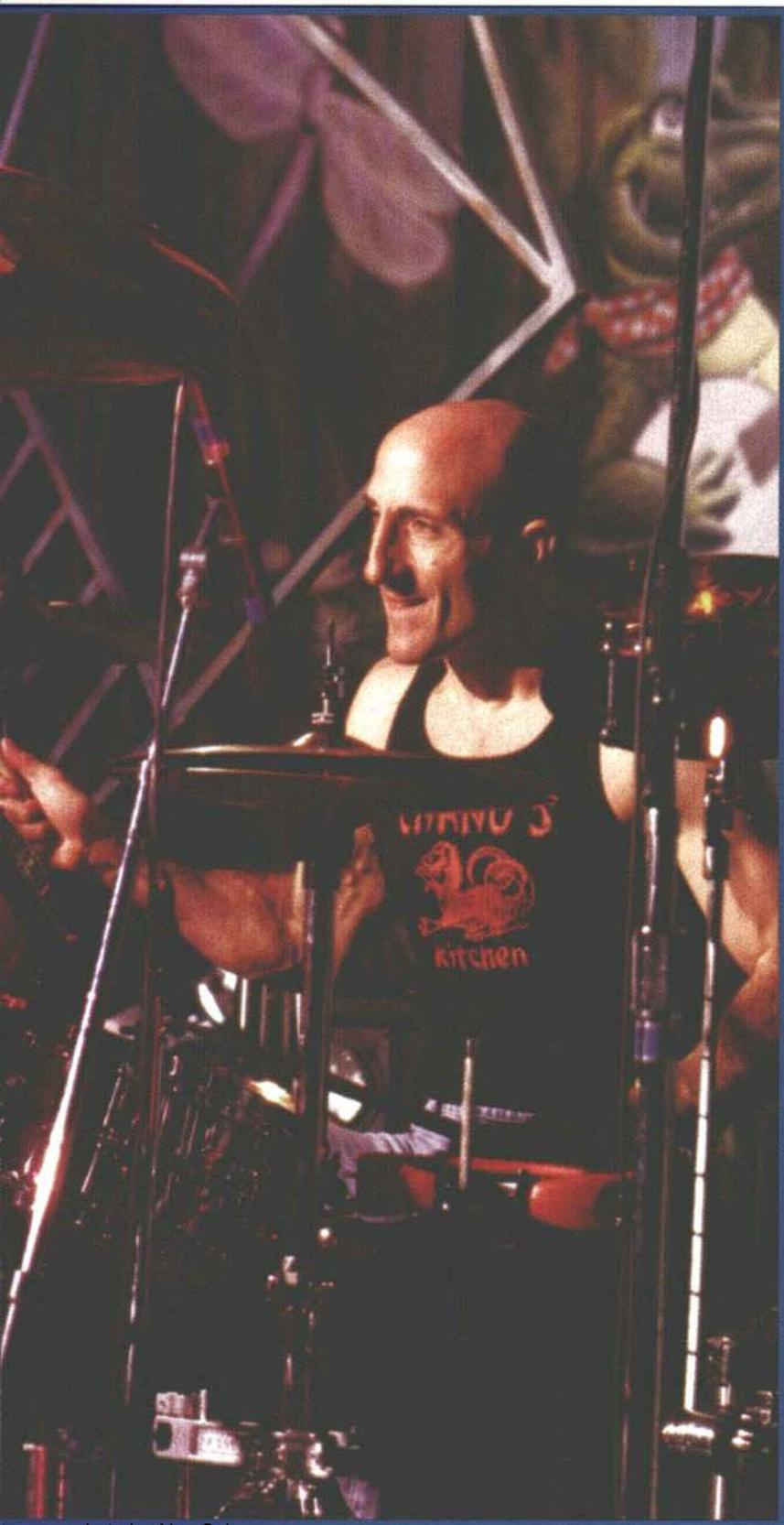


photo by Alex Solca

KENNY ARONOFF

Bye-bye John Mellencamp, hello John Fogerty. The godfather of straight-talkin', blue jean wearin', American music has emerged with his first new album in a decade. Who could better embody that rock 'n' roll spirit behind the drumkit? Kenny Aronoff, of course.

by Rick Mattingly

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FLYIN' TRAPS

Give The (Alternative) Drummers Some! Four years ago, drummer Brian Reitzell had a dream: an album featuring new music's leading drummers, performing tunes of their own. In this exclusive story, Cameron, Bordin, Perkins, Vrenna, Alexander, Freese, and friends share the experience with *MD*.

by Adam Budofsky

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LOUIE WEAVER

One holy racket: Excuse me, ma'am, but that's just what Petra is out to make—no excuses, neither. One of the most popular players on the Christian scene, drummer Louie Weaver tells the long tale behind the testifying.

by Robyn Flans

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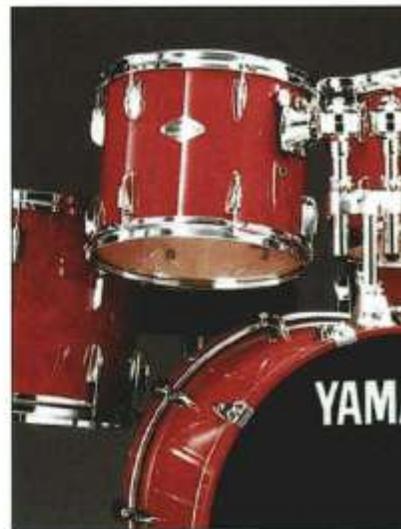
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On Editorial And Advertising

One of the negative comments we receive from a small percentage of readers is in regards to the amount of advertising in *Modern Drummer*. Hopefully I can shed a little light on a subject that apparently concerns a portion of the readership.

I think it's essential for all readers to understand that it's the advertising from the manufacturers, retailers, and publishers in our industry that enables us to continue publishing the magazine. The print media is not all that different from network TV, where the income derived from the sponsors' commercials makes possible the programming you view. And though a percentage of any magazine's revenue is generated from subscription and newsstand sales, the vast majority of it comes from the sale of advertising space. *MD* simply would not exist without it.

One approach to reduce the number of ads and replace that lost revenue would be to raise the cover and subscription price to *twice* what it is now. However, our readership surveys have clearly shown that there aren't many *MD* readers who would be very happy about that option. In truth, as opposed to the huge consumer magazines that sell millions of copies on the newsstand and whose subscribers are in the hundreds of thousands, smaller, special-interest publications like *MD* must rely on advertising in order to continue to edit, design, print, and distribute their product.

While I'm on the subject, I also think it's important to mention our ad/edit ratio, the gauge we use to properly proportion the

amount of editorial matter versus advertising that appears in every issue of *MD*. I'm proud to state that *Modern Drummer*, by industry standards, has maintained an above-average ratio of roughly 55% editorial content to 45% advertising. That's a very healthy balance in today's publishing environment, considering the many magazines much larger than us that release issues in the 75% advertising/25% editorial range—the absolute maximum US postal regulations will allow.

I'm also hopeful that those who've questioned us on this have noted that current *MDs* run anywhere between 35 and 50 pages longer than typical issues from five or six years back. Sure, a portion of that is the result of more advertising, but current issues also contain a proportionate amount of additional *editorial* content, so that our ad/edit ratio is always carefully maintained. In the final analysis, if you see more advertising in an issue, you're automatically getting more editorial material as well.

Interestingly enough, most *MD* readers tell us they enjoy reading all the ads, saying they learn from them and stay abreast of the latest offerings from the companies in our industry. And for those who have written and taken us to task on the matter, I hope this has helped put the situation in somewhat clearer perspective.

Ben Spagnardi

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EDITOR/PUBLISHER RONALD SPAGNARDI
 ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER ISABEL SPAGNARDI
 MANAGING EDITOR RICK VAN HORN
 FEATURES EDITOR WILLIAM F. MILLER
 ASSOCIATE EDITOR ADAM J. BUDOFKY
 ASSOCIATE EDITOR RICH WATSON
 EDITORIAL ASSISTANT SUZANNE HURRING
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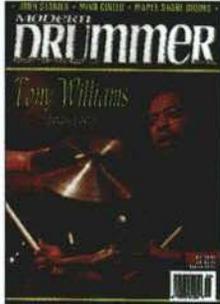


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TONY WILLIAMS



Your August issue dedicated to Tony Williams was just unbelievable. I have never been so moved as I was reading that issue. Vinnie Colaiuta's quote actually brought a tear to my eye.

Tony was truly one of a kind. I remember a friend saying, "When God made Tony he gave him all the talent and let the rest of us just try to play drums." Tony's loss is incomprehensible. The uninformed will not think of him in the same breath as Coltrane or Parker, but we who knew and truly understood will always remember him for his innovation and his truly original voice. Thank you for such care and respect. Please consider me a lifetime supporter!

Michael Israel
 via Internet

I'm fourteen years old and I've been playing drums for four years. I'd like to thank everyone at *Modern Drummer* for dedicating an issue to Tony Williams. You opened my eyes to a master, and I have fallen in love with his aggressive but controlled style. I deeply regret not listening to Tony earlier. Tony was a true legend, and he will remain an inspiration to us all.

Steve Milnes
 Columbia, MD

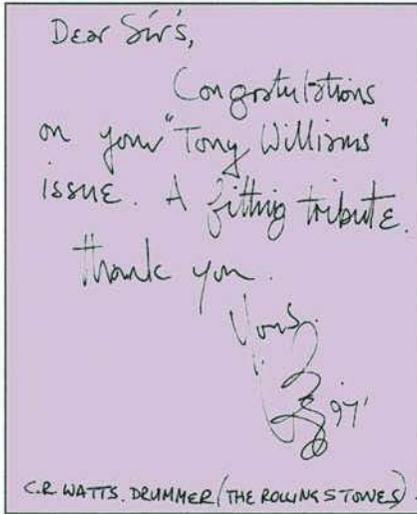
Thanks so much for the wonderful tribute to Tony. You inspired me to run to the library and check out several of Williams' disks. I'm only sorry it's taken me this long to get properly exposed to his work. Boy do I have some studying to do!

Also, thanks for the great article on Mike Neuble. I play in my church every week, so I can relate to the requirements of versatili-

ty: gospel, jazz, country, pop, choir productions, etc. Thanks especially for giving print space to Neuble's convictions about why he plays. It's so refreshing to see someone using his gifts in a positive way. What a stark contrast to the playing situation of, say, a Ginger Fish.

Keep up the good work. Your broad editorial perspective covers the drumming field extremely well!

Phil Hendrickson
 St. Louis, MO



I really enjoyed reading "A Tribute To Tony Williams" in your August issue—except for the way the "M.F." word was spelled out. This was just not necessary.

I know that Miles Davis used the "M.F." word (or even the "N" word) conversationally—as he would use "him" or "her." The question is, does this contribute to making the article good reading? Is this the written word I want my eight-year-old son to read and draw some knowledge from? I think not.

Like I said, I really enjoyed reading that article. But it could have been easier reading—and something I could pass on to my son—if only a little more care had been taken.

Willie J. Rivers Jr.
 St. Louis, MO

MIKE NEUBLE

I'm always excited about getting the newest issue of *MD*, but I was especially

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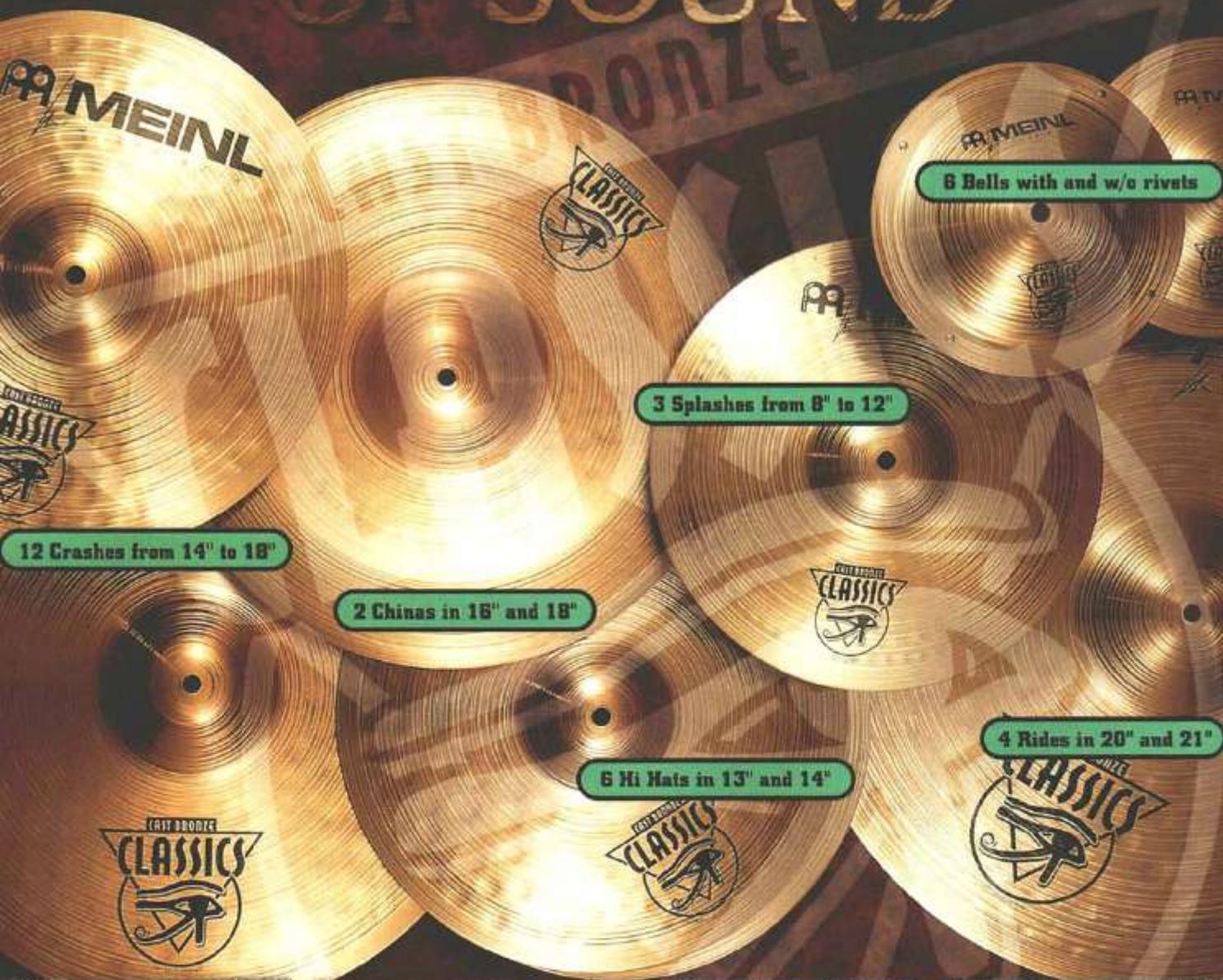
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pleased when I saw Mike Neuble profiled in the August '97 issue. As one of two drummers in a large church in Austin, Texas, I was inspired by the fact that *MD* would provide a forum for Michael to extol the virtues of playing in a church as compared to the secular scene. Having played in both, I find it infinitely more stimulating (spiritually and creatively) to play in a worship service for 2,000 happy, joyful people than for 200 to 500 people in various stages of inebriation.

Thanks and keep up the great work!

Jim Cochrun
via Internet

I've spent about twenty years admiring what other drummers do through your magazine. The Mike Neuble story made me feel that someone has finally recognized what so many of us church drummers do. There are thousands of us who can readily identify with the passions and priorities that Mike articulated so well. Drumming in a worship context is different from anything ever highlighted in *MD* until now. The whopping majority of "worship" drummers will never get paid for what we do—but who cares? The One we're play-

ing for is pleased, and that's enough!

Rev. John Counsell
Brandon, Manitoba, Canada

I'll admit to being among those disappointed with the articles on the drummers from Marilyn Manson and Korn. The music by these groups is depressing, and full of hate and negative feelings. But the article on Mike Neuble was excellent! This young man is on fire for the Lord, and it comes through his playing. Playing the drums is his ministry, and may the Lord continue to bless him. Thanks for such a great, positive article.

Brian Gunter
Griffin, GA

FISH STORIES

I was shocked at comments about Ginger Fish in your August *Readers' Platform*. This is a gig, folks! I have known Ginger for years (I replaced him in my brother's Top-40 band in Ft. Lauderdale), and this guy can play anything! He's been in jazz, rock, and Top-40 show bands. To suggest that he's not a drummer because of the

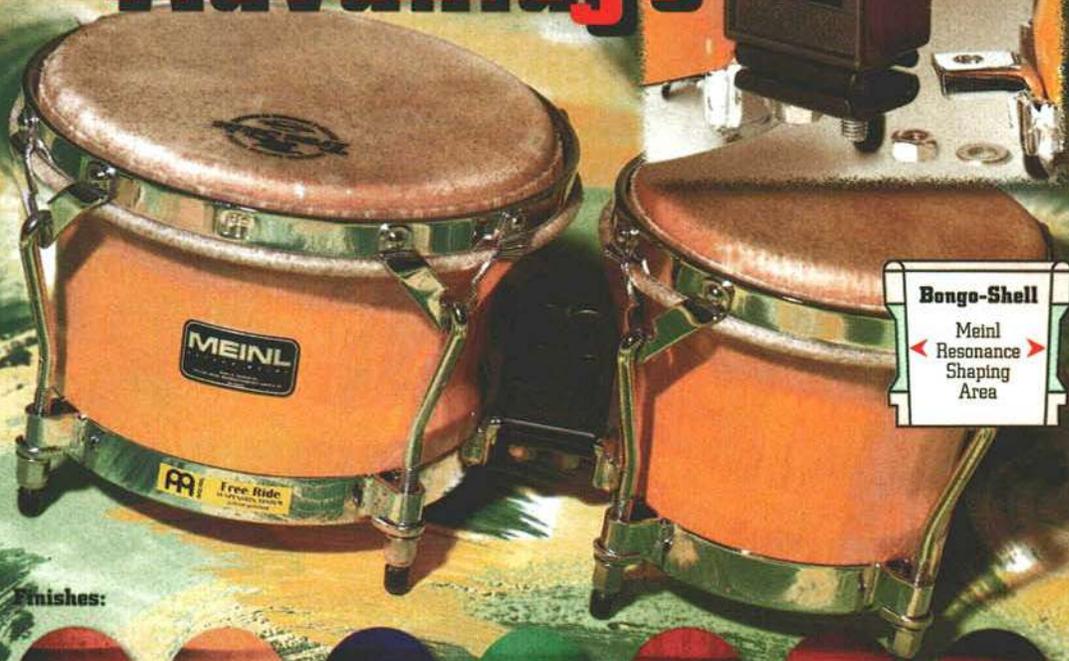
band he's in is moronic. People who would make such a suggestion are obviously not "playing professionals" who know what it takes to do the job as Ginger does. I recently got to check out the Manson show in Florida, and I can tell you that Ginger is not only a great drummer, but a showman as well. Lighten up, people!

Andre Belloise
via Internet

The first things that caught my eye in the August issue of *MD* were the responses to the Ginger Fish article that appeared in the May issue. Some readers (myself included) enjoyed the article, while others not only disliked it but seemed to think of it as a blasphemy to drumming. This reminded me of a letter in the June issue in which a reader expressed his dissatisfaction with the "moral fiber" of *MD*, referring specifically to artists like Danny Carey and the ideas he and others bring to the magazine.

A repeated point raised in these letters is "influence on youth." But where does the responsibility fall, and where do we draw the line? If articles on controversial artists like Ginger Fish were to be forever removed from *MD*, we would lose valuable

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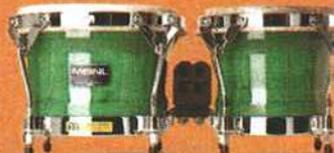
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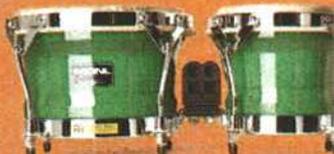
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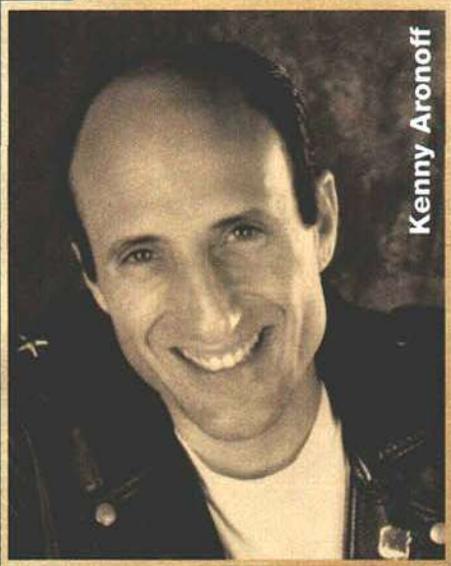
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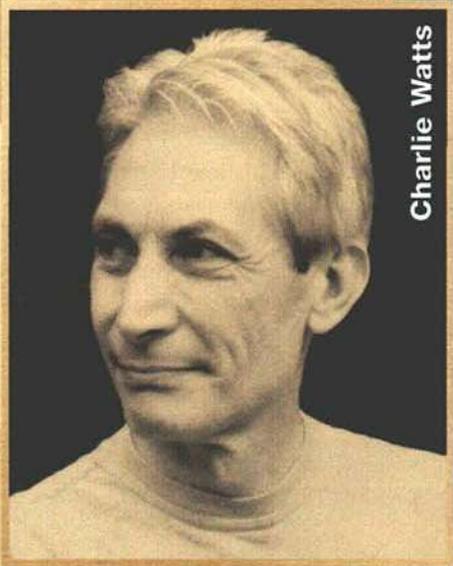
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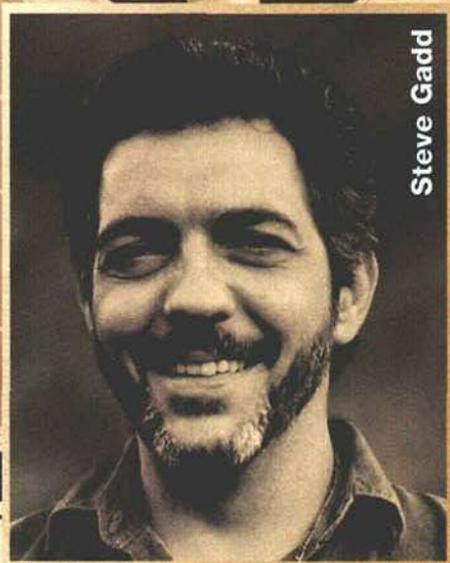
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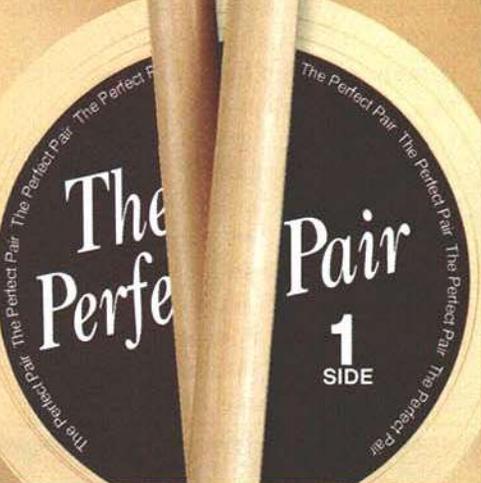
Kenny Aronoff



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insights into the art of drumming. Even if you don't like the music, you can still get something out of it. I don't much care for jazz, but I still read every interview with jazz drummers because I believe that I can gain from them.

As for the morality of the artist: Listening to music or reading an interview can't make you do anything. The responsibility for morality falls on us: the readers, the listeners, the viewers. This is what we have to teach to our youth, so that they will be able to make the decision for themselves.

Todd Bilsborough
via Internet

I have noticed a disturbing trend in the letters appearing in *Readers' Platform* over the past year or so. In almost every issue, at least one reader feels the need to cancel his or her subscription because he or she doesn't agree with the views of this drummer, or is upset about the inclusion of that drummer in *MD*. This occurred with the "Drummers Of Death Metal" article, as well as with pieces on Vinnie Paul, Danny

Carey, and most recently Ginger Fish. One reader suggests that Ginger Fish shouldn't be considered a musician because of his band's views. Another says he won't renew his subscription because Marilyn Manson "corrupts" youth—and chides the editors of *MD* for "neglecting their moral responsibility."

I applaud *MD* for providing its readers with profiles of such artists, especially Ginger Fish. While I don't enjoy or agree with much of Marilyn Manson's music and views, I will always advocate their right to express them. Music is about freedom of expression, and bands such as Marilyn Manson exist to ensure that we all have that freedom, no matter how extreme or outrageous a form that expression might take. If you don't like Marilyn Manson, don't buy their records. If you hear them on the radio or see them on TV, change the channel. Monitor what your kids listen to and, if you find them listening to something you find objectionable, discuss it with them. If you want to cancel your subscription to the best drum magazine in the world because of a short article on a drummer you don't agree with, that's fine.

Personally, I'd just turn the page.

Jon Byron
Bloomington, IN

RINGO REDUX



Robyn Flans' feature on Ringo Starr in your July issue was the most informative and revealing thing I've ever read about the legendary drummer. Although rock musicians (and especially drummers) have recognized Ringo's brilliance as a drummer for years, it seems that only recently have critics finally given him the credit he deserves. I'm a drummer in an alternative rock band in South Carolina, and everything I do I learned from watching films of Ringo or listening to his Beatle and solo recordings. Unfortunately, I'm too young to have seen the Beatles in concert, but one of my dreams came true recently when I got to

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see Ringo in concert in Myrtle Beach. I was in awe watching him play. Being able to hear that legendary backbeat and those soulful fills was an awesome experience. Ringo truly is the greatest and most influential rock 'n' roll drummer ever!

Bobby Wysner
Columbia, SC

THE DRUMMER AS RECORDING ARTIST

I found Hal Howland's "The Drummer As Recording Artist, Part 2: Business & Copyrights" [July '97 MD] to be very helpful, and I appreciate his mention of the American Federation of Musicians. However, Hal's comment that we benefit mainly the "big" players is only true to a point. Local 47 in Hollywood, California offers a 30-track recording studio equipped with the latest software. We provide this as a service to AFM members at just \$30 per hour, including an engineer. This is a great way for bands trying to "break in" to make professional-quality demos for a lot less money.

We also have our "Network Office,"

where bands or musicians are listed as "available" for gigs. We run ads for our players in trade magazines and in the yellow pages. Membership also gets a player instant discounts on instrument insurance and health care while he or she builds credit for full health coverage and pension. We provide contacts for union-approved booking agents, and free legal help (including contract review).

Of course, when it comes to ultimate success, it's up to the band or player to be motivated and not give up. (We all know that music is a tough business.) But it's always nice to know that you have somebody in your corner.

Callum Benepe
Assistant to the President
Professional Musicians, Local 47
Hollywood, CA

I am an entertainment attorney in New York, and I number Roy Haynes, Jack DeJohnette, and Lewis Nash among my clients. I've read Hal Howland's column dealing with business and copyrights, and I must say that although the article contains some useful information, Mr. Howland is

obviously in over his head. In one paragraph, he states that the mechanical royalty rate (which, by the way, is paid by the record company and not the artist), is "50 per song or 950 per minute (whichever is larger)." Obviously he means to say .950 per minute, but even with the decimal point in the right place, his information is almost ten years out of date. The current rate is .0695 for a composition of five minutes or less, and .013 per minute for compositions exceeding five minutes.

Although this is the most outrageous of the errors in the article, there are several others, as well as a general misuse of the vocabulary. It's clear that Mr. Howland obviously got advice from knowledgeable people, but something got lost in the translation.

Alan S. Bergman
New York, NY

Editor's note: Hal Howland replies: "If my information regarding mechanical royalties is out of date, then so is the source of that information, a standard industry manual that was revised in 1992 (as it is revised about every four years). Mr. Bergman's numbers look correct, and I

					
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Toms	Emperor Coated/Ambassador Clear				

apologize for the error.

"I realize that it's the record company, not the artist, who pays the royalty. If Mr. Bergman inferred otherwise, it's because in the case of the self-produced recording the owner of the record company and the artist usually is the same person.

"I have no more affection for legal issues than any other musician, and I did my best to interpret a mountain of data. Calling such an error 'outrageous' is laughable. We mortals, unlike Mr. Bergman's esteemed clientele, will be lucky if our recordings break even, let alone show a profit. The only number that means anything is the daunting figure we still owe at the end of the day."

MD FESTIVAL WEEKEND

Thank you for another great drum festival. I brought my son (the drummer) to both days, and we loved every bit of it. One great part was waiting in line! We met a young man from South Africa. We also heard a story from a man who went to Istanbul on business, and while there found

the Istanbul cymbal factory. What a mess that place turned out to be. The story was hilarious.

Of course the drummers were awesome. Tony Royster blew my son and me away, and Virgil Donati was incredible. Once again, thanks and congratulations on a job very well done.

J. Fragale
via Internet

I just returned from your 10th Anniversary Drum Festival. It was my first time there, but it won't be my last. It was unbelievable. I already knew how good many of your performers were from hearing their recordings, but seeing and hearing them first-hand was great. The Steve Gadd/Giovanni Hidalgo duet alone was history in the making.

My twelve-year-old son also enjoyed the show. It demonstrated clearly how drumming spans all ages, since the "legends" of drumming and the new talents that appeared were equally enjoyable. Thanks again.

Gregg Hershberger
Waynesboro, PA

MESSAGE FROM ARMENIA

You are doing a great job with your superb magazine. In a country like Armenia, it is very difficult to be in touch with the musical world. However, if we are lucky enough to get some issues of *Modern Drummer* from different sources (such as friends and relatives abroad), we can keep up with the world of drumming—which helps us to develop our own drumming. (We were very sorry to learn, from your magazine, about Tony Williams' death.)

We would be grateful if you could publish our letter to let people know about the Armenian Drumming Association. Perhaps drummers around the world could send some info or products to make it possible for us to survive the hardest period in Armenian drumming.

Arman Jalalian
Armenian Drummers Association
5 Vardanants Street, Apt. 32
Yerevan 375010, Armenia



Set Yourself Up Like Michael Baker & Michael Shapiro

Al Jarreau

Michael Shapiro's Percussion Set-up:

- A: 18" Oriental China Trash
- B: 14" K Mini China
- C: 22" Oriental Wind Gong
- D: 6" Zil-Bel
- E: 18" Azuka Salsa Timbale Cymbal
- F: 15" Azuka Latin Multi-Crash with Rivets

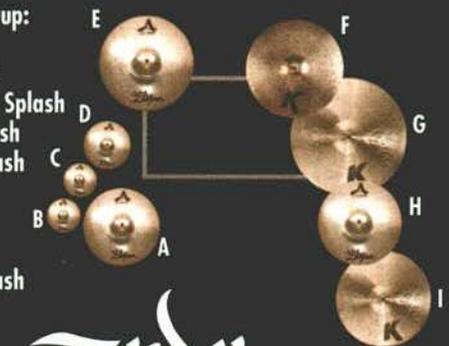
Zildjian Timbale
& Concert
Jazz Drumsticks



Michael Baker's Set-up:

- A: 14" A Custom
Projection HiHats
- B & C: 6" A Custom Splash
- D: 8" A Custom Splash
- E: 17" A Custom Crash
- F: 17" K Custom
Dark China
- G: 20" K Ride
- H: 15" A Custom Crash
- I: 17" K China

Zildjian 6A &
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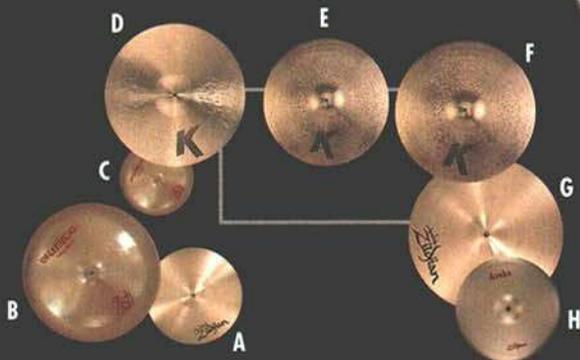
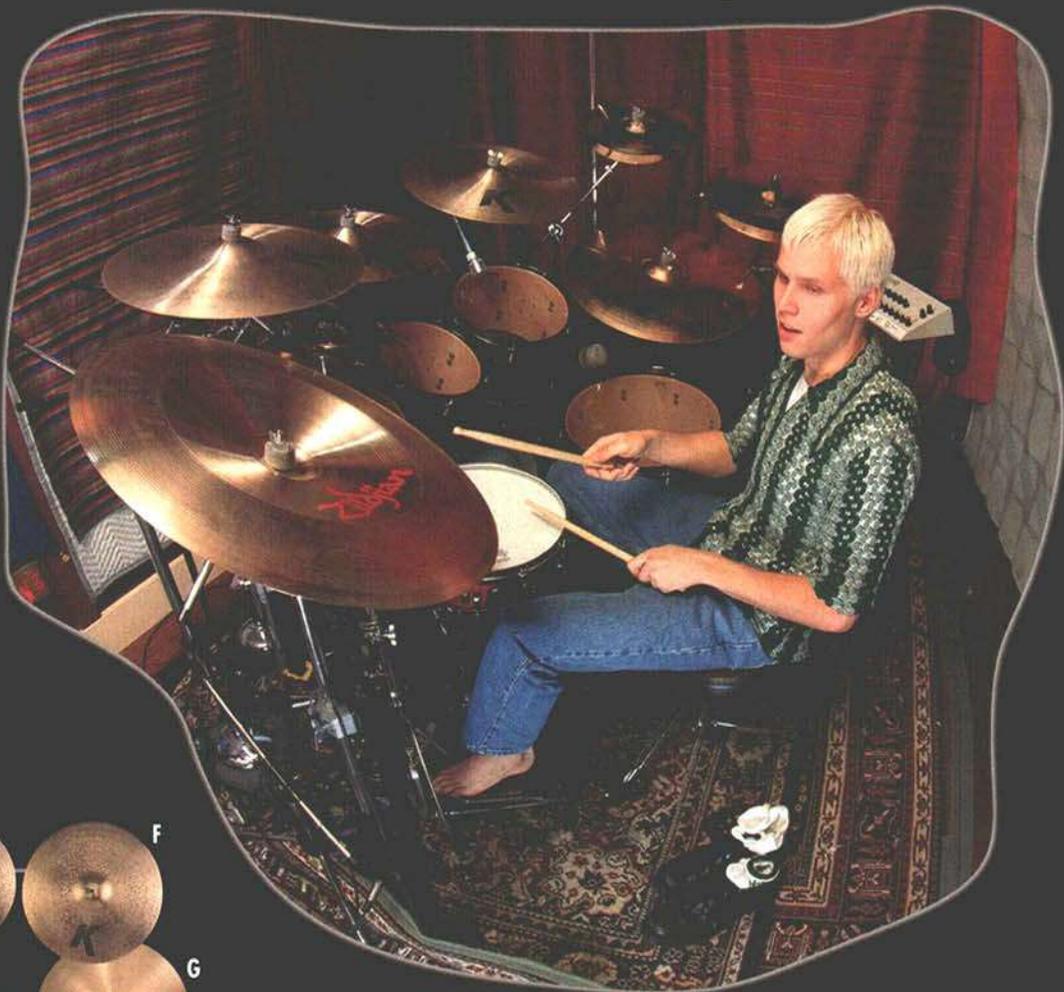
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"Chad can be very technical while still being down to earth and grooving."

No Doubt's Adrian Young on Chad Sexton



"Chad's got tons of chops but he is never stiff. He can be very technical while still being down to earth and grooving. Very few players can do that, he's the best of both worlds."



Chad's 311 Set-up:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| A. 14" A Rock HiHats (Two Bottoms) | E. 18" K Custom Dark Crash |
| B. 20" Oriental Classic China | F. 20" K Custom Dark Ride with 3 Rivets |
| C. 11" Oriental Trash Splash | G. 22" A Medium Ride Brilliant |
| D. 20" K Pre-Aged Dry Light Ride | H. 15" Azuka Latin Multi-Crash with Rivets |

Chad Sexton on Zildjian:

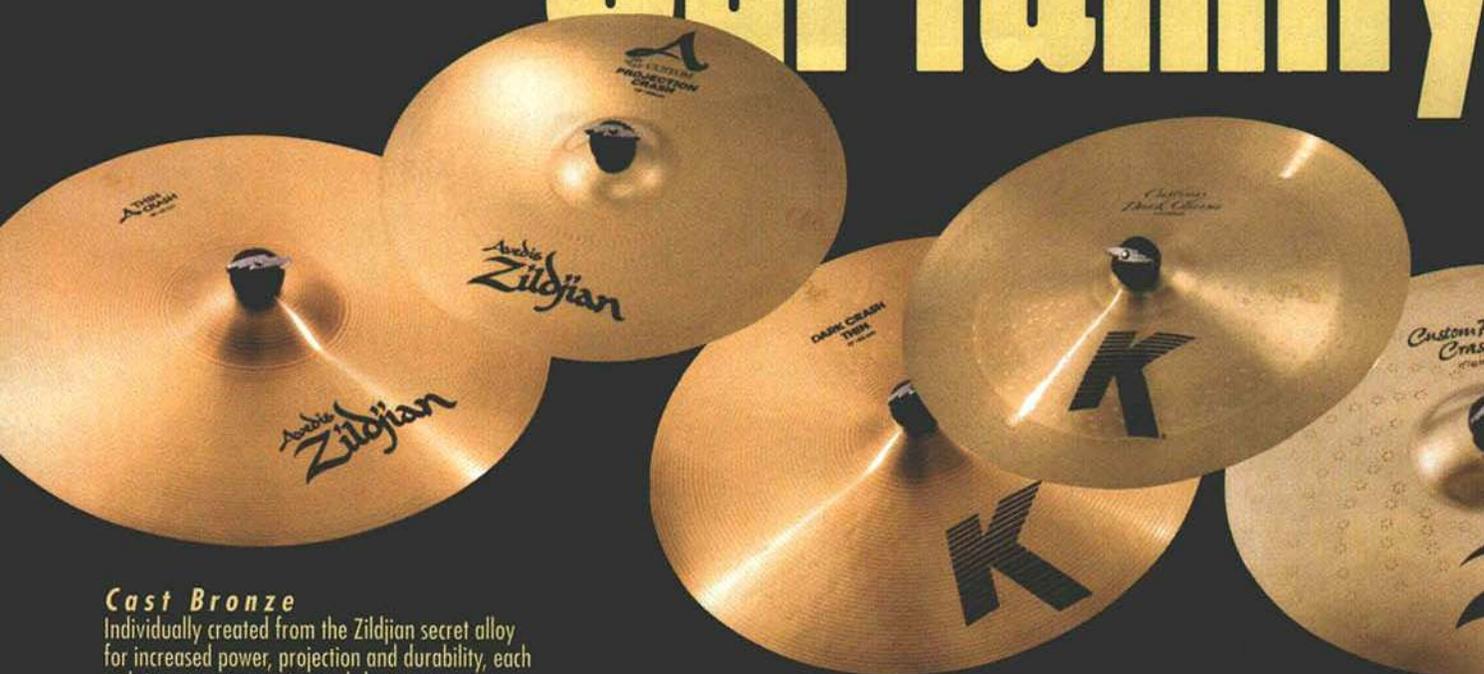
"Playing live with loud distorted guitars, it's hard to get a big, sustaining sound that gets through. That's why I like cymbals that are bigger, darker, more resonating and lower pitched. I really love the K's and the new K Customs, they're very full and natural sounding with a great dynamic range. They really open up my options."

"Also, I have a lot of effect type stuff like the Azukas for accents. They add more color and texture to my sound. We play a lot of different styles and the Azukas give me a completely different range of sounds that add to my big crashes."

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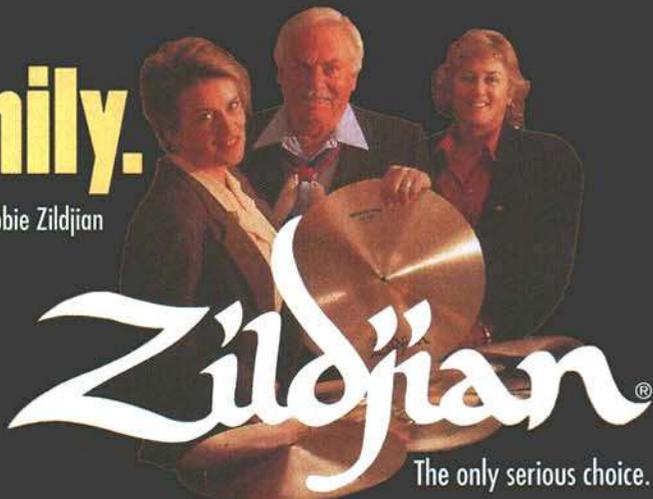
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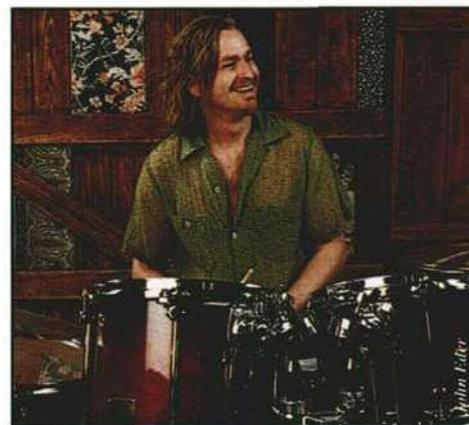
Eric Kretz

His Own Talk Show?

By the time Scott Wieland emerged from a court-ordered drug stay in rehab, Eric Kretz had already shifted his attention away from Stone Temple Pilots. He and Pilots bandmates Robert and Dean DeLeo had found a new singer (Dave Courts), written new songs, and recorded an album. So when Wieland surfaced two summers ago to tour, the rest of Stone Temple Pilots did what they had to: They hit the road to support the latest Pilots record. *Tiny Music...Songs From The Vatican Gift Shop*, then three days later returned to their new project.

Nearly a year later, with Stone Temple Pilots on indefinite hold, Kretz hopes fans will welcome this project, *Talk Show*, with equal enthusiasm. "It's a new band and, in a lot of ways, it's going to be tougher on us than it would be if we were total unknowns," Kretz says. "We're getting a chance, obviously, because of what we've done in Stone Temple Pilots. But that can actually work against us because we have a history for people to judge us against. And you don't have to be in this business very long to know there are no free handouts."

At least musically, *Talk Show's* self-titled debut (on Atlantic Records) sounds much like Stone Temple Pilots. Indeed, it's easy to see where the drum and guitar tracks could have easily fit into the framework of a future Stone Temple Pilots disc. And though Kretz is quick to illuminate the stylistic differences between Wieland and Courts, the audible differences aren't so profound that Courts couldn't pull off a few Pilots covers if the band so chose. As it is, Kretz says, these are two different bands.



"The process of making the *Talk Show* record was a lot different, and really refreshing," he says. "When you read the album credits, we all are listed as songwriters and lyricists. With Stone Temple Pilots, Scott made it clear pretty early on that he couldn't get into singing other peoples' words, which was fine because he's such a remarkable lyricist. But in a strange sense, *Talk Show* seems more like a band because we all get to experience the kind of joy that comes from expressing yourself through words."

Kretz doesn't dismiss the possibility of another Stone Temple Pilots record. But with *Talk Show* about to tour and Scott Wieland working on his own solo project, Kretz says he's simply happy not living in the dark about his musical future. "We'd tried touring for the past three years and, until last summer, nothing came of it. Stone Temple Pilots was a band in name only," he says. "I have no idea whether this new project will be a success or not, but at least we have a plan. And that's such a good feeling, I can't even tell you."

Matt Peiken

Mike Bordin

Ozzy & More

These are busy days for Mike Bordin. The powder-keg drummer commutes between rehearsals with Ozzy Osbourne in LA and responsibilities in San Francisco, including home ownership, a wife and baby, and his band, Faith No More, which, contrary to popular belief, is very much together.

Anyone disputing that need look only as far as the group's latest release, *Album Of The Year* (Slash). "It's as good a record as we've done," says Bordin. "Every record we do is different, but this one is really a balanced package, and I feel we have a good shot with this album. And the record company seems genuinely interested."

There are some great drum tracks on *Album Of The Year*, including the shimmering metals over a drum loop on "Stripsearch," the steady rocking of "Last Cup Of Sorrow" and "Ashes To Ashes," and the halting snare-kick pattern of "Paths Of Glory." "I finally got rid of my second rack tom. which is nice," the drummer says. "I'm just trying to play good, be appropriate, and support the situation as it demands."

"I've also been writing with Ozzy Osbourne for the last two months," Mike reports. "We worked our butts off and he's been good to us. It's nice. And it's been liberating to just go out and play for Ozzy, and not have to think about anything else. I actually did a lot of work on this record (*Album Of The Year*) while I was on the road with him and my mind was clear."

While on tour, Bordin likes to listen to his latest Art Blakey import or some new Afro-Cuban release.

"You've always got to find something that stimulates you," he says.

Robin Tolleson

N

Billy Ward is on tour with Richard Marx. You can also hear Billy on Carly Simon's newest release.

E

Tom Roady can be heard on recordings by Lynyrd Skynyrd, Martina McBride, Chely Wright, Kenny Rogers, Clay Walker, Randy Scruggs, Delbert McClinton, and Tom T. Hall.

W

Voyce McGinley III is handling timpani and other orchestral percussion on the road with Kitaro.

Jonathan Nanberg is gearing up for Closer's debut album, *Don't Walk*.

Byron McMackin is on tour with Pennywise in support of their newest LP, *Full Circle*.

S

Shane Hills is on the road with Cool For August, supporting their Warner Bros. debut, *Grand World*.

Amanda Marshall's Charlie Cooley

Charlie Cooley is like the kid next door who could throw, catch, hit, and, if he felt like it, put a few pucks in the net. Imagine what happens when such a person takes up the *drums*. He grapples each style with equal facility and determination. There's something about the way guys named "Charlie"—referring, of course, to Mr. Watts—lend a little elegance to dead simplicity.

Cooley's boss, Canadian singer Amanda Marshall, puts him through the ringer. She just returned home from headlining a year-long world tour, then dragged the band out again, this time opening for John Mellencamp. Marshall rides full-tilt, saving none of her gritty voice for tomorrow. "'Birmingham' has been really good to us!" she hoarsely proclaims to a cheering sellout audience in Ottawa. You just know she told them the same thing last night elsewhere, because "Birmingham"—the song, that is—saw Top-20 action in America, Europe, and below the equator, too.

Charlie didn't get to record the winning album, but he's got the zeal of the guy responsible for the tracks, Kenny Aronoff. The way Charlie sees it, if you've got to cop somebody's parts, they might as well be Kenny's. Besides, in replicating the grooves for the live shows, Charlie discovered new ways of moving songs along: "Kenny swings his fills. I had grown up making everything tight 8ths, at least for that kind of music. Kenny's is a different approach, more of a triplet-feel, which I've copied—and it grows on you."

When MD last looked in, Charlie was active in the Toronto scene, touring with Latin fusion band Manteca and spending his Fridays on prime-time Canadian television backing up guest artists like Leonard Cohen. According to the drummer, "Cohen was a little bit reluctant to use the house musicians, but unbeknownst to him we had rehearsed his songs cold, which pleased him. He asked us to appear on the



From Cooley

Juno Awards with him later that year, and I got to work with some of the Canadian icons: Randy Bachman, Buffy St. Marie, and Shania Twain."

The long haul is paying off for both Amanda and Charlie. "She's had great reaction world-wide, and it keeps getting bigger and bigger. We've done *Good Morning America*, *Rosie O'Donnell*, *VH1*. There were audiences of 65,000 in Germany. I've been in the Canadian music business for a while, and you work a lot of years to get into this kind of situation."

T. Bruce Wittet



Jon Belcher

Leading From The Drums

A couple of years ago Jon Belcher realized he was tired of being a sideman and decided to explore becoming a band-leader. "A lot of people don't want the responsibility of being a leader,"

Belcher explains. "I found that a lot of good musicians were willing to have me as a leader. And I found that you can play things that you'd never have a chance to play with someone else. I kept doing gigs for other people where I didn't get to do 10% of what I know. It got old after a while," adds Belcher, who left LA for Seattle eight years ago.

Belcher started the Savoy Swing Band as a kick, but it caught on. The band's first CD, *Roll 'Em*, was recently released. "The record industry perceives our band as retro. It's based on the instrumentation of the Benny Goodman small groups—vibraphone, clarinet, piano, bass, and drums. It's straight-ahead hard swing, high-energy. I listened to that music when I was

growing up, but we put our own slant on it."

Describing his approach to the drums in the kind of music the Savoy Swing Band plays, Jon says, "Instead of the heavy bass drum and snare of the fusion music I used to play, it's more about cymbals and hi-hat. You have to play with a more subtle understanding of how to get colors and shading out of the kit."

"What I've really learned over the past two years is not technical; I already had the chops for the gig. I've learned how to get the right sound out of the instrument for the music. For instance, if you play those quarter notes too loud on the bass drum, you drown out the bass player and ruin the groove. But if you don't play the bass drum, it doesn't work."

Belcher's second book, *Drumset Workouts, Book 2: Advanced Concepts And Application*, will be out soon and available through his Web site: www.drumsetworkouts.com. Jon's performance dates and clinic schedule are also listed there, as are some free downloadable lessons.

Robyn Flans

Goldfinger's *Hang-Ups* is due out in September with Darrin Pfeiffer on drums.

Johnny Knight is on Rule 62's self-titled debut album.

Frank Ferrer is on Love Spit Love's recently released *Trysome Eatone*.

Steve Mugalian is on Rod Piazza & the Mighty Flyers' *Tough And Tender*.

Tom Ardolino is on NRBQ's *You're Nice People You Are*.

Larry Lelli is currently on a reunion tour with the Mamas & the Papas. The tour is scheduled to hit Japan, the US, and South America.

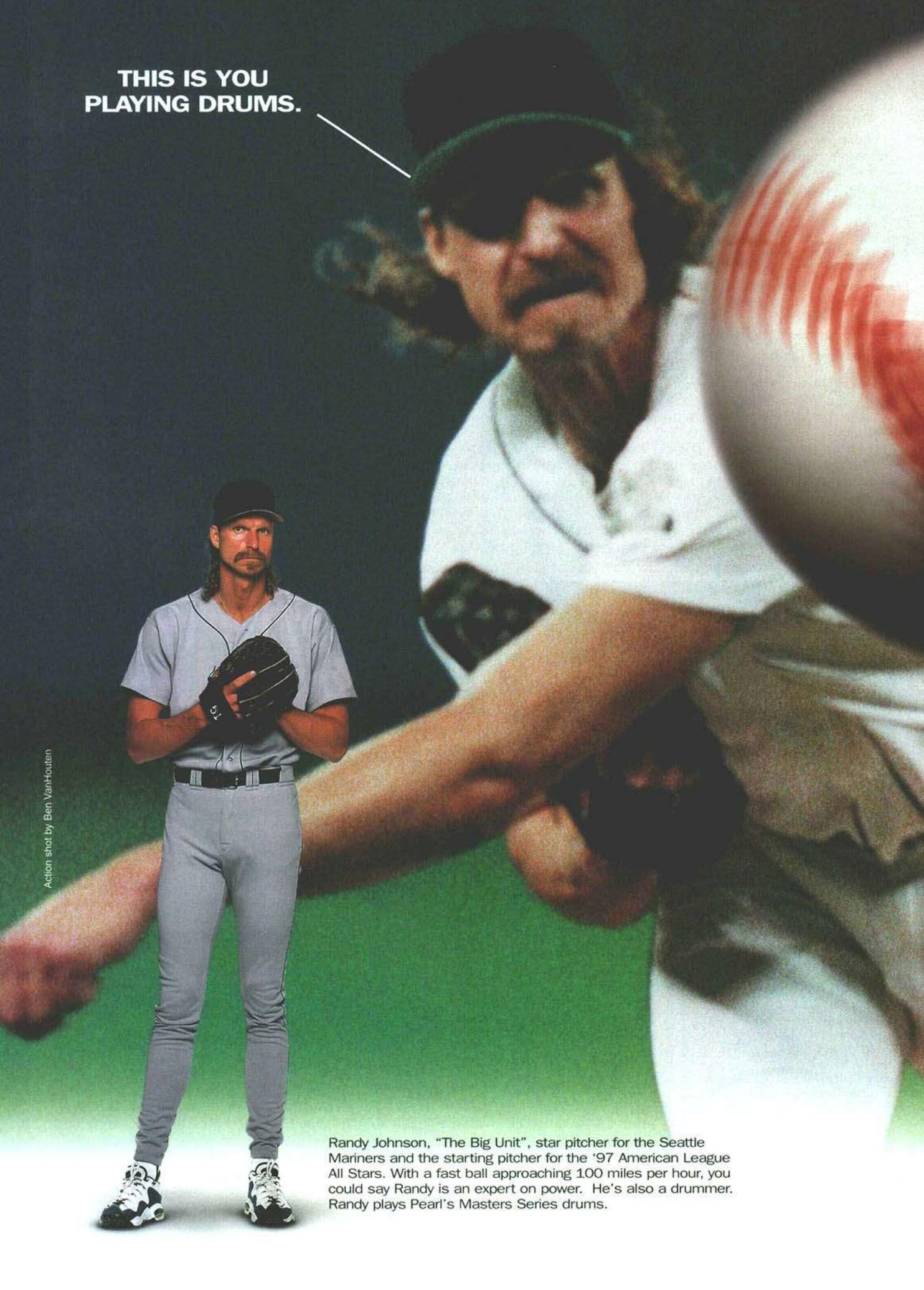
Congratulations to Joyce and Dave Weckl on the birth of their daughter, Clair Elyse.

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Action shot by Ben VanHouten



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Michael Urbano



In Search Of The Perfect Band

by David John Farinella

photos by Jay Blakesberg

If it hadn't been for a *Sacramento Bee* newspaper route and a hit of chutzpah, odds are that Michael Urbano would still be learning the rudiments on a practice pad in his parents' home. In fact, if it wasn't for a heads-up saxophone teacher, Urbano might not be making music at all. "I was really into sax when I was a kid," the drummer explains in his comfortable and stylish San Francisco apartment. "I loved John Coltrane. All my friends listened to rock, but I mostly hung, out with people who were into soul music and jazz. There was something about the saxophone that I really loved, so I tried to learn how to play it. But I couldn't do it. The teacher told me and my mom, 'He has a really keen sense of rhythm, but he can't seem to hear tones at all.' So, I'm truly not a musician. I'm really 'just a drummer'—and I'm proud of it," he says, laughing.

But don't let Michael's self-deprecating humor fool you. because over the past fifteen years he has contributed to some of the most exciting music around, from Todd Rundgren to Cracker, and from Sheryl Crow to John Hiatt. (Not to mention debut albums from Black Lab and Third Eye Blind that are heading up the charts at full

steam.) While he might be humble, his work behind a kit is astonishing, and his commitment to his musical soul is commendable.

Of course, the music teacher's words of wisdom were thrown at Michael when he was in second grade and he wanted to play the drums more than anything. He begged for a kit, but his parents just weren't going for it. Instead, he got a practice pad, a

pair of sticks, and the "Thirteen Rudiments

Of Drumming" sheet from Ludwig.

(He has that sheet framed in his front room.) "It took me two years, but I learned 'em a 1 1

Michael recalls. "I'd come

out and show my morn and

dad. Later, I'd sneak over

to a friend's house where a

real, live drumkit was wait-

ing. For two years I'd go

over and hang out and try to

play his drums. I wanted to

do it so bad, and I practiced so

hard with the rudiments, but I

couldn't get my feet and my hands

to groove. I tried to play right-handed,

even though I'm left-handed. I could kinda

do it, but it sounded so stiff."

Then came the magic day when the eleven-year-

old Urbano was on his paper route, riding around the

neighborhood. "There was music coming out of a

garage, and I walked up to the door and lifted it up."

"I want to create a body of work in my life so that when I'm an old man I can look back and know that I made some good music."

says Michael. "Here was this group of black, Mexican, and Filipino dudes lookin' at me—this little skinny white boy. I said, 'You guys have a band?' And they said, 'Yeah, *duh*.' There was a drumset in the corner, but there was no one playing, so I said, 'I play the drums.' They all started laughing, so I just left my bike out there with all the papers, closed the garage door, sat down at the drums, and said, 'Let's play.' When we did, for some reason I led with my left hand that day. Suddenly it was like skating across ice, the groove was so smooth. I was freakin' out, because I had been trying for so long to do this thing, and now my body was letting me do it."

By the end of the day Michael had joined the band, Three Shades Of Soul. "I was the third shade," he says with a smile. "I was the white dot in the group." After practice he went home to a hundred phone calls from people wondering where their papers were, and to his mom asking him where he'd been. When he told her, "Well, I'm in a band now," she couldn't believe it, so Michael brought her down to meet the rest of the band. Then he went to work on his parents for a drumkit. After he promised to repay them, they finally relented and bought him a 1965 Ludwig orange sparkle kit.

Michael soon discovered a hidden bonus to doing what he'd always wanted to do anyway. "We played in the quad of my junior high school when I was in seventh grade," he says. "I had on platform shoes and big, flared bell bottoms. Just total '70s. All of a sudden all of the girls noticed me. That was the other real impetus to do this," he finishes with a sly smile. "I've been playing in bands ever since."

Michael was the third Shade for five years, then he played with a band called Unique Blend for the next six. At the same time, he played with a series of Sacramento garage funk bands where again he was the minority. "Time and time again I'd walk in and everybody would snicker and look at me," Michael recalls. "But you know what? I had all the right records for inspiration, I had studied, I knew my stuff, and I was funky. I had a certain pride in my heart that I was able to hang with these guys and that they would accept me into their world. I was honored by that. I also took a certain pride in not wanting to play rock music. This was a lot cooler to me."

In fact, it was a number of years before Michael even listened to a rock 'n' roll record—and the only reason he did it then was because Unique Blend kept getting calls to play disco music. "We bought the Rolling Stones' *Some Girls* because of the song 'Miss You.' I listened to the rest of the record and thought, 'You know, these guys are actually soulful.' I had totally missed it up till then. I went back and bought *Let It Bleed*, *Sticky Fingers*, and *Goats Head Soup*. I was amazed at the looseness of their music. I started

to learn the difference between funk drumming and rock drumming."

Shortly thereafter Urbano and an old friend drove to San Francisco, where they saw the seminal punk bands UXA and the Mutants. Michael laughs at the recollection, saying, "I'm eighteen years old and I've got really long, feathered, blond hair, and I'm standing in this club. At 11:00 all these people come in with fuchsia and blue mohawks and pierced faces. It totally blew my mind. The bands weren't really that good, but they had so much ferocious energy. I wasn't much into the music, but the scene was amazing. So we went home and shaved our heads."

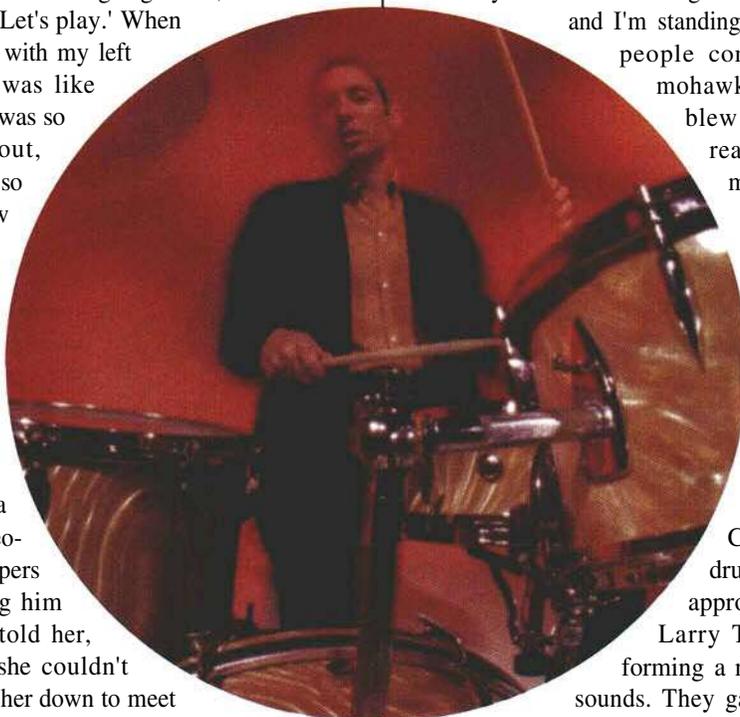
Urbano waited out the punk movement until the Talking Heads and the Police broke out. Where he had studied Al Jackson and other funk drummers previously, Michael now turned his attention to Stewart Copeland and English "romantic" drummers. Around this time he was approached by Brent Bourgeois and Larry Tagg, who were interested in forming a new band based on the mid-'80s sounds. They gave him a demo tape, which he learned inside and out, and invited him to audition.

"When I showed up," Michael says, "they had an 808 drum machine kicking. Brent was doing all this Prince stuff on a *Prophet 5*, and Larry was playing bass—just funk'n' it up. I set up my drums as fast as I could and just started playing immediately. We jammed for about three hours, at the end of which they said, 'You're in.' I said, 'Well, what about all these songs?' They said, 'Forget it, man. If you've got that feel, you're in the band.'"

After a half dozen trips from Sacramento to Los Angeles to do the record company shuffle, the band finally signed with Island Records in 1984. During the recording of their first album, Urbano discovered he had the ability to bury the click track. "I really got into that trip and I got really, really tight," he comments. The band spent the next year or so working as Robert Palmer's support act, which was a tremendous experience for Urbano. "I was living a dream," he says. "I was twenty-four and out there on the road, learning about playing."

Although he learned many lessons about playing music during those touring years, it was during the recording of Bourgeois Tagg's second album that Urbano's world got rocked. The band would start recording a drum track, and producer Todd Rundgren would run out of the control room and start taping percussion instruments onto Michael's kit. "Todd would say, 'Here, bang on this stuff while you're playing your drums,'" says Michael. "We ended up having a song that sounded like a Swiss clock falling apart. Todd started making me think that you don't need to have your shit totally together, that sometimes it's better to wing it. Sometimes magic happens that way."

After the demise of Bourgeois Tagg, Rundgren himself asked



Urbano to join his band. Michael jumped at the opportunity, and went around the world with Rundgren. "Todd taught me how to keep my feet on the ground. You're just a musician; it's not like you're out there saving the world," Michael comments with a laugh. "It's just pop music."

But even though Urbano was having some of the best times of his life, he still missed being part of a proper band. So he quit Rundgren's band and moved to Berkeley, California to join a short-lived band by the name of Spent Poets. "I had just quit doing drugs and drinking, and I was broke," he recalls. "So I got a job at Feet's Coffee [a local chain]. At that time VH-1 was constantly playing this *Todd Rundgren Live In Japan* show. There are a lot of shots of me on that show, so people would recognize me and say, 'Hey, aren't you the drummer who played with Todd Rundgren? What happened?' 'Well, I joined a band, I'm broke now...and what kind of latte was that you wanted?'" The Spent Poets signed a deal with Geffen Records, released an album, went on tour—and broke up six weeks later.

It looked like a career that had started in a garage would end up there again, because Urbano found himself back in Berkeley without a band. What he didn't know was that while he was on tour with the Spent Poets, the boys in Cracker (who had used session drummers like Jim Keltner and Rick Jaeger) were taking a look at him. After being home for a couple days, he got a phone call from Cracker's bassist, Davey Faragher, who asked him what he was doing. "I told him I wasn't doing anything, because my band had just broken up," says Urbano. "He said, 'That's great, because we want you to join our band.' Cracker had a big hit on the radio, so I

went to LA and auditioned, and I got the gig." Once again Urbano found himself on the road with an entirely new band. "There was a van for the gear and two guys in the crew, and we leased a Cadillac that we drove all over the country," he says.

After Cracker finished recording *Kerosene Hat*, Urbano and Faragher got a phone call from John Hiatt's people, who wanted to know if the rhythm section was available for a two-week tour. The duo looked at each other, shrugged their shoulders, and headed off to the audition. When Hiatt made them a long-term offer, they both jumped. "John was going to give us points on the record, and he was going to pay us more money in a week than I usually made in two months. I got my own drum tech, and everything was ultra-professional," Michael explains. (Of course, a couple of months later *Kerosene Hat* was released and Cracker scored major hits with the songs "Low" and "Get Off This.")

Urbano spent a couple of years with John Hiatt, co-producing a live album and recording the album *Walk On* as a member of Hiatt's band. "I think John Hiatt's great," Michael says. "But I was going back to my room and playing Sly Stone, My Bloody Valentine, and James Brown records. I started to think I had to do something else. At that point I decided I didn't want to be a sideman—not yet. I want it to be about the music, so I left John, and I've been looking for a band ever since."

While Michael has been searching, he's done a number of very successful session gigs for Sheryl Crow and Paul Westerberg (who both offered spots in their bands that Urbano turned down). He also did some shows and tracks for two different hometown bands, Third Eye Blind and Paul Durham's band, Black Lab. All the while he was still looking. With each session gig done and each offer declined, Michael began to have a tinge of regret. "I'm at the gym, riding the *Lifecycle* and hearing these songs on the radio. Third Eye Blind, Sheryl Crow, and Paul Westerberg were all getting played."

In between session gigs Urbano's good friend and fellow Hiatt Sideman David Immergluck (who's also played with Counting Crows and Camper Van Beethoven) took him to see the Kinetics, an unsigned San Francisco band. Seeing the band was a return to his soulful youth, and Urbano was mesmerized. "I saw them and I said, 'Oh my God, this is the exact thing I've been wanting to do.'" He talked to the band about joining, but they were ultra-loyal to the drummer they were playing with at the time. Urbano persisted, but the band stood strong. So Michael went ahead with Black Lab, recording their album and playing some shows with them. Two months before the release of Black Lab's debut album, *Your Body Above Me*, Urbano got the word that the Kinetics were looking for a drummer.

"I freaked out," Michael says, simply. Then he explains why he's moved on from each of his past opportunities. "Yeah, I want to be rich and famous. But I want to create a body of work in my life so that when I'm an old man I can look back and know that I made some good music. All I care about is music. I won't buy music that I think is bullshit, so I shouldn't make music that I think is bullshit."

Having moved from genre to genre since he was eleven years old, Urbano's seen and learned more than he could have ever imagined. Although he never studied formally, he learned about music from both playing and listening. "I learned by going to the

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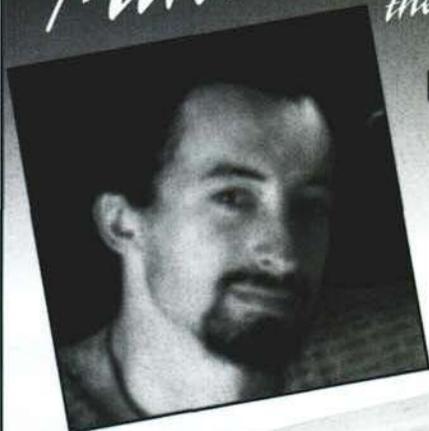


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record store constantly," he says. "I still do. I think in every genre of music about 5% is good and the rest is mundane. I own 1,500 CDs and 500 records, and I study other songwriters and bands. I try to be open-minded to what I think is good music. Whether it's Nirvana or James Brown, there's brilliance in both—and I can relate to both. There's soul in all of that."

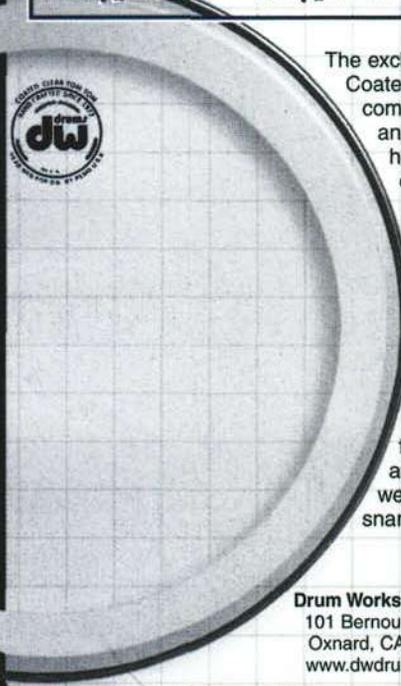
Urbano has also learned a plethora of drumming lessons from the bands he's been in, from the technical funk drumming of Unique Blend to the looser feel of Spent Poets. In fact, it was his Spent Poet days that infused him with a willingness to hear other styles of playing. "I learned to be a loose rock drummer," he says. "They forced me to listen to Ringo for hours and hours. To learn to be a 'sloppy' drummer was hard, because every bone in my body wanted to be tight and precise. Now I can play totally loose, and I can bring this whole swinging thing in."

Michael believes that the driving force in any musical situation is the song and the groove and the feel. He recounts a time when he would walk down rehearsal halls and hear other drummers practicing fills galore. Of course, he concedes that he plays his share as well. "But a typical Urbano fill is really simple," he says with a laugh. "If you're out to show people that you're a great musician, you're missing the point. You're not making music. You might as well get a calculator out or something. Work on the groove; the fills will come later. Those are the icing; you gotta bake the cake first. Get the cake happening, because too much frosting is just going to make you and everybody else sick."



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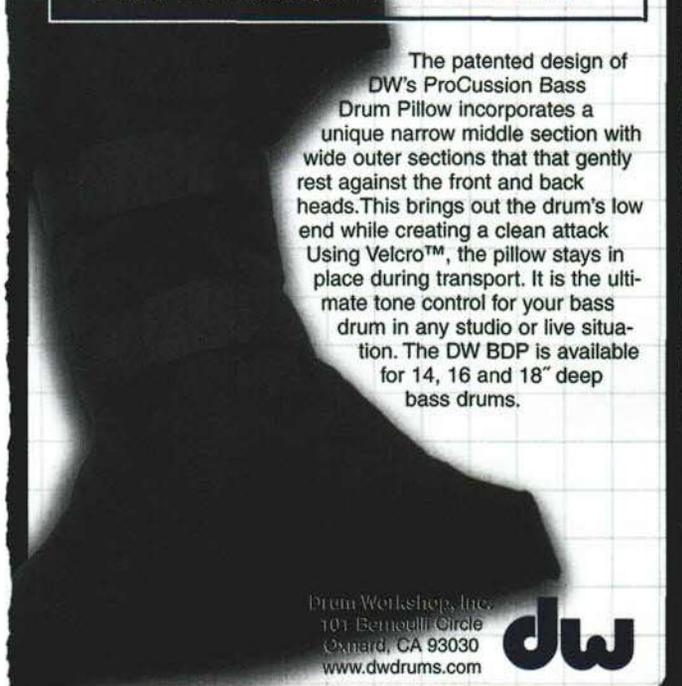
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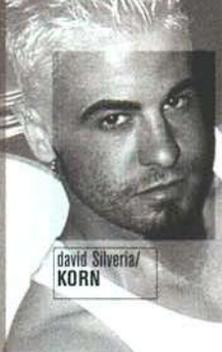


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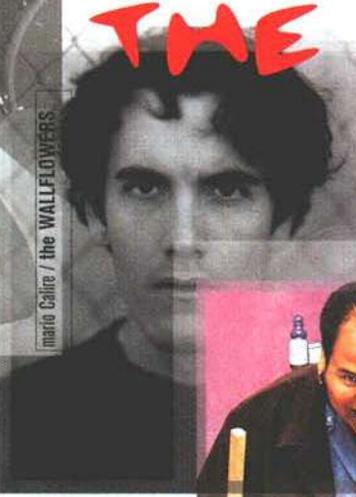
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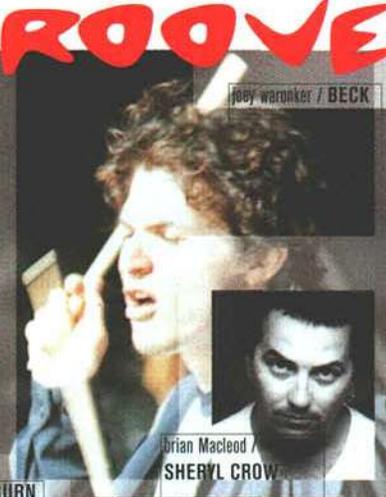
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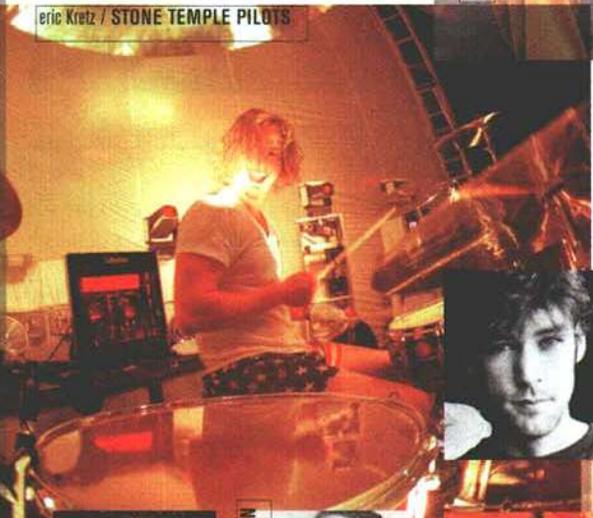
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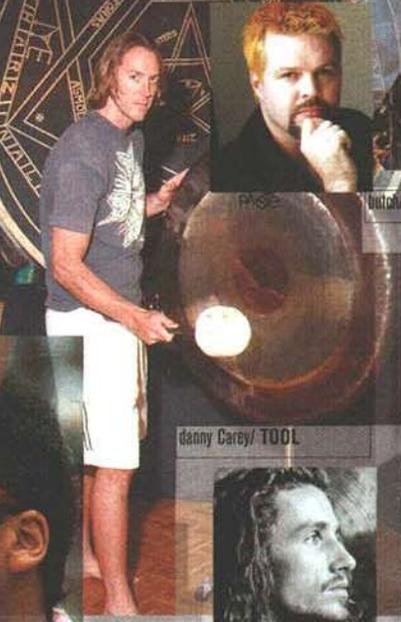
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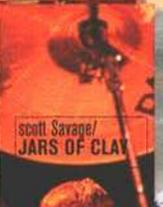
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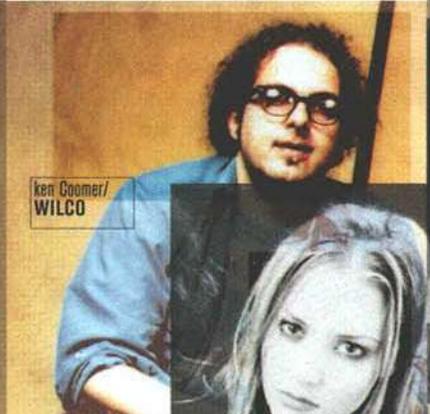
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CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS

Simon Phillips

Q I recently purchased a *Starclassic* drumset, and both my band-members and I were so pleased with the bass drum sound that I don't want to cut a vent hole in the front head. This means the drum mic' must be attached inside the shell. How did you mount your mic's without drilling holes in the drumshells?

Jan Egil Overkil
Trondheim, Norway

A I construct my microphone attachments myself. I replace the original bolts that hold one of the tension lugs to the shell with slightly longer metric-thread alien bolts. These, in turn, hold in place a "U"-shaped bracket made from aluminum (light, strong, and easy to work with). I drill holes to match the tension lug into one side of the "U", and a larger hole to accept a standard European mic' clip bolt on the other side.

You then need a mic' clip (I recommend an AKG SA40 since it has a certain amount of shock absorption in a limited space) and an adapter from US standard mic' thread to Euro mic' thread. You also need to find an alien bolt with this thread to attach the mic' clip to the "U" piece. I also insert a star washer so that the mic' clip doesn't slip. The AKG SA40 will accept the following microphones: AKG D12E, D112, and D25, Electro-Voice N/D408 and N/D308, Beyer M88, and perhaps some others that I have not used. I'm currently working on a modification to a Shure Beta 52.

You'll also need to make up a short mic' cable—say 1 meter long. Thread some Mogami 2549 or Beldon mic' cable through the air hole of your drum, then solder a female XLR connector to

the end inside the drum (for connecting to the microphone) and a male XLR connector to the end outside the drum (to connect to the mic' cable that runs to your board).

There you have it. The mic' positioning should be to the side of the drumhead, not at the center. That way you'll pick up a more even sound, with lots of attack but also a nice, round low end that will not compress or overload when you strike the drum hard.

The other secret to getting a good bass drum sound is to have a mic' pre-amplifier capable of mega headroom. Neve or Focusrite are good examples (but very hard to find in clubs, I know!). If you're using a Soundcraft or TAG it's a good idea to use the pad on the input channel.



Denny Carmassi

Q I've been a Heart fan for years, and you are one of the main reasons I got into drums. I'm seventeen and have been playing for two years. I want to be versatile and open-minded, and I have several questions.

1. Would you suggest lessons?
2. What do you believe to be the biggest "no-no" of drumming?
3. What kind of kit and cymbal setup did you use on the *Passionworks* album (especially on "Sleep Alone")?
4. What key did you tune your tom-toms to, and what sticks did you use?

Christy Lindsay
Fayetteville, AR

A First, to hear that you got into playing drums even partly because of me is really cool. I think the highest compliment any drummer can get is to inspire someone else to pick up the instrument. Thanks a lot.

I certainly do endorse lessons. They help you to develop your technique, which in turn enables you to execute all your ideas. This can only help you to be more creative. On the other hand (and to answer your second question), I think that the biggest "no-no" of drumming is to sacrifice feel for technique. A great drummer is able to play with both. To help in this area, I suggest that you listen and play along to a lot of records. That's really

good for developing an awareness of feel, as well as a command of song structure.

I'm afraid that the *Passionworks* album was made over fifteen years ago, so I'm a little hazy on the details. But at that time I was using a combination of things, including a Ludwig kick and snare, Simmons electronic drums, and Remo RotoToms. I was playing Paiste 2002 cymbals, including 18" and 20" crashes and 15" *Sound Edge* hi-hats. For drumsticks I used Vic Firth 3As.

As for what key I tuned my drums to, I don't really tune to a key. I let the room and the kit sort of dictate the tuning—going for the biggest sound I can achieve.



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Endorsement Help

Q I need some advice on how to become a product endorser. I'm not looking for anything unrealistic, just some company support. I've been drumming in the same band for the last six years. We're based in the Northeast and have two independently released CDs available throughout the United States and Europe. We have toured with and opened for every major blues act around. The band works on average 175 shows per year. Our harmonica player has an endorsement deal with Hohner.

I know I'm not a household name, and I'm not looking for any free equipment, but maybe a discount on sticks, cymbals, etc. I work very hard at this profession, and any help from any of the companies whose products I use would be wonderful. What is the best way I can go about this?

John Morello
via Internet

A The procedure is the same whether you're a household name or not. You

need to put together a promotional package on yourself. This should include a brief bio, a photo, a copy of your recordings, and perhaps some press clippings if you have them. You should also include a cover letter introducing yourself and stating why you're approaching the company! Send this package to the artist relations manager at each company you wish to approach. (You can get the person's name and address simply by calling the company's offices. Phone numbers are often listed in *MD* ads, or they can be obtained from Directory Assistance.)

Everything in your package should be prepared in a businesslike, professional manner—especially the cover letter. Avoid the "Hey, dude" approach. You're trying to establish a business relationship with a major manufacturer; you need to sound and appear like a businessman with something to offer.

Remember, too, that endorsement deals work two ways. The company needs to be convinced that supporting you with equipment (or discounts) will benefit them in

terms of promoting (and ultimately increasing the sales of) their products. It's a cold, hard fact that even if you are the greatest drummer ever to hold a pair of sticks, if you aren't in a reasonably influential position within the musical arena, you aren't really worth much to a manufacturer as an endorser. That being said, many companies actively engage in pursuing "developing talent." If they see something in you that makes them think that you're going to break really big at some point, they may want to sign you on now as an investment in the future.

Another thing to remember is that the music business is relatively small, and the number of artist relations managers is even smaller. And they talk to each other. This means that if you send out a blanket solicitation to ten different drum companies, there's a good chance that they will all realize that you're just looking for a free ride from anyone who'll provide it—rather than genuinely approaching the one company whose products you really believe in. If your first choice turns you down, then

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there's nothing wrong with approaching an alternate choice. But don't take a "shot-gun" approach to begin with; it smacks of insincerity and a mercenary attitude.

Snare Vibrations

Q Whenever my band is playing quietly, you can hear my snare drum vibrating/hissing/humming from my bass drum, our bass amp, or our guitar amplifier. I would like to get rid of this noise. Do you have any solutions?

Mark Prudden
via Internet

A The highly technical drumming term for the noise you describe is: "sympathetic snare buzz." It's a natural phenomenon that occurs when the snare-side head on your drum "sympathetically" vibrates in response to outside sounds (like other instruments, or other drums on your kit). When the head vibrates, the snare wires also vibrate, and the result is the "buzz" that you hear.

A certain amount of this is virtually unavoidable, because the only way to com-

pletely eliminate it would be to choke off all the resonance and response of the snare-side head—which you certainly would not want to do. However, there are some things that you can do to *reduce* the amount of snare buzz to tolerable levels. Most of these are tricks used by studio drummers, who regularly perform under conditions where the buzz is much more noticeable and problematic than in loud, live situations.

1. If the buzz is being caused by other drums on your kit, try re-tuning those drums to a slightly different pitch. Sometimes this can reduce the level of "sympathy" between those drums and your snare drum.

2. Try loosening the two tension rods closest to each end of the snare wires (on the bottom side of your snare drum). Do this only slightly, a little at a time. The object is to *slightly* reduce the sensitivity of the bottom head, just near the snares. (If you loosen the entire head the drum will lose *all* snare sensitivity.)

3. Try applying small amounts of tape to the bottom head, in the same way that you would use it on the top head to reduce

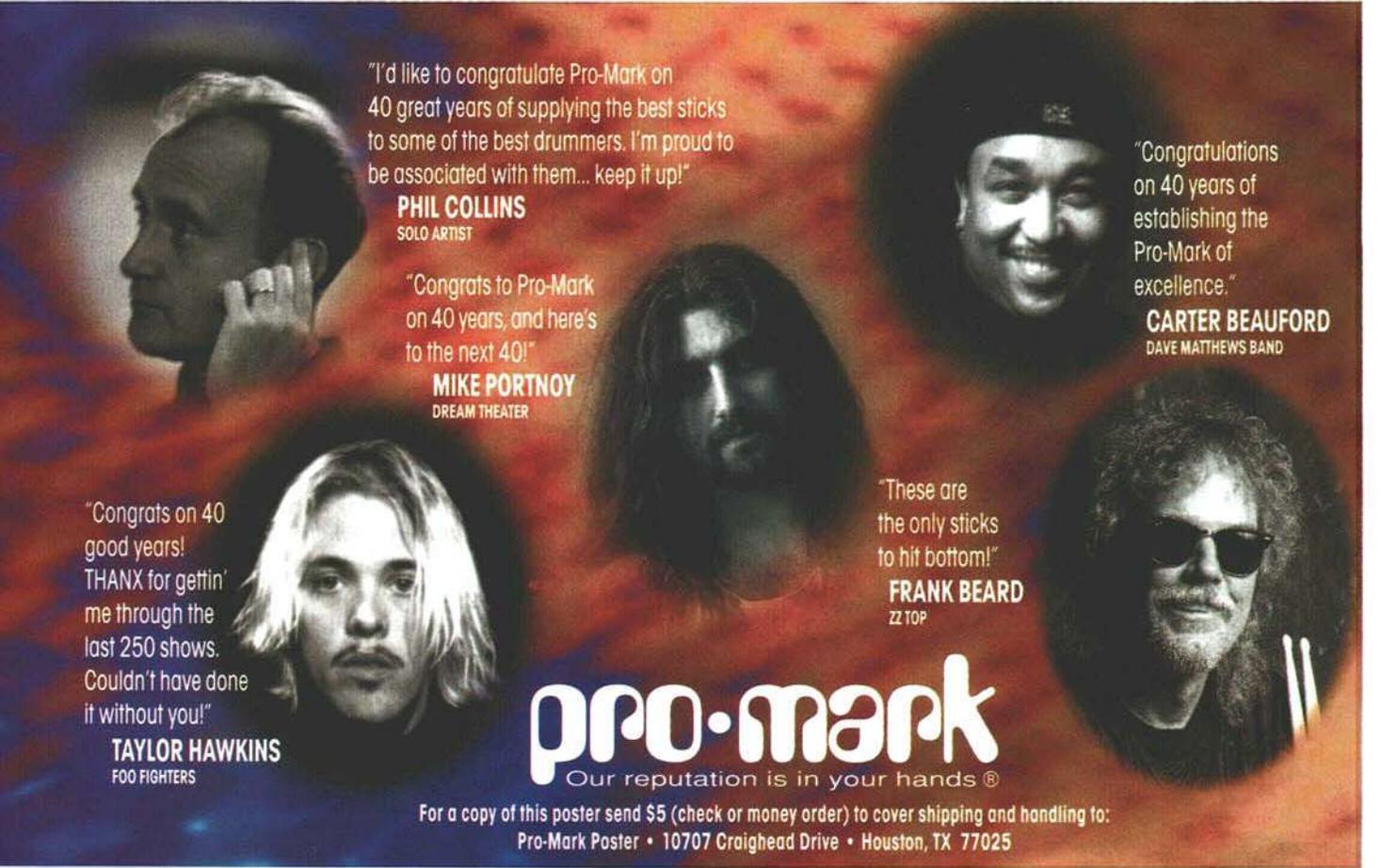
"ring." Again, do things a little at a time.

4. One studio drummer we know uses the narrowest 14"-diameter Noble & Cooley *Zero Ring* (they come in three widths for snare drums). He trims this slightly to fit inside his drumshell, laying atop the bottom head. The ring is not secured to the head, but rather is allowed to "float" on top of it. This not only reduces the snare buzz, but also lowers the fundamental pitch of the head, thereby producing a "fat" snare sound that this drummer is partial to.

Who Drums For Caroline?

Q I'd like to know the name of the drummer who plays for the sitcom *Caroline In The City*. We only get to hear small tastes of him—not more than a bar or two—but his signature style is as much a part of the show as the characters are. I'd like to know his choice of cymbals and drums; his up-tempo splashes and tom-tom punctuations are a breath of fresh air.

Jim Caterisano
Niagara Falls, NY



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A We asked our resident expert on the LA studio scene, Joe Porcaro, to help us research your question. Joe, in turn, referred us to the composer of the music for *Caroline In The City*, Jonathan Wolff. And Jonathan gave us the surprising (and somewhat humbling) response that the drums on *Caroline* are entirely programmed! Jonathan does the programming himself, using samples that he has created over a long period of time. "Each time I do a new theme I create a totally new drumkit from among my samples," says Jonathan. "For example, the snare sound on the *Caroline* theme was probably an old wooden Gretsch snare. I'm pretty sure the hi-hats were taken from a commercial sound library. But I always tweak the samples for each new project."

Jonathan performs the drum parts for the music on each week's episode on an 88-note keyboard, with one octave devoted to hi-hats, another to toms, etc. "This allows me to have many more sounds at my fingertips—literally—than I could have on a real drumkit," he says. Jonathan's sound source is *SampleCell II* by Digidesign; editing is done within that company's *Sound Designer II*. An Opcode *Vision* sequencer is employed, and then it all gets recorded into *ProTools* via TDM connections from *SampleCell*. "The music never leaves my computer," Jonathan adds. "It's even delivered on hard drive."

Jonathan believes that drummers should be active in the composition and execution of sample programs in order to be commercially competitive in the recording scene—especially in the case of TV and film projects, where budgets are tight and time is critical. "I consider myself a pretty good 'drummer,'" says Jonathan, "and I'm as flattered as I can be that a *real* drummer would speak so highly of the parts I've created for *Caroline*. But a lot of composers are *not* good drummers, so they call on real drummers who are also good programmers to create their drum parts. This opens up a lot of opportunities for those drummers who are willing to—pardon the expression—'get with the program.' Sampling is the nature of the business today—it's part of the real world. And today's sampled sounds are so much more sophisticated than those from the classic drum machines of only a few years ago.

"All drummers need to do to get started

is to work with an Alesis *D4* or something like that. Then they can grow into using more specific samples of their own, and exploring the sample libraries that are now available. Whether they trigger them from real drums, from pads, or from a keyboard doesn't really matter in the end. What matters is the creativity and nuance that a real drummer can bring to the part itself. That's where a real drummer has special value for projects like those that I do."

Gretsch Drumkit Data

QI recently purchased a Gretsch drumkit, and I'd like to know more about it. It consists of 18", 16", 13", and 12" wooden drums in a transparent brown finish, and a 6½x14 chrome snare. The snare is very heavy and seems to have had a gold-colored interior coating that has chipped off (from age, I presume). The drums are otherwise in mint condition with hardly any scratches. In fact, after having polished the snare it looks like it just came out of the factory. The drums feature octagonal logo badges around the air vents. One of these includes a sort of "script" Gretsch name and the slogan "Drum Makers Since 1883," while another features a more "block" Gretsch name and the slogan "That Great Gretsch Sound."

The only non-standard thing about the drums is the tom mount, which is a Slingerland mount. I thought this might have been a replacement of the original, but then I spotted a photo of Adam Nussbaum in the June, 1986 *Modern Drummer*, in which he was playing a Gretsch set like mine that included the same holder. My guess is that the drums were shipped with this tom mount. Is that correct?

Patrik Sjogren
Linköping, Sweden

AOur vaunted drum historian, Harry Cangany, replies: "The fact that you have drums with different logo badges is not surprising; Gretsch often mixed badges on its sets. (Or the original owner may have purchased the drums on a piecemeal basis.) The nature and shape of the badges leads me to guess that your drums come from the late '70s to early '80s. Your snare has a brass shell with a chrome exterior finish.

"As to the Slingerland mount, this was not a factory installation. However, I have seen a number of Gretsch sets from this time period fitted with either Slingerland *Set-O-Matic* or Rogers *Memriloc* tom mounts. These were either user or even drumstore installations, retrofitted onto the Gretsch drums because the Gretsch mounts simply weren't very good. Besides that, Gretsch offered quite a few sets with small (18" and 20") bass drums, and their own tom mounts set the rack tom very low.

Anyone who wanted their toms up higher needed a system with a long vertical tube, like the *Set-O-Matic*. This called for the drilling of extra holes in the tom-toms and the bass drums, but who knew back then that we'd be so picky about such things today? (It's too bad that RIMS mounts weren't available then.) It's situations like yours that require us to be 'forgiving' when we see extra holes and incorrect pieces on otherwise wonderful old drumkits."

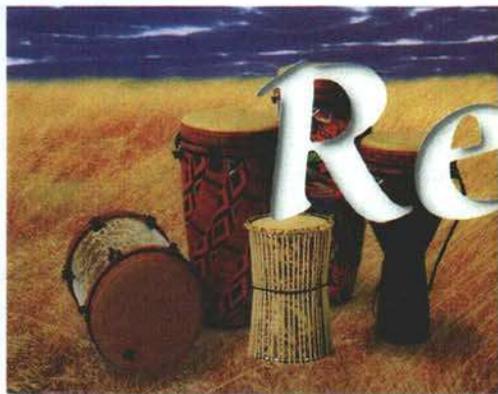


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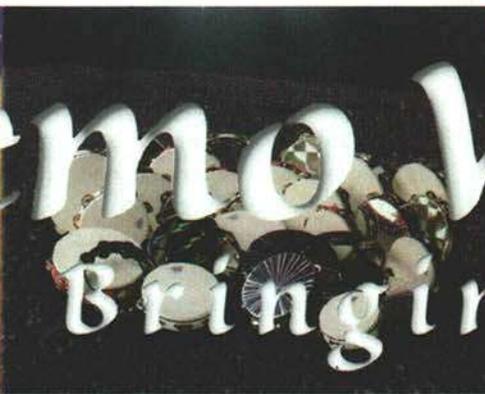
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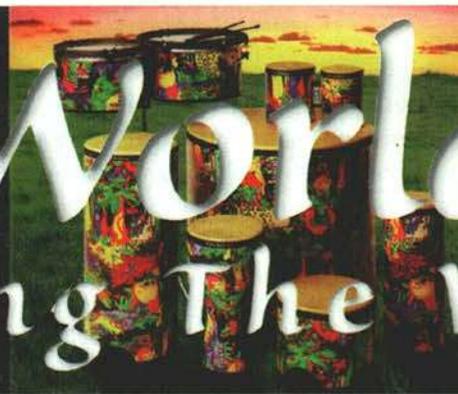
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Remo World Percussion Artists (from left to right): Mickey Hart, Chalo Eduardo, Leon Mobley, Layne Redmond, Arthur Hull and Poncho Sanchez.



Zildjian Gets Buff

18" A Paper Thin Crash and 20" K Custom Flat Top Ride

If the words "thin" and "flat" are music to your ears, Zildjian's new cymbal models may add to the tune. The company has added an 18" model to its line of paper-thin *A* crashes, and a 20" *Flat Top* ride in the *K Custom* series.



Thin crashes traditionally offer exceptionally quick response and fast decay. But according to Zildjian, the larger size of the 18" model gives it "a traditionally rich and powerful sound, a large amount of shimmer, and greater projection than one would normally expect from a cymbal of this thinness."

The 20" *K Custom Flat Top* ride was developed with input from jazz drummers Danny Gottlieb, Steve Houghton, Ed Soph, and Julio Barretto. It combines the "dry, dark sound" that is characteristic of the *K Custom* line with the features created by a no-bell design: reduced overtone buildup, and "the tightest, most controlled stick sound of all ride cymbals." Zildjian believes the new model will be extremely popular for jazz, studio, and small-group situations.



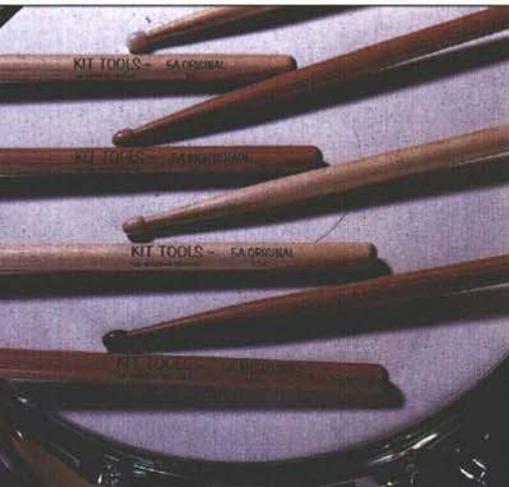
Tooling Up

Kit Tools Drumsticks

You've probably never heard of Kingfield Wood Products. But there's a good chance you've played a drumstick they manufactured. For over thirty years this Maine wood turning company has been making drumsticks for one of the industry's best-known brands. Now they've introduced their own brand: Kit Tools. (Their philosophy is: After you've made a hundred million or so sticks, you get an idea of what goes into making a quality stick.)

The company has set high goals for itself, confident that they can surpass the quality they had achieved in the past when manufacturing for someone else. With that in mind, they've collaborated with innovative software designers to create a machine that brings together perfectly matched pairs of sticks, using DNA (Digitized Note Alliance) technology. This method takes into account an individual stick's weight, balance, density, pitch, and harmonic.

Most industry-standard models are now available from Kit Tools in white hickory, honey hickory, and rock maple models. For information or ordering, call or fax the company direct.



You Mean My Drums Won't Bounce?

HQ Percussion Shell Shocks



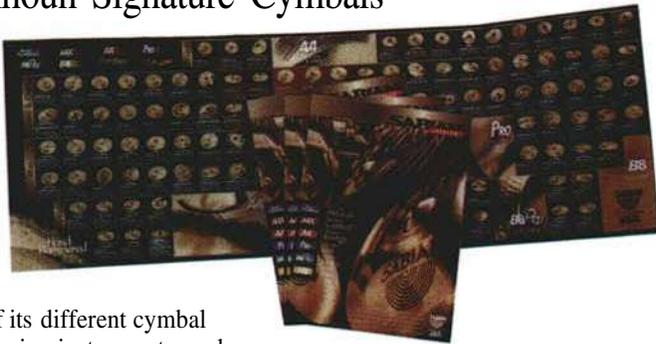
If you've ever dealt with a totally foam-lined drumcase, you're probably familiar with an age-old problem: The foam is great for protecting the drums inside the case, but it's a major nuisance in terms of getting the drums in and out of the case easily. Drum hardware—especially bass drum T- rods—invariably snags on the foam, often tearing it up in the process. HQ Percussion's *Shell Shocks* are small, block-like "buffers" designed to be installed inside a complete foam

lining. Made of high-quality, shock-resistant foam with a do-it-yourself peel-and-stick adhesive already applied, the buffers provide sufficient support and protection for the drum, while actually occupying only a few inches of space in the case—leaving plenty of room to get the drum in and out cleanly. A package of eight *Shell Shocks* (enough for drums up to 15" in diameter) retails for \$14.95. (Cases 16" or larger require ten or more pieces.) Six packages will protect a standard five-piece drumkit.

Just The Facts

New Sabian Catalog and Will Calhoun Signature Cymbals

A new product-only catalog from Sabian has been specifically designed to increase



awareness of its different cymbal series, percussion instruments, and pre-pack cymbal sets. The new eight-page brochure focuses on the complete Sabian line, with photos accompanied by brief product descriptions and size availability. Sabian has also included important information on style suitability to help buyers select the best cymbal for their purposes.

Too new, however, even to make the latest catalog is Sabian's *Will Calhoun Signature* series.

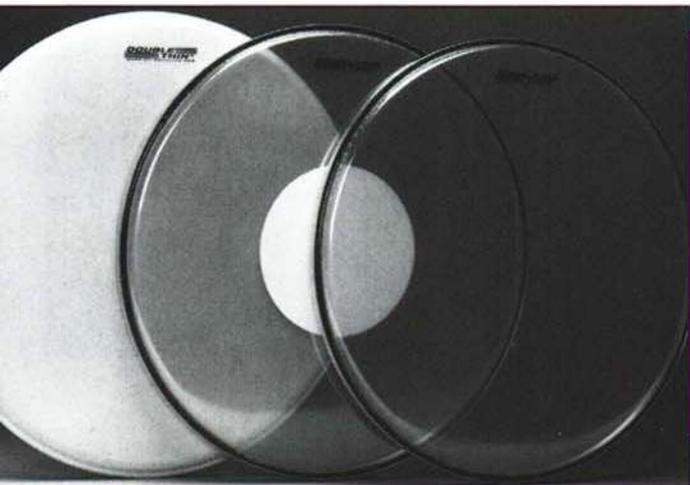
Comprised of a 21" ride, 14" *Mad Hats*, and a 10" *Alien Disc*, the new models "reflect the broad musical leanings of this musical yet powerful player." Each cymbal is unlathed for dry, definite sticking response, then buffed and heavily hammered with "O-pattern" peens for tonal effect and increased control.



The ride is heavy, with a "dry, high-pitched, penetrating sound." Its small bell is said to reduce overtones and accentuate sticking definition. The *Mad Hats* combine a heavy bottom cymbal with a medium top cymbal that is 3/16" larger in diameter. This combination is said to reduce air lock, increase response rate, and bolster stroke clarity. The *Alien Disc* is a 10" bronze disk punctuated by twelve rivets (four groups of three) to create a "bright, bell-like note reinforced with a full, sizzling sound of extended duration." It can be mounted upside down or right side up, and can be played with sticks, brushes, or mallets.

Thin Is In

Aquarian Double-Thin Drumheads



For those who want the durability of a double-ply head, but the tonal characteristics of a single-ply model. Aquarian's *Double-Thin* heads may be an excellent compromise. The new heads feature two thin layers of Aquarian's *XR* drumhead film, making them thinner than traditional two-ply heads, but more durable than single-ply heads. The heads are said to have "an open, warm, fat sound with great resonance at any volume level." They are available from 6" to 26" sizes in *Clear* or *Texture Coated* versions, and with Aquarian's patented *Dot*. The *Texture Coated* models are claimed to be especially good for snare drums because they are "dry, with a sensitive response and an articulate attack." On toms, they are said to be "punchy and full-sounding."

Stick To Rock...Or Funk... Or Marching...Or... Pro-Mark Portnoy and Beauford Sticks, and Other Accesories

Clearly subscribing to the "something for everyone" philosophy, Pro-Mark has recently introduced autograph drumstick models from progressive rocker Mike Portnoy and pop/funkster Carter Beauford, along with a new marching stick model.

The *Mike Portnoy* stick is 17/32" in diameter and 16 1/8" long, with a thick taper for added durability, and a large, acorn-shaped nylon tip. It lists for \$10.40 per pair. The *Carter Beauford* model is a hybrid that combines the 16" length and 9/16" diameter of a 5A with a 56 taper and tip, to increase power and durability without a big increase in weight. This model will be available at \$9.95 for the wood-tip version and \$10.40 for nylon-tip models. Also new is a nylon-tip version of Pro-Mark's existing *DC-9 Regiment* marching stick (designed in cooperation with the Phantom Regiment drum & bugle corps). The hickory stick is 16 1/2" long and 43/64" in diameter, and is priced at \$11.75 per pair.

Pro-Mark has also introduced the *Hot Foot* bass drum beater. The beater is made of a special blend of rubber, and though it can be used in either live or recording environments, is designed primarily as a practice aid. Pro-Mark claims that regular practice using the *Hot Foot* will result in "an increase in drummers' speed, power, endurance, and coordination." The beater features a 1/4" hardened steel shaft that will fit most pedals.

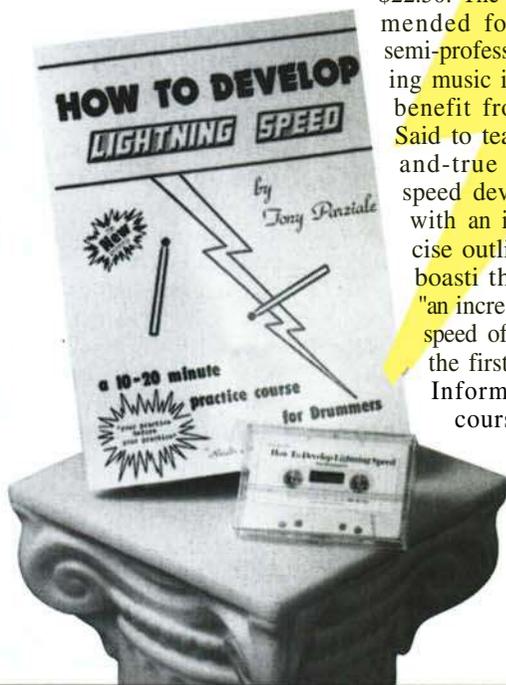
Finally, bright-yellow "police line"-style plastic barricade tape is available in Pro-Mark's accessory line. Reading: *Drum Line. Do Not Cross* in large black letters (along with the Pro-Mark logo), the tape is said to be "a real attention-grabber, with practical value. It can be used to mark off bleachers for band seating, to denote practice areas, or to be sold in small pieces as souvenirs." The tape is 3" wide and comes in rolls of 1,000 feet at \$12 per roll (which includes shipping within the continental US). Orders may be placed by calling Pro-Mark's Drummer Hotline at (800) 233-5250.

Speed, Too

How To Develop Lightning Speed Practice Course

Tony Parziale's *How To Develop Lightning/Speed* practice course has been sold through the mail since 1990. Now in its seventh printing, the course has recently been made available through retail music stores. It consists of a workbook and accompanying cassette, with a retail price of \$22.50. The course is recommended for beginners to semi-professionals, and reading music is not required to benefit from the method. Said to teach "many tried-and-true techniques for speed development along with an informative exercise outline," the course boasts the potential for "an increase in drumming speed of up to 50% after the first time it is tried."

Information about the course and where it may be purchased can be obtained from the Parziale Corporation.



Shake That Bag, Or Bag That Shaker

Go-Jo Bags

Go-Jo Bags, from Perkana Perkussion, are new percussion instruments that can be used by drummers and percussionists (as well as other musicians and even non-musicians) to create a variety of sounds and rhythms. Specially selected beads inside the *Go-Jo Bags* make them interesting alternatives to traditional maracas, cabasas, shakers, ocean drums, and rain sticks.

Available in a three-pack of different tones (green=low, red=mid, yellow=high), *Go-Jo Bags* can be played individually or in matched or unmatched pairs. The duration and volume of their sound can be controlled by how tightly the bag is held. The bag can also be smacked, slid, tossed, grabbed, rolled, and tapped to achieve a wide variety of sounds. A bag can also be fastened to the back of the hand by stick and hand-drumming players.



And What's More...

Zildjian has added a Sonny Emory model to its *Artist Series* of drumsticks. The new model is a cross between the company's 5/4 and 6A models, with a beefier neck for durability, and a round wood bead for a "full-bodied sound on drums and cymbals." The 16"-long hickory stick features Sonny's signature.



Mapex has introduced a new *Mars Pro Special Edition* kit with "fusion" sizes: 10x10, 10x12, and 12x14 mounted toms, a 16x22 bass drum, and a matching 6½x14 wood snare drum. The new model is available in cherry red, emerald green, aqua green, and midnight black transparent finishes, or in solid indigo blue. Mapex has also added hunter green and midnight blue wrapped finishes to its Venus series.

Cannon Percussion has added a new line of heads to its *Attack* series. Dubbed *Attack Force*, the new heads are made of Kevlar, a virtually indestructible material. They are designed to "withstand the rigorous demands and punishment of outdoor drumlines." The heads are guaranteed not to fail at the hoop. They are available in 6", 13", and 14" diameters and a choice of black or white colors.

Drummer/artisan Penner MacKay makes **Barrelhouse** drums from discarded French or Canadian oak wine barrels in Ontario's wine country. All work is custom, and each drum is different. Sizes range from 11" (5 gallon) to 30" (500 litre). Heads, available in steer, calf, kip, or goat hides, can be tacked or tucked. Drums can also be sized to accommodate conventional plastic heads. Snare drums can be made if the customer supplies the hardware.



Making Contact

Aquarian Accessories

1140N. Justin Ave.
Anaheim, CA 92807
tel: (714) 632-0230
fax: (714) 632-3905

Barrelhouse Drum Company

69 Niagara St., RR #6
Niagara-On-The-Lake, ON L0S 1J0,
Canada
tel: (905) 468-4668
fax: (905) 468-5153
e-mail: bhdrum@vaxxine.com
Web: www.vaxxine.com/bhdrum.

Cannon (Universal Percussion)

2773 E. Midlothian Blvd.
Struthers, OH 44471
tel: (800) 282-0110
fax: (216) 755-6400

HQ Percussion Products

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Kit Tools (Kingfield Wood Products)

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Mapex USA
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tel: (615) 793-2050
fax: (615) 793-2070
e-mail: Mapex@concentric.com

Parziale Corporation
PO Box 3456
Mercerville, NJ 08619
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Yamaha Beech Custom Drumkit And FP840 Bass Drum Pedal

by Rick Mattingly

A new choice of wood offers
a new sound and price structure.

Just as Yamaha's new copper snare drums were designed to fall between steel and brass models (see accompanying review), so the company's new *Beech Custom* series of drums are meant to produce a sound in between the sharp tone of drums with birch shells and the warmer tone of maple-shell drums.

The company is positioning the *Beech Custom* series right beside its *Maple Custom* and *Recording Custom* drums as professional, quality instruments. Accordingly, all of the fittings are from the top of the Yamaha line, starting with the *YESS* suspension mounts on the toms. Lug casings are larger than those found on the *Maple Custom* drums, but not the "power"-type lugs that span the entire shell, as on the *Recording Custom* series. Rims are triple-flange steel, and all drums are fitted with Remo *Ambassador* heads.

For review, *MD* received a 16x22 bass drum, 8x8, 9x10, 10x12, 12x14, and 14x16 suspended toms (all with *YESS* mounts), a 16x16 floor tom (with legs), and a 6½x14 snare drum. We'll start at the bottom.



WHAT'S HOT

- Drums sound fat, punchy, and distinctly different from other Yamaha professional series
- Acoustic emphasis on mid-range frequencies would likely complement a bass guitar and fill up a band's sound
- Price structure is appealing for professional-quality drums
- FP840 pedal offers excellent quickness and several innovative design features

WHAT'S NOT

- Drums' emphasis on mid-range frequencies makes them less sensitive at extreme low and high ends of the acoustic spectrum, which may not suit all applications

The 16x22 *Beech Custom* bass drum has beech hoops, and all ten of the tuning lugs are drumkey operated. The shell is 8-ply and has a single air vent. (The front head also has a large vent hole.) The drum has a pair of standard Yamaha spurs and a double tom-tom holder mounted to the shell.

The drum offered a good balance between tone and punch. Even with a fair amount of muffling it produced a rounded "thud," and the less muffling, the more boom. Overall, the drum emphasized the mid-range overtones, which gave it a very fat sound. But it lacked the extreme bottom end, as well as the higher overtones that can add to the attack sound of a bass drum. This is a drum for those who wish to blend in with the bass player and reinforce that sound, as opposed to those who want to cut through it.

The 6-ply toms all had tremendous sustain and resonance—whether tuned fairly high, in the middle, or on the low end. Like the bass drum, each drum's mid-range overtones prevailed, giving these drums an especially fat sound—so fat, in fact, as to be somewhat lacking in articulation on fast, intricate stickwork. Switching to a drier batter head (specifically, a Remo *Pinstripe*) cleaned up the sound a bit, but some of the fatness was sacrificed. I would recommend these toms to players who need power, tone, and sustain for simple, effective patterns and rhythms.

The 6½x14 *Beech Custom* snare drum also features a six-ply shell and has ten double-ended tuning lugs. The snare strainer is the Yamaha "B"-type with a standard lever, and snares are 20-strand steel. The snare-drum sound was rich and full, and it sounded good whether the snares were tight and crisp or slightly loose for a fatter sound. As with the other beech drums, the mid-range overtones predominated, giving the drum a really gutsy sound.

Overall the drums are loud and powerful. They don't so much cut through a band's sound as they reinforce and fill it up.

Price

Although the *Beech Custom* series is designated as a professional-level kit, it is priced lower than either the *Maple Custom* or *Recording Custom* series, which gives it an appeal all its own. In addition, Yamaha offers various configurations of *Beech Custom* kits. As a representative example, a kit with a 16x22 bass drum, 10x12, 11x13, and 16x16 toms, and a holder for the rack toms has a suggested retail price of \$2,100. If you add the 6½x14 *Beech Custom* snare drum, FP840 pedal, and a hardware package includ-

ing hi-hat, snare, and two cymbal stands from the heavy-duty 800 series, the price is \$2,895. Bass drums are available in sizes from 14x18 (\$880) to 18x24 (\$1,140); toms start at \$295 for an 8x10 and go to \$625 for a 16x18. Complete kits are also available with lighter-weight 700 series hardware for \$80 less than the type of package described above with 800 series hardware. The 6½x14 *Beech Custom* snare drum alone lists for \$430.

FP840 Bass Drum Pedal

Our review kit was equipped with Yamaha's new FP840 bass drum pedal, which has been designed to adapt to a variety of needs. Not only can you adjust the angle of the beater, but you can also adjust the angle of the beater head itself so that it makes optimum contact with the bass drum batter head, no matter how wide or narrow the bass drum hoop or how you might have the drum angled. Enhancing that feature is the clamp used to attach the pedal to the hoop: It swivels to allow secure mounting even if the drum is tilted back.

The pedal is extremely smooth (by virtue of its spring roller bearings), and the spring tension covers a wide range—from so loose that a strong breeze could probably generate a few bass drum notes to a point at which you'd better have some pretty serious leg strength. Once the tension is set, the spring can be secured with both a threaded washer on top and a locking screw on the side.

Set at reasonable tension (my idea of reasonable tension might be on the light side compared to a lot of drummers), the pedal was extremely fast. Yamaha claims this speed to be the result of a couple of factors. One is an ultra-light titanium beater shaft. The other



is an "accelerator" that engages the dual chain and is supposed to provide a lighter feeling for the stroke. I don't know why (or if) such a device makes a difference, but the pedal feels great, so I'll accept the official explanation.

Another interesting feature is the baseplate, which is angled in such a way that the area between the front and the heel of the pedal does not touch the floor. The pedal itself is well secured and stable, but by having the center of the base plate angled up, the pedal will sit more securely on an uneven surface. (Not that stages

or risers ever have uneven surfaces!) Some adjustments are made via a hex wrench; others can be made with a drumkey. Yamaha has thoughtfully provided a tool that has both, and there is a rubber clamp on the base plate to hold it.

The downside of a pedal this good, of course, is that if you buy one and you still don't like the way your bass drum licks are sounding, you won't be able to blame it on the pedal. List price of the *FP840* pedal by itself is \$185.

Yamaha Copper Snare Drums

by Rick Mattingly

How many snare drums does the world need? Apparently, there can never be too many. Despite the proliferation of esoteric drums currently on the market, a lot of drummers still aren't satisfied. So they continue to look for new "in-between" models that have "just the right blend" of characteristics offered by other existing drums.

With that in mind, Yamaha has introduced a series of snare drums with copper shells, said to have the bright attack and projection of steel-shell drums as well as the full-bodied tone of drums with brass shells. (That sounds like either the ideal drum, or

WHAT'S HOT

- Drums offer a wider frequency range than some other metal snares
- "Compromise" tonality (between steel and brass) could make these drums an excellent all-purpose choice

the snare-drum equivalent of one of those cymbals marked "crash/ride" that leaves something to be desired whichever way you try to use it.) There are three models from which to choose: a

6½x14, a 5½x14, and a 3½x14. All have ten tuning lugs per head and are fitted with Yamaha *DynaHoops*. Heads are Remo *Ambassadors* and the snares are 20-strand hi-carbon steel.

Whether or not these are the "ideal" drums will depend on each drummer's personal preferences and needs. But the copper drums do combine elements of other models in a way that gives them their own personality.

The primary characteristic of that personality is a richness of tone. But whereas most drums that are praised for having a "warm" sound, whether they be made of brass or wood, tend to also have a "dark" tonality, the copper drums are bright-sounding. It's not just that the higher overtones are emphasized at the expense of the lower ones (as with a steel-shell drum), but more that the drum enhances a wider range of overtones.



Rick Mattingly

Wood-shell snare drums often enhance such a wide range of overtones that they end up sounding muddy. The copper-shell Yamahas avoid that problem. With tight heads and snares, the drums produce very clean articulation. They can also respond with a fatter sound when the heads and snares are backed off just a bit.

Those who want an absolutely crisp snare sound may be better served with a steel-shell drum, and those who like the "dark" sound should probably stay with brass. But for those who want to split the difference, the Yamaha copper-shell drums offer a very attractive compromise—although that's not to imply that there is anything lacking in the quality of the tone. These are very versatile drums that would be especially suited for players who have to

cover a variety of styles and can only carry a single drum.

The three models are remarkably consistent in tonality. Obviously, the thinner drum favors the higher overtones, the deeper drum has the meatiest sound, and the one in the middle is the most general-purpose. But all have a similar richness of timbre.

Even the list prices fall between comparable steel and brass models. (Brass is more expensive, steel is less expensive.) The 3½X14 copper-shell model (*SD-6103*) lists for \$555; the 5½x14 (*SD-6105*) goes for \$565; the 6½x14 (*SD-6106*) retails for \$580.

New Sabian Cymbals

Text and photos by Rick Mattingly

Those busy Canadians have a lot of brass...
er, bronze.

The folks at Sabian have been burning the midnight oil (or should we say melting the midnight alloy) in recent months in order to create a slew of new models. These include offerings in virtually every Sabian series, so there's literally something for everybody. Let's take a look at this bountiful harvest, beginning at the low end of the price scale.

The Redesigned B8 Series

Sabian has "raised the bar" in terms of entry-level cymbals with the redesign of their *B8* series (which takes its name from the B8 alloy used to make the cymbals). The cymbals are created initially by means of what Sabian terms "uni-rolling," as opposed to the casting process used for the *AA*, *AAX*, and *Hand Hammered* lines. Then the company applies what they call "Advanced Cymbal Technology," which basically means that they have acquired new tools and procedures that enhance the manufacturing

process and ensure greater consistency in the lathing and hammering processes.

As a result, the *B8* line in general is now bordering on professional quality, and drummers who start off with *B8* cymbals won't have to be in a hurry to replace their cymbals when they start playing in bands. In general, the new *B8* cymbals are brighter-sounding than their predecessors. They also sound fuller, with better



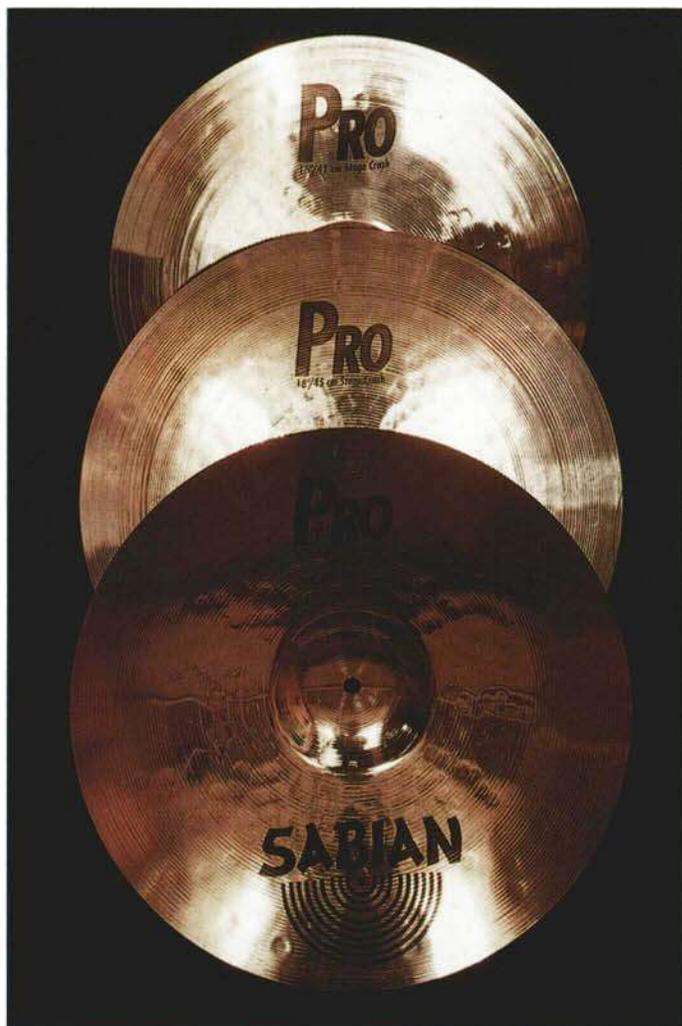
overtones. And as a pleasant surprise, the improvements have been made without the retail price going up. Let's look at each model.

The 20" ride has a very nice balance between overtones and definition. I could lay into it without the sound dissolving into a wash, yet it also responded well to lighter playing. The sound was bright enough to cut through a loud band without being brittle or clangy, but "mainstream" enough to work for a variety of situations and styles. The bell was clear and bright, with just enough overtones to give it some body. List price of the *B8* 20" ride is \$132.

The 18" cymbal was designated as a "crash/ride." Personally, I found it to be too washy for use as a ride cymbal, but I'm also aware that some of the drummers in modern rock bands are very fond of bashing their cymbals, so this might be very appealing for such players. My more traditional taste found it to be an excellent crash cymbal, with a full-bodied sound that had reasonable but not excessive sustain. List price is \$110.

As good as the 18" sounded, I was expecting a little more from the 16" crash. It didn't have quite the body and richness of overtones I expected, but it was bright and cutting with fast decay. List price is \$94.50.

I have to say that the *B8* 14" crash sounds more like a large splash, due to its extreme thinness of sound. It certainly has fast response, but however much its high pitch might help it cut through, it lacks the body to back it up. List price is \$72.



WHAT'S HOT

- Redesigned *B8* series offers improved entry-level cymbal performance at no increase in cost
- 22" *Jack DeJohnette Mini Bell Ride* features mid-range overtones that produce a "velvety" sound, while the mini bell design provides good definition
- *Hand Hammered Raw Dry Rides* offer dry, contained sounds and distinctive "sweet spots" at various places on each cymbal

WHAT'S NOT

- 16" *B8* crash lacks the body and richness displayed by the 18" model
- 14" *B8* crash sounds more like a large splash: fast response and high pitch, but a thin overall sound

While the 14" model disappointed me in terms of being a crash, the 10" was exactly what I expected from a *B8* cymbal that size. It didn't have quite the body of a comparable cast cymbal, but one doesn't buy a splash cymbal to get "body" anyway. It's an excellent splash for a beginning drummer, and would even suffice for a pro drummer who only has limited use for a splash and therefore doesn't want to invest too much money in one (but still wants a sound of reasonably good quality). List price is \$60.

The 13" hi-hats had a high, cutting sound and quick response, with a reasonable amount of overtones and a clear "chick" sound when played with the foot. They had a respectable amount of body for cymbals that size, and would be good for fusion-type settings in which the hi-hat needs to be fast and high-pitched. List price is \$132 per pair.

The 14" *B8* hi-hats are especially nice, producing a full-bodied "chick" sound, clean articulation when played closed with sticks, and plenty of overtones for a fat sound when played partially open. These could easily last young drummers well into their professional careers. List price is \$144 per pair.

Finally, the 18" *B8* Chinese cymbal is one of the stronger members of the new *B8* family. With a pitch that's surprisingly low for an 18" cymbal, it does double duty as a rude-sounding ride cymbal (with plenty of "trashy" overtones), and as an aggressive crash. As with the *B8* splash, the *B8* Chinese would be an ideal compromise between musicality and economy for drummers who have only an occasional need for this type of cymbal. List price is \$110.

Pro Stage Crashes

One would assume that a cymbal with the word "stage" in its name might have been designed for power and projection. That's what you get from these 16", 17", and 18" models from Sabian's highest-quality non-cast series. As is common with "uni-rolled" cymbals with *Brilliant* finishes, these cymbals all have a certain amount of "gonginess," which is especially obvious when they're played by themselves. But like the ring in a snare drum, that's what gives the cymbals body and projection and allows them to stand up to aggressive hits. Once the whole band is playing, that gongy undertone is absorbed in the overall volume. These cymbals don't have quite as many overtones as some might like, but they would be effective in the right situations. (Based on their price



faster decay. I would find both those sizes very useful in acoustic settings in which I wanted the darker sound associated with larger crash cymbals but not the volume they typically produce. The 18" version, being so low in pitch, might not be as useful in many situations.

I tested standard versions of each of the three sizes, plus another 16" AAX Dark Crash with a Brilliant finish. The highest overtones were subdued on that one, giving it a darker, meatier timbre, but the sound wasn't quite as cutting as the regular version. List prices of the AAX Dark Crash cymbals are \$159 for the 14", \$192 for the 16", and \$225 for the 18" model.

AA 17" Fast Crash

This thin, small-bell cymbal has a high pitch and quick response, as well as a quick decay. But its 17" diameter also gives it more body than is typical from a cymbal with such

range and impact-oriented performance, I'd say those situations would mainly be rock-oriented playing, by advanced students or semi-pro drummers.) Personally, I found the 17" model to have the best balance of pitch, response, and sustain. List price for the 16" Pro Stage Crash is \$150; the 17" model lists for \$159; the 18" version goes for \$225.

a high pitch. Imagine the response of a splash with the body of a crash, and you'll get the idea. The Brilliant version has a slightly narrower spread of overtones, but the difference between the Brilliant and regular version is slight, and they sound virtually identical in the context of a full band. List price of the 17" AA Fast Crash is \$207.

AA El Sabor Salsa Splash

Perhaps I'm being nit-picky, but I'd call this 13" cymbal a small crash rather than a large splash. It certainly has the quick response of a splash cymbal, but it also has more body than most splash cymbals I've known (and haven't loved). The upturned edges of the Salsa Splash give it the appearance of a tiny China cymbal, while the El Sabor line is designed for Latin music. But despite this ethnic dichotomy, the cymbal sounds like a small, mainstream crash (or large, meaty splash) to me, and I would imagine that drummers playing all sorts of music could find a place for it within their setups. List price of the 13" AA El Sabor Salsa Splash is \$144.

Mini Fusion Hats

Consisting of a 10" AA top and a 10" Leopard bottom cymbal (with air vents), the AA Mini Fusion Hats are to regular hi-hats what a splash cymbal is to a crash. The timbre is so high and thin as to sound like something you'd find with a toy drumset. I can't

AAX Dark Crashes

These three crash cymbals, available in 14", 16", and 18" diameters, each have a pitch typical of a standard crash cymbal two inches larger. In other words, if you like the characteristic pitch of an 18" crash, but that size tends to be a bit too loud or ring too long for your use, you can go to a 16" AAX Dark Crash and get the pitch of an 18" with the response of a 16". Similarly, the 14" AAX Dark Crash has a pitch more like a typical 16" crash, but with quicker response and



imagine many drummers using these as a primary hi-hat, but they could be effective in selected situations as auxiliary or special-effect hi-hats. Whatever they lack in tonal quality is made up for with quick response. List price is \$234.

Hand Hammered Bright Hats

Many of the hi-hats I've played that have been described as "bright" have also been somewhat brittle sounding. This is because higher pitches usually come from thicker cymbals, which tend to have fewer overtones. But the *Hand Hammered Bright Hats* have plenty of shimmering overtones, resulting in fat "chick" sounds when played with a pedal, and meaty ride sounds when played with a stick. They're especially nice when played just a little bit loose for that John Bonham "Rock And Roll" sound. The *Bright Hats* are available in 13" and 14" sizes, and each consists of a very heavy bottom cymbal with a medium-weight top.

The 13" version has a nice "chick" sound and a reasonably full sound when played with sticks, with quick response for open hi-hat "barks." It may be somewhat thin-sounding for certain applications, but would be fine in acoustic settings in which one wanted a high-pitched sound. List price for the 13" *Hand Hammered Bright Hats* is \$366.

The 14" models were my favorites. (I say "models" because we received both a regular and a *Brilliant* top cymbal to match with the same bottom cymbal.) The sound was rich and full, with the *Brilliant* model being just a bit less cutting and sharp than its regular counterpart. I might use the *Brilliant* version for acoustic jazz gigs and the regular one for more pop-oriented music. List price for 14" *Hand Hammered Bright Hats* is \$416.

21" Hand Hammered Vintage Ride

Sabian's 21" *Hand Hammered Vintage Ride* is designed "to recreate the full-wash sound of rides made in the '50s through the '70s." But my testing revealed it to have more definition than you might expect from that description. It still maintains the darker sound of the *Hand Hammered* series, with just a hint of the "trash" sound. The bell is a little bigger than normal and is appropriately clangy.

We received both "regular" and *Brilliant* versions of the 21" *Vintage Ride*. The wash sound was significantly more pronounced on the *Brilliant* model—to the point that articulation suffered on fast bebop-style sticking patterns. But for those who like to bash, this would be an excellent choice. The regular version also had plenty of overtones and a fair share of wash, but the ratio between wash and definition was better balanced. List price is \$372 for either version.



Jack DeJohnette Encore Mini Bell Ride

The newest addition to the distinctive *Jack DeJohnette* signature line of cymbals is a 22" *Mini Bell Ride*. Like other cymbals in the series, it has a brushed-gold finish and a very dry sound. But it also has a nice complement of mid-range overtones that produce a "velvety" sound, and the mini bell design provides good definition. While some 22" cymbals can be overwhelming, this one isn't, and it would work fine in an acoustic setting. In general, the *DeJohnette* cymbals are for specialized tastes, but this one could easily attract a more mainstream following for its smooth sound. List price is \$390.

Hand Hammered Raw Dry Rides

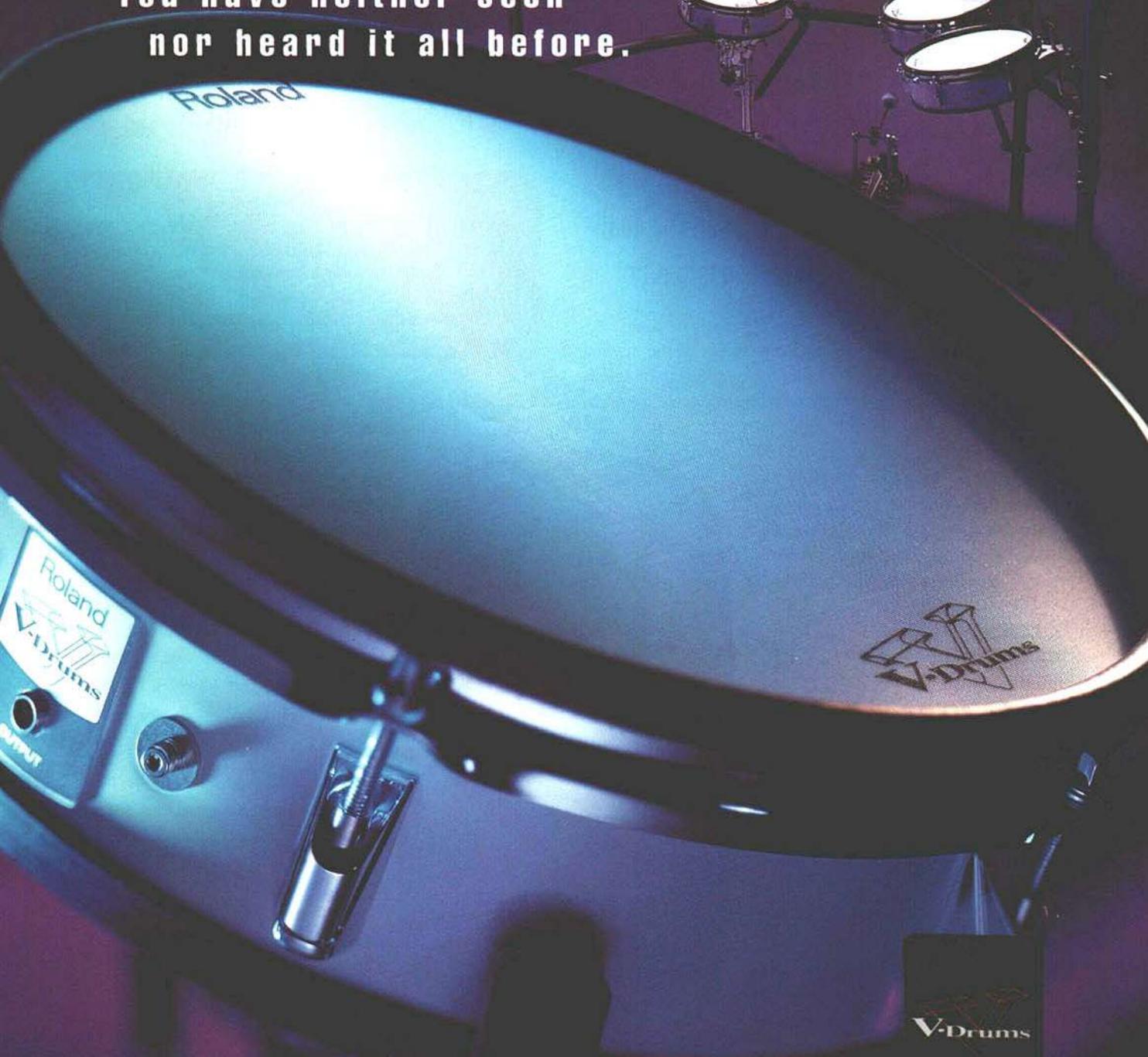
Of all the cymbals included in this review, the *Hand Hammered Raw Dry Rides* surprised me the most. They were scary to behold, their appearance suggesting a very anvil-like tonality. But while there is a hint of "clang" in the 20" model, overall it is a dry, contained sound. The 22" version has more "click" than "clang." As with most unlathed cymbals, you can find distinctive "sweet spots" at various places on these cymbals.

The closest comparison I can make is with the original, brushed-black *Jack DeJohnette* signature ride cymbals. But because these new cymbals are hammered and the *DeJohnettes* were not, these have a lower, darker sound. The 20" is bright enough to cut through a reasonably loud band, and its dryness makes it ideal for really fast tempos where articulation is crucial. There are just enough overtones to give it some shimmer, and the large bell is clear and cutting. List price of the 20" *Raw Dry Ride* is \$340.

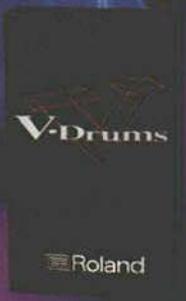
The 22" version is the *really* special one, though. Despite its size (or maybe because of it), you can lay into it without the sound dissolving into a wash—the cymbal has a perfect balance of dry articulation and overtones. The bell is just as clear and cutting as the one on the 20" model. (In fact, the bells on both cymbals appear to be the same size, so it's probably the difference in proportion between the bell and body that gives the 22" model its distinctive sound.) This cymbal proved great for fast tempos, but also works for medium-tempo patterns. List price of the 22" *Raw Dry Ride* is \$403.



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Electro-Voice N/D 868 And RE200 Microphones

by Mark Parsons

These new drum-specific models offer all the qualities you might expect—and several you might not.

Electro-Voice has a couple of interesting new mic's on the market, and although they seem to be almost completely opposite in design (one is a large-diaphragm dynamic and the other is a small-diaphragm condenser), they have a couple of things in common. The first is that each of them has a *purposely* non-linear frequency response, in order to tailor the sound for certain applications. The second is that each of these mic's has a drumset-specific application for which it is very well suited. Let's start with the big guy.

N/D 868

The full name of this mic' is the *N/D 868 Cardioid Dynamic Bass Drum Microphone*, which pretty much says it all. According to the technical sheet that came with it, "Every aspect of its design is optimized for miking a bass drum in both live and recording applications. The frequency response is tailored to match the optimal post-processing usually applied to 'flat' microphones when used in this application. This means that the *N/D 868* is a plug-in-and-hang-on product. You can use this microphone as is with no post-processing needed."

Can this possibly be true? We'll find out in a minute, but first let's take a look at the mic' itself.

Description

The main body of the *N/D 868* is a thick cylinder approximately 2 3/8" in diameter and 3 1/2" long. Attached is a 1"-diameter tailpiece that houses the mic's XLR connector and connects the mic' to a stand via the included adapter. The tailpiece and the lower half of the body is steel, while the top half of the body



WHAT'S HOT

- *N/D 868's* design is smooth and streamlined for a "large" microphone
- *N/D 868* sounds great when placed on a pillow—eliminating the need for a stand
- *RE200* is excellent in traditional high-frequency applications, and is surprisingly good for toms

is comprised of a large mesh windscreen with an internal foam pop filter nested inside. The mic' is finished in a smooth black enamel, and the entire affair seems like a sturdy package that should stand up well to the rigors of being inside a kick drum.

One of the things I like about this mic' is that even though it's ostensibly a "large" microphone, the design is smooth and streamlined, with no protuberances—making it easy to place inside a 4" port in a kick head. The clip is likewise unobtrusive and functional.

Theory

As mentioned, the *N/D 868* was designed to get a good kick sound without a lot of additional processing. The main way manufacturers do this sort of thing is to make a mic' with "built-in" EQ to enhance the intended sound source. In this case, Electro-Voice added the following three equalization enhancements specifically for kick drums: First, there's a boost (approximately 6 dB) centered at 50 Hz to bring out the fundamental note of the drum (the "boom"). Then there's a broad reduction of a couple dB or so throughout the lower midrange, particularly in the 200-600 Hz range. This helps get rid of the dreaded "cardboard box" syndrome that can rob drums of punch and warmth. And finally, there are some peaks in the high end to accentuate the beater attack, giving the note more articulation. (According to the "typical" response curve for the *N/D 868*, there are two prominent peaks—one at 2 kHz and one at 5 kHz. But the

actual test chart packed with the mic' shows a number of smaller peaks between 2 and 7 kHz.)

In addition to this frequency tailoring, EV has also reduced the sensitivity of the *N/D 868* (as compared to other mic's in their *N-Dym* series) so that it can reproduce *very* high-volume sounds without overdriving the input on your mixer.

In Use

I started by placing the mic' in the usual spot: hanging on a low boom in the middle of a 22" kick drum, approximately 6" from the batter head, pointed at the beater contact spot. The signal was sent to tape without EQ, compression, or processing of any kind. (Other drum mic's were also put up so the kit would sound normal upon playback.)

In this position the mic' sounded good (but not, in my opinion, without need of further processing). The bottom was *very* solid—so much so that I could afford to roll off 3-4 dB at 60 Hz to tighten things a little. I also pulled out some lower mids (centered at 400 Hz). The top wasn't quite as articulate as the advertised curve would indicate, but then I remembered the discrepancy between the "typical" curve and the actual chart, and I realized that the mic' was just living up to its test results. A small boost at 6 kHz brought out some attack, and the whole thing sounded very nice.

Because of how well the *N/D 868* reproduced the lower fundamental, I decided to try it outside of the drum. I ended up with the mic' 18" in front of the drum, pointing at the center of the front head. (I should note that both heads had an integral control ring and the front head had an offset 4" port. There was also a very small amount of dampening applied to the bottom of the batter head only, but overall the drum had a fairly wide-open sound.) In this location the mic' produced a big, live sound, much fuller on the bottom end than the sound captured by some other mic's at this distance. (Again, I added a little top for increased articulation.) Additionally, the mic's polar pattern (a modified cardioid) eliminated much of the bleed you might otherwise get in this position. If you're a fan of the Bonham sound, I think you'll find this mic' very useful.

EV's literature indicated that placing the mic' on a pillow in the drum, approximately 3" from the batter head, might be the best position for the *N/D 868*. I didn't try this right away, because I'm not usually happy with the sound resulting from this technique. But there it was: a picture of the mic' resting on a DW pad in the bottom of a kick drum. I happened to have a similar Evans *EQ-Pad*, so I dutifully placed the *N/D 868* exactly as illustrated and then laid some tracks. Guess what? You've got it: *great* kick sound. I *suppose* you could use the resulting sound "as is," if you wanted a huge "thud" that was a little shy on definition. But it sounded *sooo* much better with a little judicious tweaking that I couldn't resist. (We used similar EQ as before: a little roll-off at the bottom—120 Hz this time—to con-

trol the boom, some reduction of the lower mids, and a few dB at 6 kHz to bring out the beater.) It sounded wonderful, and with the addition of some compression (a dbx *160-X* set to take 8 dB off the peaks at a ratio of 6:1) it yielded one of the best kick drum sounds I've ever heard, period. I proceeded to pump the track through some big speakers at a significant level to see how the sound would hold up in a reinforcement application, and the results were the same...only more so!

Conclusion

I ended up nicknaming the *N/D 868* "Thumper," because it produced one of the biggest kick sounds around, with all the beef you could ask for. For my taste it could use a little EQ at the top to bring out more attack, but in my experience this is never *not* the case with kick drums (to one degree or another), so it's nothing to fret about. In fact, I only bring it up because of EV's claim that this mic' is designed to be used without *any* processing.

Depending on your taste this may or may not be marketing hyperbole, but who really cares? At the end of the day, it's a *great-sounding* kick mic'.

The *N/D 868* comes with a foam-lined hard case, and carries a list price of \$370.

RE200

One of the best candidates for reproducing cymbals and other high-pitched percussion is a small-diaphragm condenser microphone. Small condensers usually have good high-frequency response, and if they don't extend quite as far into the bass regions as their larger brethren it's not really a problem, because in this application we don't care about low end nearly as much as capturing those sparkling transients. EV has recently introduced a mic' in which these traditional small-condenser qualities are accentuated somewhat, making the mic' exceptionally well suited for hanging over a drumset.

Design

Physically, the *RE200* is a slim, compact unit. The mic' is 5 1/2" long overall, with the majority of the body only .8" in diameter, expanding to slightly over an inch at the business end. The samples we were sent had a matte beige finish, although EV informs us that the mic' is currently shipping with a black finish (see photo). The *RE200* is a "true" condenser, meaning that the transducer is externally biased (as opposed to a pre-polarized "electret" condenser). Among other things (like greater sensitivity) this means there's no way that this mic' can run on batteries. You're going to have to feed it phantom power from an external source (anything from 12 to 52 volts DC; the standard 48 volts on most mixers will do fine).

The mic' was designed to have what EV calls a "continuous presence rise." Translation: Everything is fairly flat from 200 to 2,000 Hz, but at about 2 kHz the curve starts sweeping upward, culminating in a 6 dB peak at around 7 kHz or so. The low end starts rolling off gen-



tly below 200 Hz, with the -10 dB points at 50 Hz and 18 kHz for the bottom and top respectively. The intention of this curve is to give the mic' increased sensitivity to transients, adding detail and "air" to the sound. To further isolate the sound source, the *RE200* has a cardioid polar pattern. Now let's check out what all these specs sound like in the real world.

Testing 1,2,3...

The first thing I did was hang the mic's (we were given two for review) over the kit in a typical spaced-pair (A/B) configuration. The signals were printed to tape flat and dry. The resulting sound was bright, but I mean that in a positive sense: It was "smooth-bright," not "harsh-bright" (probably because most of the mic's non-linearity occurs *above* the midrange, where true harshness resides). And the bottom wasn't nearly as thin as you might expect. Overall, the mic's gave a realistic yet flattering portrait of the kit. In fact, with the addition of just the *N/D 868* on the kick we were able to get a decent ambient drumkit sound that would be useful in a jazz or "acoustic" context.

As an interesting note, it was hinted by someone at Electro-Voice that we try the *RE200s* with the included foam windscreens in place. I usually reserve windscreens for problematic vocalists or for when I'm miking outside, but I learned from my experience with the *868* that it pays to listen to the manufacturer's suggestions (even if they sometimes seem kind of wacky). The difference with the windscreens installed was quite subtle—mostly a small reduction in the presence peak, which smoothed things out ever so

slightly. But overall it wasn't a big change (which was actually a tribute to the windscreen itself in that it *didn't* have a major impact on the sound).

Another common application for small condensers is on hi-hats, and the *RE200* didn't let us down here either. Close-miking the hats (4-6" above, pointing down at a 45° angle toward the bell) brought out a good sound that had a bit of brashness to it. This sound would work well in a rock context, or whenever you needed the hats to be able to cut through a mix. Moving the mic' back to 12" yielded a more natural representation that would be suitable whenever you needed a very realistic rendition of your hi-hats.

It's also not unusual to use a condenser on a snare when you're looking for an articulate sound, and at 2" off the head of a piccolo the *RE200* gave us a crisp, clean sound that clearly brought out the subtle details of the drum. Backing the mic' up a bit brought out more air, which can be very nice (provided the situation doesn't call for extreme isolation).

I realize this may be slightly outside of its design basis, but the *RE200* was also quite nice on toms. When placed within a couple of inches of the top head, it put out a fat sound with lots of definition. The attack came from the high-end lift built into the mic', and the warm bottom was due to the proximity effect of the cardioid mic' being so close to the sound source (effectively negating the mic's built-in bass roll-off). With the mic's a foot away, the toms sounded virtually the same during playback as they did in reality, which is pretty impressive.

As you may have noticed, every time the *RE200s* were placed about a foot away from an instrument, they captured very life-like tones. With this in mind, I set them up in sort of a hybrid "low overhead" position, approximately 12" above (and pointed towards) the rack toms. This picked up the toms with plenty of clarity, yet still gave them a sense of "space," and the enhanced high end brought out the cymbals even though they weren't directly on axis. Adding a kick mic' and a snare mic' was all it took to get some very nice-sounding drum tracks, with every part of the kit cleanly audible. Even the relatively distant floor tom—while not as fat as if it had been close-miked—was clear and present.

Final Thoughts

You've probably noticed that I haven't said much about what sort of EQ was applied during the listening tests. That's because, for the most part, we didn't use any. Sure, we'd occasionally tweak the signal to see what it would sound like, but only because we *wanted* to, not because we *had* to. It's been said before that taking a good-sounding instrument and miking it in the right location with the proper microphone is 90% of the battle. Well, if the job at hand is miking a drumset from overhead (or miking *any* sort of percussion where the priorities are air, detail, and transient response), then I think you could safely say that the *RE200* is a proper microphone.

List price is \$372 including clip, windscreen, and zippered vinyl pouch.



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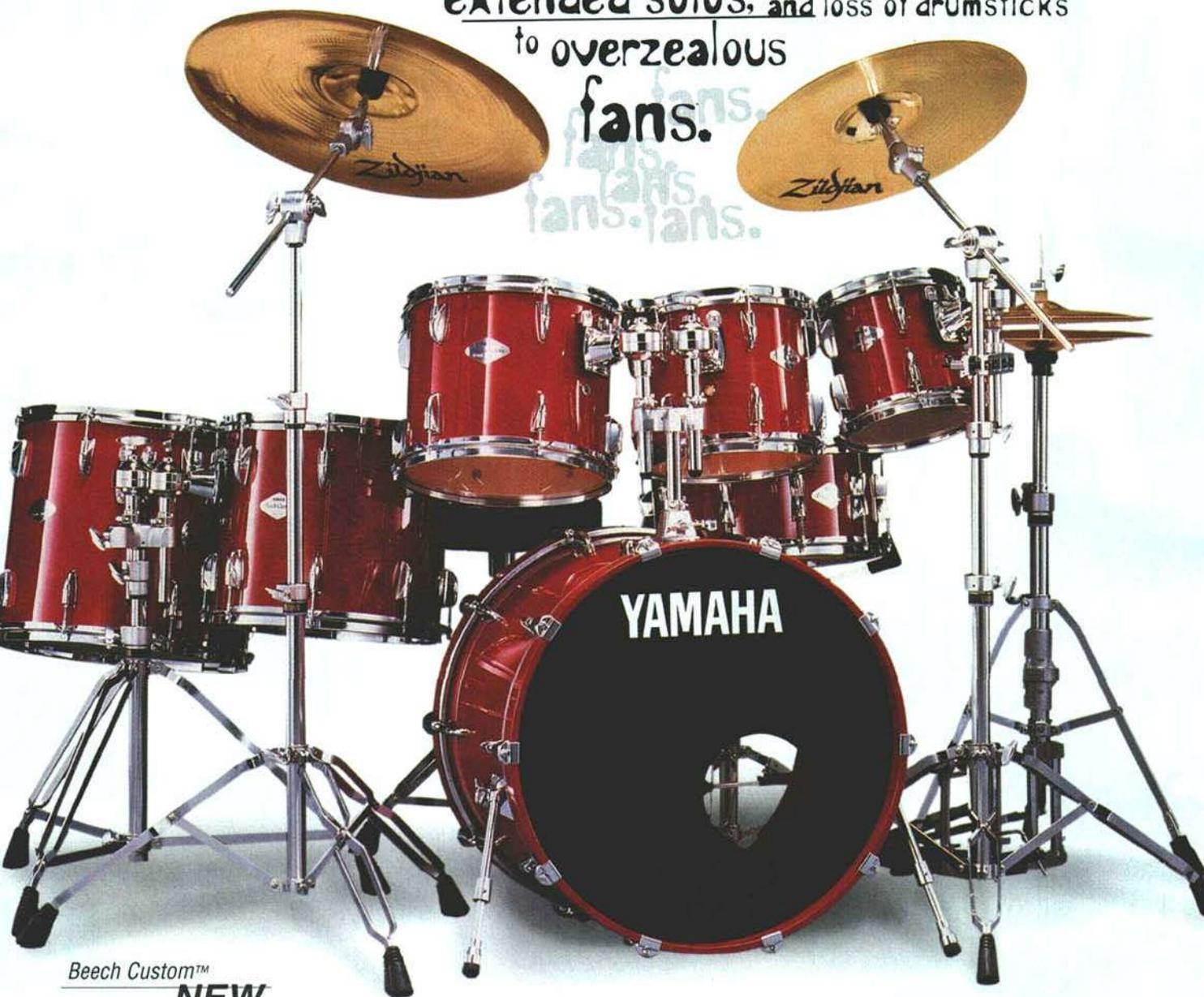
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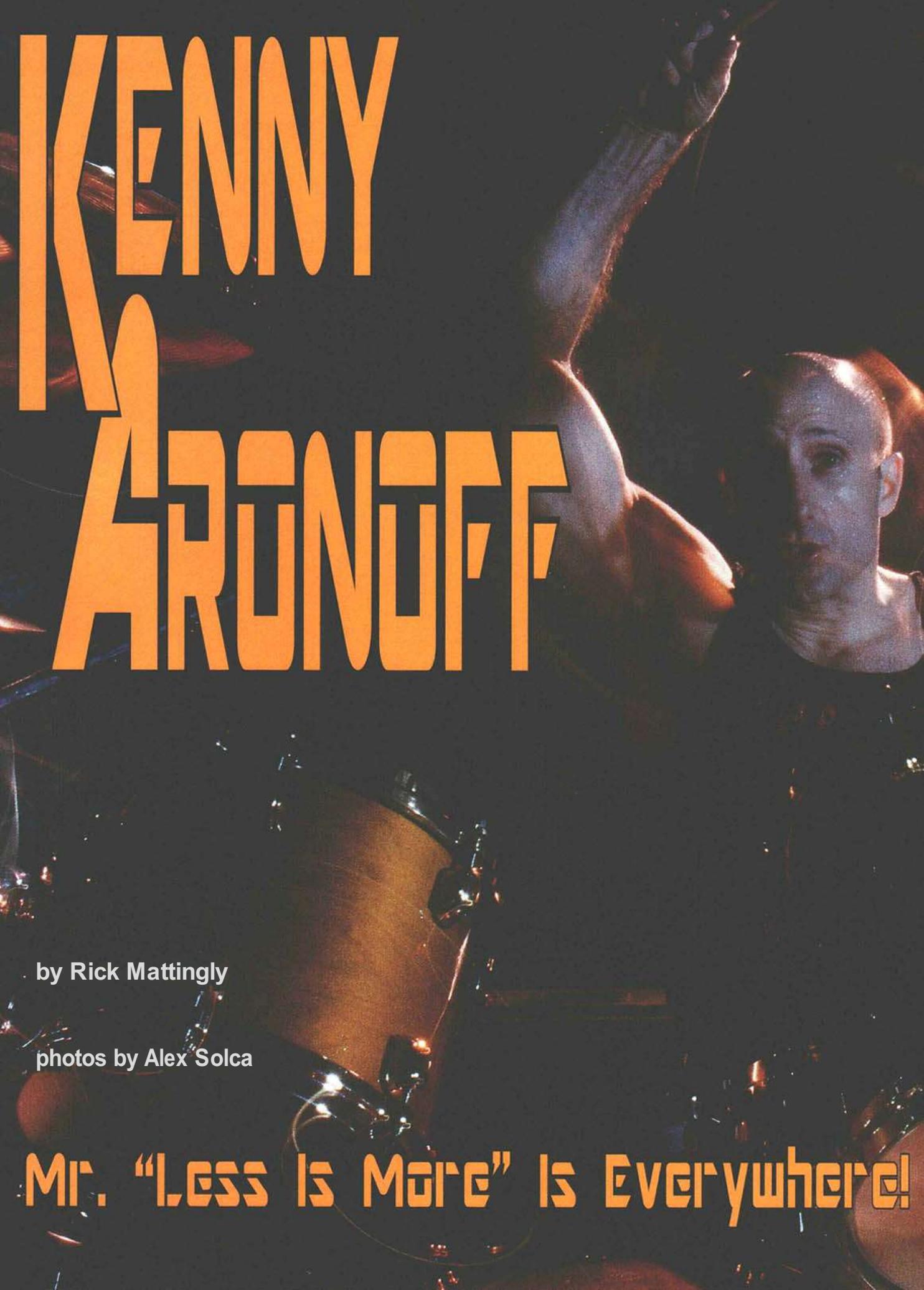
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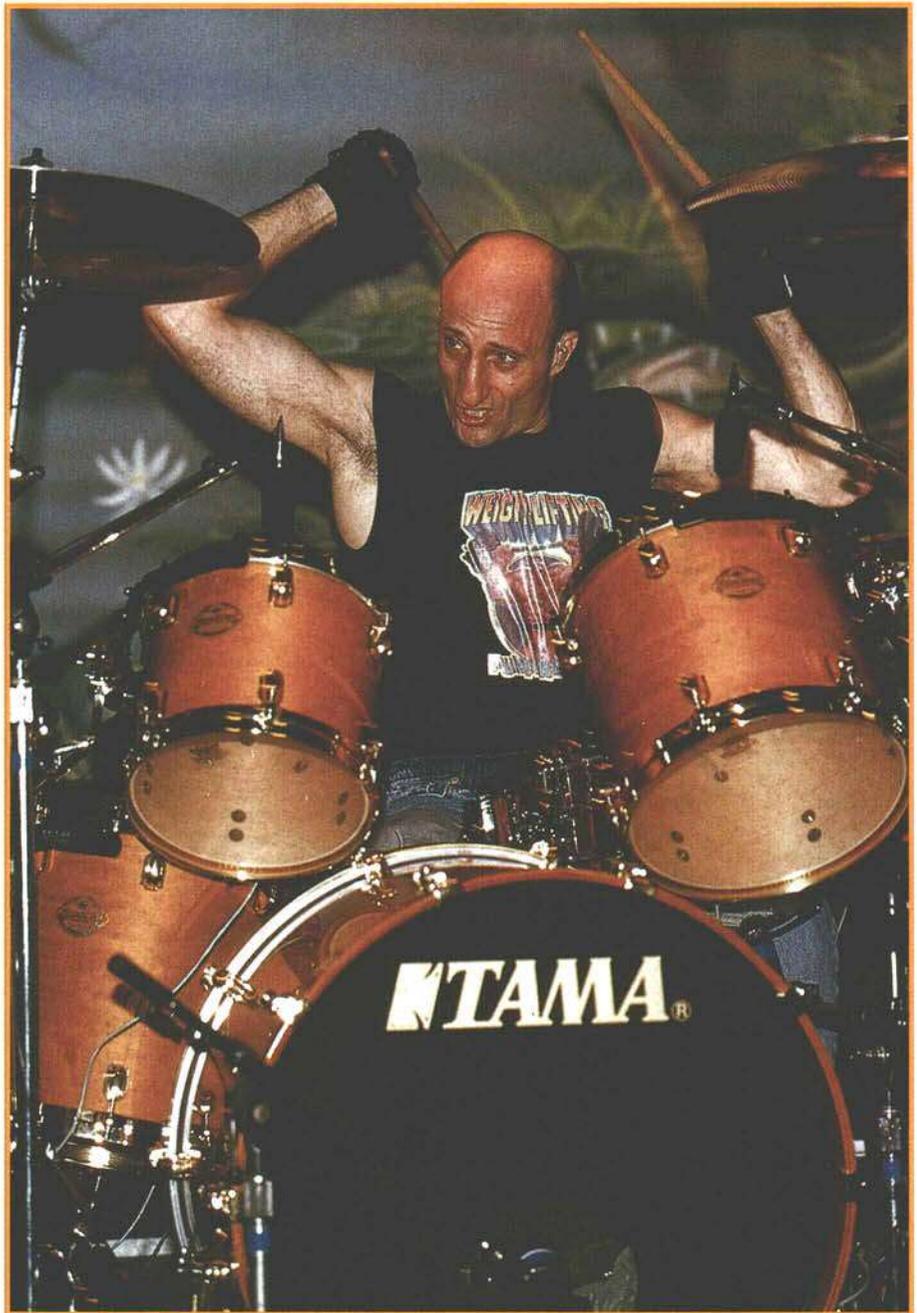
Mr. "Less Is More" Is Everywhere!



He starts the song with his right hand coming off the hi-hat to open up a pocket for the snare drum backbeat—the kind of beat usually associated with Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts. As the song switches gears, he goes to an open-handed pattern with his left hand playing straight, on-top 8th notes on slightly open hi-hats, and his right hand slamming backbeats on the snare—a style that most people associate with this very drummer, Kenny Aronoff.

On this one song alone, Aronoff's drumming encompasses a substantial chunk of rock drumming history, which makes it the perfect match for the song "Bring It Down To Jelly Roll," and the artist, John Fogerty. Through his work with performers such as John Mellencamp, Bob Seger, and Melissa Etheridge, Aronoff has played plenty of music built on the foundation of traditional American rock music. But whereas those artists were simply drawing from that source, Fogerty can lay claim to creating part of that tradition by defining a particularly American style of rock 'n' roll that owes as much to Mark Twain as to Bo Diddley.

That music was part of the soundtrack to Aronoff's formative years in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. He can still remember being absorbed in an *Incredible Hulk* comic book at age thirteen when a friend's brother put on a Creedence Clearwater Revival album. "When I heard John sing 'Born On The Bayou,' I just couldn't get over it," Aronoff recalls. "It was *so cool*. I figured if the *Incredible Hulk* could sing, that's what he would sound like."

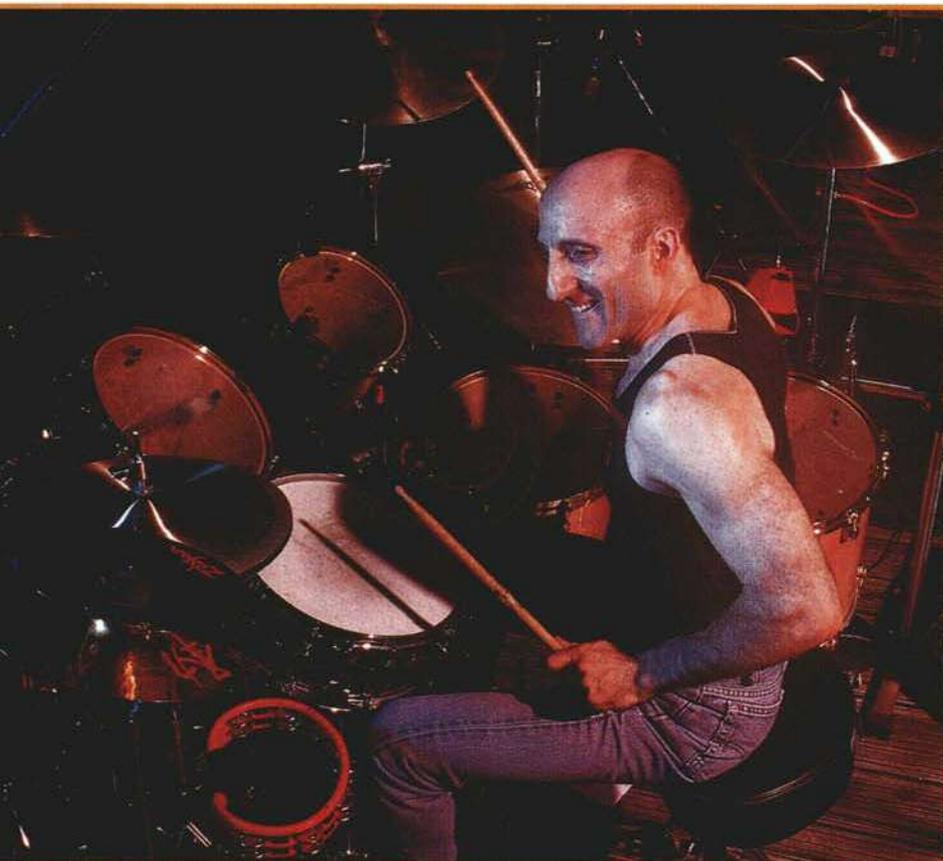
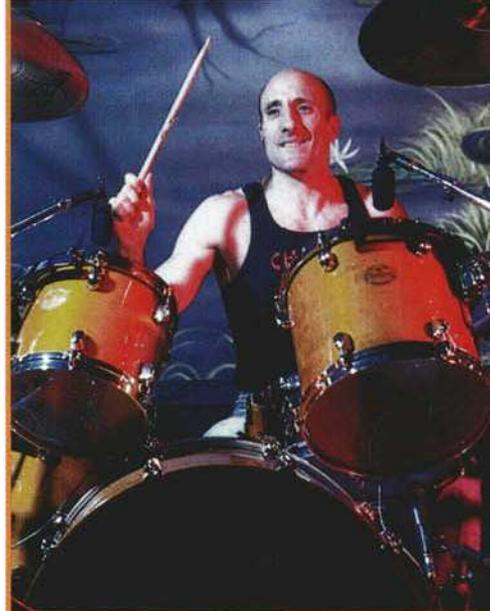


Watching Aronoff play that song live with Fogerty, one speculates that this could very well be the gig Kenny has unknowingly been preparing for over the past thirty years. One also senses that Fogerty has found the perfect drummer for his music, as he's not on the road simply doing a nostalgia act. There are certainly elements of "revival" in the show, as the band delivers burning versions of CCR classics such as "Green River," "Who'll Stop The Rain," "Bad Moon Rising," and "Proud Mary," and Aronoff is right at home playing the music he grew up with. But the show also contains a wealth of songs from Fogerty's new album, *Blue Moon Swamp*, on which Aronoff contributed his contemporary consciousness to the ongoing history of Fogerty's music. Fogerty and Aronoff fit together as naturally as if their names were Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

"I tried upwards of thirty drummers for this album," Fogerty says. "A few of them are really good, and I'm sure those guys know who they are. Kenny is the best of those few. I consider him the best rock 'n' roll drummer in the world."

Fogerty had been working on the album for about four years before Aronoff was brought in. "I had been hearing about all these drummers playing on the Fogerty record," Kenny says. "Jeff Porcaro had even played on it. I'd always thought I'd be a good match for John Fogerty because his music is straight-ahead rock 'n' roll. It's real song-oriented, and it's all about feel, simplicity, and getting right to the point."

Aronoff ended up on five of the album's twelve tracks, with the other seven tracks featuring five different drummers: Vinnie Colaiuta, Chad Smith, Chester Thompson, Eddie Bayers, and



Jeff Donovan. "John used so many drummers because his concept was developing as he went along," Aronoff says. "For example, at first he was using a click track, but then he decided he wanted musicians who could make it groove without a click track and let it breathe. Also, at the beginning he was trying to use the same musicians for every track, but he decided that didn't work, so he started using different musicians for different songs. Plus, he kept writing new songs."

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- B. 11x12 tom
- C. 9x10 tom
- D. 13x14 tom
- E. 15x16 tom
- F. 16x24 bass drum

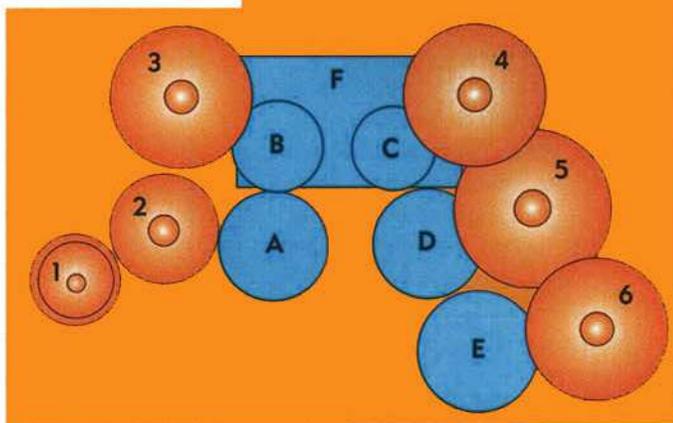
Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 9"/11" *Oriental Trash* splashes (9" mounted upside down on top of 11")
- 2. 14" *New Sear* hi-hats
- 3. 19" *Rock* crash
- 4. 19" *Rock* crash
- 5. 21" *Rock* ride
- 6. 19" *Rock* crash

Hardware: Tama

Heads: Remo coated *Emperor* on snare batter, clear *Emperors* on tops of toms with clear *Ambassadors* on bottoms, *Powerstroke 3* on bass drum batter with *Ambassador* on front

Sticks: Vic Firth *Power Play* model with wood tip (Kenny's signature model)





One element that distinguishes Aronoff's tracks on *Blue Moon Swamp* is the on-top feel. "I'm big about timing—or let's call it 'feel,' because I accelerate our tempos all the time," Fogerty says. "As far as feel and keeping the pulse moving forward, Kenny's time always feels great, whereas I've had a lot of situations where I'm standing there stomping my left foot trying to keep the thing moving forward.

"In rock, you've got to kind of lean toward the next county," Fogerty explains. "Any time it starts to sag, especially on the uptempo numbers, you're not rockin' and rollin' any more because the key ingredient is missing. But Kenny does it without rushing, which is the common disease. So it really feels great."

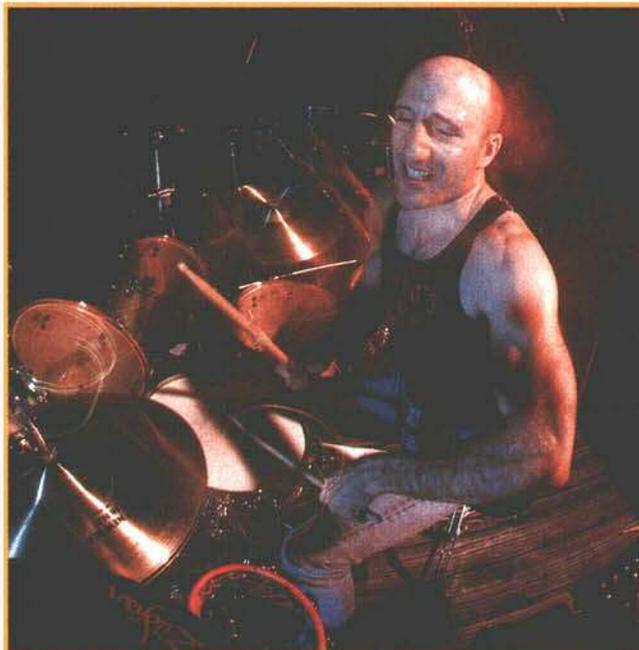
Aronoff says that playing on top of the beat is more difficult than laying back. "Being on the

Every time I hit a backbeat, it has a million performances behind it. I have a feel and sound that comes from hitting backbeats every day for twenty years.

front edge of the beat is a relationship between you and the other musicians," he says. "You're a little bit on top of everybody else, leaning and pushing. Sometimes it might just be the kick drum or the fills, but you're pushing and creating tension."

Aronoff says that Fogerty maintained a precise schedule in the studio. Each week would be devoted to two

songs. Sessions would begin at noon and go until 6:30 P.M. The band would spend the first half of each session working on one song, take a lunch break, and then spend the rest of the session working on the second song. They would do two takes, then listen to and discuss them. Then they would do two more takes, listen and discuss again, and so on. Although all the takes were being recorded, Fogerty considered Monday through Wednesday



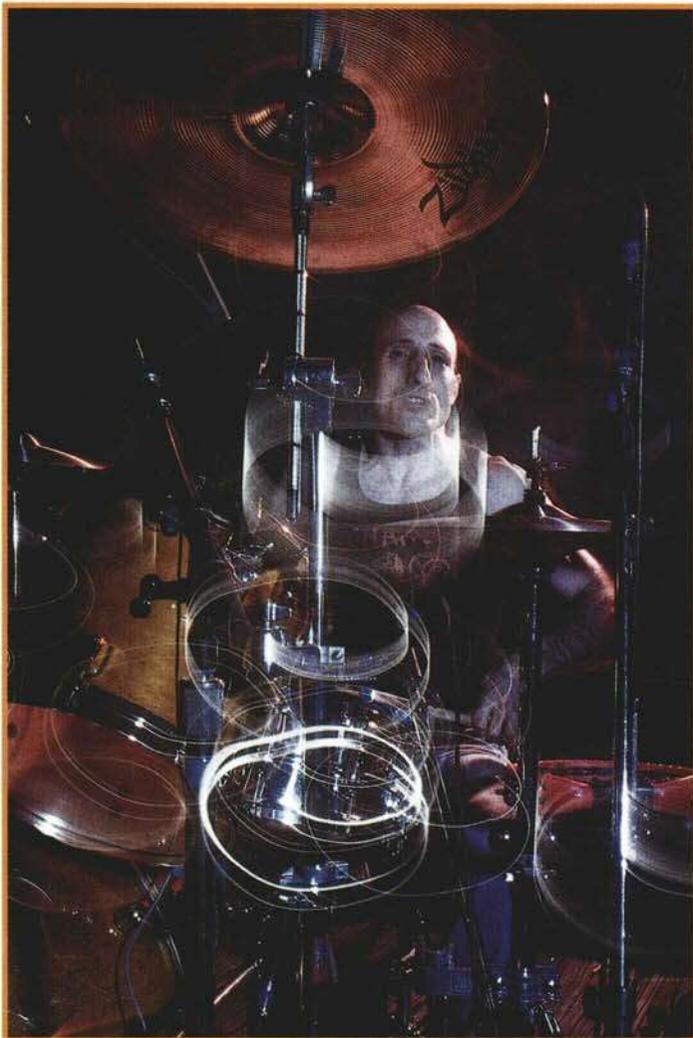
Burning For...Everybody

Recent albums that Kenny lists as most representative of his drumming include:

artist	album Title
John Mellencamp	all
Buddy Rich Big Band	Burning For Buddy, Vols. 1 and 2
Bob Dylan	Under The Red Sky
Iggy Pop	Brick By Brick
Melissa Etheridge	Your Little Secret
Joe Cocker	Organic
Jon Bon Jovi	Blaze Of Glory
Jon Bon Jovi	Destination Anywhere
Patty Smyth	Patty Smyth
Waylon Jennings	Waymore's Blues, Part II
John Fogerty	Blue Moon Swamp
Robert Mirabal	Mirabal
Cinderella	Still Climbing

And the musicians whose records Kenny says he "always goes back to" include:

the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Steely Dan, Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck, and the Beach Boys, plus Simon & Garfunkel's *Bookends*.



rehearsals and designated Thursday and Friday as the actual recording days.

"The first day was real exciting, because you were learning the songs," Aronoff says. "By the second day you definitely knew the songs, so you weren't looking at charts any more and you were starting to try a few different things. By the third day, you start to go wacko, because you think they surely must have a usable take by now. But that's when the songs really start to grow. There's something exciting about recording a song you've never played before in two takes, but it's also exciting to play a song so much that it evolves into something different than what you had the first day you learned it.

"Fogerty knew that by Thursday and Friday this would turn into something that we didn't have on Monday, and he was right. By Thursday we were stretching and doing things a little differently. On Wednesday I was getting a little bored, but on

In The Loop

by Kenny Aronoff



On John Mellencamp's *Mr. Happy Go Lucky* album, we combined my drum parts with pre-recorded loops. Here is the pattern the loop was playing on the song "Key West Intermezzo":



This is what I played on the intro and verses:



During the choruses, I basically doubled the loop part:



I did all the fills in the song, and sometimes the loop would stop during the verses and I would just play the hi-hat and kick part. That gave the song dynamics it wouldn't have had if we had just started the loop and I had played with it throughout the song. I put the loop in a *ddrum 3* brain so I could start and stop it by hitting a *ddrum 3* pad.

I used a deep 7x14 wood snare drum tuned low to contrast the loop sound. That was a departure from my usual Mellencamp snare sound, which typically came from a 1960s Ludwig *Supra-Phonic 400* or Ludwig *Aerolite* snare drum.

For the song "Queen Of New Orleans" from Jon Bon Jovi's solo album *Destination Anywhere*, the loop played this part:



I doubled the main beat, letting the loop play the ghost notes.



Obviously, I had to lock my snare and kick beats in with the loop. I would occasionally add extra snare notes, and I did all the fills in the song.

First I recorded the entire song with a muffled 22" kick drum and a 3x12 wood-shell Ludwig snare drum from 1960 that was muffled for a tight sound. Then, on the choruses, bridge, and solo, I overdubbed the same drum part with a 4x14 snare drum tuned real loose and a kick that had no muffling at all. I wanted to make the kit open up for the louder sections and be real tight for the softer sections.

I also overdubbed maracas, shakers, and other percussion. The idea is to add a human feel by playing simple fills and simple creative ideas around a loop or sequence.



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Thursday, when I knew we were going for that live thing, I was back in the saddle, very excited, and that's when I would really start to get on top of the beat. The first time that happened, John said, 'THAT'S IT! I love it when you play on top. Not many drummers can do that, and I know, because I've played with all of them.'

Playing on top is challenging enough with a click track going, so Aronoff found that he had to concentrate especially hard to maintain a steady tempo in the absence of a click. "The song 'Hot Rod Heart' starts off with accented 8th notes on the hi-hat and four on the floor on the bass drum," Aronoff explains. "As simple as that sounds, you start going crazy wondering if you're speeding up or slowing down. Once you've played the first two 8th notes, you've defined the time, and you have to maintain that for the rest of the song."

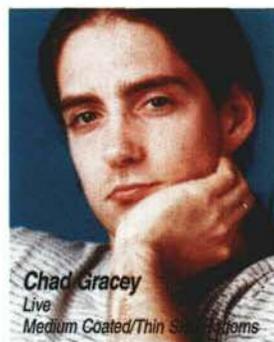
"In the second verse, I bring in the snare drum on 2 and 4. It can be so difficult to get your hand to lay exactly on top of the hi-hat and bass drum without getting a microscopic flam. And believe me, after five days I could hear the wind blow between two notes if they didn't line up perfectly. When I play that song live, I really focus on that."

With all its different drummers, *Blue Moon Swamp* is an interesting study in styles, from Aronoff's on-top playing to Vinnie Colaiuta's in-the-pocket feel on "Swamp River Days" to Eddie Bayers' laid-back gospel feel on "A Hundred And Ten In The Shade." It also proves that good drummers can sound like themselves on any drumkit, because none of the drummers used their own gear.

"John Fogerty used to be a drummer, and he had his drumset there," Aronoff explains. "I've done sessions on rental kits when it wasn't practical to send my own kit, but this was the first session I'd ever done where I was specifically told that they did not want my drums."

"So I just showed up with my sticks. Every day when I walked into the studio John would be sitting there tuning the snare drum. He was like a scientist. He would use *Lug Locks* and glue two or three little Dr. Scholl's pads in strategic places. He had recorded the pitch he liked on the snare drum, and when we would actually start recording on Thursday and Friday, after every take he would play back that pitch

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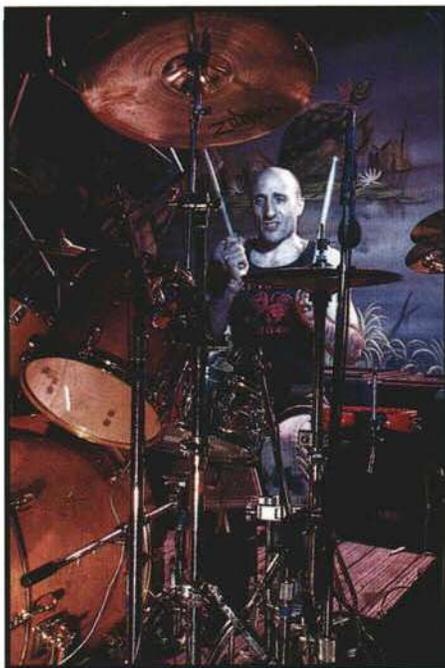
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and check the snare drum to make sure it was still in tune.

"He tuned the bass drum the way he liked it, muffled it the way he wanted, and placed the microphones. He also picked the cymbals, and he had 15" hi-hats. If you remember, Doug Clifford, who was the



drummer in Creedence Clearwater Revival, used huge hi-hats.

"I heard that some drummers were insulted that they had to use John's drums and that he was tuning them, but I didn't mind it at all. It was his record and he wanted a specific sound. I knew it was still going to sound like me because of the way I hit the drums. I really liked that snare drum anyway. It was a pre-'62 Ludwig *Supra-Phonic 400* with the extra brass and weight. He owns about six of them."

When Fogerty started rehearsing for the tour, he encouraged Aronoff to play the songs the way he felt them. "You're allowed to improvise, but you can't help but just groove, because that's what those songs are all about," Aronoff says. "What I bring to the party is giving the songs a facelift. With the heavy rockers I'll definitely push the band and get on the edge, but some songs I play deep in the pocket."

Fogerty says that Aronoff's contributions to his band go beyond musicianship. "Kenny is really a fun guy who's up all the time," Fogerty says. "He smiles, he has a good time, he's into the music. His face looks like how my heart feels."

Several months after leaving John Mellencamp's band, Aronoff's name was still being mentioned in Mellencamp concert reviews, generally preceded by the phrase "conspicuous by his absence." In retaliation, Mellencamp denigrated Aronoff's contributions to his music in several interviews. But when asked about Mellencamp's acrid comments, Aronoff shrugs it off, refusing to trash his former boss. "I don't regret one second of being in Mellencamp's band," Aronoff says. "If I could have stayed, I would have. But I was put in a position where I had to make a choice."

"Here's what happened, and why: John worked non-stop from 1980 to 1988. The cycle was: rehearse for an album, record the album, make videos, rehearse for a tour, then tour for nine months. The whole process would take a year and a half to two years. We'd take a month off and then do the whole thing again. Finally, John said he needed a break. He ended up taking three years off."

Aronoff had to make a living, so he started taking whatever gigs he could and also



got involved with studio work in LA. "It sounds so simple, like I just decided to be a studio musician and work came to me," Aronoff says. "But just because you've played on a few records that went to number one doesn't mean that the music business looks at you as being a session player. Those are two different worlds."

But a couple of producers took a chance on Aronoff, hoping that the kind of energy he projected live would carry over to the studio. In 1989 Don Was hired Aronoff for an Iggy Pop album, and subsequently used him for sessions with Elton John, Bob Seger, and Bob Dylan. Aronoff was spending more and more time in LA and developing a good reputation as one who could play with the consistency demanded of studio musicians but who could also add the elements of abandon and excitement more characteristic of band drummers.

In 1992 Mellencamp decided to put his band back together, but it became obvious that the work was not going to be non-stop, as it had been through most of the '80s. "I made John's band my first priority," Aronoff says, "but I did sessions whenever we weren't working so I could keep that part of my career going and make a living. The problem came because when John would decide to do something, we would have to discuss my schedule. He didn't mind that I was doing other work, but when he wanted me, he didn't want to have to be concerned with my schedule."

"At times it got a little tricky. I might be right in the middle of doing somebody's record, and John would suddenly need me. I couldn't walk out on people I had made a commitment to, although I did get out of a lot of stuff to accommodate John."

Mellencamp accused Aronoff of wanting to be a studio musician rather than a band-member, but the facts do not support that theory. In 1996, Aronoff spent eleven months touring, first with Bob Seger and then with Melissa Etheridge. He also managed to appear on twenty-one albums by booking sessions on days off and maintaining a ridiculous schedule.

"One of the wildest experiences was doing the Travis Tritt record, *The Restless Kind*," Aronoff recalls. "I played a concert in Boston with Bob Seger, and at 5:30 the next morning I was on my way to the airport to fly to Nashville. This was winter, mind you, so I was totally uptight about

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missing flights due to the weather. So I got to Nashville, spent a day recording with Travis, and then flew to Providence, Rhode Island the next day to do a show with Seger. Next morning—fly back to Nashville to record with Travis, then fly to Buffalo for a show with Seger. Back to Nashville to record, then fly to Cleveland for a show.

"Here's the funny thing: Travis and Don Was, who was producing, thanked *me* for accommodating *them*, because they really wanted me to do the record. But the way I see it, I was the one who was being accommodated, because whenever I wasn't there they had to do overdubs. They worked around my schedule with Bob Seger."

It gets worse.

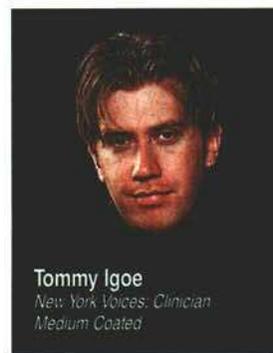
"Mellencamp had been asked to play for the Polygram corporate meeting, which was going to be in Hong Kong," Aronoff recalls. "This was a very big deal. The year before, U2 had played for the meeting, and the year before that Elton John did it. We had just recorded John's *Mr. Happy Go Lucky* album, and this would be a chance for the record company people from all over the world to hear his new songs.

"John said he wouldn't do it unless I could play, because he didn't want to use a substitute drummer. I would have felt horrible if he couldn't have done that, but luckily it was right in the middle of a three-day break from the Seger tour. So I said I would do it as long as they could get me back in time for the next Seger concert, which was in Detroit the night after John's concert. It was Seger's hometown, and they were going to film it and record it live.

"Everybody thought it would be no problem, so we committed, we rehearsed, we sent the gear—and they couldn't find a way to get me out after John's concert. It turned into a *huge* deal. We called every airline, and my lawyer was trying to hire a corporate jet. But in Hong Kong you can't leave corporate jets in the airport after a certain hour at night, so that didn't work. We asked Polygram if they could move the concert up an hour so I could catch an earlier flight out of Hong Kong to Amsterdam, Amsterdam to France, take the Concord to New York, and from there fly to Detroit. But they wouldn't move it."

Aronoff wasn't able to leave Hong Kong until the morning of the Seger concert. "I

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went from Hong Kong to Japan, made my connection, and landed in Detroit. Everybody was ready for me. I ran to customs and a woman started to inspect my bags, but a guy told her, 'Don't you know who that is? That's John Mellencamp's drummer, and he's playing with Bob Seger tonight. You've got to let him go.' So I was out of there. I was picked up by a private car, taken to a helicopter, flown over Detroit, and we landed near the Palace. They had a car waiting to race me to the dressing room, and I got there five minutes before the band. I changed my clothes, and when the rest of the band showed up I was sitting behind my drums ready to go.

"It was the coolest experience of my life!" Aronoff says. "At the end of the concert we were doing 'Hollywood Nights,' which is a fast, fast song. Chris Blackwell jumped up on my riser and said, 'Come on, admit it. You're tired!' I said, 'NEVER!'"

Despite the lengths to which Aronoff would go to be there when Mellencamp needed him, the situation came to a head when Mellencamp wanted to make a last-minute promotional appearance on a day that Aronoff had to play a concert with

Seger.

"There was no way I could do it, and John said he'd had enough," Aronoff says. "There was no yelling or screaming. He simply said that he had to get someone who would be there all the time. He even admitted that he wasn't working that much anymore.

"It's probably worked out best for both of us. Now I don't have to worry about having to get out of something that I committed to because John needs me. In the professional world, everybody respects a commitment. Jon Bon Jovi wanted me to do a promotional tour with him, but I couldn't do it because I had made a commitment to Fogerty. Jon and I were both disappointed, because we've become close friends and this was something we had talked about doing. But his thing got delayed until after the Fogerty tour was scheduled to start.

"Jon respected the commitment I had made, but Mellencamp wanted me to drop everything at a moment's notice for him. You can't do that unless you put someone on retainer and take care of them so they can say no to other work and still pay their

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Kenny Aronoff



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bills. John never did that, which is fine, but I had to make a living.

"So now I'm doing what I always wanted to do: be part of a band—first with Bob Seger, then with Melissa Etheridge, and now with John Fogerty—and do sessions.

"The music business is short and sweet. You can have a good run that can last a long time, but in most cases the success of a musician is like the success of an athlete. It comes fast and goes fast. In my case it came slow, so I've appreciated every day of it. I don't care if I'm recording a jingle or playing with Bob Dylan; it's all important to me."

When Aronoff showed up to begin recording Joe Cocker's *Organic* album, Jim Keltner was there too. Producer Don Was told Kenny, "I figured you could play on some of the songs and Jim could play on the others." That was fine with Aronoff. "But I don't know which songs I want you to play on and which ones Jim should play on," Was said. "So why don't you and Jim figure it out." With that, Was smiled at Aronoff and went back in the control room.

"Jim Keltner is like my hero," Aronoff says. "My attitude was that whatever Jim wanted to do was fine with me. So I asked Jim what he wanted to do. He said *I* should do whatever *I* wanted, and he'd do whatever was needed after that."

At first, Aronoff suggested that he could play percussion and Keltner could play drumset. On the album's first track, "Into The Mystic," Aronoff played 16th notes on a steel bucket with Vic Firth *Dreadlocks* and played an open hi-hat note on the first beat of each bar, while Keltner played the full kit.

"On 'Delta Lady,' Jim suggested that I play hi-hat and snare drum and he would play bass drum," Aronoff says. "So we split the kit in half. It was really tricky, but it swings really cool. I ended up playing hi-hat, snare drum, and a crash cymbal, and Jim played kick drum, toms, cymbals, and maracas. My fills were on the snare drum, his were on the toms.

"We did the same thing on 'High Lonesome Blue.' I'm playing snare drum with a brush, although you would never know it was a brush because it has a really ringy sound. With my right hand I played hi-hat and ride cymbal with a stick. Jim

played the kick drum, cymbals, and a shaker.

"That song has a heavy, deep, swamp groove. Everybody was really into being funky, but then the songwriter, Tony Joe White, came in and said, 'I think this song is too hard for you guys.' This guy is the ultimate groove master, and we weren't getting down enough. We needed to feel the groove to the point at which we could simplify and play just what was necessary. Your head really has to be in the right place to be that simple and keep the space between the snare drum and the kick drum consistently cool. It's hard enough to capture a groove like that by yourself, but between the two of us we did it."

By the time they recorded "Dignity," Aronoff and Keltner were both playing full kit. "The tricky part was locking up snare drums and kick drums," Aronoff says. "When we did fills, we really had to listen to each other. We got to where we were filling up each other's holes without stepping on each other. He'd play a little phrase, I'd answer it, he'd add a little more and then I'd add something, all in a one-measure fill."

Recently, Aronoff played in another multi-drummer situation—one that he never expected to participate in. "While I was rehearsing with Fogerty, Don Was called and invited me to stop by and watch the Stones record," Kenny says. "He told me that Keltner and Charlie Watts were doing some cool stuff together.

"So I went by to check it out. First of all, I was just flipping out over what Charlie was doing, because nobody on the planet plays like that. He's a genius. You cannot transcribe what he does. Sure, you can transcribe the pattern, but you'll never be able to transcribe the multitude of dynamics, textures, and sounds, the way he hits the bass drum, or the way he speeds up and slows down. The whole thing is constantly moving in texture and sound. He'll play very lightly on the snare drum with traditional grip, and all of a sudden he'll play a rimshot that will be explosive in contrast to what he was doing before. Maybe he doesn't have the chops of some drummers, but he's got unbelievable style. Up close, it blew me away.

"I was also fascinated by what Jim was doing. He had some tom-toms, a *drumKAT* that was plugged into a sampler, and all

kinds of weird percussion. Charlie would lay down a groove and Jim would play along, but it wasn't like he was doing an overdub. Because Charlie is an artist, he would listen to what Jim was doing and react to it, and Jim would react to Charlie. It was cool, even when it was the simplest thing."

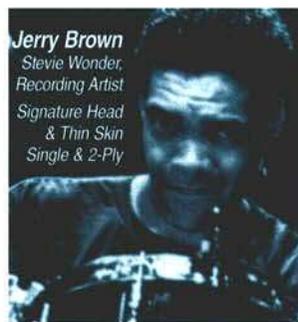
One night when Aronoff arrived, Watts and Keltner were in a separate room recording grooves together. "When I walked in, Jim said to Charlie, 'We should have Kenny play on this because he does really interesting percussion stuff.' I was flabbergasted. Don Was told me, 'Jump in there!' But I told him, 'Look, I don't want people thinking that I'm hanging out so I can play. I'm flattered that you and Jim think I should play, but this is the Rolling Stones! I need Charlie to ask me.'"

Watts did just that. "I was flipping out playing percussion with Jim and Charlie," Aronoff says, still finding it hard to believe. "And when we finished, Charlie said, 'You must come back tomorrow and do some more.' Meanwhile, I was rehearsing for Fogerty's tour every day from noon till 6:00, then I was racing over to another studio to record with an artist named Catie Curtiss from 7:00 until 11:00, and then I'd race over to Oceanway to record with the Stones from midnight until 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning. I did that for two weeks because Charlie and Jim kept inviting me to come back."

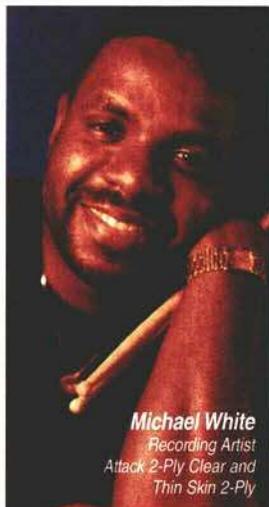
Eventually, Aronoff was recording live with Watts, Keltner, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, and Don Was on bass. "I was playing 8th notes on a Meinl shekere with a brush," Kenny says. "At the beginning, it was just me and Mick Jagger, who was playing guitar. He would get the click going with a *Dr. Beat*, then shut it off and count us in. I had to keep a steady tempo and also play with a tremendous amount of feel, but also follow Mick as he made musical inflections up and down with the tempo. Mick's biggest concern was that when the whole band came in, my part would interfere with the feel of Charlie's hi-hat."

"When we heard it back, I knew that I was playing right when my thing wasn't obvious and you were hearing Charlie. I was listening very closely to his hi-hat. Every once in a while I would add an extra little 16th note thing that would dance

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around his hi-hat part, but the idea was to stay out of his way so he could be expressive with the cool style of hi-hat he plays."

Aronoff found working with another drummer (or two) to be an interesting experience. "If you decide that one of you is going to do what you do and the other one is just going to follow that, then that's all you have—somebody following someone else. You might as well do an overdub. The ultimate creative thing is to be listening to each other. In fact, you have to listen to the other person more than to yourself. That's the only way it's going to work to the fullest."

By contrast, Aronoff has been involved in several sessions over the past couple of years that involved the use of loops. "Mellencamp has always tried to reinvent himself from album to album, and I think that's one thing that has helped him maintain his success," Aronoff says. "So when we went in to record *Mr. Happy Go Lucky*, he decided to get involved with loops and he brought in Junior Vasquez as co-producer. Junior brought a bunch of CDs of loops with him, and I brought a bunch more.

"Whenever John would bring in a new song, he'd sing it for us and play it on acoustic guitar, and at first they all sounded pretty much the same. The first thing he would want was the drum part, because that would define the direction of the tune."

Often, when working with loops, a drummer will determine the basic groove first, and then loops will be programmed to fit around the drum part. But since Mellencamp was working with pre-existing loops, the loop had to come first.

"I would listen to the song, and then I would go through hundreds of loops trying to find ones I thought would work," Aronoff says. "Once we found one we could work with, I'd take it from CD and put it on DAT so I could dump it in my *ddrum 3* brain. From there I could edit it to the one or two measures I wanted. Then I'd truncate it and loop it, and that would be like our click track. I would play on top of that."

Aronoff says that a lot of the loops consisted of old R&B grooves with a lot of noise behind them. "The real drums would be clean and more upfront," Kenny explains. "The loop would create sort of a fuzzy, rhythmic background thing, like a

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shadow behind a picture, or like the dust that's blowing around a car going down a dirt road."

Although Aronoff enjoys creating a part with drums and loops, he admits that loops are restrictive. "It's difficult to be creative within limitations, but you can still be creative in a simplistic way that serves the song. That's what Ringo Starr did for years. His beats were so simple that people made fun of him, but they were brilliant, unique beats. Sometimes it's just a matter of playing one note in exactly the right place. A lot of people might think that's nothing, but someone else will recognize it as perfect because that one note was played on the right drum with the right tuning and with the right feel."

In the midst of his other activities Aronoff continues to serve as a teacher at Indiana University. What does he find most lacking in typical students? "Simplicity and groove," he answers. "It's not their fault. When you're young, you're achieving technical proficiency, and it's exciting to see yourself develop. You're also drawn to people who play with a tremendous amount of technique."

"Groove is the hardest thing to develop because you are so preoccupied with technique. So that's what I work on with students. I'll put on 'Deacon Blues' by Steely Dan, which is so simple and straight-ahead. They'll start playing along with it and I'll go, 'Snare drum behind... on... on... behind... ahead... ahead... behind... on...'" When they hear that they aren't landing in the pocket from beat to beat, it's humbling and frustrating for them. But if they can hear it, they can work on it. If they can't understand what's wrong, then they've got a serious problem.

"One kid was so frustrated he threw his sticks down and said, 'Why can't I get this?' It takes a lifetime to get a groove. It comes from living life, moving those muscles every day, and playing a lot of music and a lot of gigs.

"Every time I hit a backbeat, it has a million performances behind it. I have a feel and sound that has come from hitting backbeats every day for twenty years. It's not like I'm a rocket scientist. I've just been hitting 2 and 4 with a certain approach and feel that has developed over all those years. It all comes out every time I play."



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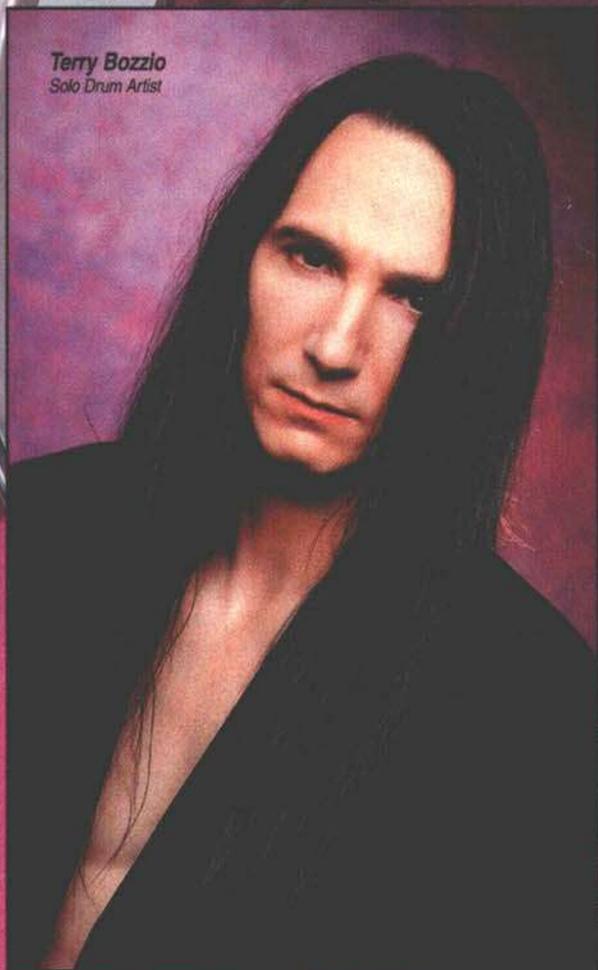
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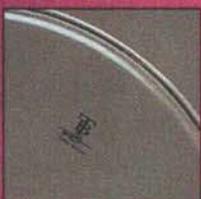
1-Ply Medium Coated



1-Ply Medium
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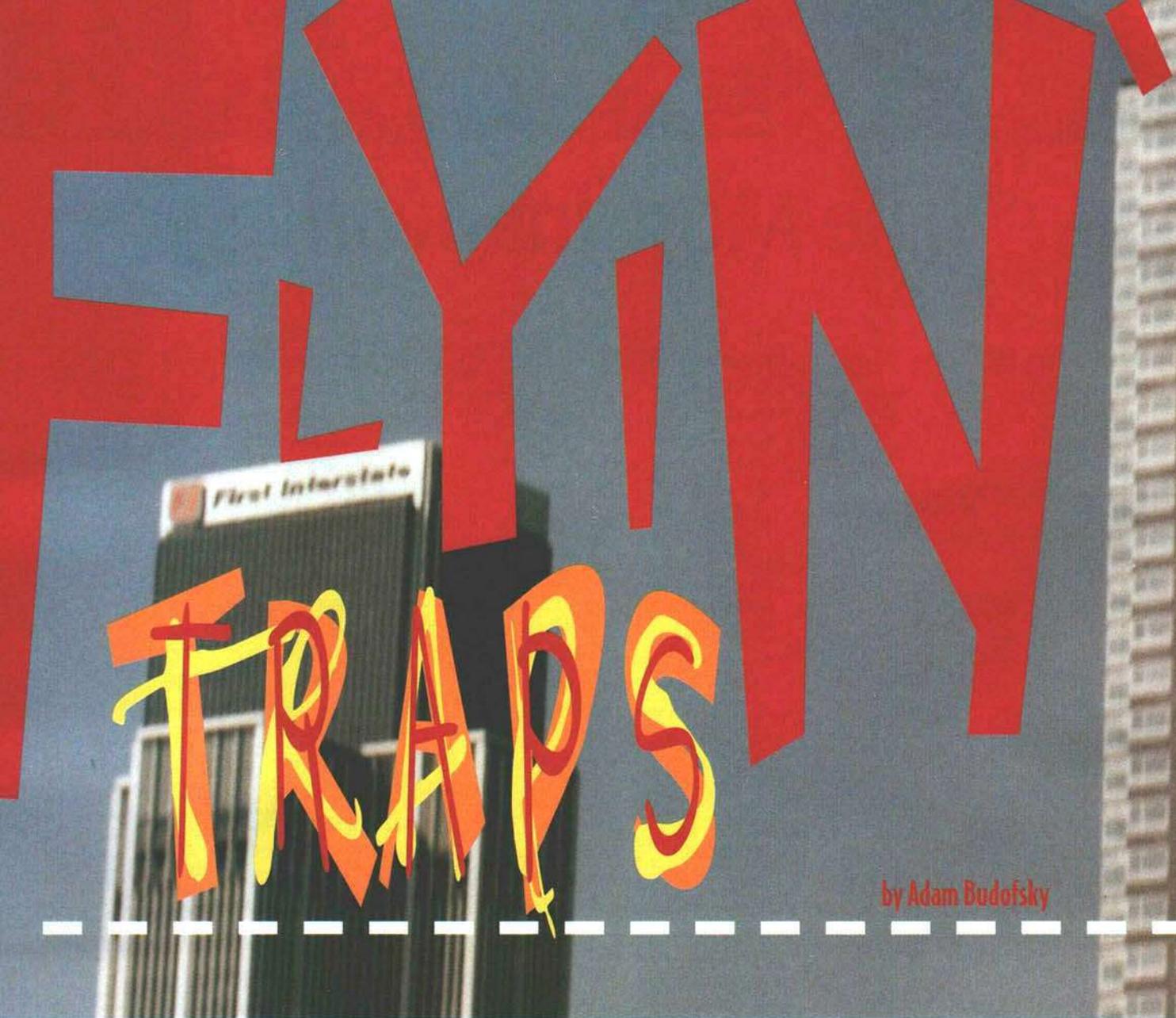


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by Adam Budofsky

"I'm sure there is going to be an endless number of drummer jokes." Tongue *somewhat* in cheek, Brian Reitzell is imagining the reaction to *Flyin' Traps*, the album he has produced featuring past and current drummers of Soundgarden, Nine Inch Nails, Beck, Primus, Porno For Pyros, the Melvins, Mudhoney, Flaming Lips, Dinosaur Jr., the Posies, the Jesus Lizard, Screaming Trees, Girls Vs. Boys, Redd Kross, Faith No More, and the Reverend Horton Heat.

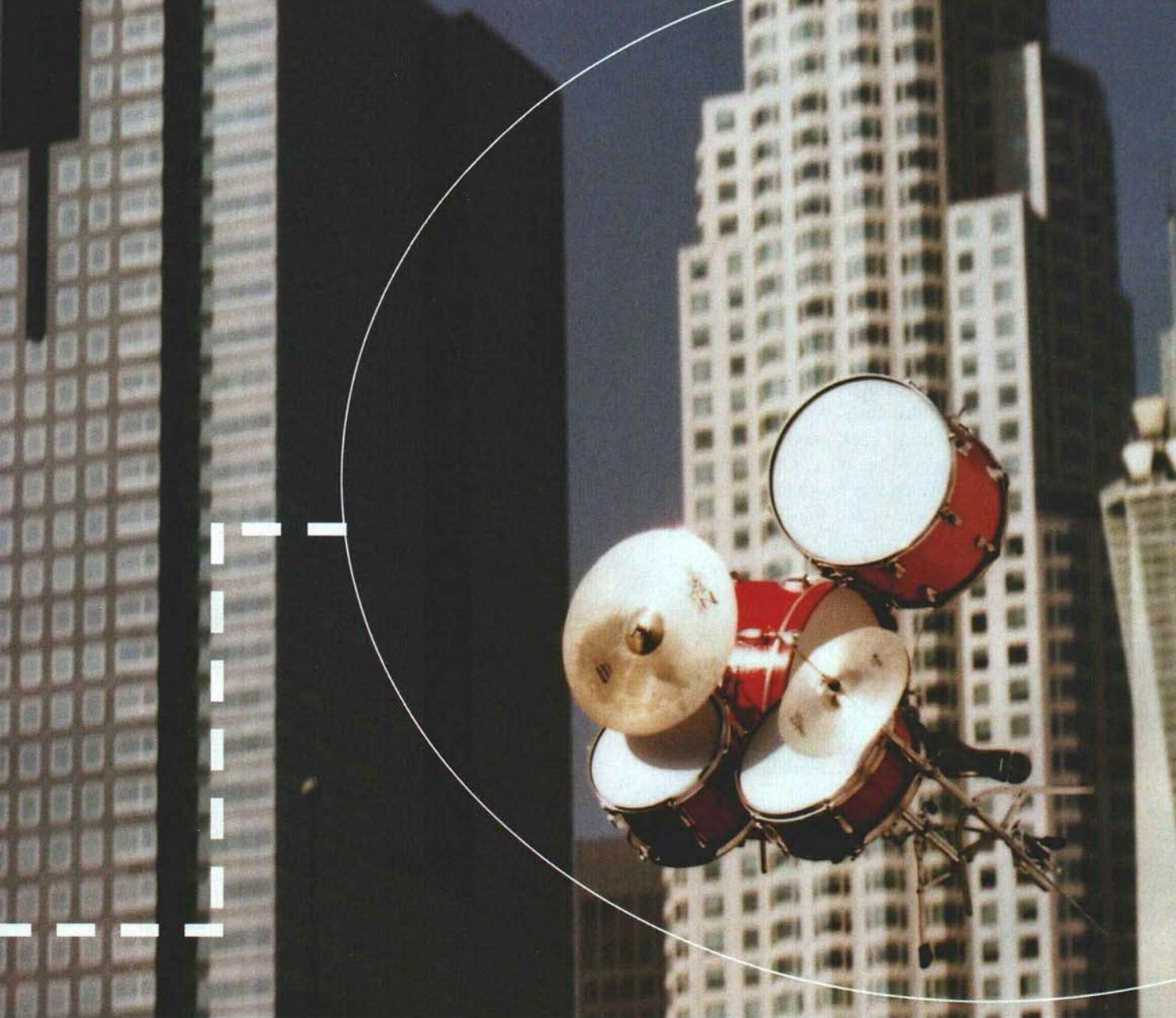
"I'm actually looking forward to it, because I've heard all the jokes, and I need some new ones. You know, the old 'What was the last thing the drummer said before he was kicked out of the band?' 'Hey, guys, I've got a new song.'"

Well, here are the new songs—but nobody's getting fired. A unique release on the new music landscape, *Flyin' Traps* harks back to the days when jazz giants like Buddy Rich, Max Roach, Gene Krupa, and Art Blakey "battled" each other on stage and in the studio, thrilling listeners with the power of percussion. Up to

now, no one had thought to expose today's young talent in such a way. *Flyin' Traps* might not contain any drum battles, but by featuring seventeen of alternative rock's most highly regarded drummers, it's the first serious move to hand the mic' over to *this* generation.

"Drummers never get a whole lot of credit," *insist* Reitzell, who has held the drum chair for LA's power pop pioneers Redd Kross since 1991, and who has been obsessing over *Flyin' Traps* for the better part of the past four years. "I think it would only *be* a drummer who would think to do this record. I don't think, anybody at a label or a producer would say 'Hey, let's get all the drummers together and have them write their own songs.'"

The proverbial light bulb went on in Brian's head to do a drummer record while he was on tour behind Redd Kross's *Phaseshifter* album. "I was really getting into these drummer-type records," Brian recalls, "like Sandy Nelson records and Hal



Elaine's *Drums-A-Go-Go*—even Stewart Copeland's *Rhythmist* record. I remember Redd Kross was in Florida playing a show with the Lemonheads, and I was telling their drummer, Dave Ryan, about the idea to do this record, and he said, "Oh, that's a great idea. I would love to play on it as well." And I thought, "Yeah, that *would* be great." There was just no end in sight to the tour, though, and it seemed like I was never going to be able to do this record. But I thought that I could at least do one track in the middle of touring. From that day on I started trying to get a record together."

Reitzell was able to work "a loose sort of deal" with a record company, and though nothing was signed, he had already enlisted ten or twelve drummers for the project. *Flyin' Traps*, was generating its own inertia. "Some people had sent me master tapes," Brian explains, "and I didn't even have a record deal signed yet. I kept telling them, 'Don't worry, everything is going to happen.' But I just got so frustrated with the first deal that I decided to go

to another record company

"Now it's 1995, and I've already been working on this thing for practically two years. Then I went to yet another record company who said they really wanted to do it, but they wanted only certain people on it, they didn't like my title—they were really restricting. So I got frustrated again, but then along came Barrett Martin, who had heard that I was doing this record and said that he would like to be involved with it. I told him I was having a hard time with the label, a topic he knew a lot about because he had done his own Tuatara record. Through Barrett I hooked up with Hollywood Records—they do lots of soundtracks and they had the money to do it—and they said they were interested in releasing it. I was practically done with the record by then anyway."

In several cases, the tracks offered for the project had already been recorded, though never released. Other cuts were created specifically for the project. Reitzell had to make decisions

whether he thought each cut would work for his vision of the album—a slippery slope to walk, especially for a musician learning his producer's chops along the way. "Sometimes I would have them either record something else or change something," Brian says. "But for the most part I really liked everything everyone sent me. And all the musicians really came through. I just had to be the guy who oversees things.

"There are a couple of people who were sort of dream performers that I wanted for the record," Brian adds, "like Rey Washam, who is best known for playing in Steve Albini's Rapeman. He's just a monster of a drummer. And I really wanted Robert Ellis, who is back playing with PJ Harvey now. It actually got to the point where I had to say no to a few people, which was really hard; I'm not good at the whole business end of this. It was crazy. For a while there my phone was drum central. I'd get calls in the middle of the night from some guy who I'd never met but whose records I owned all of."

As the project moved along, Reitzell saw its

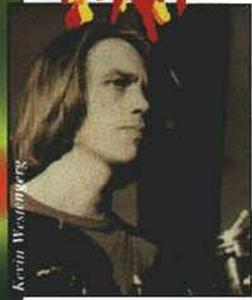
nature change. "If you listen to a tape that I have of the record in its first stages, when I had maybe six drummers on it, it all sounded similar. Originally I was going to make more of a surfy Sandy Nelson type of record. And then I wanted to make more of an Art Blakey jazz-type record. That was before I added stuff like Chris Vrenna's track and Tim Alexander's track, and some of the more—for lack of a better word—high-tech-sounding pieces. But then I decided that it would be best to make a record that represents different styles of drumming. I guess it just kind of found its own voice."

As anybody who has gotten involved in even the most mundane aspects of the music business knows, there is much more to making an album than booking studio time and playing. Reitzell discovered that a project like *Flyin' Traps* exponentially complicates matters. "I learned so much," Brian states. "It was almost like I went to school. This album has been a legal nightmare. In fact, it's still going on, and it will go on for a while. Of course, I had my lawyers and my manager, and I could call them any time and ask them questions, and they would filter through all the legal speak. I went into this so innocently. But it was really good because now I can take a lot of the knowledge towards dealing with my own band."



BRIAN REITZELL

MATT CAMERON
(WITH TAZ BENTLEY)
"Theme From Wrong Holy-o"



Kevin Westenberg

Employing the ample drumming aid of ex-Reverend Morton Heat drummer Taz Bentley, Matt Cameron's track kicks off *Flyin' Traps* with a wallop full-throttle rock workout, featuring Taz and Matt trading fills in a most excellent fashion. "I love the way Taz Bentley plays," says Matt. "We did our track at a rehearsal space in one day with an 8-track. It was done with a lot of fun... and beer... and salt. We played everything on the track. I played guitar; he played bass.

"The drums are panned right and left, and I'm on the right channel, Taz is on the left. I had come up with the drum part from practicing on my own, and I'm playing the 'melodic' tom part and Taz is playing the beat. We wanted to split it up to make each part distinct but be grooving when you hear it connected. And then we had the obligatory break in the middle where we're trading fills. Taz does all the awesome fills."

"We ended up writing four songs, and I cannot tell you how absolutely ticked pink that whole situation made me," Taz Bentley says. "As both a friend and a drummer, Matt is one of the best by far. Just to be able to sit there and trade licks with my idol was like a dream come true."

Matt says that in his downtime since Soundgarden broke up, he's been writing and recording "very weird instrumental music" in his home studio. "I've always written and recorded at home, and now I have some time to do it. I'm still playing shows around town and getting some studio calls, and there's another band I'm in called Wellwater Conspiracy, which just released a record. I'm not really interested in joining some big established band right away. I'm having fun again; the big rock experience was not always fun." Meanwhile, Taz Bentley is busy touring behind the self-titled album by Tenderloin.

"*Flyin' Traps* sounded like a project I wanted to be a part of," Matt adds. "Brian chose some diverse players; the Tim Alexander piece is phenomenal, and the Stephen Drozd piece is just a beautiful tune. Sometimes a drummer's approach to songwriting is a little bit askew, and therein lies the interesting bits. I think this record is going to surprise a lot of people."

"I was working on 'Monkey In Brazil' when Brian brought up the *Flyin' Traps* idea," recalls Porno For Pyros' Stephen Perkins. "My friend Rob Siefert and I had some time in a studio. We started with an island-type melody, which went into something really psychotic and psychedelic. I imagined I was playing music on an island, hanging with some friends and eating nuts and fruit on the beach, and then a crab and some ants come along and take the food away—and then a wave comes along that hits me and takes me away. And that was my composition.

"I like having my own drum sound and getting wild behind the kit, but when you're in the studio under the mic's, the less you play the better, and you really learn that when you're in there alone. You start with a kick and snare, and then you lay a bongo part on top of that—and you've got a lot of notes already. Then you're like, 'I want to fit melody over this...'. You've got to be subtle, because all of a sudden it can be a mess and you're like, 'What happened?' They were all good ideas at one time.

"There's some great songs and great demonstrations of the power of drumming on *Flyin' Traps*. When the goal is to give fifteen drummers a place to release their energy beside their normal band—with that intention, you can't go wrong. I think drummers are very good at dropping the ego and sharing with other musicians. But there's also a competitive thing: 'There's all these other drummers on the record; I want to kick ass!'"

Stephen has recently appeared on his Banyan project's first record (a second is coming), is recording a new Porno For Pyros record, and has been going through his collection of Jane's Addiction tapes for a record that will feature unreleased and live songs. Also, "Perry and I are going to get together with Dave Navaro and Flea and do a Jane's tour in November. The record comes out in October, and we'll do about a one-month tour." Stephen has also co-founded a percussion instrument company.

STEPHEN PERKINS
"Monkey In Brazil"



Speaking to Reitzell, it's apparent that he's foremost a fan of drummers and their music, even as he plays at the role of producer. "The most exciting thing about the record was that almost everybody knew of each other, and surprisingly knew of me, which was nice. It was like, 'Oh, he's on the record? Great!'" And it's Brian's fandom that informs his image of the typical listener who will dig *Flyin' Traps*. "The first person that comes to mind who will enjoy this record is a drummer, though this certainly isn't a record just for drummers. But I definitely imagine a kid much like myself when I was younger—and not necessarily a younger person, just someone who maybe thinks Tim Alexander is the greatest drummer in the world, and so would go out and buy this record. Then maybe he'll be turned on to somebody he's never heard of before, like Mac McNeilly, and then go out and buy a Jesus Lizard record. It's such a strange cross section of people on the record, and I think it will really open up people's minds and ears to other bands and other drummers."

The photos you see OH the opening spreads of this story were taken specifically for the *Flyin' Traps* album—and the story behind them is almost as strange and fun as the music inside. "All along I had this idea to call the record 'Flyin' Traps,'" Reitzell explains, "which to me sounded very '50s or '60s, like a lot of the drum records I have. So for the artwork, I wanted to throw a drumset off a building and photograph it flying through the air." (The

resultant impact sound, by the way, is what you hear at the opening of *Flyin' Traps*.)

Though Hollywood Records balked at the idea at first, Reitzell explains, "Luckily the photographer, Spike Jonze, has a bit of clout in this town, and once he said he would do it—for free—the record company kind of had to do it. We also had Sofia Coppola shooting. We ended up having maybe eight different people shooting at once; that way we could get all the different angles. After all, the thing was only going to be in the air for a couple of seconds."

Before shooting could begin, though, Reitzell needed a kit to be the sacrificial lamb, so to speak. (Actually, kits, plural, just to be safe.) "I went through all of my old gear that I've had since I was ten years old," Brian explains, "and I bought odds and ends. I went to this old guy, Roy Harte, who's had a drum shop here in LA since the '50s. I walked in there and said, 'I need to get a drumset that I can throw off a ten-story building.' He didn't even blink: 'I've got one in the back that I dropped in a swimming pool forty times that will be perfect; it's drying off now.' So I got some kits from him. Then I spent a week painting them, putting them together, making them look like they were brand-new drumsets. Next we had to find a location, which was a nightmare because we had to get a permit, we had to have a cop there—it was getting out of hand. But we went to the top of this ten-story parking garage in downtown LA, and we threw each kit off."

STEVEN DROZD

"Headphones Theme From Seemingly Infinity"



"Since I didn't want to do any crazy drum fills or use weird ethnic instruments on my track," figured the Flaming Lips' Steven Drozd, "I thought I'd have two kits and then pan them left and right. When you listen at first you don't really notice it, but when you listen with headphones you realize they're kind of playing off each other. I think we just used two mic's on each kit. I did a couple of keyboard tracks, some whistling, and some guitar, and a friend of mine came in and played violin on it."

The result of Drozd's efforts is a slow, eerie tune that truly lives up to its title, like the soundtrack to a *Lost In Space* episode if it was done by a hip indie band. "This was the first time I ever did anything on my own like that," Steven explains. "In the Flaming Lips I contribute ideas and then we all work through it and record it. I was a little uncomfortable at first; I'm just used to putting my ideas through the Flaming Lips filter."

"It's funny the way I came up with that melody and the chords of the main chorus part. I was trying to come up with something one day and I got really bored, so I just took staff paper and wrote dots at random, then I turned it upside down and put chords under it, basically in the key of C. It doesn't sound quite as weird as you think it would from the way it was done, but it worked out pretty good."

Steven and the Flaming Lips have a couple of projects coming out soon, including a four-CD set designed to be played simultaneously. In January a "proper" Flaming Lips album is due, at about which time the band plans to begin touring.

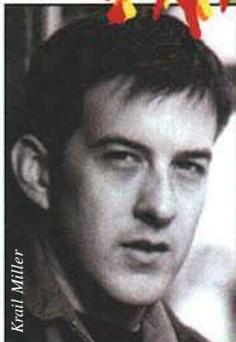
Girls Vs. Boys might not be a household name yet, but lots of critical acclaim and a strong loyal following have established them as a band to watch. Drummer Alexis Fleisig has transferred the group's steely sound, added the power of droning and some odd vocal samples, and come up with a truly affecting instrumental. "I got together with Scott from Girls Vs. Boys and his wife Sophie," Alexis recalls. "Basically I came up with this beat and she came up with a bass line, and we jammed on that. I wanted my cut to be more drum-heavy, but still like a song, not just a solo."

"Since we did it in this cheaper studio, there was a lot of bleed between the mic's, so basically I played the whole drum track unaccompanied. Then Sophie overdubbed bass, and Scott overdubbed a guitar sample. So we built it up from the drums. I was surprised at how easy it was to record that way. I just counted bars, without a click track. It was really a lot of fun. Usually with the band, there's a lot of work rewriting tracks, and this was much more spontaneous. I've been wanting to do more stuff like this."

Alexis and Girls Vs. Boys plan to release a new album early next year.

ALEXIS FLEISIG

"Don't Ruin Me Gorgeous"



Krall Miller

One of the scarier cuts on *Flyin' Traps*, "Steel Box" is a wonder of studio trickery dreamed up by Nine Inch Nails' Chris Vrenna. A thundering drum tour-de-force, "Steel Box," in a way, was never played at all. Chris explains: "I specifically did not go to a studio and set up a kit and put mic's up. I wanted to work completely within the computer. When we record or when we're on tour we always keep a DAT rolling, so I took my favorite bits out from all these tapes, picked a tempo, and made everything fit that tempo, doing pitch or time correcting. So it's bits and pieces of me on the drums screwing around at sessions and stuff."

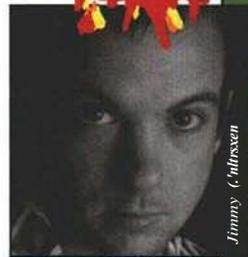
"The cool thing is that this project coincided exactly with a feeling I had that I wanted to do a complete thing myself. I learned that you have to develop self-confidence, since there's no one else there to say, 'That sucks' or 'That's great.' And it's cool because you can tell that today's music has changed; rhythm has become a much more important element today than even melody—listen to that Chemical Brothers track that's a big hit now. And that's cool; rhythm is being pushed up in importance."

"I was into doing this record because all the drummers on there are either friends of mine or people I respect," Vrenna adds. "It's cool that they're all young, alternative drummers. Knowing the drummers on the list, I could almost picture in my head what they would do, like I imagined Stephen Perkins would break out every piece of ethnic percussion he's gotten from all over the world—and that's just what he did! That's just a great piece; everybody's tracks are brilliant. Dale's is my favorite; that thing is so warped. It's a really cool bunch of peers to be associated with, and that was pretty exciting."

Chris is currently performing live with his own project, Tweaker.

CHRIS VRENNA

"The Steel Box"



Jimmy C. Intrixen

"It was one of the most thrilling moments of my life," Brian recalls. "I had wired all the drums together so that when they were flying through the air it looked like a complete trapset. I was so nervous the night before, I didn't sleep; I'd invested all this money and time. But it all worked out: beautifully."

Though Brian says that there was a time when he thought he'd never attempt a project as complicated as *Flyin' Traps* again, today the drummer laughs, "I've aged twenty years in three years, but I'm looking forward to doing it again—though it's going to be done differently. I might have an A side and a B side, and use two of my favorite engineers—one for one side and one for the other. I'd also like to have a lot of drummers playing together, more like some of those Art Blakey records where they would have their 'drum orgies.'

"We've also got all that great footage of the kits being thrown off the roof, so we hope to make a video and maybe even a film.



I'm also going to try to do a couple of concerts. I wanted to do one in LA, one in San Francisco, one in Seattle, and one in New York, but I don't know how I'm going to do it. I would love to take it on the road for a week—that would be amazing, even if I could get ten of the guys together and we could do a show that would vary from city to city.

"We've also discussed remixing a couple of songs. I've already met with a couple of different remixers. I'm just approaching it the same way I did the record. When I talk to someone like Critter or the Dust Brothers or Moby, I tell them to pick the song that they would most like to do."

Brian Reitzell says that originally he just wanted to *buy* a record like *Flyin' Traps*, he didn't want to actually *make* it. "I just wanted to be able to go into a record store and get a record that was a contemporary type of drum album." Thanks to Brian's efforts, we *all* have just that—and more: *Flyin' Traps* is a testament to the ingenuity, scope, taste, and technique of a group of perpetually under-appreciated musicians—us, the drummers.

TIM 'HERB' ALEXANDER (WITH MIKE BORDIN) "Choked"



Ebet Roberts

One of the most revered and identifiable of today's drum artists, Tim Alexander has continued to come up with extremely cool percussive pieces since leaving Primus. "Choked" features a neat two-against-three feel mutated at times beyond recognition in the editing room. It also features Faith No More's Mike Bordin. "I didn't really know how to approach my cut," Tim explains, "so Brian Reitzell suggested I do something with Mike Bordin. I have some recording gear in my garage, and Mike came over one day and said he had this beat he'd been

playing. So he played it, I recorded it, and then I played along to the beat he did. Then I took what we played and, using an editing system, made a bunch of different mixes, and then put music to it. I played all the other instruments, and my friend Maynard came in and did some screams in the middle of it.

"Some of the song is just Mike on drums, then it's me, then it's both of us. We played on the same kit. I kind of played in between or played something different from what he was playing. He was doing a lot of tom stuff, and then I was playing more of the hi-hat and cymbal. When we're playing together, the drums are panned left and right.

"It was fun just taking a rhythm and messing with it," adds Tim. "That was cool, because I'm interested in film music, so I think I'll try more of that in the future. I wanted the drums to be the dominant thing, that's why there's not a lot of music happening; I wanted the drums to make the song."

The recording process for drums usually involves figuring out what to play to existing songs," Mike Bordin explains, "but this was different because the drums and the patterns were the framework. So it was like, you know, when the cat's away... Herb's just a super-fantastic technical drummer—everything that I'm not. But we get along really well. And this was a great opportunity to do something off-the-cuff: unstructured, open, yet not super show-offy, since it was two of us together."

Tim has been working on new material with Laundry, while Mike just came off the OzzFest '97 tour (playing with both Ozzy Osbourne and Black Sabbath) and is now touring behind the latest Faith No More record.



Ebet Roberts

MIKE MUSBURGER "Noodles"



Howie Walden

Flyin' Traps' ode to a previous generation of drum records, Fastbacks drummer Mike Musburger's "Noodles" conjures up the ghost of a thousand Sandy Nelson songs. "I got together with the bass player I used to play with in the Posies, Dave Fox," recalls Mike, "and he has all these really cool surf-instrumental-type bass lines in his head. So I took one and arranged it into a song. Another friend, Kurt Bloch, plays in the Fastbacks, and he came in and played a Link Wray-type guitar part. It was a lot of fun; I produced it myself, and I had never taken control in the studio like that or offered so much creative content before."

After several years in the Posies, Michael recently played with Love Battery, recorded an album with Tube Top, and acted as drum tech for Jason Finn of the Presidents of the United States of America. The Fastbacks, who opened for Pearl Jam on their last tour, plan to release new material early next year.

DALE GROVER "Vomit And Orange Juice"



Don Lewis

"My tune wasn't worked out at all before I recorded it," explains the Melvins' Dale Grover, referring to the frightening behemoth of an avant-garde drum experiment he committed to tape for *Flyin' Traps*. "I just had a few ideas of what I wanted to do. I wanted it to build up at the beginning, then go into some weird drum beat in the middle, and then come out of it at the end. Sometimes it's really great doing it spontaneously, sometimes it really sucks—you never know. This one came out okay.

"I did pretty much everything in one take," Dale adds. "There's a double-track of drums, and then I overdubbed Tibetan gongs, and I recorded a hi-hat in a reverb chamber—without my headphones. The producer just said, 'Play really sparse.' I didn't really want to do a drum solo; I wanted to do some weird ambient drum thing influenced by *Apocalypse Now*—the helicopters. We pretty much did all the effects to tape, which is usually the way we do it in the Melvins anyway."

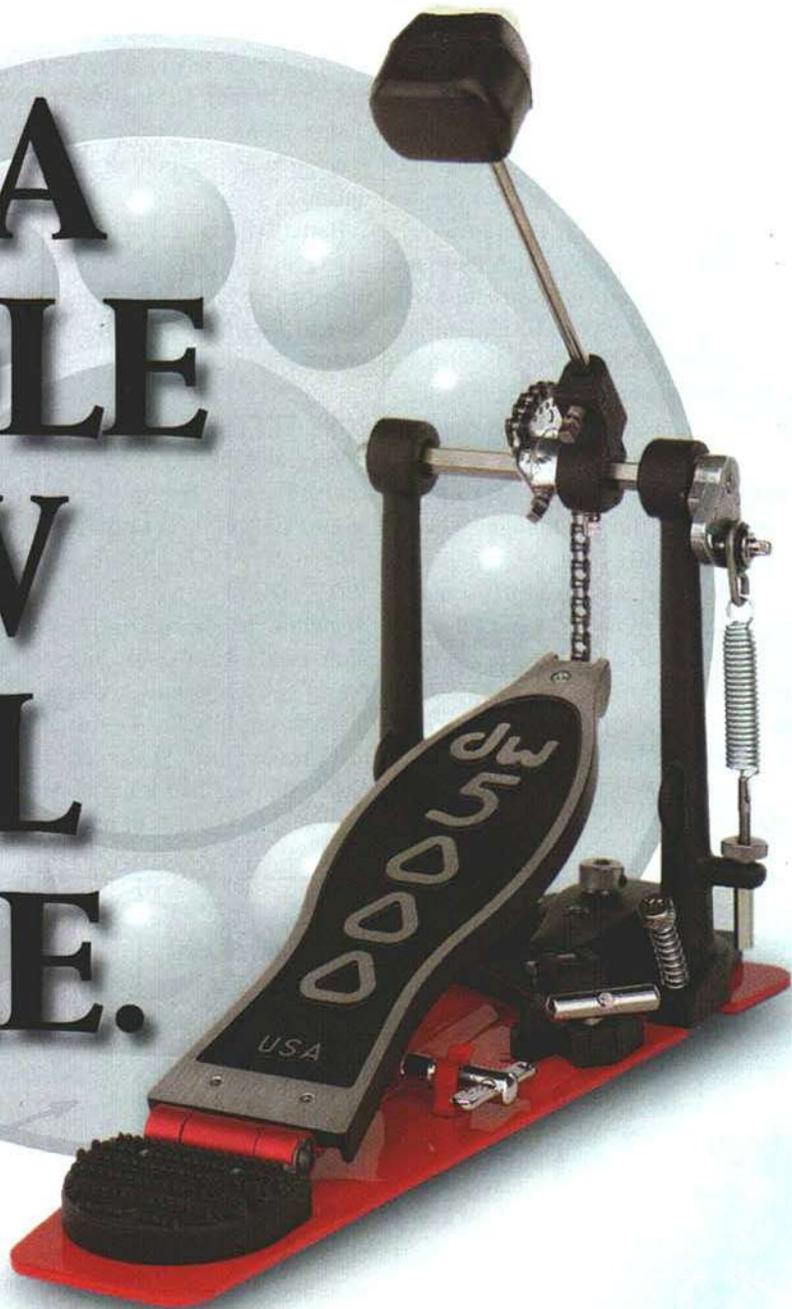
The Melvins are currently touring behind their latest album, *Honky*.

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BARRETT MARTIN "Barnburner"

A true Renaissance man, Screaming Trees drummer Barrett Martin founded the band Tuatara because "I've always got musical ideas that don't fit into the rock 'n' roll field." Barrett cites influences as diverse as John Coltrane, Miles Davis, African drumming, Indian rhythms, gamelan, and Caribbean music—many of which crop up on "Barnburner." "We played this tune on the Minus Five/Tuatara/Mark Eitzel tour as a closing number," Barrett explains. "I had done it as a demo, not knowing if it would be a song. I was about halfway done by the time the rest of the Tuatara album was finished, and we weren't really sure if it would fit on that record. But we thought it was worth finishing, and right at the same time Brian Reitzell called and asked if I wanted to do a song for the record. So I just finished that one up and turned it in. We play it much differently live now.

"I've traveled a lot over the years," Martin reveals, "and in the process I've taken field recordings and picked up a lot of instruments. I may not be able to master any

of these instruments, but if I can come up with a neat melodic idea or something that I can use, I'm happy. We're in a real interesting time now in music, where you don't have to be an 'alternative rocker' or an 'industrial rocker' or a 'jazz head' or whatever—you can be into all *different* types of music."

Barrett is currently working on a second Tuatara record; also planned is an EP including several songs from the band's first album, *Breaking The Ethers*, remixed by several musicians from around the world.

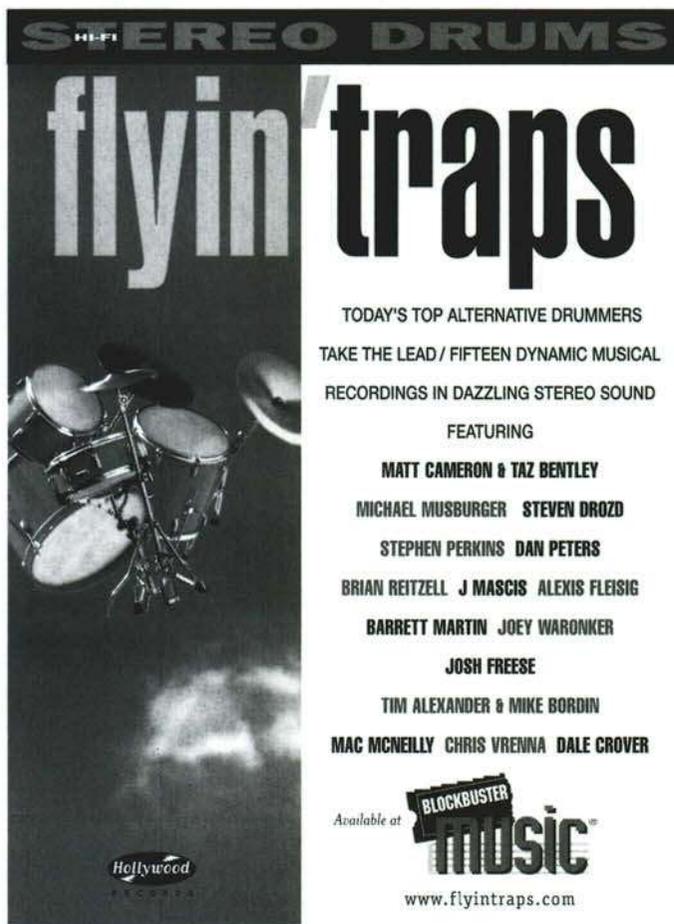
JOSH FREESE "The Gay '90s"

Josh Freese's resume is so diverse, it would be tough anticipating what he'd offer up for *Flyin' Traps*. And "The Gay '90s" truly comes out of nowhere. Somehow balancing a seriously evil edge with a calliope-like joyousness, the tune features a sing-song melody from hell, manic drum fills...and a disturbing case of the hiccups. Josh: "I wanted to make 'The Gay '90s' feel like a big dopey waltz and have it skip like a 16th note and throw the

whole thing off kilter and jolt you. Just when you get used to the rhythm it jolts again, especially when there are two or three 'skips' in like ten seconds; you're like, 'What happened *there*?' I still haven't worked out exactly what it is; I just kind of feel it.

"I liked the idea of doing it in a song format, where the drums are playing around the melody, rather than just having a drum thing. So I laid down a click and then did this weird synth bass and the guitar parts first, and then I played drums to that. I've done stuff like this at home for six or seven years, but this is the first time I've been able to release something like it. Originally I was going to be a smart-ass and give Brian a song that I'd written that had just drum machine on it. Then I wanted to program 'Moby Dick' on a drum machine, with every single nuance. I thought that would be pretty funny, but Brian was like, 'You know...I'd really appreciate it if you did your own thing.' [laughs]

Josh continues to be one of the most in-demand session players on the scene.



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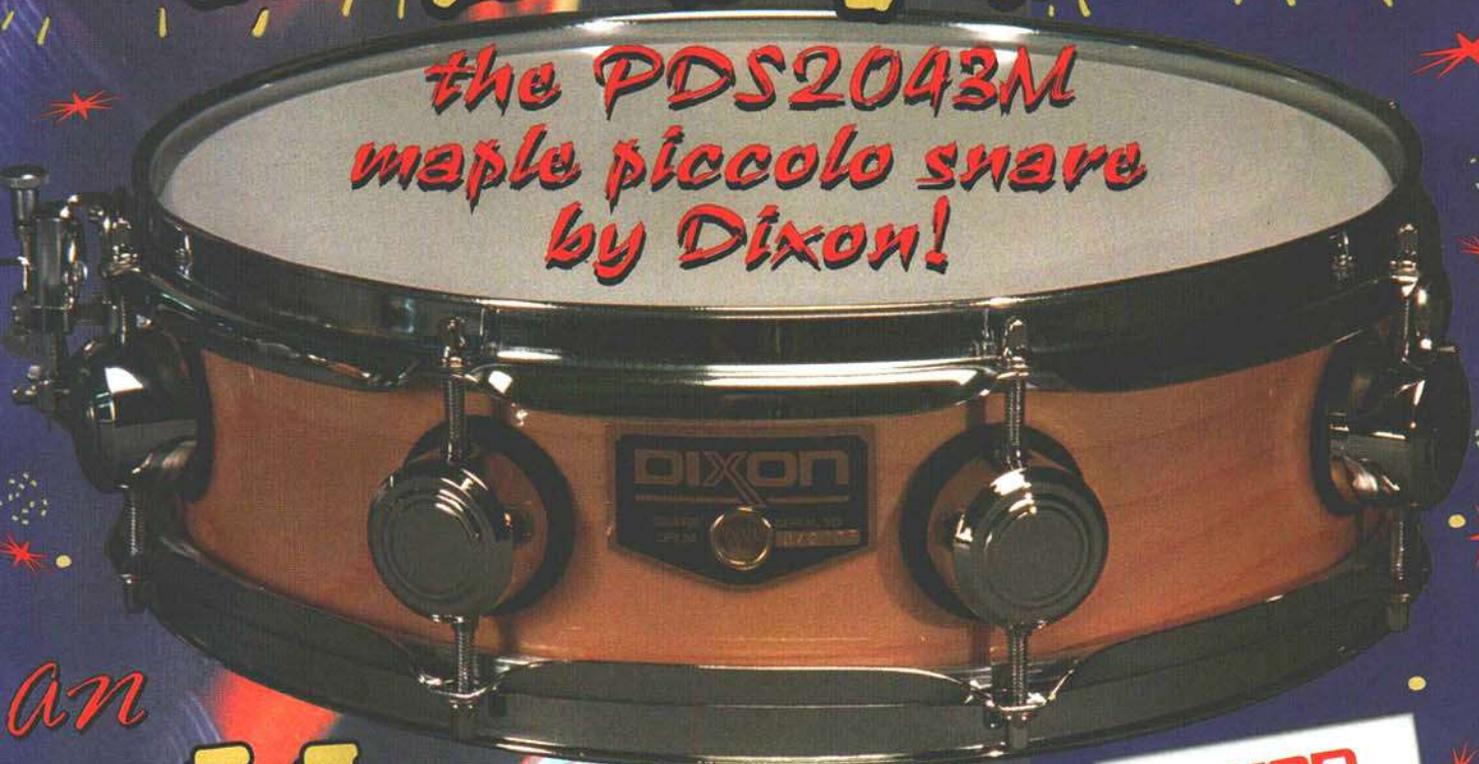
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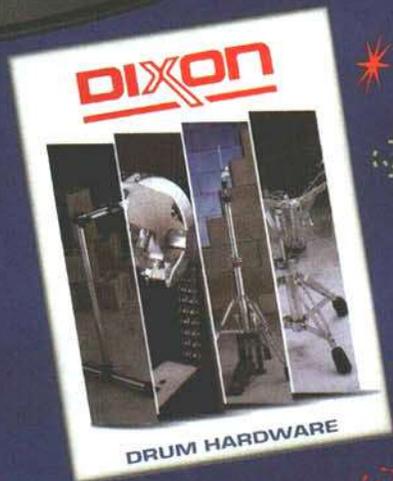
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BRIAN REITZELL

"Snake And Mongoose"

Brian's personal contribution to *Flyin' Traps* tears along at a good tempo, and sounds like it would work great as the backing music to a jungle chase scene in a '60s British spy movie. "I recorded 'Snake And Mongoose' with a guy named Brian Kehew," says Reitzell, "and he did a record called *The Moog Cookbook* with Roger Manning from Jellyfish and Imperial Drag. He's got his own studio, and he and his partner own the Mellotron company. I wanted to put some Mellotrons and some Moogs on my cut; I wanted it to be drums and keyboards, and Brian has the biggest selection of keyboards. We set up the drums in this big sort of warehouse space at his studio. I know a few chords on the guitar, and I can play a little bass and piano, and I can sort of fake my way around the keyboards...though I'm no J. Mascis."

Brian has been touring with Redd Kross this year behind their latest album, *Show World*.

DAN PETERS

"Do You Remember Walter"

It figures that the only cover song on *Flyin' Traps* would come completely out of left field, but somehow Mudhoney's Dan Peters makes an obscure Kinks track the perfect vehicle for Seattle's grunge drumming forefather to take the reins. "Originally I didn't want to do this project," insists Peters. "I thought I'd have to play all the instruments myself, which I really couldn't do—and even if I could, I don't know if I'd want anyone to hear it! But I talked to Brian, and he told me it didn't have to be that way, so I decided to do an instrumental version of one of my favorite songs."

"Steve Turner from Mudhoney plays bass and fuzz guitar, and Kevin Whitworth from Love Battery plays the 'vocal part' guitar, and we recorded in this studio in Brad Smith's basement; he played bass in Blind Melon and played a little organ on the track. I basically made everybody listen to my old Ventures 8-tracks to get an idea of what I wanted: 'Hear that? *That's* what I want to sound like.' It's a pretty cool little setup Brad's got, with a lot of old gear; some Creedence stuff was recorded on the board we used. I thought after we finished the song that I'd like to get together with



Joey Waronker, Beak

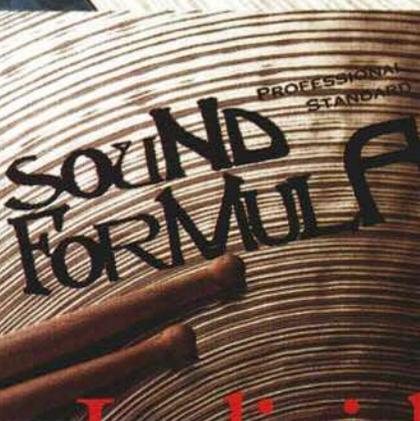


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these guys and do a bunch more; I've got a whole list of songs I'd love to do the same way."

Dan and Mudhoney plan to record a new album later this year.

J. MASCIS "Carl"

"I've always been into being thought of as a drummer, though not many other people think of me that way." An understandable situation, given the amount of attention heaped on Dinosaur Jr.'s J. Mascis as alternative rock's very own guitar god. On "Carl," J. reminds us of his manic drum talents with an off-the-cuff drum solo more concerned with attitude than accuracy. "When I listen to other records," says J., "I often think the drums can be more lyrical and part of the song, rather than just a timekeeper."

"I recorded 'Carl' with producer/engineer/drummer Warton Tiers, who's also my superintendent in New York. He's got two drumkits set up in the basement, and this was the first thing we played together."

"I'm an old guitar freak, but I don't care that much whether the drums are old. I'm more into the sizes and if they sound right. I use a 28" bass drum and 14" and 18" toms. I saw Hunt Sales play with Tin Machine, and that's what inspired me to get the 28", because I had always wanted to. I thought, "Well, *he's* got a 28", I've got to get one now." He's the drummer I've seen who plays the most like I do."

J. and Dinosaur Jr. recently toured Europe and Australia behind their latest album, *Hand It Over*.

Editor's note: Mac McNeilly and Joey Waronker could not be reached for comment on the cuts they participated in, respectively, "Lime" and "Chorkle Is Dead."



Danny Carey, Tool



Eric Kretz,
Stone Temple Pilots



Charlie Benante, Anthrax



David Silveria, Korn

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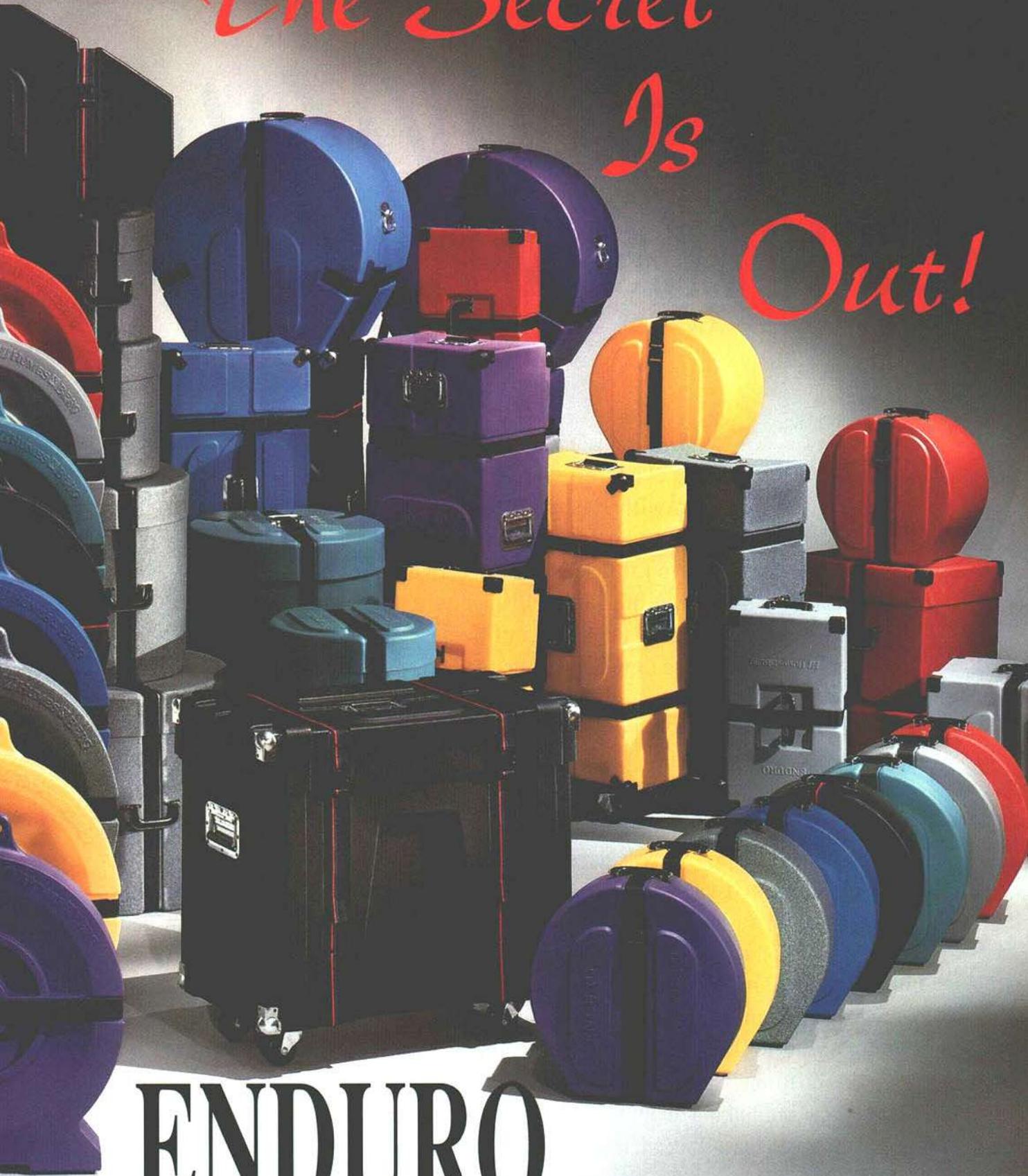
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Petra's **Louie Weaver** *Drumming On Faith*

At first glance, Petra looks like every other rock band—musicians with flashy hair and clothing and loud instruments. But if you look and listen past the familiar rock sights and sounds, you'll discover a band fighting to expose not the usual excesses of the rock life—but Christianity.

Louie Weaver is proud of the number of lives he's been able to touch during the past sixteen years as the drummer for Petra. Christian music's top-selling band, Petra has won three Grammy Awards and nine Gospel Music Association Dove Awards. And despite the fact that the band is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary, its five members are still going strong. Besides recording their eighteenth album, the band is as active on stage as ever, averaging close to two hundred shows a year. Life couldn't be much better.

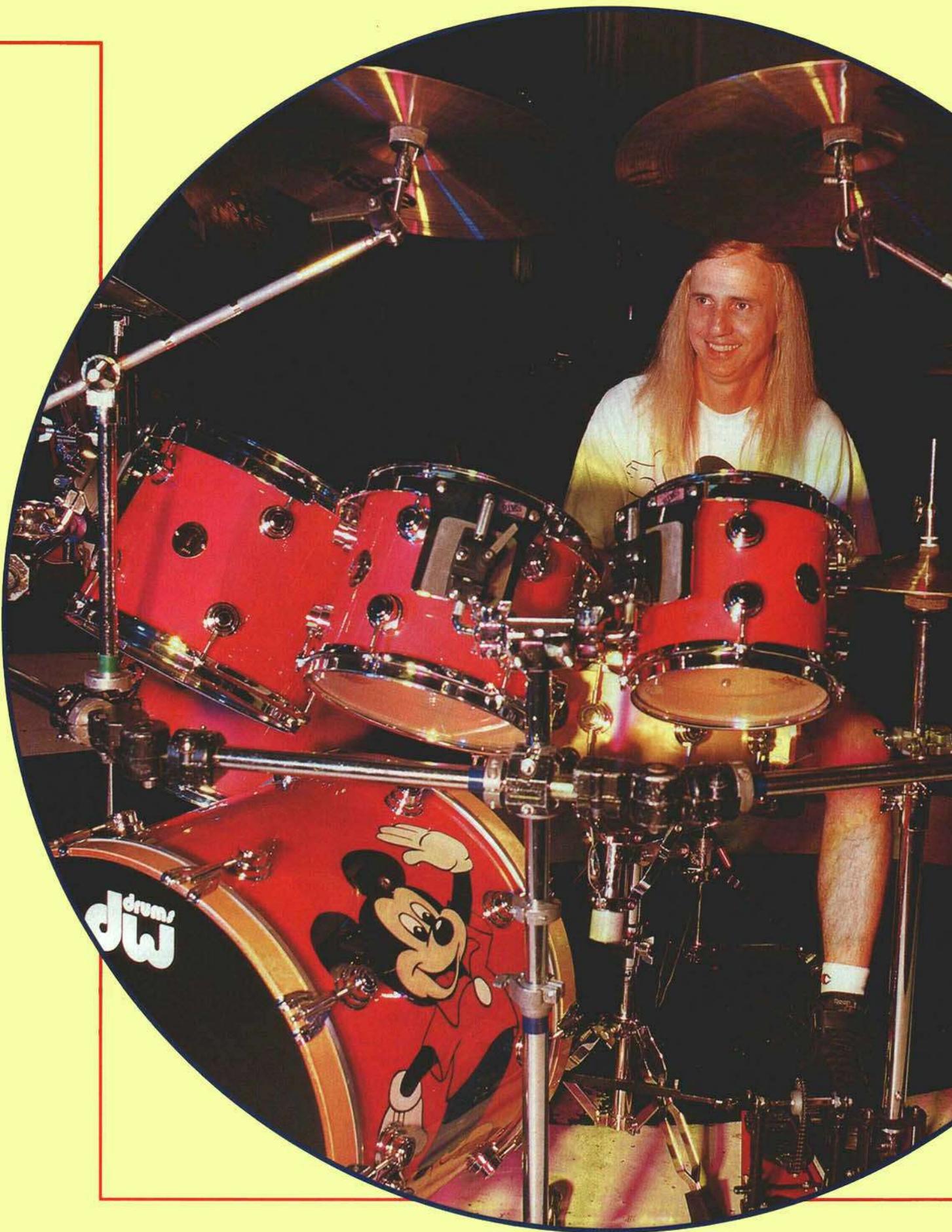
The only thing that's tough these days for the forty-five-year-old Weaver is the fact that he must leave his two-year-old son, Adrian Louis Weaver IV, when he's on tour. Fatherhood has put a whole new slant on touring, and Louie now understands how hard it's been for the other bandmembers to leave their children behind to go on the road.

But "witnessing" to people is very important to Weaver, and he refuses to slack off.

As an example of his deep-felt beliefs, Weaver cites certain secular distributors who would not carry his educational video—and his refusal to cower to their pressure. "They actually told me they wanted me to cut out talking about God and Jesus," he says. "But I couldn't do that." Indeed, that's what Louie is all about.

by Robyn Flans

photos by Rick Malkin



RF: For many, rock and Christianity are a contradiction of terms.

LW: I've always liked to look at it from the point of view that God created everything. A lot of people say, "The devil created rock 'n' roll music." The devil, Satan, or whatever is evil, takes and

the attitude of the heart of the person who is playing it and what they're trying to portray. You can portray evil through bluegrass if that's what you want to do. It's just that rock 'n' roll music is the main medium for people who have said, "We're going to mix up evil and drugs with the music."

RF: You must get very tired of having to defend yourself as a musician. The opportunity and temptations still exist, it's just that you guys have to be strongly against them.

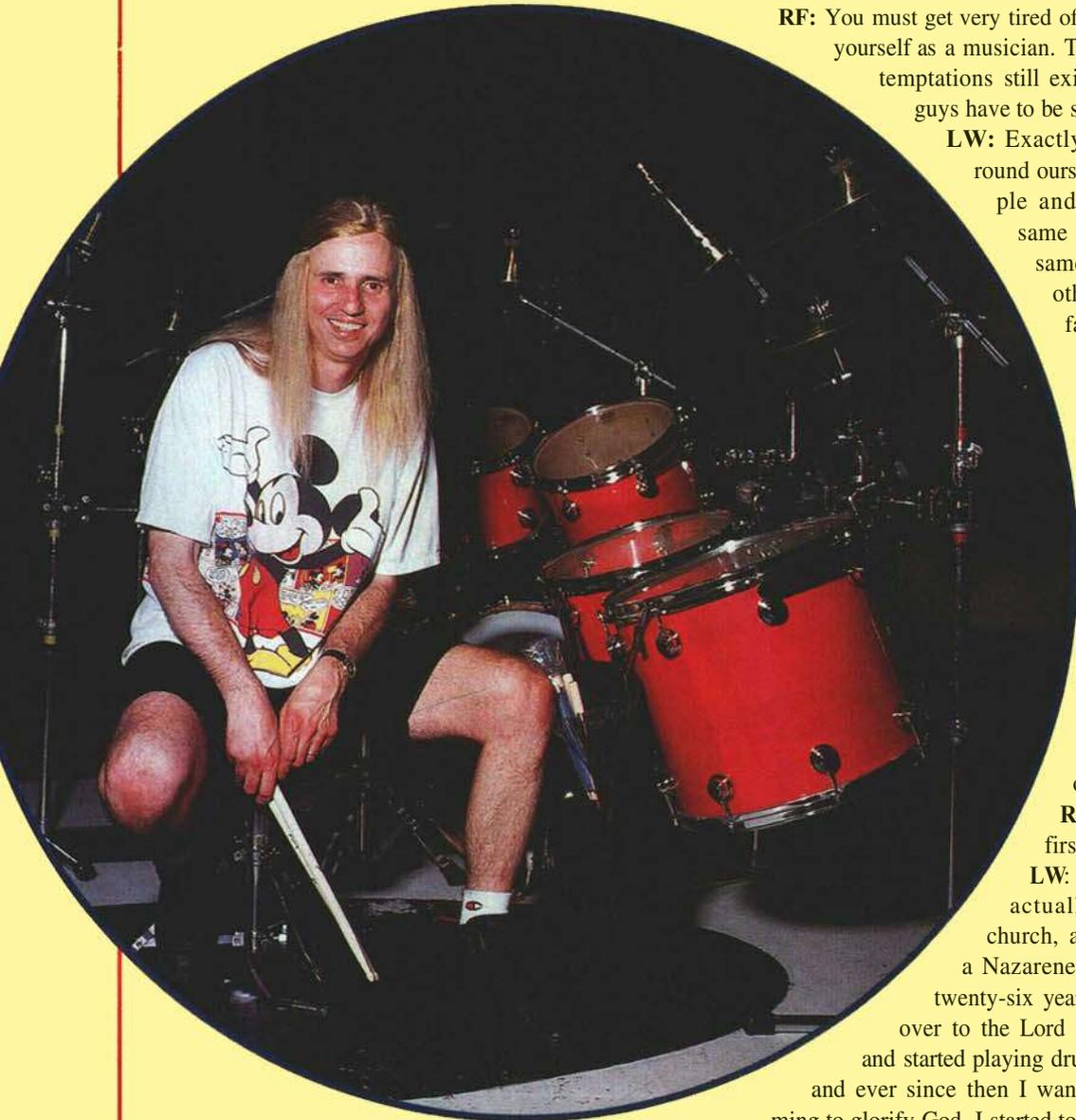
LW: Exactly. That's why we surround ourselves with the right people and players who walk the same walk and are living the same lifestyle. We help each other. I think a lot of people fall into the trap of trying to be an island. They go out on the road and they don't rely on each other to help build each other up, to pray for each other, to find out if they're having problems that are causing them to slip or fall in their walk with the Lord. Sometimes your best friend will see something the Lord shows them that can help you, and vice versa, and that's how we can help each other.

RF: Which entered your life first, Christianity or drums?

LW: Being a Christian. I was actually raised in a Baptist church, although I've attended a Nazarene church for the past twenty-six years. I turned my life over to the Lord at the age of five and started playing drums at about ten, and ever since then I wanted my drumming to glorify God. I started to listen to the Beatles and Led Zeppelin and all of that, but my lifelong goal was to play rock 'n' roll music for Jesus. From that age on, I let God prepare me for what he wanted me to do.

I really feel that these

perverts. God *creates* everything. Rock 'n' roll music is no different or worse than country, classical, bluegrass, or jazz. It's just a form of music. It's about



"That's what I was put on this earth to do—to be a Christian drummer and a role model for kids to look up to."

sixteen years in Petra is what God had in mind for me. That's what I was put on this earth to do—to be a Christian drummer, present an alternative lifestyle, and be a role model for young kids to look up to and say, "Wow, he plays the kind of music I play, but he doesn't live the lifestyle

of the people my parents don't want me to look at."

RF: How did drums enter your life?

LW: Music was always a big part of my family, even though my mother couldn't sing a lick. My dad played harmonica by ear, my sister played piano, and I had played piano since I was five years old. So music was big in our family. As for me, it eventually came down to a choice between flute, trumpet, or drums. When my mom went to talk to the band director at school, he said, "Mrs. Weaver, you'll get off the cheapest if he's a drummer—you'll only have to get Louie drumsticks and a pad." Little did he know that two years later she'd have to buy me a drumkit. She said, "If I had only known! I could have gotten by with buying you a piccolo."

RF: Who were your favorite drummers then?

LW: Buddy Rich. Then when I was in high school, you'd have to add Ringo Starr and John

Bonham. My favorite drummers of all time, though, are Rod Morgenstein and Steve Gadd.

RF: So once you picked the drums, how did you learn?

LW: I was first-chair in high school band, and I lived, breathed, and ate music. Sixth-period band was what I looked forward to every day. I didn't have a great grade point average, and my high school guidance counselor told me I wouldn't amount to much. When I told her I wanted to go to college, she laughed at me and said, "No college will take you." I don't think she knew—I don't think *I* knew—what God had in store for me.

A small Christian school in Nashville, Trevecca Nazarene University, took me on probation, and I eventually graduated from there with a degree in music. I was going to get a teaching degree, but in the middle of my time in college I began to realize the powerful tool God was going to use me as.

RF: Why did you want to go to school in the first place?

LW: I wanted to learn. I knew I would get more teaching of the Bible at a Christian college. I also studied classical styles—piano, marimba, xylophone—and I majored in percussion. My instructor was one of the main percussionists in the Nashville Symphony, and he really taught me a lot about who I am musically and percussively.

RF: You didn't feel ready to go out and join a band?

LW: No. Even though I was *in* a band at the time, I knew I wasn't ready to do it on the scale of Petra. When I met Petra, they were the

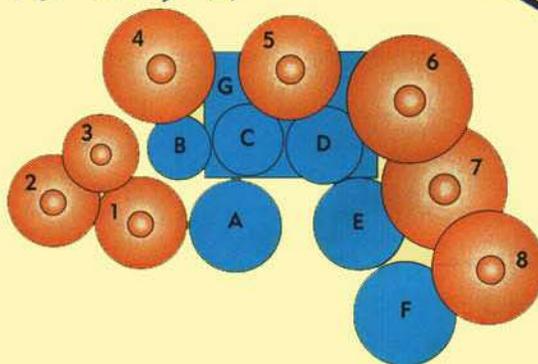
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first major Christian rock band that had a record released. When I joined them, we were a warm-up band for another Christian band called Servant. Then we went from that to headlining shows, to doubling and quadrupling the crowd size.

RF: What do you think happened?

LW: I don't know—the movement of God's spirit? All of a sudden people found out about Petra and realized there was a group with the production the size of rock 'n' roll groups that their parents wouldn't let them go see. We were playing to less than 1,000 people in '82 and '83, and then all of a sudden we had to book arenas because 10,000 people were showing up! Like music does, the group has gone up and down in popularity, but we've lasted twenty-five years.

RF: How did you meet the band?

LW: I had their first record and they came to our school. From that point I started praying a lot about becoming their drummer. I was in a rock 'n' roll band at school, but I was longing to be their drummer. The first year in college, I got to go on a summer traveling ministry, where we traveled up and down the West Coast, visiting a different church every day. We went into the parks and out on the street and played our music, and then witnessed to people. I felt God was preparing me for Petra with that experience.

RF: How did you eventually get the gig?

LW: When the original drummer left, they started holding auditions. Every time I'd hear about an audition I'd just pray to be

able to try out, but God just didn't want me to. After a couple of years of that praying, out of the blue, He said yes.

RF: What was keeping you from it?

LW: I was with another Christian band and I just figured that God wanted me to stay right where I was. Maybe God knew I wasn't ready to go out on as big of a scale as Petra was. For three years I knew I was going to be the drummer for Petra, but wasn't. Then the band I was with disbanded—I had already graduated from college—and out of the blue I got a call from Bob Hartman, who was the guitar player for Petra, wanting to know if I knew anybody who could play a weekend gig with them because their drummer wasn't available. I said, "I can." I played two shows with them, and after the second show the guys said, "Louie, we want you to be our drummer. What do you think?" Yes, yes, yes!

RF: Take me back to the first gig you did with Petra. How did you prepare for it?

LW: When I was praying to be the drummer for Petra, I was keeping up with them. I knew their material. I would play to their songs when I practiced. When Bob called and said they were going to be performing certain songs, I charted out those songs so I could duplicate the parts from the album. We had two rehearsals and I used the charts. When I got to the gig and set up my drums, I couldn't find the charts. There were 2,000 people at that first show in Detroit, Michigan. Luckily, even without the charts, it went great. I thought they

were going to think I was a flake because I hadn't remembered to bring the charts, but they wanted me to be their drummer.

RF: You made the comment before that maybe you wouldn't have been ready to be their drummer any earlier. How has your playing grown and matured in Petra?

LW: It's amazing how each time we bring different players into the band it's helped me to think of different ways to approach my drumming. I've always played a little differently—I'm right-handed, but all my licks start and end with my left. I think I should have been a left-handed drummer. I decided after ten years of crossing my right hand over to the hi-hat that I should play open-handed, playing ride rhythms with my left hand. I had developed good technique playing the normal way, and there were certain things I could do better that way, but when I started playing open-handed it opened up my coordination tremendously. I think I got some really good things out of it.

About a year and a half ago I went back to leading with the right sometimes, because I felt my technique was better served by playing the way I originally had learned. So if there's something that is harder to play or more intricate, or something that needs more grace notes, I'll cross my hands. But if it just needs a solid 2/4 time, I'll play open-handed.

RF: Just being on the road must have matured your playing as well.

LW: I believe that performing live has always been my forte. I definitely get off

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on the crowds. I'm not one of those drummers who closes his eyes when he plays. I love to establish eye contact with the audience, and then it's like we're going through the whole thing together.

We play over 180 shows a year now. People always ask me if I'm tired of the road, but that's where my heart is, and

that's where I enjoy being. I have to figure out how to handle missing my son, though. Not that I don't miss my wife, but she understands what I do. My son doesn't understand where his daddy is. But not everybody can have a 9-to-5 job. That just isn't my life.

RF: You said that having new players in the band has given *you* a transfusion. Isn't it tough to adjust to a new bass player?

LW: For the first four years I was in the band I played with Mark Kelly. Then we got Ronny Cales on bass, and just the newness of having him in the band created an incredible excitement and took my drumming to a new level. Ronny and I locked in incredibly well, and he was instrumental in helping me find more things that I could play and lock in with. Now I've been playing with Lonnie Chapin for a year, and it's the most exciting time I've had with a bass player in my entire life. With Lonnie there's almost no thinking about locking. It's so automatic it's spooky.

RF: There are always pros and cons to being in the same band for a long time. One of the drawbacks, of course, is that you can get too settled and sedate. But Petra has evolved musically.

LW: It went from the raw rock of the original group to a techno-rock thing in the mid-'80s. Like a lot of other bands, we started incorporating drum machines with live drumming. But given the choice to take electronics or leave them, I'd leave them. Acoustic drums are where it's at as far as I'm concerned.

On *No Doubt*, I did trigger electronically. I was really happy because I play DW drums and we found DW samples. On the *Praise* album it's all acoustic. As for my sound and the way I play drums, I feel that the live album, *Captured In Time And Space*, best represents how I play and sound.

RF: Being a Christian musician must be a really rough road to travel.

LW: Well, it can be hard to please Christian radio. They don't like rock. If it gets too hard, you don't get played. If you don't have a middle-of-the-road song, you don't get played. We *tried* not to be quite so heavy, but we know when people come see us they want to see us rock. Live, we really go for it.

It can be difficult to be a Christian musician, but if you're going to take on that challenge, you should take it on with sincerity and do it with all your heart. Don't be something you're not and don't water it down—just *be* it. And there's more to being a Christian artist than just the music. It's the lifestyle and telling people about it—not just letting the music speak for itself. In my opinion, that's why Petra has had this longevity. We've never been ashamed of who we are. People say, "You'll get in more doors if you'll tone it down and not say so much about Jesus." Those aren't the doors we want to go in.

RF: There are a lot of people who talk the talk but don't walk the walk, which makes it that much harder to prove to people you're for real.

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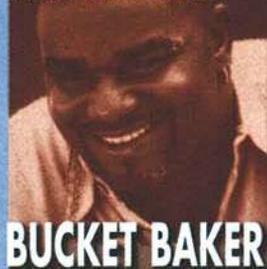
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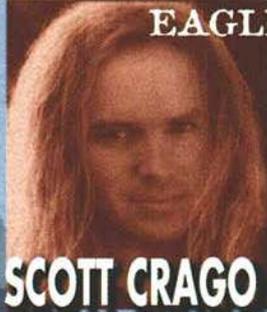
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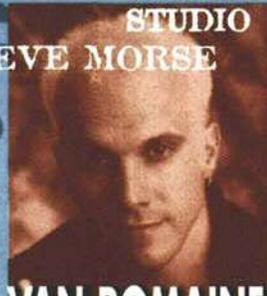
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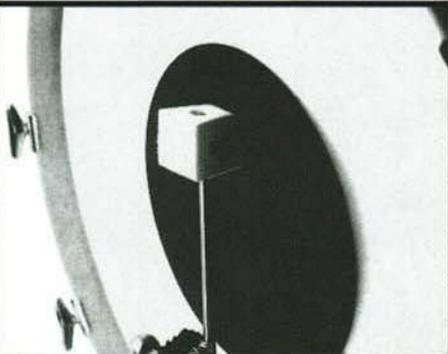
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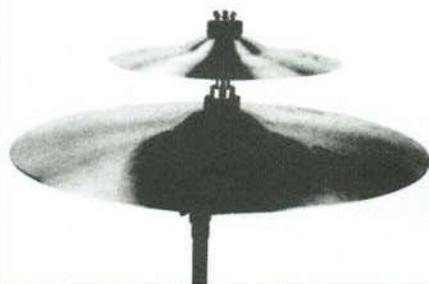
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LW: We, as Christians, are not perfect. The only perfect person we know was Jesus. But by the same token, we hold each other accountable to walk in the light and not walk in the darkness. If you've sinned against your brother or done the wrong thing, the Christian thing to do is to admit it and then let God help you walk from that point and try not to go back to that mistake. Admitting it and then getting up and walking in the opposite direction is what is imperative. I go out and speak to youth groups and talk about that walk. We're not perfect, but we have to take responsibility for our actions and then learn from our mistakes.

RF: Was it tough sticking to your guns as a kid and not following the secular crowd?

LW: That was not difficult. I don't suggest that all young Christians do this, but I played in bands with guys who didn't live the lifestyle I agreed with. They would be partying, and I shouldn't have even been in the same house with them, but I would sit there and try to be the positive influence in their life. Even though I shouldn't have been there, I wanted to be a light in the darkness, and I think God has honored where my heart has always been.

RF: And they didn't put you down?

LW: No, not at all. In fact, a friend would sit down beside me, going, "Man, I wish I could be like you." And I'd go, "Well, dude, you can. It's a choice."

RF: Peer pressure can be tough on a kid.

LW: I don't know if it was something my dad said a long time ago or if it was just me, but I just never cared what other people thought of what I did. I couldn't care less.

RF: That's because you have self-respect and confidence.

LW: That must have been it. I try to tell kids it doesn't matter what everybody else is doing or what they're thinking about. Just do the right thing.

RF: Were there tough times for you?

LW: Before Petra, there were times after college when I was making no money. I had a degree in music, I was playing in a great band, but we had nowhere to play, so I was unloading trucks at UPS at night and coming home and sleeping during the day. I lived at home, so I had no bills. Then I would get together with the band and we'd practice all night. I did that for three years during the time between college and that

first gig with Petra.

Then Petra got going; we had been out for a few years, and through '85, '86, and '87, the royalties were pretty good. We got a big machine going, and everybody was on salary. I bought a new car and eventually a house, but then we weren't playing as much, so we went off salary. That's when I wondered how I was going to pay for the house. But things turned around for us.

RF: You said there were a couple of albums that were your best. What tracks would you tell people to listen to?

LW: I always go back to the live album, because I really embellish on the tunes. When we did the *Beat The System* album, a lot of the drums were done on a *Fairlight* and I only overdubbed cymbals and things like that. But we recorded those same songs live for the album, and I took them where I thought they should have gone in the first place. If you really want to hear how Louie Weaver does something, compare the *Beat The System* album to the live album and hear how the same songs evolved.

Looking at some of the old videos from back in 1981, the changes were pretty obvious. Our new lead guitar player said, "You know, Louie, you're a lot better than that now."

RF: What did he mean by that?

LW: I think he meant that I'm a lot more solid and I play with more confidence, which he can play off of. I think the drummer's number-one responsibility is to make sure it's easy for the rest of the musicians to do what they do. If the rock ain't there, nothing else can happen. That's what I always felt was my biggest attribute: I may not play the flashiest technical licks, but I'm solid. I want to leave more space, I'm not about overplaying.

RF: But you are into showmanship.

LW: Yes I am. Over the years, I would see other drummers do different things. As a matter of fact, at one point I remember saying, "I'm never going to do all that stuff because it takes away from the drumming." But more and more, I realized people hear with their eyes. It makes it more exciting for the audience. The non-musician can interpret a twirl of a stick or a flashy body movement from the drums more than some technical drum part. I incorporate the flash because I want to convey the full scope of the performance to the audience.

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Rebel Tip



RF: Do you always wear gloves?

LW: Not always. When we're on tour and I'm playing every night, I build up calluses and don't need gloves. When we're just playing weekends, where I'm not spending enough time playing to build up those calluses, I wear gloves so I don't tear up my hands. I prefer to play without gloves, but sometimes it's necessary. And I've really had to get my double-stroke rolls together, because they're hard to play wearing gloves.

RF: You do a solo, don't you?

LW: We've just started doing a new show where we're playing for two hours without any solos. But that may change because the audience has been complaining during our autograph sessions. Up until just recently I had done a solo every night. I got to play all of the licks I was thinking about that wouldn't fit in the songs.

RF: In your educational video you have John Goode from DW talk about picking a good drum. I gather that has been an issue for you.

LW: I've heard drummers in bands that opened for us who had drums that just

sounded awful. They'd comment to me that my drums sounded great, so I'd try to help them by tuning their drums for them. Too many drummers learn to play but don't learn how to make their kits sound good.

RF: How did you learn to tune drums?

LW: I taught myself. When I was a kid, I used to take my drums apart all the time. I wanted to see what made a drum tick—how this head compares to that head and why it does what it does. I'd try different tuning combinations and just experiment. I found out what head tension best complemented the way I like to play. A lot of drummers don't realize they haven't found the tuning that best fits the way they play. There are drummers who love to play a lot of double strokes, but they tune their heads so slack that they don't get any rebound.

My all-time pet peeve is sticking a hunk of tape on a ringing drum. When we were in the studio doing the last album [*Praises 2*], the engineers said, "Louie, let's get a different sound. Will you dampen your toms?" I said, "No, what is it you want?" They said, "We want a different sound." I said, "If you want a deader, drier sound,

I'll tune it for you." So I tuned it. I like the top and the bottom heads tuned the same and to where the fundamental note of the drum is. I de-tuned it, lowering the pitch of opposite lugs to get that flat, no-tone sound without putting any kind of dampening on it. They said, "How did you do that?"

RF: By the way, what is this fascination you have with Mickey Mouse?

LW: [laughs] I found that when I wore a Mickey Mouse shirt on stage people went bonkers. It opened up the doors for me to share something about who I am, and about Christ, with them. I decided that if I wore a Mickey Mouse shirt all the time, it would be a way of establishing some recognition for me. There are Micekeys all over my drums. I had a pink DW kit with four Mickey Mouses—one on each side of each bass drum—but in the last year I started using one bass drum and a double pedal. It's easier for set up and tear down, and I really enjoy playing the double pedal. I love the look of double bass drums, but I like the feel of a DW 5000 double pedal.

RF: What would life after Petra be for you?

LW: It might involve doing something in the record business, or it might be something in telecard communications, which I'm dabbling in right now. I have a company that created a Petra phone card, and I've been approaching other bands with this idea. There are a lot of Christian bands who are playing to a thousand or fewer people a night, so they're not making very much money. I think it's a great thing to have a product like a phone card where you're saying to the audience, "Hey, you've got to make a phone call when you go away from the house, so how about making that phone call to support what we're doing so our guys can feed their families?"

As far as Petra goes, I'd be happy if I got to do what I'm doing with Petra for a few more years. My goal is to be able to do this long enough so that my son will remember it. I want him to remember what daddy did in this group. I want my son to see the crowds and see that daddy went out, through the good and bad times, and did something for the glory of God.



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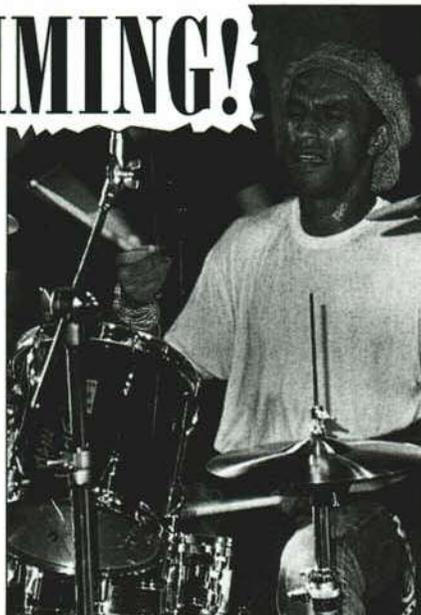
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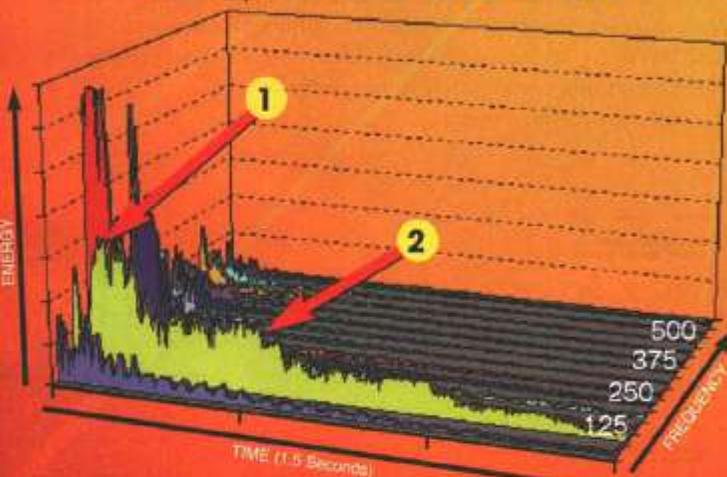
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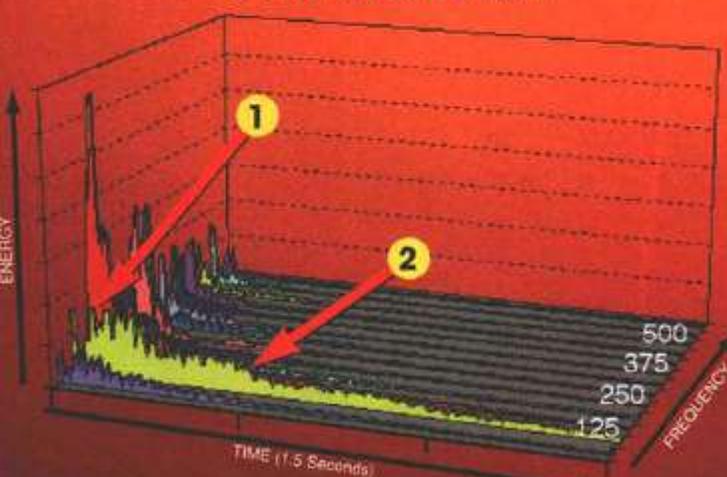


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Tabla Rhythmic Concepts For Drumset

by Jon Belcher



Often the most complex rhythmic patterns are based on very simple concepts. In this article we'll look at a basic North Indian rhythmic concept, and apply it in more complex ways to the drumset.

North Indian tabla performers have used a rhythmic device called "tihai" for thousands of years. Tihai are composed of three identical phrases, with the final stroke of the third phrase most commonly falling on the downbeat of the next

measure. Typically, if used in 4/4 time, this device will create a polyrhythmic relationship of three-against-two or three-against-four between the three phrases of the tihai and the 4/4 pulse.

Since Indian tabla players use tihai at a resolution point in the music (not unlike the end of a verse in western music), it is natural for a drumset performer to begin incorporating the concept in fills. Examples 1-4 represent the basic tihai formula. Brackets on the notation indicate the three phrases in each tihai. Practice each example at a medium tempo.

1

2

3

4

Once you are comfortable playing the formulas, try orchestrating them on a full kit. Each of the following examples is built on the correspondingly numbered tihai formula, and alternates the tihai with a measure of groove.

1a

2a

Musical notation for exercise 2a, featuring a 3/4 time signature and a 3-measure tihai pattern. The notation includes a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a 3-measure tihai pattern (three eighth notes beamed together) repeated three times, followed by a 4-measure groove variation consisting of eighth notes and rests.

3a

Musical notation for exercise 3a, featuring a 3/4 time signature and a 3-measure tihai pattern. The notation includes a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a 3-measure tihai pattern (three eighth notes beamed together) repeated three times, followed by a 4-measure groove variation consisting of eighth notes and rests.

4a

Musical notation for exercise 4a, featuring a 3/4 time signature and a 3-measure tihai pattern. The notation includes a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a 3-measure tihai pattern (three eighth notes beamed together) repeated three times, followed by a 4-measure groove variation consisting of eighth notes and rests.

The next example uses the tihai as a groove variation instead of as a fill.

1b

Musical notation for exercise 1b, featuring a 3/4 time signature and a 3-measure tihai pattern. The notation includes a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a 3-measure tihai pattern (three eighth notes beamed together) repeated three times, followed by a 4-measure groove variation consisting of eighth notes and rests.

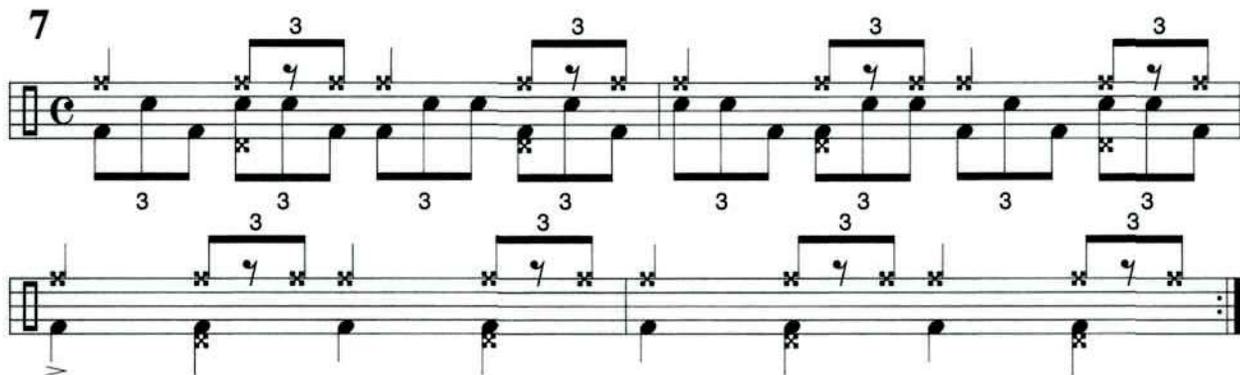
Examples 5-7 apply the tihai concept to the jazz swing groove, using "Chapin"-style coordinated independence. Two measures of tihai alternate with two measures of groove.

5

Musical notation for exercise 5, featuring a 3/4 time signature and a 3-measure tihai pattern. The notation includes a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a 3-measure tihai pattern (three eighth notes beamed together) repeated three times, followed by a 4-measure groove variation consisting of eighth notes and rests.

6

Musical notation for exercise 6, featuring a 3/4 time signature and a 3-measure tihai pattern. The notation includes a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a 3-measure tihai pattern (three eighth notes beamed together) repeated three times, followed by a 4-measure groove variation consisting of eighth notes and rests.



To hear tihai performed by master tabla players, we suggest any of the duet recordings by Alia Rakha and Zakir Hussain. Keep in mind that Indian music does not use written notation, but is instead taught by a method of verbalizing and counting on fingertips. (Some of the patterns would require odd time signatures if transcribed into our Western notational system.) Finally, don't be intimidated by complex patterns; remember that by understanding the *concepts* they are based on, you will eventually master them.

Jon Belcher is a clinician for the Ludwig Drum Company and the author of Drumset Workouts (Polyrhythms And Independent Coordination Applied To Contemporary Grooves), a Hal Leonard Publication. This article is an excerpt from his new book, Drumset Workouts, Book 2.

The author would like to thank David Brumm for his assistance with these concepts. David has studied tabla with Prabha Rustagi and Akram Khan, and he currently studies with Zakir Hussain.



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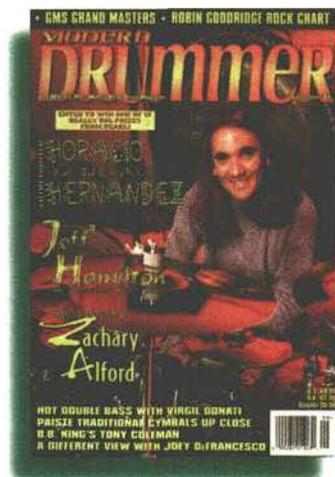
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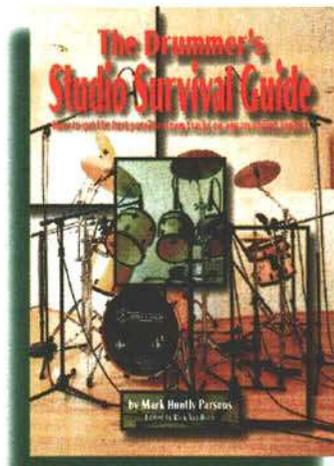
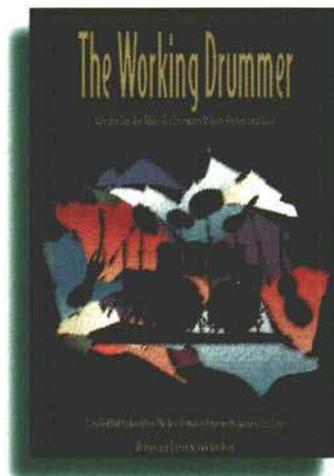
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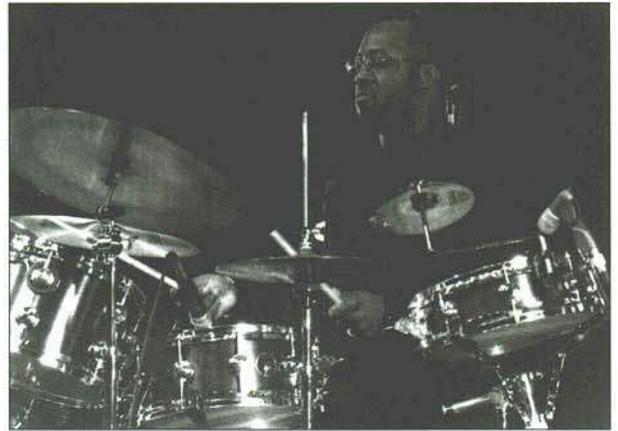
Carl Allen: "Carl's Blues"

Transcribed by Phil Smith

MUSIC KEY

T.T.	R.C.	CC
S.D.	X	X
B.D.		
H.H.	X	Add'l
w/foot	X	T.T.
		Splash

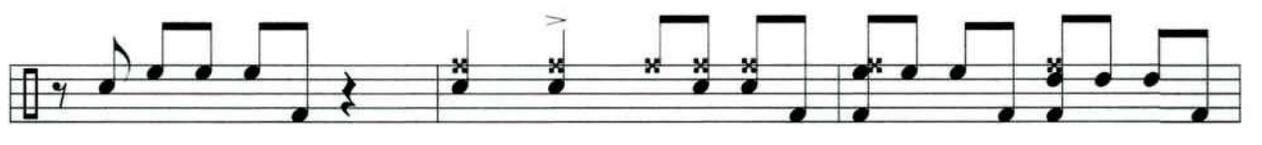
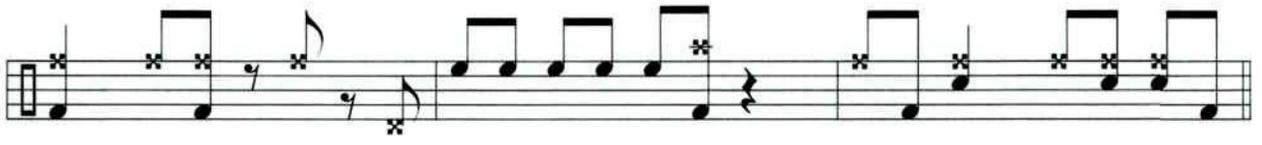
This month's *Drum Soloist* features the fine drumming of Carl Allen on the Benny Green Trio album *Testifyin': Live At The Village Vanguard* (Blue Note, released in 1995). This solo is over a twelve-bar blues form, and Carl uses a mixture of standard jazz licks and more contemporary phrasings for the seven choruses he plays.



In the fourth chorus, Carl really affects the time feel by stretching out the notes within each measure. Hence, the notation is an approximation of the drum part. And in the sixth chorus, Carl changes from sticks to brushes to finish out the solo and to lead back to the head.

All notated 8th notes in the following transcription are swung.

♩ = 260



(time played freely)



(back to strict time)



This page contains ten staves of musical notation for a drum set. The notation is written on a five-line staff with a drum set icon at the beginning of each line. The music consists of various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as accents (>) and a triplet (3). A specific section is labeled "(brushes)".





The Grooves Of Planet Drum

by David Garibaldi

MUSIC KEY

Open	O
H.H.	X
S.D.	X
B.D.	X

Rimclick

Planet Drum is Mickey Hart's groundbreaking percussion group, and I'm a member of the latest version. Along with Mickey on electronic and acoustic percussion, my bandmates include drumming virtuosos Zakir Hussain, Giovanni Hidalgo, and Sikiru Adepoju, along with bassist Bakithi Kumalo. This band is many drums and bass!

Our current music is based on drum and bass grooves with the percussion instruments supplying the melody. My role is to provide drumset grooves for the bass while the percussionists "talk." Occasionally my drum parts lean toward the percussion side, in which case I compose a part that sounds like drumset and percussion together.

This month I'd like to share some of the drum grooves I'm playing with this group. At first it would appear that these grooves are nothing out of the ordinary; on the surface they look simple enough. The thing that makes them special is what they have taught me, and that is *focus*. As drummers, focus is one of the most important elements in making our musical abilities work for us. All of our musical gains are achieved with this important key.

Another word we can use is *concentration*, the ability to keep your mind on the task at hand. That is what this lesson is all about: Your task is to lock in to the groove mentally and play with clock-like precision. Timekeeping should be at the top of the list of drumming priorities.

Listening is also very important. Listen to yourself as you play the following grooves. Do you hear any inconsistencies? If you do, correct them. Tape yourself playing; it's an invaluable tool in uncovering timing errors and other problem areas.

As I'm playing, I also *watch* myself. Are my hands and feet lined up accurately? Sometimes I also sing the song's melody or the bass line as I play. This really helps to lock everything in. At other times, if I'm playing 8th notes with my hi-hat, I listen to that part to gauge the accuracy of the other parts I'm playing with it. The more closely I listen, the more accurate my hearing becomes. Then I'm able to recognize inconsistencies and adjust accordingly.

3
♩ = 120

4
♩ = 106

5
♩ = 117

6
♩ = 120

7
♩ = 110

8
♩ = 130

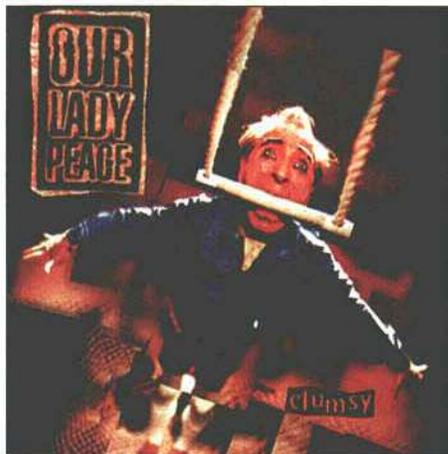
1
♩ = 96

2
♩ = 128



Our Lady Peace's Jeremy Taggart

Clumsy



MUSIC KEY		
Open	O	RC
H.H.	X	X
T.T.	●	●
S.D.	●	●
F.T.	●	●
B.D.	●	●
H.H.	●	●
w/foot	X	

"Jeremy Taggart rules!" was scrawled on a note that recently showed up at the *Modern Drummer* offices. The young Canadian drummer obviously has his fans. Apparently so does the band he plays in, the Toronto-based foursome Our Lady Peace.

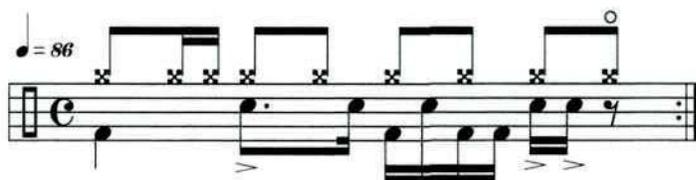
OLP's second album, *Clumsy*, was just released, making it clear why Taggart is perking drummers' ears. Jeremy has an energetic style that sounds as if it's inspired by players like Matt Cameron and Dave

Abbruzzese—a heavy alternative approach with lots of power and good technique. But there's another element in the mix as well: Taggart doesn't hold back. He plays with an abandon—almost a cockiness—that reminds one a bit of, dare we say it, the great Keith Moon. Fire and freedom burst from his drums.

Taggart's flowing, free-style approach makes his parts tough to transcribe, as he doesn't often repeat patterns over and over. Jeremy constantly embellishes and adds rhythmic commentary to the music around him. That said, the following examples, taken from *Clumsy*, are the "core" patterns he plays. Pick up the record to hear Jeremy elaborate on these beats, as well as to get a load of some of the fun fills he plays.

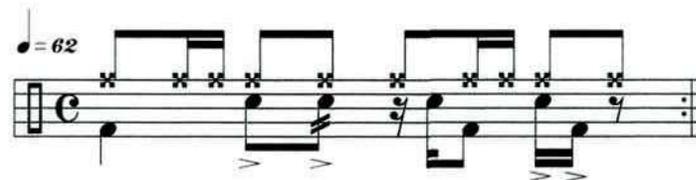
"Superman's Dead"

Here's the groove Taggart plays during the verse. (You'll notice he has a penchant for playing on 4 and the "e" of 4.)



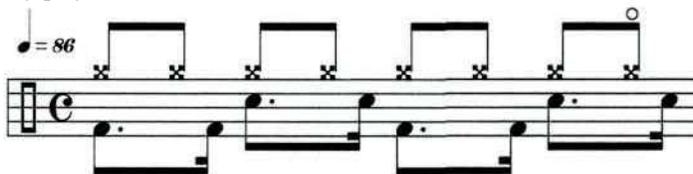
"4am"

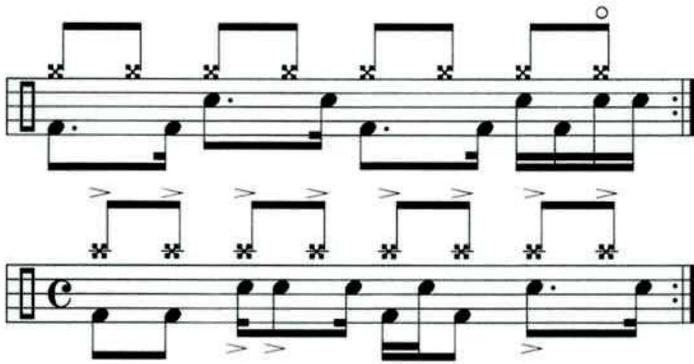
This tune features a loose, flowing verse groove (shown) that builds to a solo section that Jeremy peppers with some bodacious fills.



"Clumsy"

The first example is the two-measure verse groove—Oasis-style. The second is the chorus pattern, played full-tilt with Taggart riding on his crash cymbal. Check out the three tasty fills Jeremy plays in the instrumental section—ah, the tension and release.





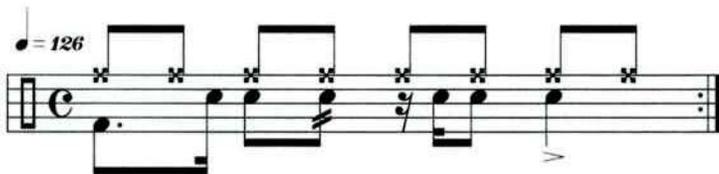
"Let You Down"

Jeremy's floor tom riding gives this one a nice kick.



"The Story Of 100 Aisles"

This simple verse groove adds to the Middle Eastern vibe of the track.



"Car Crash"

The verse begins with a pared-down groove (first example), then builds subtly with the hi-hat part adding a little syncopated slice of fun. The big explosions follow.



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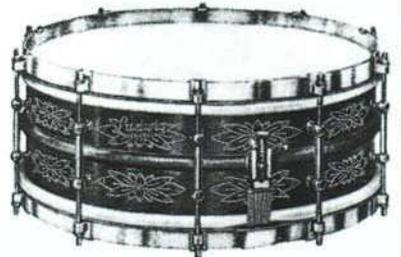


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Ray Marchica

Rosie O'Donnell's Non-Specialist

by Rick Van Horn

The hottest talk/variety show on television today is undoubtedly *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*. And while the lion's share of the show's success is due to the popularity of Rosie herself, she is ably supported by a crack five-piece band

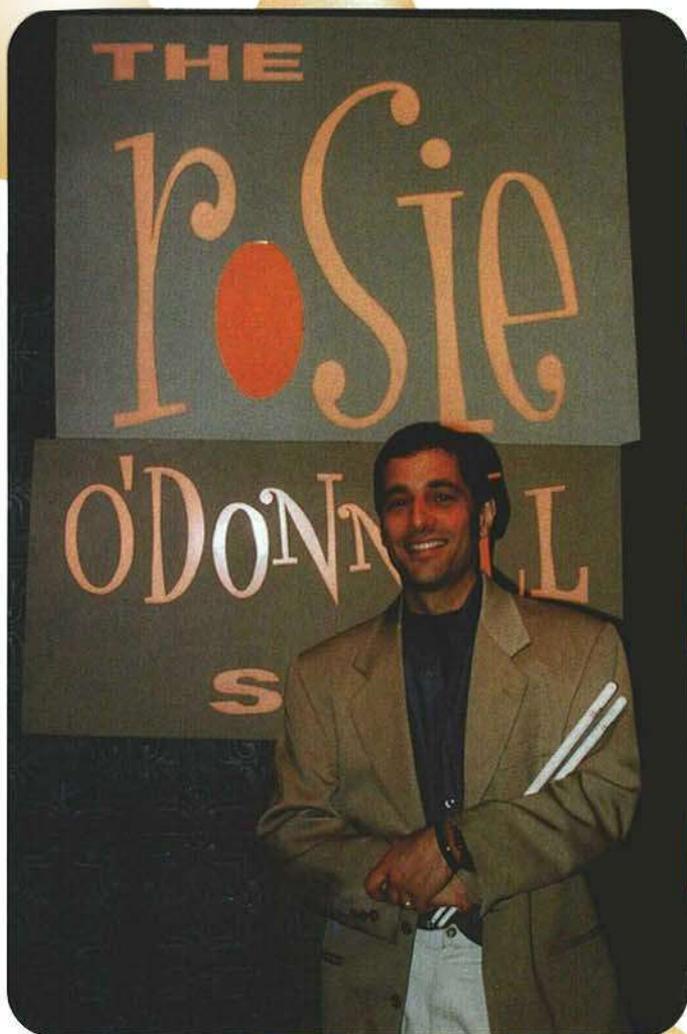
known as the McDLTs (named for their musical director, John McDaniel). Whether it's backing Rosie's varied musical guests, covering commercial breaks, or jumping in when Rosie spontaneously launches into a jingle or TV theme song, the McDLTs have to be ready for absolutely anything—which suits drummer Ray Marchica just fine. With an extensive resume of pop gigs, Broadway musicals, and show tours to his credit, Ray is well prepared to fill TV's hottest "hot seat."

The last time *MD* spoke to Ray was in 1989. At that time, he was making minor Broadway history by being the first drummer to play a major musical (Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Starlight Express*) on an all-electronic drumkit. During that show's run Ray was called to do a New Year's gig with Tommy Tune in St. Louis. When *Starlight* closed soon after, Ray continued to tour with Tune. He also subbed on *Les Miserables* and *City Of Angels*, before landing the full-time drum chair for the *Will Rogers Follies*.

After a successful run with *Will Rogers*, Ray was called to play the revival of *Damn Yankees*. "The conductor asked me to listen to Bobby Darin records," recalls Ray, "especially 'Somewhere Beyond The Sea.' They wanted that very loose, swinging big band style—with 'go for it' fills. So that was a fun show to do."

When *Damn Yankees* closed, Ray was called for another revival: *How To Succeed In Business (Without Really Trying)*. It proved to be a very different musical experience. "On *Damn Yankees* they knew what they wanted before they even called me," says Ray. "But I jumped into *How To Succeed* from the beginning. It was a little frustrating to go out of town and live in the dancers' world for three months while they were experimenting. I'd literally sit for half an hour while they tried a spin or a turn. But I'd have to be there because they needed the drums to try those things with. Of course it really turned out well in the end."

Ray's Broadway career kept him busy for the next six years, after which he returned to subbing. This included touring with Broadway star Bernadette Peters. "We played with symphony orchestras all over the country," says Ray. "That's a great experience, but the time feel is kind of weird because a symphony is just so big. It's hard to move that many people when you still have to play softly. You can't bash with reckless abandon, like I did in *Damn Yankees*. There's an art to making it exciting while playing



dynamically."

In what might seem a complete "left turn" for a show drummer, Ray has been playing regularly with the Ed Palermo Big Band—a group that specializes in the challenging music of Frank Zappa. "The hardest chart we do is a tune called 'Echidna's Arf,'" he says, "which goes from 4/4 time into 9/16, 11/16, 13/16.... It's just great." The band played New York City's Bottom Line this past spring, and released an album in June.

"When I went to Brooklyn College in the late '70s," Ray continues, "my teacher was Arnie Lang, who's the percussionist for the New York Philharmonic. The classical training that I received from him obviously ties to Frank Zappa, who was a classical musician working in rock 'n' roll. But Arnie was into all kinds of music. He'd come in from playing with the Philharmonic and start to talk about Billy Cobham, Billy Higgins, Charles Ives, Edgard Varese, and Tito Puente. He gave me a wonderful education in terms of being open to all styles of music. Of course, since I'm close to forty, pop/rock is the music of my generation, so I love John Bonham, Charlie Watts, and Bobby Colomby. That Blood, Sweat & Tears record with "Spinning Wheel" on it was a big influence. But my favorite drummers were Mitch Mitchell, Ginger Baker, and Aynsley Dunbar. When I play the Frank Zappa stuff, I try to think of their vibe.

"I want to mention Hal Blaine, too," Ray adds. "He was the greatest. If you listen to his drum parts on all those records—that's it. There's a real art to being able to fit onto anything—being able to switch gears in a second. I just love doing that. Playing so many different gigs has sort of defined my specialty—which, as it turns out, is not to be a specialist in any one area."

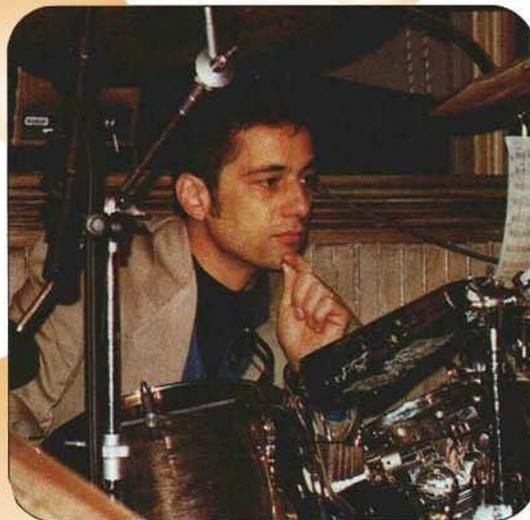
When the band for *The Rosie O'Donnell Show* was being formed, a non-specialist was exactly what was called for. In a fortunate coincidence, bandleader John McDaniel had previously worked with Tommy Tune, and knew of Ray's abilities. He called Ray for an audition, and the drum chair for the McDLTs was filled. At that point, however, Ray quickly learned that live television didn't recognize "musicians' hours."



Ray and the rest of the McDLTs rehearse with Maureen McGovern's musical director (at the piano) prior to taping. In fifteen minutes the crack group has the chart down.



"Even though as a drummer you're generally a sideman, you also have to be a leader. But you have to lead diplomatically. It's a matter of professionalism."



Ray listens intently to instructions from bandleader John McDaniel. Owing to Rosie O'Donnell's spontaneous nature, Ray has to be ready for anything.

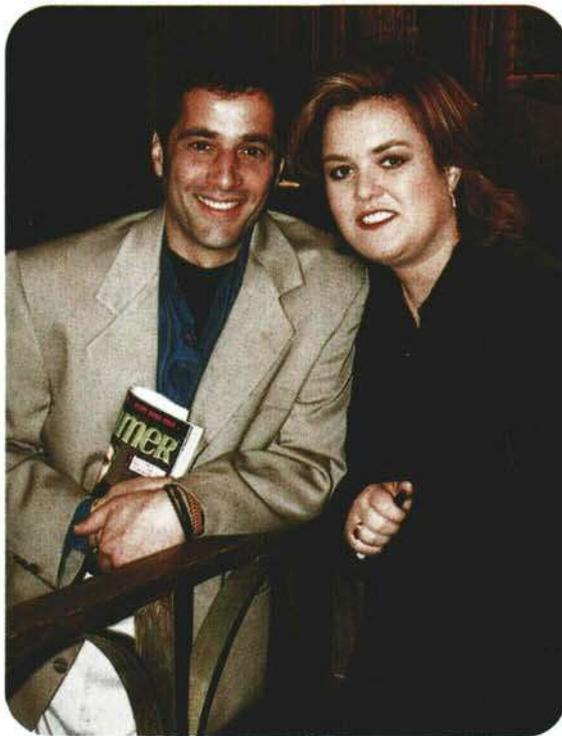
"When I first started, the show was broadcast completely live. That meant rehearsing the show and playing it on the same day it was shown. We used to be in the studio at 7:30 every morning, kicking butt—then out on the street by 11:30 after the show had aired. Now it's a lot easier because we don't have to be *in* till 11:30 and the show is on a taped delay. We tape on Monday for broadcast on Tuesday."

One thing that Ray has always found easy about his gig is working with his talented bandmates. "Our guitar player is Rodney Jones," says Ray, "who's a wonderful, all-around musician. He played with Dizzy Gillespie, Maceo Parker, and Ruth Brown. The bass player is Tracy Wormworth, who's played with Sting, the B-52's, and Wayne Shorter. Morris Goldberg, who plays saxophones and flute, has worked with Paul Simon and Harry Belafonte. And John McDaniel is an incredible keyboardist—and a leader who knows *exactly* what to do in this job. He also has a great rapport with Rosie. At a moment's notice, she might sing a pop tune from the '70s or '80s, a song from an obscure off-Broadway musical, a TV theme, or a commercial jingle. John knows them all. When those things come up, I just watch John for the feel and play softly so I don't cover up Rosie's lyrics."

The *Rosie* show differs from most daytime "talk shows" in that it regularly features musical performers as guests. In addition, the band plays "ins" and "outs" to and from commercial breaks. There's also a warm-up period for the studio audience (which, regrettably, the TV audience doesn't get to hear). That's a lot to put together for each show.

"We definitely play a variety of stuff," agrees Ray. "A lot of it is familiar pop tunes—but we give them a little special treatment. For example, the tune might be a ballad, but we'll do a funk version of it. On TV the feel has to be exaggerated, because you may only get to hear the music for ten seconds at a clip. What we do is step up the dynamic level. For instance, on a tune where the original recording featured a tight hi-hat, I'll use the ride cymbal to open up the sound and get a bigger feel.

"I've been learning a lot about different styles on this gig," Ray continues. "In the audience warm-up set we play a lot of funk. Rodney plays with Maceo Parker, and



Ray and Rosie have something in common: Rosie formerly drummed for a rock band.

Tracy is heavy into James Brown. So we talk about those grooves, and how they involve inside ghost notes on the drums. It's fun to experiment...to do 'Satin Doll' or 'A Train' and then go right to a James Brown thing. There is a real art to doing all those styles with authenticity."

The variety Ray mentions is illustrated by the material the band is scheduled to play on the day *MD* visits the *Rosie* show. The musical guest is stylish songstress Maureen McGovern, who will perform a bossa nova version of "How Do You Keep The Music Playing?" "Material like that sounds easy," says Ray. "But we have to get the right feel, and there are always some subtle little touches." Later in the show the band will play a brief rendition of "Wipeout," followed by a rock 'n' roll version of "The ABC Song" for a spot featuring pre-schoolers reading with Rosie. "With all this varied material," says

Ray, "we really have to focus on dynamics in order to make things work."

"Making things work" also involves rapid-fire cues and split-second timing. After all, this is television, and the cameras are on. According to Ray, he learned the hard way to *always* watch the musical director. "A guest artist was making an entrance from the back of the theater, behind the audience. I got caught up in the excitement of the show, and I was looking back at the artist. The next thing I knew, the band started playing without me! Now, no matter how tempted I am to look at Rosie, or at a film clip, I *have* to watch John at all times.

"This gig puts extra pressure on me as the drummer," Ray adds, "because *everything* starts out with the drums. When I first got the gig I thought, I'd better get some real slick fills to start out these tunes.' But as it turns out, what works best is real simple stuff—a two-beat fill or a one-bar fill—and then meat & potatoes time playing. We're usually only playing sixteen bars, and if I establish the wrong feel, by the time we figure out what the *right* feel is, we're done. And it's taped live—we don't get any overdubs."

They don't get much rehearsal time, either. The rehearsal for Maureen McGovern's appearance, for instance, begins at 11:30 in the morning. Maureen's pianist/musical director arrives, greets the band, passes out charts, and immediately starts giving directions: "Okay, I want a hit here...ritard this...take this 8th note and tie it over that...we're going to cut the introduction in half...." The band runs through the parts three times, smoothing out a few "wrinkles." By 11:45 the musical director is satisfied, so John McDaniel runs the band through the day's play-on and play-off material until 12:15, when Maureen McGovern comes in for her run-through. Some of the changes made in the earlier rehearsal are un-made, and new changes are added—all in about twenty min-

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Photo by Gary D'Ercole

utes' time. Ray and the rest of the band are required to adjust instantly.

And that's for a chart that is relatively simple. Ray describes a similar situation that wasn't so easy. "Just yesterday," he says, "we had a very tricky chart for a dance number by a group of kids. We didn't know anything about it ahead of time. It started out with a drum fill with the camera close up on the snare drum. And then there were a lot of cuts; we actually had to follow arrows. After the first ending we had to cut to the second coda, then jump to the end—where there was another drum fill. After we had rehearsed it and gotten the arrangement down, the dancers came in—and immediately said, 'The band is too loud.' So we had to play softer. Again, it called for keeping the intensity while being able to play softly."

In the little more than a year that Ray has been doing the show, has there ever been an instance when the brief rehearsal time was insufficient to prepare for the taping? "Not really," Ray replies. "The closest we came to that was on the second show we ever did—which was almost a disaster. The show featured a big production number from *Bring In Da Noise, Bring In Da Funk*. Fortunately we had been given a tape of the music the night before, so we knew the feel. But we still had to coordinate with eight tap dancers trading fours over a hip-hop kind of groove. The problem was that I couldn't hear their taps. Finally I just stopped and asked for more taps in the monitor. You can't be afraid as a drummer. If you can't hear something, you're not going to be able to play with it. So if you can't hear the vocals—or in my case, the tap dancers—you have to speak up.

"Egotistical as it might sound," Ray continues, "it's true that a band is only as good as the drummer. The groove, the tempo, and the feel of a tune is only going to be as good as we make it. In an article that *MD* did on J.R. Robinson a few years ago, he kept stressing that drummers are leaders. Obviously, John McDaniel is our *bandleader*, but when he counts off a tune and I come in with a drum fill, from that point I set the tone. So even though as a drummer you're generally a Sideman, you also have to be a leader. But you have to lead diplomatically. It's a matter of professionalism."

In Ray's case, professionalism doesn't mean just supporting the band and pleasing the bandleader. As it happens, Rosie O'Donnell's musical background goes beyond knowing every pop tune and commercial jingle ever made. "Rosie was the drummer in an all-girl rock group years ago," says Ray. "So she knows the drums. When we play 'Wipeout,' I guarantee you she'll start playing along with her pencils."

The studio where the *Rosie O'Donnell* show is taped holds 170 people. Does Ray think in terms of playing for those people, or for the several million people watching the show on TV? "I really try to just play to the room," Ray replies. "On the other hand, I went to the NAMM show last January and met Steve Gadd—one of my all-time idols—and he told me that he watches the show. I thought to myself, 'Boy, Steve Gadd is hearing *me*.' It wasn't intimidating; actually it felt great. But it did set a goal for me: 'You never know who's listening, so just play good all the time.'"



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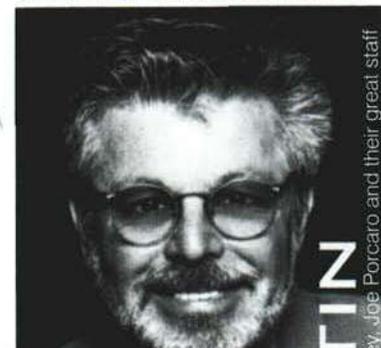
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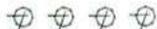
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RECORDINGS

Bill Bruford

If Summer Had Its Ghosts (Discipline)

drummer: **Bill Bruford**

with Ralph Towner (gtr, kybd), Eddie Gomez (bs)

Bill Bruford has never been one to lie dormant in any particular style or musical element, which is partially why he has become one of the most respected drummer/composers of our time. From his roots in progressive rock with such innovative groups as Yes, King Crimson, and U.K., to his classic solo releases and highly acclaimed Earthworks project, Bruford consistently finds a way to dismantle and reshape the rhythmic concept in a non-traditional artistic fashion.

If Summer Had Its Ghosts finds Bruford exploring an acoustic trio format featuring the subtle sophistication of ECM guitarist/keyboardist Ralph Towner and legendary jazz bassist Eddie Gomez. For drummers (living under a rock) unfamiliar with Mr. Bruford's playing, first listen to the final track, "Now Is The Next Time." This will acclimate you to the essence of Bruford's flawless technique and stylistic expression of timekeeping. Next, move to "Some Other Time," a duet in 5/8 with master drummer Joe Morello on a reconstructed version of "Far More Drums," which Morello originally recorded with Dave Brubeck. This melodic old-school-style drum duet clearly expresses Bruford's love and respect for his idols Morello and Max Roach.

Then discover Bruford's explorations into electronics with the hypnotic "Silent Pool," featuring sampled clay pots. More sampled percussion textures, such as the Thai kongwongle, can be found on the 6/8-based "Splendour Among Shadows," as Bruford toys with the time between 6/8 and a shuffle groove. On "Thistledown" a sampled African mbira whispers behind a classical Spanish melody while Bruford plays melodic free time. Bill even breaks out the brushes on the elegant ballad "Amethyst," and on "Never The Same Way Once" and "Forgiveness" he displays the stickwork of a veteran jazz player.

If Summer Had Its Ghosts has all the tasteful ingredients of Bruford's perfection: odd meters, electronics, melodic acoustic drumset playing, and the wisdom of generations of imagination. Listen and learn.



Mike Haid

Primus

Brown Album (Interscope)

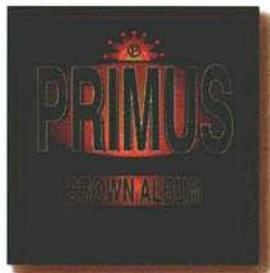
drummer: **Brain**

with Les Claypool (bs, vcl), Larry LaLonde (gtr)

If you read this magazine on a regular basis, you've surely heard that Tim "Herb" Alexander has vacated his position as Primus's timekeeper. That's right, a guy named Herb has passed the torch to a guy named Brain. However, since this band is still called Primus, we pretty much know what to expect: goofy vocal vignettes and delightfully screwy guitar melodies set to throbbing basslines and lumbering drums. The most significant new development on the *Brown Album* is that Primus is getting funkier, if only just a bit (as on "Kalamazoo").

In keeping with the band's proven formula, Brain retains many of Alexander's Primus trademarks: the plodding beat, the thunderous tom-toms, the fast rolls on the hi-hat, and the shimmering splash accents. But he plays it a bit straighter than Herb, using a smaller kit (with a deeper snare drum) and playing fills that are less over-the-top. And contrasting his predecessor's love for running full-speed on his double bass drums, Brain favors the four-on-the-floor technique on several tunes.

It's clear that with this LP Primus had absolutely no interest



SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

The brainy, droll, mature, and catchy music of Huffamoose gives ample room for drummer **ERIK JOHNSON** to simultaneously provide confident grounding and unpredictable lift to their debut CD, *We've Been Hod Again* (Interscope).

Okay, if we must use the term "Brit-Pop," we will. Two of the best in this nebulous school of English bands equally concerned with crunchiness and catchiness are Supergrass and Radiohead, and both have recently released great albums, of course featuring quite wonderful drummers. Supergrass claims they're only *In It For The Money* (Capitol), but with a wink and a nod the boys extend their previous punk-pop sound into Kinks-y territories and beyond, giving drummer **DANNY GOFFEY** plenty to explore and explode. Radiohead's new one is the sublimely dramatic *OK Computer* (Capitol), on which **PHIL SELWAY** does much the same with solid and tasty patterns.

The ever-wonderful, ever-funky "It's Your Thing" and "That Lady" might not appear on these particular albums, but Epic/Legacy's re-release of four classic Isley Brothers albums circa '69-72—*Get Into Something*, *The Brothers: Isley*, *Givin' It Back*, and *Brother, Brother*, *Brother* still document a band incorporating Sly, JB, and Jimi in the grooviest ways possible. **GEORGE MORELAND**'s slithery licks still hold up today—as does much of this material in general—forever documenting the brothers' ease at creating a profound stylistic melting pot.

Rating Scale

- ◆◆◆◆◆ Excellent
- ◆◆◆◆ Very Good
- ◆◆◆ Good
- ◆◆ Fair
- ◆ Poor

in making a brittle, '90s-style digital recording—instead, the whole record has a sweaty and raw analog quality that serves the music well. In fact, it's doubtful that close miking was used on the drums at all. But none of this sonic analysis can prepare the listener for what he or she will find on "Restin' Bones," "Arnie," and "Shake Hands With Beef: Brain's spookily accurate imitation of John Bonham—immense syncopated bass drum grooves, exploding rimshots, and all. Though this is merely a novelty—hey, there's only one Bonzo—it's neat nonetheless.

Michael Parillo

Thread

Thread (Laughing Gull Records)



drummer/percussionist: Doane Perry
with Vince DiCola (kybd), Ellis Hall (vcl)

Thread plays progressive power pop rock similar to what Mr. Mister had much success with in the mid-'80s. Their self-titled CD is a highly produced recording with an emphasis on electronics and multi-layered voices, and the eloquent and versatile voice of Ellis Hall guides each song with spirit and uplifting lyrics. Vince DiCola's technically proficient keyboard work is at times reminiscent of Keith Emerson and the classical motivation that propelled prog rock groups like Kansas and Yes.

Drummer Doane Perry, who is responsible for much of the writing here, is no stranger to prog rock, as a long-standing member of Jethro Tull (whose influences are also heard in this collection). His drums have a big, almost synthetic sound, and Perry always displays solid time and a skilled sense of "fitting the mood."

"Rage" shows his ability to lay down the funk, and "Secrets Of The Game" has an interesting 12/8 shuffle feel complete with a Steve Lukather-sounding guitar solo. Perry exhibits much restraint throughout—that is, until the final, fourteen-minute "Rainbow Suite," a dynamic piece that allows Doane to unleash some lightning-fast fills and solid double bass technique, while also showcasing the group's complex writing abilities. If prog rock is on the rise, Thread will survive. (Laughing Gull Records, M&M Music, PO Box 63, Ashland, MA 01721, tel: [508] 881-6737, e-mail: mmmusic@ix.netcom.com, Web: www.geocities.com/sunsetstrip/4500)

Mike Haid

Jimmy Madison & Friends

90° With 100% Humidity (Blue Chip Jazz)

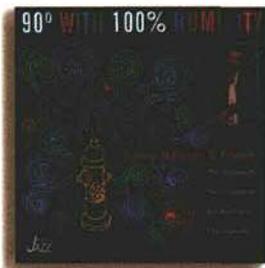


drummer: Jimmy Madison

with Walt Szymanski (trp, flglm), Dave Schnitter (tn sx), Ian MacDonald (pno), Chip Jackson (bs)

The opening bars alone deliver your drum-dollars' worth: Interpreting an uptempo tutti bop head, master Madison plays brushes with fluid phrasing, crisp technique, a melodic sense, and strong, committed swing. The same virtues apply to the band and its straight-ahead jazz material. And Madison burns bright throughout.

The "friends" are four impressive players who have shared the stage with Madison in other bands



through his long, diverse career. Bassist Chip Jackson and Madison had previously joined forces behind Chet Baker and Red Rodney; their bonding history pays off here. Ace trumpeter Szymanski also contributes some fine writing that well suits the band's unpretentious, zestful spirit.

Madison's three-decade presence on the New York scene and his fat resume and discography (backing artists from Art Farmer and Carmen McRae to George Benson and James Brown) should have guaranteed him greater "star" status in the media eye. Nevertheless, swinging speaks louder than hype, and this drummer's statement is strong. (Blue Chip Jazz, PO Box 3, Little Silver, NJ 07739)

Jeff Potter

Jayuya

Jayuya (Cosmic/Caroline)



drummer/percussionist: Luis Blanco

with Aib Gomez-Delgado (vcl, sx, gr, perc), Jose Ayala-Rubio (gr, vcl), Ted Nordlander (bs, synth, vcl), Alec Haavik (sx, fl, trb, perc, vcl)

If there were a CBGB in San Juan, these guys would be house favorites; fans could come to mosh or mambo. This outrageous, bizarre, and burning quintet blends salsa grooves (especially Puerto Rican influences), avant-rock, a touch of Sun Ra, and punk-funk attitude in a lively debut CD that shows why they're one of Boston's favorite world music bands.

The brash wail of the comic-menacing vocals, gritty horns, and aggressive rhythm section isn't for timid ears, but the energy, fun, and surprising textures are irresistible. The muscular grooves of Venezuelan-born Luis Blanco play a huge role in pulling off this risky hybrid sound. And he knows how to deftly jump from clean, tasteful grooves to raging thrash. There's something new under the tropical urban sun with these hot plantain-punksters. (Cosmic Records, PO Box 382391, Cambridge, MA 02238)



Jeff Potter

Pete Escovedo

E Street (Concord Jazz, Inc.)

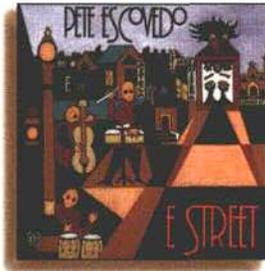


drummer/percussionists: Pete Escovedo, Sheila E, Juan Escovedo, Peter Michael Escovedo, Paul Van Wagningen
with Jeff Ghimenti (pno), Steve Erquiaga (gr), Derek Jones (bs), Robbie Kwock (flghn, trp), Buddy Montgomery (vbs), Renatao Neto (pno), Ray Obiedo (gr), Bill Ortiz (trp), Mark Van Wagningen (bs), others

Many are aware of Pete Escovedo's work with artists such as Carlos Santana, Herbie Hancock, Stephen Stills, Boz Scaggs—and his own band, Azteca. Fewer, perhaps, know Pete is a veteran in the Latin music field, having worked with Mongo Santamaria, Cal Tjader, and Tito Puente. It is with this diverse background of experience that Escovedo has developed his unique style with elements of jazz, smooth jazz, pop, R&B, and various styles of Latin music.

On his latest release, *E Street*, Escovedo continues to enhance his reputation as a bandleader unlimited by musical styles. Keeping it all in the family, *E Street* is produced by Pete and his son, Peter Michael Escovedo, and also features Sheila E and

Juan Escovedo. Highlights include Peter Michael's Latin/funk drumset patterns and Pete and Juan's "timbal" and conga work on Earth, Wind & Fire's "Fantasy" and Stevie Wonder's "Another Star," which include elements of guaguanco and samba, as well as funk; Paul Van Wageningen's kit work on "Boomerang," which starts with a funk line, goes to swing, and jumps right back to a heavy backbeat; and "Like A Volcano," a Latin/funk tune that showcases Sheila on drumset taking a Weckl-type solo—musical, powerful, and precise.



The drumset and percussion on *E Street* keep you on the alert because they don't necessarily play one rhythm throughout a tune. Just when you think, "Oh, this tune is a cha cha cha or a mozambique," it's already going into something else. Pete Escovedo has shown us that a true "melting pot" is possible with his rich combination of varied sounds from around the globe. (Concord Jazz, Inc., PO Box 845, Concord, CA 94522, tel: [510] 682-6770, fax: [510] 682-3508)

Victor Rendon

VIDEOS

Clayton Cameron Live At PAS Steve Gadd Live At PAS

(CPP Media)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕
level: all

\$19.95, 60 minutes (each)

Simply (and sometimes clumsily) recorded, these two videos from PASIC 1995 are nonetheless full of great tricks and inspiring stickwork. In the case of Clayton Cameron, it's the brushwork and his sense of history that delivers the goods. Clayton talks extensively about working with Sammy Davis Jr. and all the tap dancers that Sammy performed with, and does a fascinating and breathtaking collage of his interpretations of the styles of these dancers. The personable drummer explains his brush techniques in a fun, clear style.



The same is true on Steve Gadd's PAS video. Left to himself, with no interviewer to steer him quickly away to the next topic, Gadd really thinks about his playing and gets to the heart of it, calmly demystifying some of his monster grooves with a very likable humor and humility (and

gives credit to Don Alias for his famous Latin-funk pattern on Paul Simon's "Late In The Evening"). When Luis Conte and Alex Acuna join Gadd, this video truly becomes a master class.

Robin Tolleson

BOOKS

FastTrack Music Instruction: Drums 1

by Blake Neely and Rick Mattingly

(Hal Leonard)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕

level: beginner

\$7.98 (with CD)

FastTrack Music Instruction: Drums 1 Songbook

no author credited

(Hal Leonard)

⊕

level: beginner

\$12.98 (with CD)

After the first drums appear under the Christmas tree, there's a dreaded/wonderful period during which a kid never changes out of his pajamas and thrashes out a non-stop free-form solo for extended hours—perhaps days, depending on the speed of the advancing axe-armed neighbors. Before the neophyte gets serious, finds a teacher, and faces method books riddled with sober capital "Ls" and "Rs," the student-to-be might benefit from Neely's book.

This is a self-starter volume with an emphasis on fun, offering an introduction to kit methods aimed at quickly teaching beginners to play basic rock beats. As a get-your-feet-wet guide, it's a good way to keep a young one inspired while also nudging towards the eventual step to discipline. The "FastTrack" series' gimmick is the closing section: each book, featuring other instruments, is compatible with others, allowing learning buddies to play together.

Whereas the instructional Neely/Mattingly book is worthwhile, the detached "Songbook" supplement takes a wrong turn, deflating its dive-in fun theory. Boasting "Get ready to jam" and "Start playing the hits immediately," it's a collection of scores including drum, guitar, keyboard, and bass parts to mostly well-worn '50s, '60s, and '70s classic rock tunes. (No way, dude, that's the old man's music!) The CD features sterile play-along rhythm tracks with a piano stiffly plunking out the melodies; it's enough to flatten any kid's enthusiasm.

Parents, I beseech you: If you want your budding, chomping-at-the-bit prodigies to start with inspiration and open ears, urge them to grab a pair of headphones, a stack of CDs (especially the beloved discs that drive *you* nuts), and live it up. Much later, when the horse has been led to water, you can feed 'em *Stick Control*. I shudder to imagine junior garage bands sitting at music stands, plodding dutifully through the songbook's note-for-note scores of "Piano Man."

Jeff Potter

When The Drummers Were Women A Spiritual History Of Rhythm

by Layne Redmond

(Three Rivers Press)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕

level: all

\$18

Combining a passion for drumming, scholarly rigor, and feminist sensibilities, Layne Redmond offers a unique and important book with *When The Drummers Were Women: A Spiritual History Of Rhythm*. Redmond, a world-renowned frame drummer, establishes with great detail the little-known history of women in early civilizations who were spiritual leaders drawing and expressing strength and power through hand

drumming. The author then holds nothing back as she tells how the Christian patriarchy forbid women to drum, thus stripping them of their spiritual role and expression.

Redmond supports her claim of women's involvement in ancient religions by reviewing the art on hand drums, cave carvings, and other archeological evidence from early Mediterranean cultures. She then traces women's continuing religious leadership along with their use of various frame drums in religious celebrations. She also reveals how women used drumming to connect with the rhythms of nature, including the change of the seasons and human reproduction. All of this research is accompanied by a wealth of illustrations, including a reference map, a timeline, and photographs of artifacts, drums, and drummers.

In the final two chapters, Redmond gives her study a contemporary update. Chapter 12, "The Technology Of Rhythm," reviews how rhythm permeates human biology, including the pulse of the heartbeat and right/left brain activity and its relation to various states of consciousness. Finally, discussing her involvement with women-only drum circles and mixed-gender drumming groups, Redmond portrays a modern culture in which the spiritual power of the frame drum is rediscovered by women and men alike. Her description of various rituals serves as a good primer for readers wishing to start their own spiritual-based drumming circles.

An important read for any drummer, male or female.

Harriet L. Schwartz

Splashdown: Hi-Hat Splashes For Rock Drumming

by Joel Rothman

(JR Publications)



level: all

\$7.95

The Turtle Factor For Rock Drumming At A Snail's Pace

by Joel Rothman

(JR Publications)



level: all

\$9.95

Joel Rothman has added two new books to his collection of eighty-four publications. *Splashdown* concentrates on the effect of striking the top hi-hat cymbal against the bottom within a groove. The book starts with 8th-note figures with snare drum, and Rothman reminds us about "ghosting" snare drum notes that are not on backbeats. The reader should be comfortable with all the subdivisions of a beat into 16th notes, ties, 8th-note triplets, and 12/8 time. These forty-eight pages represent a good composite of splashes found within common rock grooves, and provide a good start to using the "least used limb," the left foot. Rothman's decision to indicate where the hi-hat closes under the rhythms makes it easier for students to understand and play these splashes.

The Turtle Factor is designed to help players subdivide beats at slow tempos, the idea being that as we break beats down into smaller subdivisions, it helps us to not rush. Rothman offers grooves to set up this concept that include the use of subdivisions of 16th notes, 16th-note triplets, 32nd notes, and some quintuplets and septuplets. Some grooves also incorporate two-bar breaks. I found that experienced teachers can customize the material here to the student's needs and performance levels, and that students enjoyed working with this material. Overall, a good book to help players realize that playing more notes per beat will help to "put the brakes on the tempo."

Gary J. Spellissey

Mel Bay's Super-chops

by Voyce McGinley III

(Mel Bay Publications)



level: intermediate

\$14.95

The subtitle of this book is "A Source Book Of Chop-Building Techniques With A Comprehensive Look Into The World Of Backsticking." Voyce McGinley III not only explores drum corps (rudimental) drumming, Latin rhythms, and double bass drumming here, he also includes trivia, Egyptian drumming, the birth of drum notation, the origin of drum rudiments, backsticking, Swiss drumming, Latin drumming, Morse code, and shuffles.

Superchops is an eclectic if erratic mix of rudiments and rhythms. The author—who neither includes a biographical background nor credentials—begins with a fairly thorough explanation of the notation used in the book, and then covers over 4,000 years of drum history in twenty pages! The first exercise to incorporate backsticking is on page 30, although the explanation of backsticking begins on page 32. More exercises follow (including ones featuring rudiments and odd meters), as do more annoyances. In the Swiss drumming exercises, for example, a notation for a flam is used that was not explained with the rest of the notation. (He even misspells the word "corps" many times.) Still, McGinley has put together an entertaining variety of snare and set lessons that, taken with a grain of salt, might be of some benefit to curious drummers.

Lauren Vogel Weiss

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The Drummer As Recording Artist

Part 6: Veterans' Reflections And Conclusions

by Hal Howland

I live in Washington, D.C., a city that boasts a diverse music scene about as healthy as any outside New York, Los Angeles, or Nashville. For thoughts on independent recording I called three longtime friends whose local prominence and growing national and international presence make them realistic role models.

Tom Teasley, a versatile musician who teaches at several area schools and universities, has two CDs. *Balancing Act* came out in 1989, and *Time Travel* has been out a couple of months. Both are on his own label, TNT.

"Try to conceive of the finished product," Tom advises. "The music was the easiest thing to deal with. Take care of the copyrights, the artwork, all that other stuff, right from the beginning.

"There are different reasons to put something out. One reason is just to document what you're working on at a specific time. But if you're trying to reach national airplay or get ranked on the Gavin chart [140 2nd St., San Francisco, CA 94105], you could do yourself a favor by checking out what's happening. For example, right now you could see that almost a quarter of the things in the Gavin chart are B-3 organ based; once again that's trendy. That has become more important to me, to reach the kind of audience I'm interested in. It wasn't anything I was aware of until after the fact, when I started tracking [my CD's] progress. [Yet timelessness may be critical to an artist who cannot afford to release an album every year.]

"On this last recording, since I played drums, vibes, marimba, hand percussion, the *malletKAT*, keyboards, strings, and bass, it made me look at things from the perspective of another instrumentalist. That became especially apparent when I started mixing. From a drummer's perspective, the tendency, especially if you've done much freelance work on other CDs, is to say, 'How do the drums sound? How is my role fitting in?' When you produce

something, whether you're playing the other instruments or not, it makes you become very much aware of the quality of sound.

"I recorded both CDs at Prodigital [(202) 319-5588], housed at Catholic University, and Alan Wonneberger was the engineer on both. He's a good drummer himself, and I really like the drum sound he got."

Balancing Act and *Time Travel* are distributed by NorthCountry (see Part 1) and sold by Steve Weiss Music, PO Box 20885, Philadelphia, PA 19141, (215) 329-1637, and by Lone Star Percussion, 10611 Control PL, Dallas, TX 75238, (214) 340-0835.

Brooks Tegler, noted Gene Krupa expert, *Radio King* aficionado, and leader of the globe-trotting group Hot Jazz, says, "We have recorded six albums. The first four were independent. The first was in '84, an album [vinyl] called *Cookin'*. That was also Big Mo's [(301) 946-7364] very first mobile recording project. The next, with John Kirby and Artie Shaw, was produced by Johnson McCree's label, at that time called Fat Cat Jazz. That came out on cassette only. After that was a live recording we did at the Ice House Cafe, in Herndon, Virginia, on cassette only. That's on my trumpet player's company, B-Flat Music Productions [(800) 442-3528]. In 1986, the year Benny Goodman died, we did a Goodman tribute called *Fanfare For A King*. That came out on the

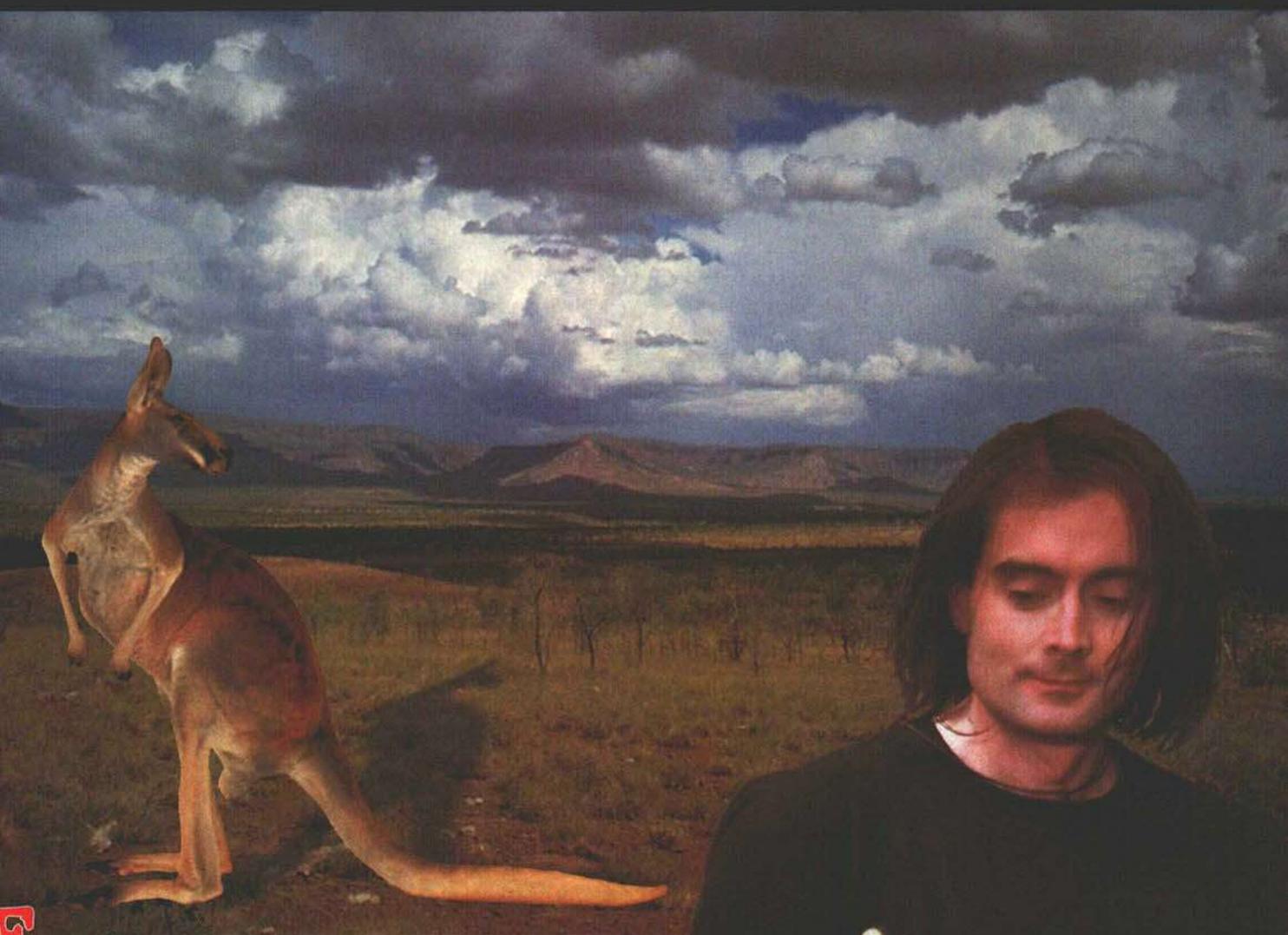
BeauTie label, put together by myself and Beau Dudley. That one actually still does well. Then the next two were CDs. The first was called *Keep 'Em Flyin'*, which was on CD and cassette, through one of George Buck's labels, Circle [176 Decatur St., New Orleans, LA 70130, (504) 888-9849]; he's got a huge catalog that goes all over the world. Most of that was Krupa Sextet stuff. The last one came out on Big Mo a year ago, called *And Not Only That*. There's a European distributor and a domestic one [Bayside Distribution, 2609 Del Monte St., W. Sacramento, CA 95691 (916)373-2548].

"The predominant lesson I have learned is: Know what you're going to do before you ever step into a studio. If you go in there

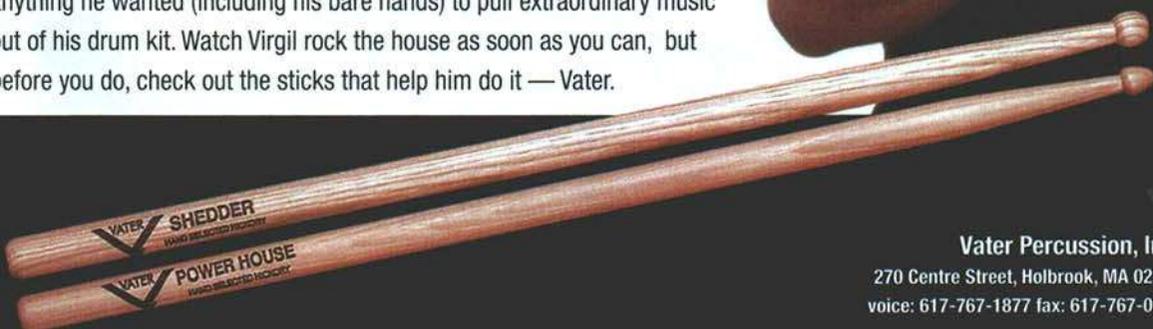
"Contacting record companies... and all the rejections... was very discouraging. Sending these tapes out, packages and bios and pictures, it's not unlike putting a message in a bottle and throwing it out to sea."

Tony Martucci

Ever wonder where **Virgil Donati** learned how to kick?



Every once in a while someone comes along that is so naturally talented and unbelievably proficient that they seem to defy the laws of physics. That someone is Virgil Donati. Comments from even the most famous and experienced players on the scene range from "I'm burning my drum set" to "I can't wait to get home and practice that 'cool foot thing'." Virgil's sticks of choice are two new models from Vater: the Powerhouse and the Shedder. In Virgil's own words, "They're straight, balanced, reliable; and they speak — LOUD"! That's high praise from the man who could use anything he wanted (including his bare hands) to pull extraordinary music out of his drum kit. Watch Virgil rock the house as soon as you can, but before you do, check out the sticks that help him do it — Vater.



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and try to build this thing while you're there, you're going to get in trouble. It took the experience of our first album to teach me that lesson. I've never been that interested in the technical aspect of recording; I cannot sit at a board and go, 'Well, let's do this and try that,' like Danny [Gatton] did. I'm glad of that, because it never deterred me from an artistic focus. I've also been terribly lucky with the engineers I've worked with. The last one was Alan Wonneberger. Alan's a great jazz drummer, so he knew what I was shooting for before I ever opened my mouth. That has a lot to do with it too: getting people who know what you're about.

"My strongest advice [as a recording drummer]: Don't let an engineer tell you what you want your drums to sound like. For *Keep 'Em Flyin'* and *And Not Only That* I wound up using eight different drumsets and nine snare drums. I'm a firm believer in using your own stuff, and that the engineer is there to get the sound of what the band is supposed to be."

Tony Martucci is Washington's first-call modern jazz drummer, and has accompanied everyone from Mose Allison to Sonny Stitt. He reflects on the two CDs he put out on his own, *Earth Tones* and *Collage*, on Sound Judgement Records, also distributed by NorthCountry.

"It was in many ways an enlightening experience getting involved on that level," Tony recalls. "There are some very unpleasant aspects to dealing with the record industry, at least relative to my personality. I certainly wouldn't discourage anyone from taking this step if they feel they have some kind of a statement they want to make. Everybody and their cousin is putting out

CDs—it's become the business card of the '90s—so perhaps the release of your own record these days doesn't have the luster it once did.

"I had been doing some recording with other people, and of course I had been playing for many years. You've done the recording—that's the easy part—and then you start contacting record companies. You're subjected to all these rejections—if they're even courteous enough to reply to you. Or people would lie to me, 'Yeah, we want to put it out,' and disappear from the face of the earth.

"That was very discouraging, shopping around. Sending these tapes out, with packages and bios and pictures, it's not unlike putting a message in a bottle and throwing it out to sea. What you need is someone who's already plugged in to the system, has some contacts, and has the respect of people who are in a position to consider your project. If it's just another package, one of hundreds that come in daily over the transom, it's going to sit there a long time. It may never even get listened to, it might go directly into the trash.

"I haven't pursued [hiring management] very aggressively, but I find it's a catch-22: You can't get any serious management interested in you unless you've got a name and a reputation, and you can't get a name and a reputation unless you're out there on the scene."

Regarding drummers as leaders, Tony says, "In situations where I'm selling my CDs at a gig where everybody else in the band also has CDs, I have observed that the drummer isn't taken as serious-

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ly. In some of these situations, of the recordings that were available, mine were on a much higher level. People, if they're familiar with jazz music at all, could probably count on one hand the drummers who have succeeded as bandleaders. Buddy Rich: There'll never be another Buddy Rich. Maybe they'll think of Art Blakey. How many people think of Tony Williams as a bandleader? Even Gene Krupa: Is he thought of as a bandleader? No, not really, he's kind of the quintessential Drummer Man.

"*Earth Tones* was the first of my two recordings. I decided, All right, I'm going to do this recording. At this point in time I've got no music. Once I committed myself, everything fell into place. I decided who I wanted to play on it. It had nothing to do with the instruments they played, it was about who they were personally and musically. We had two saxophonists on the first record; that was coincidental. If [Joe] Lovano played trombone, it would've been trombone and tenor. If Ellery [Eskelin] played sarrusophone, it would've been sarrusophone.

"Then I started thinking, Who do I want to engineer this? To me the engineer is the sixth person in the band, like George Martin, the fifth Beatle. It was very, very important. I started going through my record collection, picking out records I really liked the vibe and the sound on, and David Baker's name was on most of them. I also knew that he had worked with everybody else in the band. So I called him up, and he agreed, and I felt very fortunate to get him.

"Then I figured, Now what we need is a studio. The two things I'm concerned with there are, does the pianist like the piano in this studio, and can the engineer work in this studio? It's almost like I let the two of them pick the studio. I might end up spending a bit more money than if I went to some guy's loft, but the thing I kept telling myself from the very beginning was, if for any reason when I get done with this I'm unhappy with the results, it's not going to be because I was afraid to spend money. That's not to say I'm throwing money all over the place, but I'm not going to cut corners in that regard. I made sure there was a piano tech there both days—my *own* piano tech, not just somebody the studio has. Make sure everything like that is taken care of. Everybody gets fed. Everybody's comfortable.

"The only thing I would add to this is that as a result of these recordings I've gotten some exposure I wouldn't have had otherwise. I've had some incredibly positive feedback from a lot of people all over the world [including on the Internet]."

From my own perspective, here is a final excerpt from my forthcoming book, *The Human Drummer*:

"By the summer of 1988 the Howland Ensemble had accumulated more than enough credentials to merit a fair listening beyond the Beltway. *The Howland Ensemble*, which *Stereo Review* called 'eloquent, modern, first-class,' has won two 1986 Wammy awards from the Washington Area Music Association, for Best Jazz Recording and Best Debut Recording, as well as nominations for Best Small Jazz Ensemble, Best New Artist, Best Song ('Bedouin Song'), and Best Record Design. We had been one of ten finalists (among nearly two thousand entrants) in the 1988 *Musician* magazine Best Unsigned Band Contest, with 'Bedouin' appearing on the compilation CD *Best Of The BUBs* (Warner Bros. PR4757). We'd been compared in the press to the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Gary Burton, Milt Jackson, Steve Lacy, Oregon, David Sanborn,

and Wayne Shorter. Our concert audiences clearly felt our power and sensitivity....

"In December 1988, after the few labels who bothered to respond had let fly their photocopied rejection slips, I received a beautiful handwritten letter from Giovanni Bonandrini, president of Soul Note Records, Milan (and *Down Beat's* Best Producer for the last decade or so).... He said he wanted to release *Reiko* but had to work out a little problem with his US distribution...that is, he had to *get* some. He'd severed his ties with PolyGram and wanted to find a suitable replacement before releasing a record by a young American group that couldn't get arrested outside its hometown. (That last bit is my realistic assessment; Giovanni was considerably more polite). This was 1988.

"Many detours later, *Reiko* (Howland 2) was released on November 1, 1995, to excellent reviews. In his liner notes, Peter Erskine says, 'Good stuff survives the test of time.'"

Reiko and *The Howland Ensemble* are available through NorthCountry and from Harold Howland Music (EMI), 406 Dove Circle, SW, Vienna, VA 22180-6563, (703) 938-0004.

In closing, let me recommend one course of action that will serve you better than anything else you can do:

Read the bible of independent recording, Diane Rapaport's *How To Make And Sell Your Own Recording* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1992), cover to cover. Then take a long look in the mirror and ask yourself, Is this *really* the best way I could spend fifteen thousand dollars?



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Pro-Mark

FOUNDED 1957 AND GROWING

by Rick Van Horn

Nineteen ninety-seven marks the fortieth anniversary of Pro-Mark, one of the percussion industry's longest-running and most successful family businesses. The company was founded in 1957 when Houston, Texas drummer-turned-retailer Herb Brochstein discovered a Japanese source for drumsticks that were better than those he could obtain domestically. Since then, Pro-Mark has grown into a major manufacturing operation, turning out over two million pairs of sticks annually from its Houston facility alone. (With the additional production of its Japanese factory, the company could probably supply the world's drumstick needs, if necessary.) Pro-Mark sticks are now sold in seventy-five countries around the world to literally millions of loyal consumers.



Brochsteins at the helm: Bari Brochstein Ruggeri (left) is Pro-Mark's director of sales for the US. Wlaury (seated) became president of the company in 1995 and the owner in 1997. Herb (right) founded the company in 1957.

How loyal? Enough to name Pro-Mark as the most consumer service-oriented percussion accessory manufacturer in *Modern Drummer* magazine's most recent Consumer Poll, conducted in 1995. (As a matter of fact, Pro-Mark swept *all five categories* in which it was eligible in that poll—the first manufacturer of *any* percussion product ever to do so.) What sort of company

earns such consumer respect and loyalty? Who runs such a company? And what kind of products can they manufacture that make such an impact on the marketplace?

Actually, the answers to these questions are fairly simple. Pro-Mark is a company totally dedicated to their customers. It's ran by the family of the man who founded it on the basis of that dedication, along with an "extended family" of employees who subscribe to the same principle. Their operating philoso-



"Pro-Markers" in support: marketing director Pat Brown (left) and product development specialist Steve Beck

phy is simple: to manufacture the best drumsticks and other percussive products they can possibly create. And then to stand behind those products—ready, willing, and eager to communicate with the consumers who use them.

Change And Continuation

An anniversary can celebrate change as readily as it can celebrate continuation, and both are represented in Pro-Mark's fortieth anniversary celebration. Change is personified by Herb Brochstein's son Maury, who was named to the position of president in early 1995, and who bought the company outright at the beginning of 1997. But don't get any ideas that the



Company mascot "Luke" (appropriately carved out of solid hickory) stands guard over the room in which wood dowels receive the special treatment that's part of the Millenium II process.

"founding father" plans to fade away. "It's Maury's baby now," says Herb, "but I'll be on hand to serve as advisor, mentor, and 'therapist.'"

Herb's daughter, Bari Brochstein Ruggeri, started with the company eight years ago. "In this company, you begin at the bottom, no matter who your father is," says Bari. "I started in packaging, then I was the receptionist. Then I went into sales and consumer relations." Bari is now the company's domestic sales director.

Herb's youngest son, Max, is also a drummer. He works in Pro-Mark's shipping department, preparing merchandise for



In the ten years since MD last visited Pro-Mark, production has quadrupled. The company expanded from two lathes to seven, and those lathes are running almost constantly—helping to create over two million pairs of sticks annually at Pro-Mark's Houston factory alone.

shipment to consumers around the world. "We ship to seventy-five foreign countries in addition to the US," says Max. "It keeps us pretty busy."

Maury Brochstein stresses the family nature of the entire Pro-Mark staff, saying, "We can't do what we do without *everyone* here. The twenty-nine people who work in our Houston headquarters aren't called 'employees.' We call them 'Pro-Markers.' The average Pro-Marker has been here fifteen years or more. So they may not *be* family members, but they sure *seem* like it."

Key among those not-quite-family 'Pro-Markers' are marketing director Pat Brown, who joined the company twelve years ago and devotes most of his time to advertising and promotions, and Mike Reece, who designs and supervises the operation of the company's manufacturing equipment. Steve Beck joined the company in 1996, bringing with him an extensive background in the percussive industry as the former executive director of the Percussive Arts Society. Steve now has the daunting task of directing Pro-



Even though many manufacturing steps are mechanized, others—like sanding certain areas of the sticks—employ the services of skilled technicians.



Another part of the Millenium II process is the finish applied to the sticks, which is accomplished by tumbling them in large barrels along with a unique finishing material.

Mark's education department and product development efforts. And Jeff Hartsough was recently brought on board to take over the company's artist relations program. Formerly with Columbus Pro Percussion, Jeff is a published author, and the chairman of the Percussive Arts Society Marching Committee. He also writes and arranges for several drumlines and percussion ensembles around the country.

The "continuation" represented by Pro-Mark's fortieth anniversary has to do with ongoing production processes and policies that the company believes set them apart from other drumstick manufacturers. Those are: the *Millenium II* manufacturing process, the Assured Performance Engineering product guarantee, and total attention to customer service and involvement.

Rings Around Pro-Mark

One of the minor legends concerning the history of Pro-Mark drumsticks has to do with the bands or "rings" that have appeared on the sticks over the years. Drummers have come up with all sorts of colorful tales to explain what these various rings have signified. Pro-Mark founder Herb Brochstein now lays all these stories to rest by giving us the real history of the mysterious rings.

"When I first made our initial stick designs," says Herb, "I'd send a sample of an existing stick to our Japanese factory and ask them to make a new model that was a little larger, or a little longer. It never took more than two returned samples before I got the improved model I was looking for. But after a few years, when we were getting some pretty good market recognition, I began to think about how I could make my sticks look different from other Japanese oak sticks that were on the market. I came up with a single gold band that went around the end of the sticks. We trademarked that band around 1981 or '82.

"At just about that same time, the factory in Japan developed an improved way to treat the wood. I wanted to take advantage of that, but how could I identify sticks made in the improved way from the existing inventory of sticks made by the original method? At first we used a metal die with a number on it, and I hired a few people to actually hammer that number into each drumstick! But then I was told about yet another improvement! Well, should I use a different die number to identify *those* models? Sales were getting to a point where we couldn't keep hammering numbers into every single drumstick by hand.

"I figured that the folks in Japan had made their final improvement and that we had achieved marketing success, so I decided to add a thin band alongside the first band on the ends of the sticks. That would identify those sticks as having gone through that particular treatment. And that's how the wide band/thin band combination ultimately became our trademark."

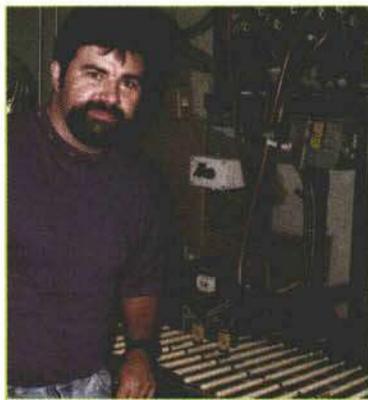
But what about the different color of the bands over the years? "Ahh," says Herb. "That's a story for our fiftieth anniversary."

Millenium II

Pro-Mark's *Millenium II* drumsticks earned the company two of its five *Modern Drummer* Consumer Poll awards: one for innovation and one for most valuable percussion product. Lofty praise for a relatively mundane tool? Not when you consider that a drumstick is a drummer's most personal connection to his or her instrument. But just what does the *Millenium II* process involve?

"We can't tell you exactly what the process is, or we'd have to kill you," says Maury Brochstein—only half joking. "But we can say that it's *not* just a marketing gimmick, as some people originally thought. It's essentially a three-step process that starts by putting the kiln-dried dowels that we get from our wood mills through a special treatment to stabilize their moisture content. This takes place in a room created specifically for the purpose. The treatment helps us to find warped dowels *before* we turn them into drumsticks—allowing us to turn out only top-quality finished sticks, and saving us production costs in the bargain.

"The treatment also tightens up the fibers in the wood," Maury continues, "so that the finished drumsticks are noticeably stronger and more consistent than any we've ever made. That's the second part of the process. The final step is our drumstick finish. Instead of a lacquer, we



Production manager Mike Reece stands in front of a single machine that silk-screens the sticks with their model and logo, dries the ink, and then installs nylon tips on those models designated to receive them. (Wood-tipped models automatically pass the tipper by.)



Max Brochstein prepares sticks for shipment to Pro-Mark customers around the world.

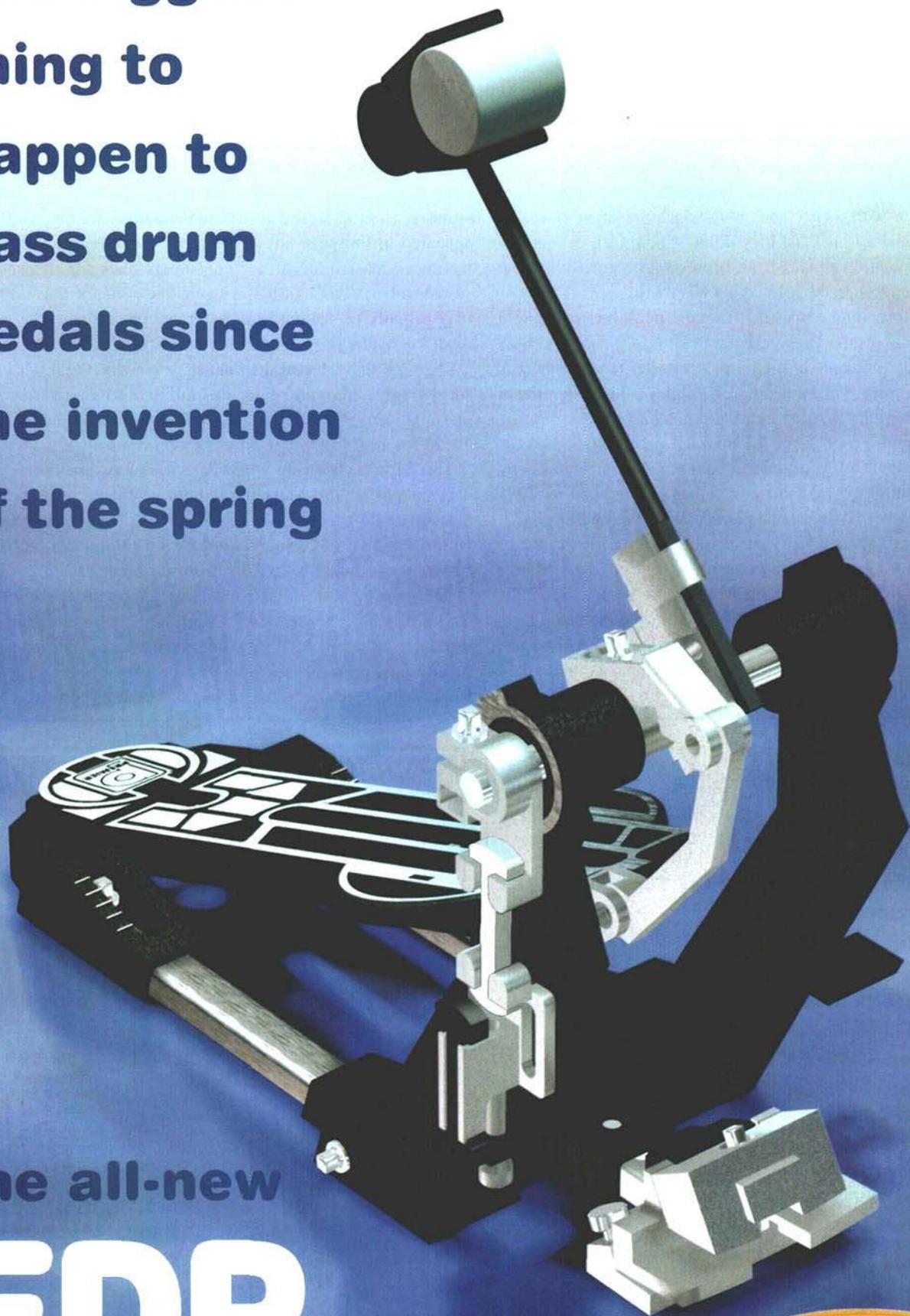
use an environmentally friendly material that seals the wood much better than an ordinary lacquer does. This material gets totally used up in the process, so there's no waste to dispose of. Best of all, after a few minutes of playing the finished sticks, the finish gets warm in the drummer's hands and becomes a little tacky. So the stick stays in the drummer's hands better than one finished with lacquer. The finish also does a better job than lacquer of sealing the wood against moisture, which helps prevent warpage over time."

Product Guarantee

Pro-Mark knows that it's not enough for *them* to believe in the quality of their product line—their *consumers* have to believe in it, too. As a result, Pro-Mark offers the Assured Performance Engineering product guarantee on every drumstick it makes. This guarantee was initiated with a series of "Go A.P.E." advertisements in late 1996. "The ads were a little corny," admits marketing director Pat Brown, "but their intent was entirely serious. Simply stated, the A.P.E. guarantee says that if for any reason a drummer believes that a pair of Pro-Mark sticks has not met reasonable expectations, we'll replace those sticks."

That replacement will *not* be on a "no questions asked" basis, however. In fact, Pro-Mark will ask a *lot* of questions—in a deliberate effort to improve the performance of their sticks. "If we can't find out what's wrong with the sticks," says Bari Ruggeri, "we can't fix it. But if drummers bring our attention to problems that relate to our wood, our production process, or some other element of our manufacturing, then those problems can be corrected. So we *want* to hear their complaints. That's how we can learn."

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Consumer Relations

"Wanting to learn" has led Pro-Mark to make special efforts to involve consumers at virtually every stage of product development and evaluation. One such effort is the "Project X" campaign, which was first instituted several years ago and was reintroduced this year. It involves a select group of consumers, chosen from among literally thousands of applicants, who are sent samples of new-product prototypes. "We give them a questionnaire," explains Pat Brown, "and we allow them a month to test the product. Then they return the questionnaire with their comments—which are often extensive and detailed. They tell us what they think—good, bad, or indifferent. We even solicit comments from people who regularly use our competitors' products, in the interest of objectivity.

"Once the information comes in," Pat continues, "we evaluate it to see if there is a consistent element or suggestion—such as everyone leaning toward a different tip or a longer taper. If there is a solid majority toward one design, that's significant." (Significant indeed: Input from the first Project X group led Pro-Mark to settle on the specific finish used in the *Millenium II* process.)

Another way that Pro-Mark fosters communication is simply by answering consumer inquiries or complaints. The company offers a toll-free consumer hot-line, maintains a Web site and an e-mail address, and actively solicits consumer mail. "We're trying to make it as easy as possible to access Pro-Mark," says Maury Brochstein. "I am personally challenged by any person who calls and has a situation to discuss with me. And in the eighteen years that I've been here, I can't recall one time that a customer has called or written and not gone away satisfied that we had taken care of their problem 100%."

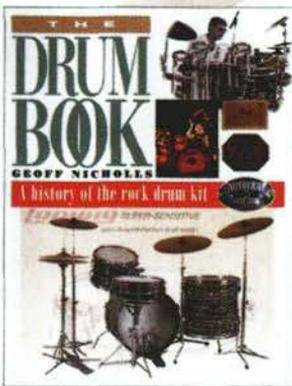
Adds Bari Ruggeri, "People are amazed that they can call and talk to Maury—the president of the company—without any hassle. So they call for advice about *everything*: what sort of pedal they should use, or how to tune a snare drum. And we're paying for the call."

Not satisfied with anonymously servicing consumer complaints or suggestions, Pro-Mark has actually helped to promote their customers individually, with the now-legendary "Not-Yet-Famous Drummer" ad campaign. The company solicited input from consumers, then selected individuals whose names and photos appeared in full-page ads in *Modern Drummer*. "It was a way of paying at least some of our consumers back for their support," says Maury. "Although it's possible that some of those drummers may actually be featured in *Modern Drummer* someday, most of them knew that this was their one shot at 'glory.' We're as happy as they are that we had the chance to provide them with it." Not surprisingly, this make-your-dream-come-true ad series was the one that earned Pro-Mark its *Modern Drummer* Consumer Poll award for most interesting ad/marketing campaign.

This virtual obsession with consumer involvement has paid off handsomely for Pro-Mark. In addition to the aforementioned *MD* Consumer Poll awards, in 1996 Pro-Mark was also recognized with a Positive Performer award for customer service from *Inc.* magazine (a business publication observing from outside the music industry) and MCI. And most importantly, the customers themselves have rewarded Pro-Mark with year after year of ever-increasing support. "We may not be the largest drumstick manufacturing company in terms of dollar sales," says Maury Brochstein, "because some of our competitors also deal in other

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product lines that affect that figure. But I'm confident that in terms of pure drumstick production and sales, we're number one."

In an effort to return a bit of their good fortune to those without much of it, Pro-Mark is an active supporter of a variety of charitable and social-service campaigns, including various cancer research foundations, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Drums For Fun, Drums Not Guns, and even the campaign to preserve Walden Woods. (The creation and sale of the *Don Henley* signature drumstick netted \$25,000—all of which went directly to the campaign.)

Also environmentally conscious, Pro-Mark utilizes soy-based inks, recyclable packaging, and biodegradable poly bags exclusively, and disposes of virtually all stick-manufacturing wood waste by turning it over to companies who create other products from it. The company is also sponsoring a reforestation program for the Japanese oak forests that supply its Japanese facility. (Domestic hickory supplies actually grow wild, faster than they can be used.) "We do all of this partly because we know it's an important issue to some consumers," says Ban Ruggieri, "and partly because it's good business. But we mainly do it because it's the right thing to do."

The Future

After forty years of successful growth, what lies ahead for Pro-Mark? Says Maury Brochstein, "We have to keep getting better at what we do in every area if we are to survive, much less continue to grow. We're going to develop and add new products—primarily in our bread-and-butter area of drumsticks, but also in the area of additional accessory products. Our fortieth anniversary catalog introduced over twenty new products, and it's safe to say that our next catalog will debut even more.

"For instance," Maury continues, "we've recently expanded into marching percussion, which was an area we really hadn't been addressing previously. We put together a coalition of drum-corps luminaries to give us direction on how to create something different and better than what was already available. The result was our *AmeriCorps* line, which offers features unlike those of any other brand. Those include an exclusive, extra-dense felt for mallet

heads that won't get trashed in the rain. We've also developed 'Acoustic Resonance Control' technology, which helps to eliminate that 'toonk' sound you get with aluminum shafts. And we've created special wood drumstick models, including the *DC-121*, which we call the *Kwik Stik*. It has a relatively thick corps-style shank, but it tapers down to a fairly small *SD-1* tip. It's good for the indoor Winter Guard program, because drummers can play with the dynamic intensity they use outdoors, but without the associated volume. They can also get articulation that's impossible with bigger, 'club-like' sticks. Incidentally, Pro-Mark is the first and only drumstick maker to offer a stick designed especially for indoor drumline competition.

"At the other end of the scale, we feel that no one is adequately addressing the needs of younger students, who have smaller hands. So we've introduced a line of sticks and mallets that we call *Future Pro*. The models in this line were developed with input from our Education Advisory Board. In tests that we conducted, every student who played with *Future Pro* prototypes advanced more rapidly than did those students who used 'full-size' sticks and mallets. Those are the kinds of innovations we're trying to focus on. We're also working in the area of classical and jazz mallet percussion, with *Evelyn Glennie*, *Milt Jackson*, and *Robert Van Sice* signature mallets.

"To facilitate our product-development goals, we're going to have to take a serious look at expanding our physical operation," Maury continues. "By January of 1998—if not sooner—a new production facility of between 27,000 and 30,000 square feet will either be under way or under serious consideration. That will be our third major expansion since 1981.

"Competition is definitely fiercer than ever today," Maury concludes. "It's a serious battle out there, and we plan on winning it. There's no doubt in my mind that we have the people, the right attitude, and the direction to carry us through the next forty years...and then some!"



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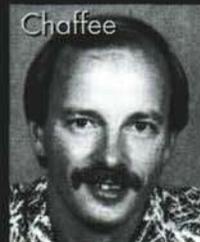
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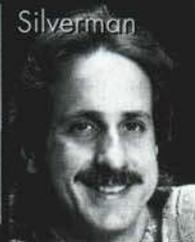
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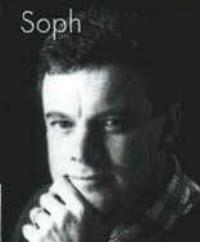
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Rob Silverman

Twenty-nine-year-old Rob Silverman is currently teaching over forty students per week at Fred Pierce's drum shop in St. Louis, Missouri. He's also writing his fifth drum book. An earlier work, *Drumset 101* (published by Mel Bay Publications), was reviewed in the



September '95 issue of *MD*. Rob's *Drumset For The Twenty-First Century* and *Snare Drum 101* are slated for release late this year.

In case you subscribe to the philosophy that "those who can, do; those who can't, teach," Rob blasts that theory with his six-night-a-week gig at the Goldenrod Showboat in St. Louis. Along with his brother Mike, Rob plays in a fusion/rock band aptly called the Silverman Brothers. They've opened for such acts as the John Patitucci band (with Dave Weckl), the Yellowjackets, and the Eric Marienthal band. Rob cites Neil Peart, Dave Weckl, Will Kennedy, Terry Bozzio, Steve Smith, and Dennis Chambers as "sources of endless inspiration."

Rob's demo recording and video reveal a combination of highly developed technical skills and a solid grasp of a drummer's supporting role in a pop/rock format. He exercises that combination on an eight-piece Tama *Artstar II* kit, with Sabian and Zildjian cymbals, assorted hand percussion, and a 52" Chinese tam-tam. He's also skilled on the *Zendrum*, an electronic trigger/controller that straps on like a guitar.

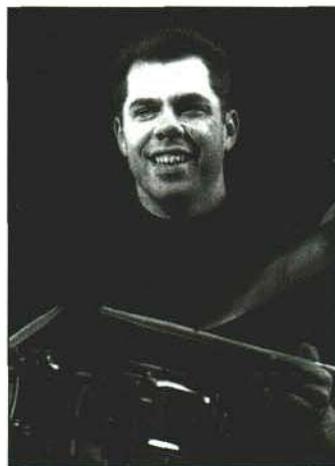
Rob's goals include landing a record deal with his band and continuing to pass on his experience and knowledge through teaching and writing.

Chris Wolfson

Westfield, New Jersey's Chris Wolfson is living proof that you can take the drums away from the boy, but you can't keep the boy away from the drums. Having started playing as a child, Chris progressed through a variety of self-described "terrible bands" until he landed a seat in a Beatles sound-alike group. When that group broke up, Chris joined a contemporary Christian rock band. And when *that* group disbanded, Chris gave away his kit and quit playing altogether.

For seven years, that is. Then "the itch proved too strong," says Chris. "I bought a new Tama *Granstar* kit and a variety of Sabian, Zildjian, and Paiste cymbals. And I started looking for a band."

Three years ago Chris hooked up with a



South Jersey band called the Head Diggers, backing recording artist Bruce Tunkel. Stressing fundamental rock 'n' roll, the band plays the same Jersey Shore circuit that launched Bruce Springsteen and Southside Johnny. In fact, they've opened for Johnny, and they've had Bruce sit in—which Chris describes as his "greatest musical thrill."

Wolfson cites musical influences that he says are "solid and dependable, never flashy." They include Stan Lynch, Charlie Watts, and Ringo Starr. "Ringo's drumming was straightforward and steady," says Chris. "He had really unique fills, but he didn't overshadow the music; he complemented

it. My approach is similar: Keep it simple. When there's an opening, throw in an appropriate fill. But don't take away from the song."

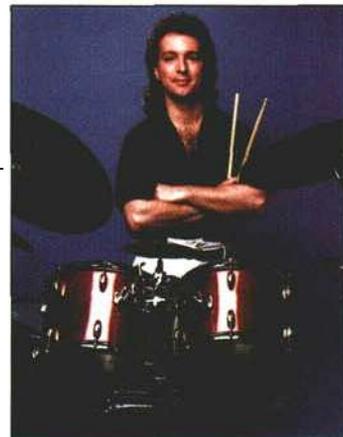
Bill Donnelly

Bill Donnelly of Patchogue, New York has performed in a variety of settings, from jazz to R&B, rock, funk, and fusion. He spent ten years studying with Tony Palumbo—who, he says, was "an incredible local teacher who gave me a solid foundation from which I continue to build." Bill also studied with such drumming luminaries as Rod Morgenstein, David Garibaldi, Joe Morello, and Gary Chester.

Bill is currently appearing with the Hackensack Men & the Trenton Horns, a ten-piece R&B group playing regularly in Manhattan and Long Island's posh Hamptons. He also recorded songs for jazz guitarist Jim Savitt's *The Way Home*. But Bill is most

excited by Satori, a group he formed that is geared toward creative instrumental music. He is involved with writing and arranging the material, and is the spokesman for the group. Satori is currently playing clubs in New York and Long Island, and shopping for a record deal. The group's self-produced (and self-titled) cassette amply displays Bill's creative abilities and technical facility. Serving as both drummer and percussionist for the group, Bill performs on a Gretsch kit, with Ludwig and Barnes snare drums, Zildjian cymbals, and Toca mini-timbales.

In addition to his teachers, Bill looks to Bill Bruford, Tony Williams, Steve Smith, Danny



Gottlieb, Peter Erskine, Vinnie Colaiuta, Max Roach, Jack DeJohnette, Philly Joe Jones, and Terry Bozzio for inspiration. He's looking forward to "getting Satori to a successful, self-sustaining level, and to additional freelancing and teaching."

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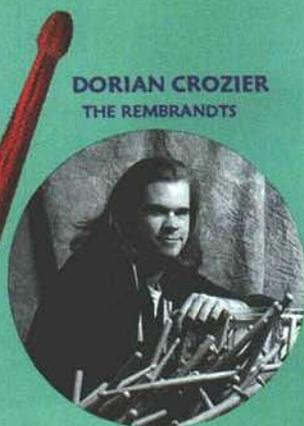
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WATCH YOUR EARS

Part 1: The Problem

by Mark Parsons

I'm about to reveal my stupidity to the world at large in the hope that it'll help someone else avoid the mistakes I've made and the subsequent hearing problems I've experienced. My situation isn't unique. In fact, it's all too common among musicians (especially drummers). The interesting part is that I can pinpoint the actual incident that drove my ears over the edge into hearing damage and tinnitus. The stupid part is that I should have known better. In retrospect, I made several classic mistakes, which we'll examine shortly.

Cram & Jam

The proverbial "straw that broke the camel's back" occurred last November, on the day after Thanksgiving. That was when my friend Tim and his wife Marie had their annual "Cram & Jam" party. The basic agenda: Marie cooks up a huge Italian feast for all their friends, after which the musicians among the guests waddle to Tim's music room to sweat off some of those extra calories with an extended jam session.

Even though he's primarily a guitarist, Tim's music room is

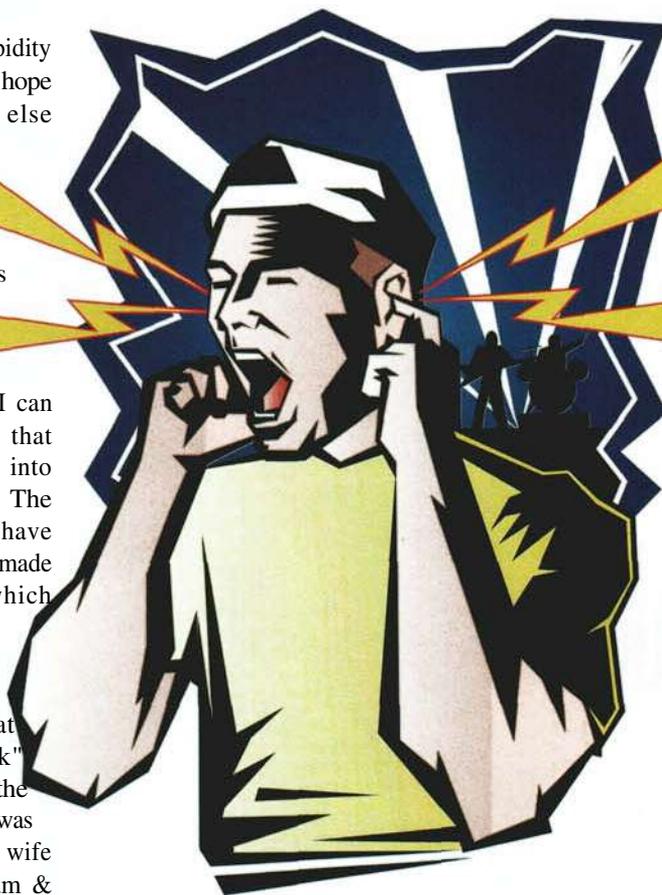


Illustration by Joe Weissenburger

replete with drums, guitars, basses, amps, PA, etc.—everything you need to make a little noise. The only drawbacks are that it's not very big (maybe the size of a large bedroom) and it has bare walls and an eight-foot ceiling. It's a very ambient room, to say the least. Add to this the fact that the drums were set up in the corner, and you begin to get the idea that this was potentially a high-volume playing environment. When I gave the metal snare a few trial whacks it seemed incredibly loud, so I threw on a *Zero-ring*, but it *still* seemed very loud in that room. When the whole band fired up, however, it was a different story.

By the middle of the second song I sensed that my unmiked drums weren't "keeping up" volume-wise, so I pulled the *Zero-ring* off. By the third song I'd switched to 2fis and was playing at the very upper limit of my dynamic range (and I'm considered a "loud" drummer, whatever that means).

In the back of my mind I knew I should put in some ear plugs or stop playing, but I didn't, for several reasons. First, although I almost always carry ear plugs in my pocket, I'd left them out in my van (and it would have taken all of five minutes to go retrieve them!). Besides, even though it was damn loud in there, my ears

didn't hurt. I'd been in situations before that exceeded the threshold of pain, but this wasn't one of them. The music felt good and I was having too much fun to stop. On top of everything else I was the only drummer in the house at that moment. I knew that a couple of other drummers were slated to show up later, and I promised myself that as soon as one of them arrived I'd relinquish the throne.

We wailed away for probably an hour before taking a break, by which time I was happy to stop—I had a headache and my ears had that numb, buzzy feeling that comes from too much volume for too long. By then another drummer had shown up, so I called it quits for the evening. (In retrospect, it was fortunate that I did!)

As I lay in bed that night I could hear my ears—particularly my right one—ringing. Many of you have probably experienced this after playing a high-volume gig or attending a loud rock concert—a high-pitched ringing that persists for a few hours or occasionally into the next day. This was like that except for one thing: It's been months now and the ringing hasn't gone away, and according to my audiologist it probably never will. To make matters worse, there's been a slight but noticeable loss of the highest frequencies in my right ear.

Classic Mistakes

There are several common misconceptions about noise-induced (*sensorineural*) hearing damage, some of which I fell victim to. Let's look at four of them:

1. *"It doesn't hurt, so it's not damaging my hearing."* Not true (although the converse statement—*"It hurt my ears, so there's a potential for damage"*—certainly is true).

For one thing, our hearing adjusts to the situation at hand. Faced with sustained high noise levels, our hearing will subjectively attenuate in an attempt to lessen discomfort. Although this may seem like we are "getting used to" the situation, in reality our ears are still taking a beating. It's just that our brain is passing on less of this information in an effort to spare us some pain. As an example, when I first hit the snare in Tim's music room I winced at the volume, yet within a few minutes I was happily bashing away because my hearing had accommodated the noise. Because of this, it's a good idea to go with *your first* impression if a situation seems dangerously loud.

Another reason that pain isn't a reliable indicator of dangerous noise levels is because levels that seem quite moderate can damage your hearing, given enough exposure time. Take a look at the time-weighted exposure table at right. Even 90 dB (lawn mower, truck traffic, etc.) can be harmful to your hearing if you're exposed to it all day.

Human hearing is more sensitive than many people realize, and for good reason. When our hearing was evolving, its main function was to warn us of impending danger, and acuity was to be prized above all else. Except for the occasional lightning storm, most sounds in nature are relatively quiet, and it's important to realize that our ears were never really designed to deal with thousand-watt subwoofers, Marshall amps, and brass piccolo snare drums.

2. *"It's only for a little while."* This is the other half of the equation. Take another peek at that table. Sound levels of 115 dB (such as a loud rock concert) can damage your hearing in as little

as fifteen minutes. (And how many of us have ever been to a concert that only lasted fifteen minutes?) And as we'll see, in some circumstances a drumset can generate these same sorts of levels.

Also, there are some types of sounds (extreme feedback, spikes from PA malfunctions, headphone accidents, etc.) that can harm your hearing almost instantly, so don't think that just because an exposure is brief it's necessarily safe.

3. *"I've been playing this way for years with no major problems, so it's probably safe."* Don't bet on it! In fact, the longer you've been exposed to even moderate noise levels, the more likely it is that you'll eventually have problems, because of one insidious fact: *Noise-related hearing damage is cumulative.*

My auditory misadventure last Thanksgiving probably wouldn't have had much of an impact on my hearing if it hadn't been preceded by twenty-five years of playing in rock groups, along with additional exposure from power tools, firearms, etc. Most noise-related hearing loss occurs gradually, over years, and may go unnoticed until the victim finally (for example) realizes that he's having trouble understanding his wife across a table at a crowded restaurant. (In fact, one of the classic signs of sensorineural hearing loss is the reduced ability to comprehend higher-pitched voices in environments with high background noise.)

So if you've been exposing your ears to high volume for quite a while with no noticeable effects, you should consider yourself lucky. But don't push your luck—you may be on the last of your ears' nine lives. Instead, start taking precautions now. We'll cover this in detail next month, but in brief: Limit noise levels, limit exposure time, and (most importantly) wear hearing protection.

Time-Weighted Exposure Table

Sound Level	Representative Examples	Allowed Exposure
25 dB	quiet bedroom	no limit
65 dB	normal conversation	no limit
85 dB	manual machinery	no limit, but continual exposure may cause damage
90 dB	lawnmower truck traffic	8 hours per day
95 dB	drill press	4 hours per day
100 dB	chain saw snowmobile	2 hours per day
105 dB	paint sprayer kick drum (at drummer's ears)	1 hour per day
110 dB	power saw 10" tom (played hard)	30min. per day
115 dB	rock concert 21" rock ride (played hard)	15 min. per day (max. w/o protection)
120 dB	snare rimshot (played hard) 18" China cymbal (played hard)	never w/o protection
125 dB	open hi-hats (played hard) threshold of pain for most people	never w/o protection
140 dB	firearms jet engine	!5min.perday max. with protection

Information sources: US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration; California Occupational Safety and Health Administration; American Academy of Otolaryngology; Physician's Hearing Service; author's field measurements

4. "We're not using huge amps and speakers, so how bad can it be?" Plenty bad, given the right circumstances. In my studio (a fairly live room of moderate size) I have no problem getting my drums to generate levels in excess of 120 dB all by themselves. And even little amps can generate dangerous levels in close proximity. (One of the highest onstage levels I've ever experienced was from a small guitar amp. We were on the road and had loaded into a new club whose stage was deeper than it was wide, so our guitar player ended up placing his amp on a chair almost directly behind me. During sound check the level from that amp was so high that I experienced pain and vertigo—the room seemed to tilt sideways and I felt like I was going to throw up. The guitarist balked at relocating his amp until I told him he'd sound pretty lame without a drummer.)

And you big band drummers don't get off easy, either. Without an amp or speaker in sight, a horn section can create enough volume to set your ears ringing. The point is, noise is where you find it, and high levels of noise from *any* source—amplified or acoustic—can damage your hearing.

The Danger Factors

There are six interrelated factors that combine to create a hazardous situation. They are:

1. *Intensity.* Obviously, the louder the noise, the more danger you're in. But most folks don't know just *how* loud a given sound is. One way to tell is to memorize some common values from a noise exposure table, but a better method is to get a dB meter and measure your environment. (Radio Shack sells a decent meter for \$35.)

Once you start measuring, you might be surprised at what you find. I measured a drumset (with all readings taken near the drummer's head) to determine the approximate maximum volume of each piece, starting with the kick at 105 dB. Next were the toms in the 110-112 dB range, followed by most cymbals at 115 to 118 dB. The snare, as you might expect, put out some serious volume with rimshots peaking at around 120 dB. A pair of 15" heavy hi-hats could just about keep up with the snare when played hard, halfway open, but the loudest thing I measured was a pair of 14" Paiste 2002 *Sound Edge* hi-hats. When played in a serious "wash," these puppies generated levels up to 125 decibels. (Note: all measurements are in the "A-weighted" mode, which is what OSHA uses for occupational exposure limits, as it approximates the frequency response curve of the human ear.)

To put all this into perspective, keep in mind that the absolute maximum level OSHA will allow unprotected ears to be exposed to is 115 dB, and this exposure must be for less than fifteen minutes per day in order to avoid hearing loss. Kind of sobering, isn't it?

2. *Frequency.* All sounds are not created equal. At any given volume, sounds of a higher frequency are more damaging to your ears than sounds containing low frequencies (which is why hi-hats, China cymbals, and high-pitched snares are particularly dangerous). Fortunately, most types of hearing protection reduce the higher frequencies most of all.

3. *Environment.* The acoustic space in which your drums are played makes a big difference in the overall amount of sound bombarding your ears, due to the fact that the total sonic output of a drum (or any other sound source) is the sum of the direct sound *and* the reflected sound.

Small, reflective spaces can raise moder-

ately loud sounds to dangerously high levels. For example, from a distance of 10' in a non-reflective environment (such as outdoors), snare rimshots generated only 100 dB. In a highly reflective environment (round room/bare walls/hard floor) the same drum generated 114 dB at 10'.

All of this explains why levels that might not bother you onstage at a roomy club can be sonic torture in a bedroom.

4. *Time.* The longer you're exposed to a high noise level, the more damage your ears can suffer. That seems straightforward enough, but there are a couple of things to take into consideration:

The first is that "safe" exposure times are cut in half for every 5 dB increase in noise levels. This means that if the limit for 105 dB is one hour, it goes down to thirty minutes at 110 dB (and I don't know anyone who can reliably tell the difference between 105 and 110 without a meter).

The second thing to remember is that these exposure limits are daily *totals*, taking into account your cumulative exposure



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over a twenty-four hour period. Once you've listened to music (for example) at 105 dB for an hour in the morning, you can't go out later that afternoon and do something else at 100 dB for two hours—you're done for the day. Period. Technically, anything over 85 dB is potentially damaging and becomes part of your daily exposure limit.

5. *Proximity.* The closer the noise, the more damaging it is. Recent studies have indicated an increase in hearing loss in young people, and much of it is attributed to the use of personal stereos with headphones. While a pair of phones may look pretty innocuous compared to a massive subwoofer, they can generate some very high levels because they're so close to your ears. As an example, I recorded levels of 110-120 dB on a pair of AKG K-240s (studio standard headphones) when measured inside the earcup, where your ear normally resides.

As further testimony to the danger of headphones, Peter Erskine has attributed some of his hearing problems to a single massive overexposure he received when an

engineer mistakenly sent an incredibly loud signal to his headphones during a recording session. Pete Townshend, when once asked during an interview about the causes of his infamous tinnitus and deafness, replied simply, "Headphones, headphones, headphones!"

Drummers typically run their phones hot in the studio in an effort to hear them over their drums, but as we'll see in the next installment of this series, there are isolation phones available that greatly attenuate external sounds, allowing you to set your headphones at a sane level.

6. *Your personal exposure history.* As stated, exposure (and subsequent hearing damage) accumulates over your lifetime, and if you've already experienced years of high-volume music, the standard OSHA guidelines may *not* necessarily be safe for you. As for me, I've now got a whole new set of guidelines: When things get loud at all—say over 90 dB—I wear hearing protection of one form or another (depending on the situation)... which is our topic for next time.

Until then, *Happy (and safe) drumming!*



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Super Ludwig Stippelgold Snare Drum

by Harry Cangany

Of all the drums I've bought, whether original or restored, the one that seems to get the most attention is the late-'20s *Super Ludwig* pictured here. In its first life, it was known as the *Stippelgold* model (and also as the *Paul Whiteman* model).

A friend of mine called one day to say that he had seen an old drum in a shop called Trash To Treasures. So I went to find it, and I saw a run-down Ludwig snare laying on its side. The owner called it an "old brass drum" and told me that she was going to make it into a table! I'm sure she was amused by my reaction. I went into my regular "Oh no you won't! This is *history*" routine. (I am ready to negotiate, beg, plead, cajole, or promise at any given moment to save our vintage and collectible drums.) The owner was nice, and she sold me "one antique brass drum" for one hundred dollars. Upon closer inspection, I discovered that the drum had a few parts missing and great wear on the finish.

While Leedy was the first drum company to cover drums in plastic (then called pyralin), Ludwig was the first to use "fancy finishes." *Stippelgold*, I believe, was a gold, sparkle-like paint applied after a rough primer finish had been baked on the drum. The advantage was the color; the disadvantage was the durability (or lack of it). The *Stippelgold* finish would wear down to the brass shell due to the constant rubbing of the drummer's legs.

My find was approximately sixty-five years old and was well worn on one side. A plater looked at it and suggested restoring it with crinkle paint. Our intention was to strip the drum down to its brass shell, replat the hoops and lugs in brass (and spray them in gold lacquer for the *Deluxe* finish), and then apply black "crinkle paint" to the shell. Once the paint was on the shell, baking would make the smooth paint crinkle, and that would create a rough finish. We originally intended to have a 24-karat gold lacquer applied over the crinkle, but we were so impressed with the contrast of the black and brass that we decided against that.

I want to point out that the process described above was contrary to my usual procedure. In every other case, I have followed a



simple formula when a vintage drum was purchased for our collection: If it's passable, leave it alone. If restoration is needed, then restore using finishes that were available at the time of manufacture. (In other words, you don't put a satin flame finish on a *Radio King* set. If you do, the value takes a nice decline.) But with this drum, I knew that I could add the gold finish coat at any time, so I felt that the choice was always available.

When we initially displayed the *Stippelgold* drum, it gathered "oohs" and "ahs," so I was pleased with our restoration modifications. One of our customers, a well-known national player, was so struck with the finish that he asked us to find and modify a similar drum for him. Once again, we found a *Super Ludwig* in run-down shape, and off it went to the plater.

The shell on this drum is the same two-piece brass type used in Ludwig's famous *Black Beauties*. The only difference is the outer finish. Versions were made with both the parallel strainer and the *Pioneer* strainer.

If you can find an intact *Stippel*, you are indeed a lucky person. I would venture to say that although it is rarer than a *Black Beauty*, it should only demand about 80% of a *Black Beauty's* value. I would estimate values at between \$650 and \$2,000, depending on condition.



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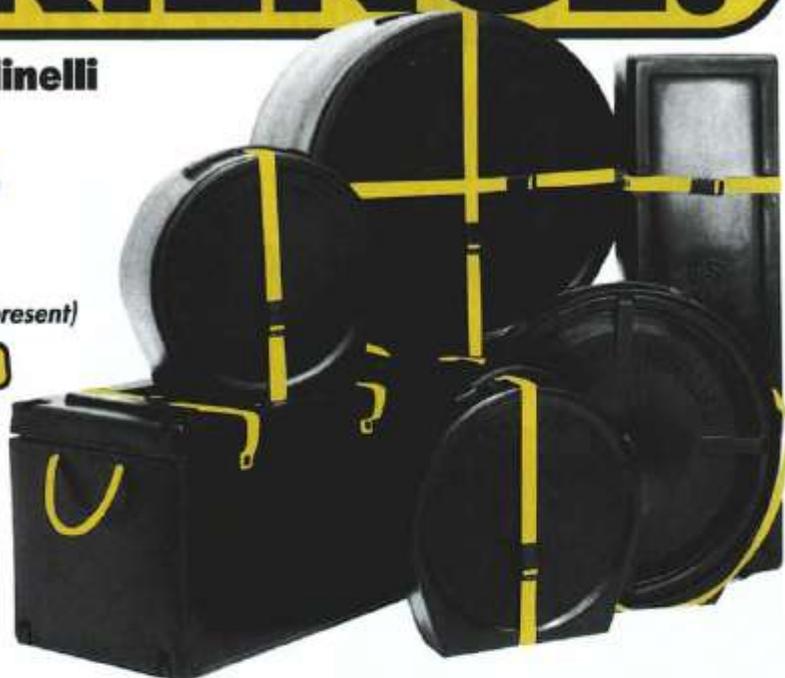
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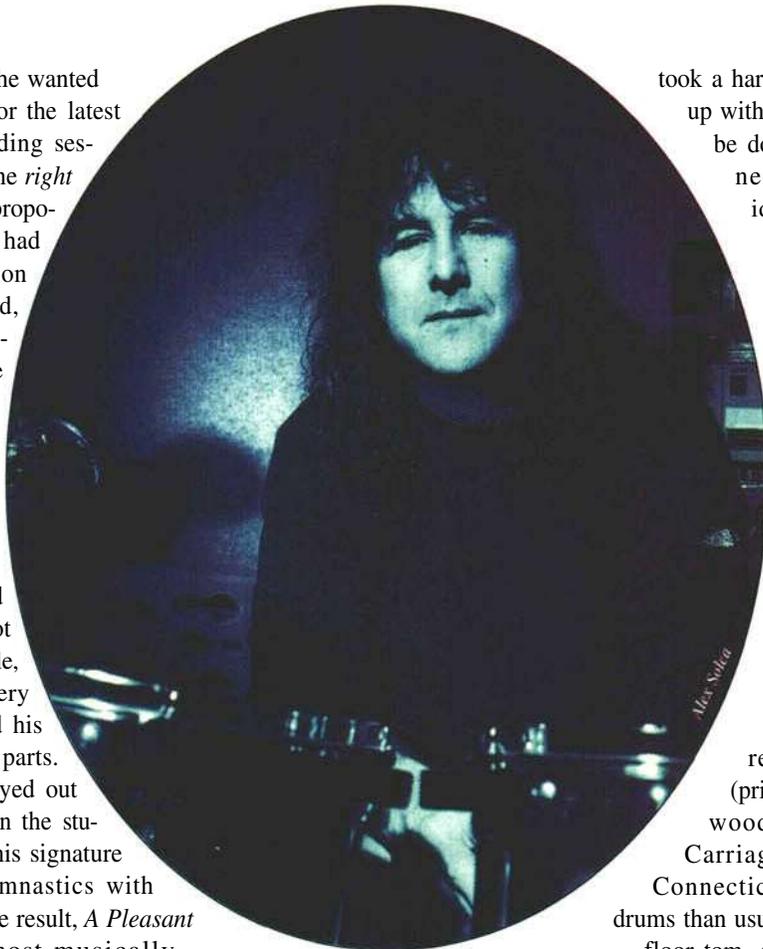
Mark Zonder Of Fates Warning

by Matt Peiken

Mark Zonder knew that he wanted something different for the latest Fates Warning recording sessions. But coming up with the *right* change was a challenging proposition for a drummer who had already earned his reputation through intricately detailed, complex compositions within his band's progressive metal framework.

When it became clear that guitarist and songwriter Jim Matheos was developing a concept album—one continuous piece of music, as it turned out—Zonder decided to not only scrutinize his own style, but also re-examine his very approach to the music and his method for building drum parts. The reconstruction was played out during pre-production and in the studio, where Zonder merged his signature odd-time, four-limbed gymnastics with bonafide groove. He sees the result, *A Pleasant Shade Of Gray*, as his most musically thoughtful performance.

"In a way, it wasn't my decision to do things differently. We just *knew* it would be different because the record was going to be more precise and exact," says Zonder, who began formulating his approach to the album after receiving nine pages of time signatures, tempo changes, and conceptual notes through the mail from Matheos. "I had a lot of ideas right away, like I usually do. But instead of just jumping on those ideas and embellishing them, I



"I'd like to think that by being more open to different ideas and approaches, I helped make this a really different record for us."

took a hard look at the first things I came up with and asked myself if things could be done entirely differently. I didn't necessarily throw out my first ideas, but I didn't want to lock myself into one way of thinking, either. I usually trust my instincts, and this went away from that a little. There's a lot more simplicity and open space. It wasn't so much playing for the song, but I didn't want to play things that come naturally to me, because that would be too boring."

Zonder used his own recording studio and rehearsal facility (Bill's Place in North Hollywood) to extensively demo his parts before rehearsing them with the band (prior to recording the album in the wood-and-stone confines of The Carriage House in Stamford, Connecticut). He also utilized smaller drums than usual—8" and 10" rack toms, a 12" floor tom, a 20" kick, and a trio of snares (all GMS)—along with his usual array of triggers and electronic pads. Mark altered his kit from tune to tune, setting up only the drums and cymbals he planned to use for a given song. The effort made his kit more efficient to play, Zonder says.

In the face of atmospheric guitar sounds and keyboard parts laced throughout the music, Mark paid particular attention to his electronic sounds. But by programming many of his electronics into a computer,

he could transfer large passages of music into a sampler. "It was done more for efficiency during recording," he says. "We're not talking about a few notes; these are passages that go for sixteen bars. I could play the parts myself, but you can't expect a human to match up perfectly to a sequencer. We didn't do it so much for the convenience, but for the fluidity. You can edit the beats and change the sounds without being committed to what's on tape. We can edit and completely alter the sounds at any time—or take them out altogether. I used only twelve tracks for drums, but we had another twelve for electronics—most of that was being flown into the mix without chewing up tape."

Despite the band's technological bent, Zonder and producer Terry Brown also relied on their ears. Engineers used a Sennheiser 427 within the kick drum and a Neumann U-47 further back—anywhere from a few inches to a few feet beyond the front head—encasing the whole package in a sound-isolation tunnel built in front of the drum. Zonder also spent the better part of a day experimenting with two hi-hats and a sound baffle between them, hoping to create a stereo effect for the album's introduction. When he couldn't get the hi-hats to sound alike, he tried using one hi-hat with a digital delay. In the end, Mark simply programmed the part.

"There are a lot of things on this record I've never done before, like rolling across the toms or riding a crash cymbal for a chorus," Zonder says. "And I think this is the first time I've been content with just opening the hi-hat a little and laying down a fat backbeat. I'd like to think that by being more open to different ideas and approaches, I helped make this a really different record for us."

Recording the disc was simply a prelude to the tedious task of preparing the music for re-creation in concert. Zonder spent a weekend at Matheos' home in New Hampshire, programming all the album's background noises and lead-ins—beat by beat—into a sequencer. "I'd start at 11 P.M. and work until about 4:30 A.M.," says Zonder (who once lost five hours of work when Matheos inadvertently flipped a light switch that also controlled power to the sequencer). "It sounds like a pain in the ass, and it definitely can be. But we don't do any of this stuff just to be more artsy.

The sequencer is just a tool for us to be able to do some creative and exciting things. For us, it's like having two more guys in the band, without paying them."

As it is, Zonder says that since adding bassist Joey Vera and bringing a keyboardist on tour (Kevin Moore, formerly of Dream Theater, played on the record), the band has never sounded better. "It's like a new band—not just in terms of the people, but the music," says Mark. "We weren't really happy with our last record [1995's

Inside Out]. We really wanted something that was more live-sounding and aggressive this time, and I think we got that. Making it one continuous piece of music gives it a lot of natural ups and downs, which should make it pretty interesting live. As much as I enjoy the studio, I can't remember being more excited about getting out and doing some shows. I just want to see if we can pull this off."



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Chuck Silverman

The Clave And Beyond

by T. Bruce Wittet

Nobody in their right mind could have predicted that a little Montreal boy with a "Hep Cat" cardboard drumkit would someday author a treatise on the drummers of James Brown, produce instructional drum videos and play-along Afro-Caribbean packages, conduct clinics around the world, or embark on five pilgrimages to Cuba (long before the politicians could sort out cultural relations).

Such audacity! Imagine Chuck Silverman landing in Havana for the first time. "Who is this *gringo*? But far from attracting scorn, Chuck endeared himself. His love for Cuban music—for all music—is sincere. And when he sits at the drumset, he communicates his obvious affection in no uncertain terms.

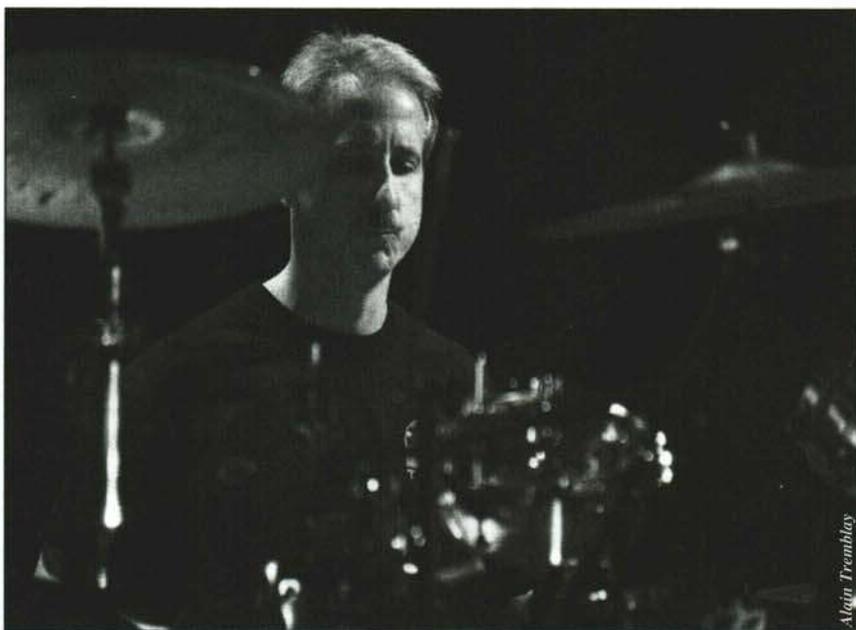
Somewhat ironically, the death of president Kennedy was an early inspiration for Chuck.

Jack Kennedy had made wariness of Cuba a national obsession with his ultimatum over the Bay of Pigs missile sites. Kennedy's funeral was televised, and a tearful nation witnessed the poignant good-bye from the president's son, and the solemn procession. "His funeral march was led by one drummer who played a cadence the whole march through," Chuck recalls. "The impact that one drummer could have on all these people marching together is something I have remembered for thirty-five years. I still get goosebumps thinking about it."

Like many of his peers, Chuck was reared on pop music of the late '60s, preferring the blunt practicality of the Stones and the Animals over the romanticism of the Beatles. Busier chops came later, by way of Clive Bunker, Barriemore Barlow, Ginger Baker, and Mitch Mitchell. But they were mitigated by the no-nonsense attitude of John Bonham and Charlie Watts. All the while, the backbeat ruled.

That is, until one day in his late teens. "I met a guy named Steve Brooke," says Chuck. "He took me over to his little jazz apartment—he had a goatee and shades—and we listened to Miles' *Four & More*. Then he put on *Sorcerer* and *Nefertiti*. I was thinking, 'What is *that*? The drummer, of course, was Tony Williams."

This set off a wave of jazz listening (read "obsession") that brought Chuck to Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Max Roach, Art Blakey, and Roy Haynes. But there was something about their



licks that didn't travel well. "I remember doing this blues gig," says Chuck. "We were playing a shuffle, and I went into this Tony thing, complete with metric modulation. Talk about evil looks!"

"It takes a long time to mature. You go through experimental stages, and you learn. Or you get fired!"

By the time Chuck turned twenty he was piecing together some basic tenets of what it takes to survive in a rhythm section and play styles convincingly: "Your job is to make the bass player smile. That's it. Suppose you're playing funk, and you know all these chops. If the right thing to play is 8th notes on the hi-hat and 2 and 4 on the snare, then *that's* what you do! All the other stuff doesn't mean anything if it doesn't make that other person's head nod or foot move. You can talk about *clave* and stuff like that, but it means groove.

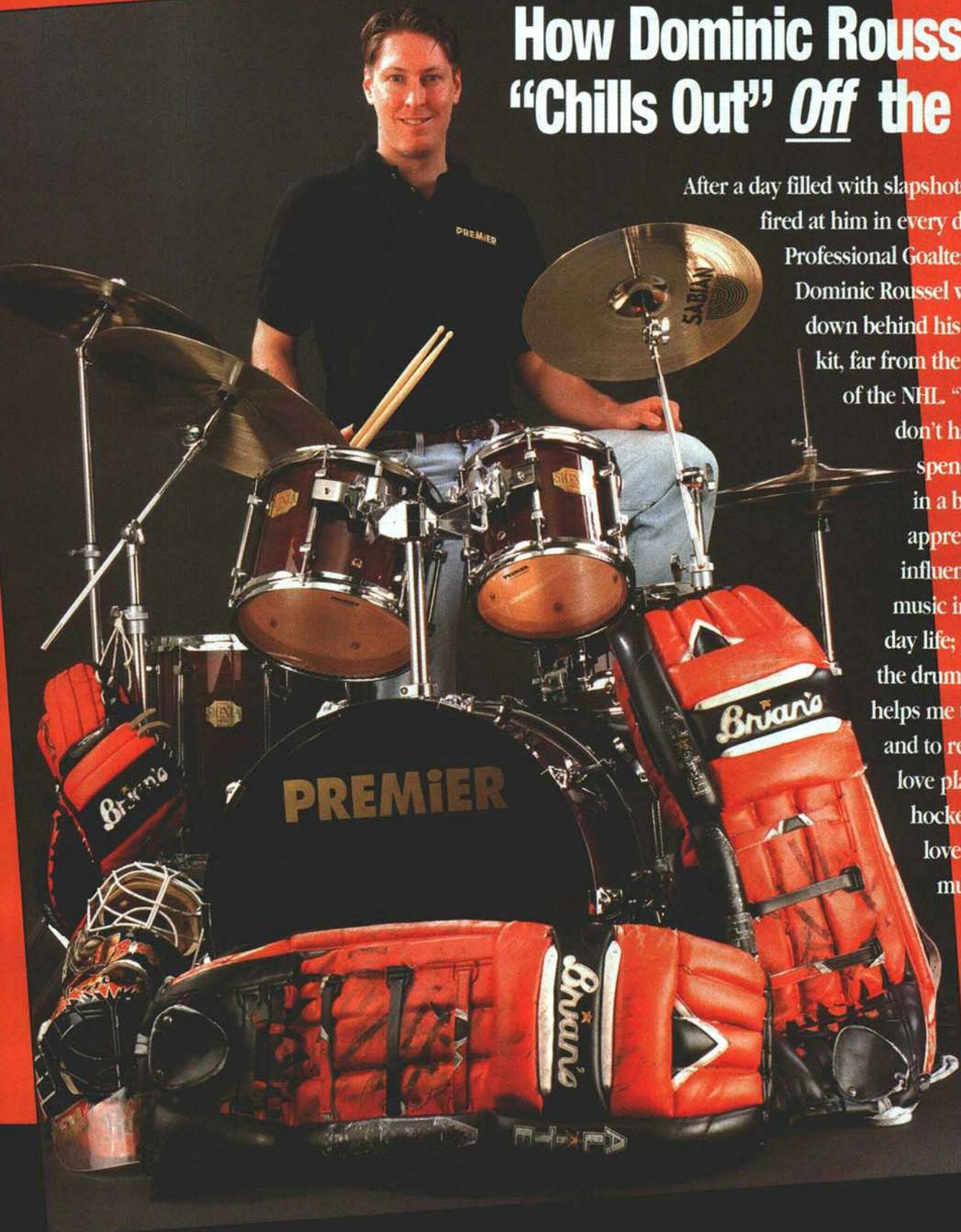
"There's also an aggressive attitude in certain types of rock music," Chuck continues. "Dave Lombardo, who is a good friend of mine, can play the simplest thing, but it has this attitude and it really moves. What grabs me about the music I love is that it has this *motion*. People say that Chuck Silverman equals *clave*. This is not necessarily true. Sure, I love Los Van Van and La Charanga Habanera. But I like all sorts of music: Anthrax, Sixun from France, Sepultura from Brazil, Tool. Good music that feels good—that's what moves me."

Be A Player! SM



How Dominic Roussel "Chills Out" Off the Ice

After a day filled with slapshots being fired at him in every direction, Professional Goaltender Dominic Roussel winds down behind his drum kit, far from the action of the NHL. "You don't have to spend time in a band to appreciate the influence of music in everyday life; playing the drums really helps me to focus and to relax. I love playing hockey - and I love playing music."



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Teacher And Therapist

"Drums can enhance a person's life," says Chuck, "not necessarily by their becoming a professional drummer, but just by playing drums by themselves—or, better yet, with a group. Drums and voice were the first instruments. It's as basic as you get. For the past five or six years I've been facilitating drum circle events. In fact, in July I went with Microsoft to Dublin, Ireland to do a week-end of team building. Six drummers led six hundred managers in a one-hour drum circle. Why? Because they know that there is a power inherent in playing drums together.

"Rhythm is the most basic of life forces. If you look in a scientific manner at how the body is made, or how the universe is made, not only do molecules and electrons vibrate in their paths around the nucleus of the atom, but subatomic particles vibrate in rhythms that can be measured. We are manifesting that life force, bringing it out, through drums."

There's little doubt today that drumming can be viable therapy and recreation. Everyone is getting in on the act, giving old beats a new spin. But what about the sad old musician, silently making the sign of the cross, bemoaning the convolution and dilution of sacred rhythms? Are we a little hasty in tampering with and blending the rhythms of other cultures?

This familiar criticism gets Chuck off and running. "If you are going to play these musics together, you really have to understand the essence of each—to maintain the respect factor. If you want to learn about rhythms from certain countries, you need to delve a bit deeper than is customary. For example, how did the clave come about? On the sailing ships bringing the slaves to the New World, there were devices like bowling pins that the sailors would wrap rope around. In Spanish they're called *clavija*: The slaves would whittle these down into sticks and use them to play rhythms common to their native African songs and dances. The sticks are now called claves, and the rhythms also took that name.

"I tell my students you can't just learn a *cascara* pattern in order to cover a Cuban gig. You need to go back and get a feeling for the roots. Students who come to my house don't just sit in my drum room. We have Cuban coffee, we watch Cuban videos, and we listen to music. I have them play congas the first day: They play a little *tumbao*, just to get the movement and feeling. You learn to respect the rhythm, and then you respect what you play."

A new generation of Cuban musicians is juxtaposing ambitious double bass and tom patterns over the ancient two-bar *clave*. Ironically, this has provoked a fuss reminiscent of the bitter reaction to bebop of old-guard swing drummers. "It's exactly the same in Cuba," says Chuck. "The old guys talk disparagingly about the young guys. But you've got the young lions, these new guys that I swear you are not going to believe. That's why I produced my video, *Drumset Artists Of Cuba*. I shot the whole thing in Cuba on

a Sony *Handycam* with two mic's. I wanted to share these great musicians with the world. For example, Raul Pineda, from the band Sintesis, is featured. He's seen all the American videos—Dennis Chambers, Dave Weckl, Mike Portnoy, Gadd—and he can play all that, *plus* all the folkloric stuff. On the video, he plays *bata*—a rhythm called *lyesa*. The next thing you know, he's playing on the drumset, and you hear it; it's there! He plays fills that stretch the time because of his feeling of the folkloric stuff: It's the ability to flow in what many people call the 'magic space' between 4/4 and 6/8.

"There's also Piloto Baretto, who leads a group called Klimax. What a lion of a drummer! Then you've got this guy Jimmy Branly. Jimmy is very into jazz—Jeff Watts, Peter Erskine, and Tony Williams—plus he's got *clave* to burn. These guys have got massive chops, but it's *grooving*. That's the key."

Chuck's teaching methods are varied. He'd rather his students *feel* before they *think*. "It comes from the gut, not the brain," he says. "It's an internal feeling more than an academic event. It's not patterns; it's life! These rhythms have been around for thousands of years. Sometimes I look at instructional methods that tear things apart and I feel that the soul is lost. Sure, a *cascara* pattern in 3-2 is a five, a five, and a six—but it loses the beans and rice, man, to look at it like that.

"What I teach is that all the patterns in the world won't do you one bit of good if the music doesn't have that forward motion. I remember a clinic where Peter Erskine played nothing but quarter notes on the ride—but *what* quarter notes! He showed regular quarter notes, and then quarter notes with an *attitude*."

Once in a while Chuck signs on a beginner, but it's fair to say most of his students are already grappling with perplexing Latin grooves. "A lot of times," he says, "students will complain that

their playing is stale and that they need new 'licks.' I've got tons of things. I've got ideas called 'fills with feel,' based on my experiences with Cuban, Brazilian, and African music. I'll play a fill on timbales, and we'll transfer it to the drumset, not necessarily verbatim. And we'll look at a favorite Neil Peart fill. I tell my students, 'You bring it in, and I'll write it out. Here's your chance to learn to read a bit better. Learn these four fills we have just worked on, and bring me two variations

for each.' The biggest part of my teaching is about using imagination and creativity.

"The music and rhythms I know apply to many different styles of music," Chuck continues. "If you study Afro-Cuban 6/8 music, you're going to learn about shuffles, and you're going to learn about swing—because the swing rhythm came from Africa. We get to other styles: rock and jazz. We get to the technical parts and to the sticking ideas. An hour lesson? Forget it! Right now my lessons are at least an hour and a half. I have to develop a relationship: There's got to be meat along with the gravy. At the end of a



day of teaching—I'm talking three or four students—I'm wasted. But I love it."

Entrepreneur

Twenty-seven years ago, when Chuck Silverman started drumming professionally, there were plenty of opportunities to work, both live and studio. "The music business has changed drastically," he says. "I don't see the same opportunities for young drummers to play four or six nights a week as I used to. What I do see is the necessity for these drummers to be good business people—to learn to be able to sell their product. And their product is *themselves*."

"I tell my students to develop their unique qualities. I know the qualities I have that are unique. There are not many people who are capable of playing and teaching about Brazilian music, Cuban rhythms, funk stuff, and the James Brown drummers. You have to look for niche markets and determine how to fill them. When you ask yourself what's unique about *you*, think about what you play, your influences, how you've molded yourself. What do you bring to the world?"

Listening to Chuck is inspiring, because he believes that there are no closed doors, and no dry holes—if you keep digging. Persistence and preparation are always rewarded. Says Chuck, "You need to have the goods. You need to have the technique; you need to study. But you have to know other stuff, too, like how to smile and put out your hand and introduce yourself. You need a business card, a brochure, and maybe a logo. You need to have your equipment together, and to be on time."

"I'm also learning about my Mac, and learning new software," Chuck continues. "Lately, it's been *Quark Xpress* and *Finale* notation software, because knowing that stuff will make me a better producer, player, and educator. The people at Warner Bros., for example, want books to be presented to them on disk, not hand-printed as in the past. Learning these other skills is doing not only what needs to be done, but going steps beyond so people will notice you. Suppose you're auditioning for a band. You write charts out, you do your homework, you come totally prepared—as opposed to the other four drummers who just want the gig. You gotta think *large*."

Student

Like the Jim Chapins, Peter Erskines, and Steve Smiths of the drum community, Chuck Silverman shares an insatiable thirst for knowledge. When he was completing his BA in psychology, he stumbled, as it were, onto arrhythmia—jet lag syndrome—and the biological clock. Chuck was quick to imagine the percussion connections implicit in that part of the brain dealing with daily rhythms and time. He plans to continue studying the "existential drumming" in California. If he doesn't do it, who else will?

"Not enough research work is being done by musicians," says Chuck. "And the work being done on rhythm and behavior? Not too many drummers are involved there. The ethnomusicology link is that music of certain cultures holds within it many long-lost secrets. Take the rhythms on the bata drums: One of the reasons for playing them is to create a trance. I'm interested in why and where, neurologically, that happens. What can be done in those states once they're achieved? Maybe it will lead to something I've been thinking about for a long time: the ability to use rhythms for wellness."

Chuck still practices every day, and he still sets goals for his playing. He still works on hand exercises assigned by his teachers Murray Spivak, Richard Wilson, and Steve Bagby (a jazz drummer from Florida, with whom he had four indelible lessons). And he has been shedding double bass, taking his cue from the young drummers in Cuba who appropriated Steve Gadd's "tap dance" method. Explains Chuck, "The foot will come down and hit a stroke, followed by a toe stroke. They do this with *both* feet!"

It's a great life if you don't tire. While he does pause now and then to allow the dust to settle, Chuck continues to scratch along at a frantic pace. "The music that I love has been a treasure-trove for me," he says, "and it's not anywhere close to being tapped. If I go to Cuba or Brazil and hear new stuff, it's time to do more, to write more, to practice more. There's so much left to learn and to share. That's why I love clinics. I get to share this music I love, and I get to establish relationships in all these countries. And it's all because of this rhythm [claps the clave]. Rhythm has enriched my life. I'm a student of many things, but a student of drums most of all. It just keeps piling up. I really need to learn about computers and music, and about harmony and theory. But how many lifetimes do I have?"

Chuck Silverman plays Zildjian cymbals and sticks, Remo heads and world percussion, Toca percussion, Gibraltar hardware, HQ Percussion practice pads, and Rhythm Tech percussion. Chuck can be e-mailed at drumnart@sprynet.com. Also, check out his Web site: www.chopshop.com/silverman/.



Chuck Silverman
(Author/Educator)

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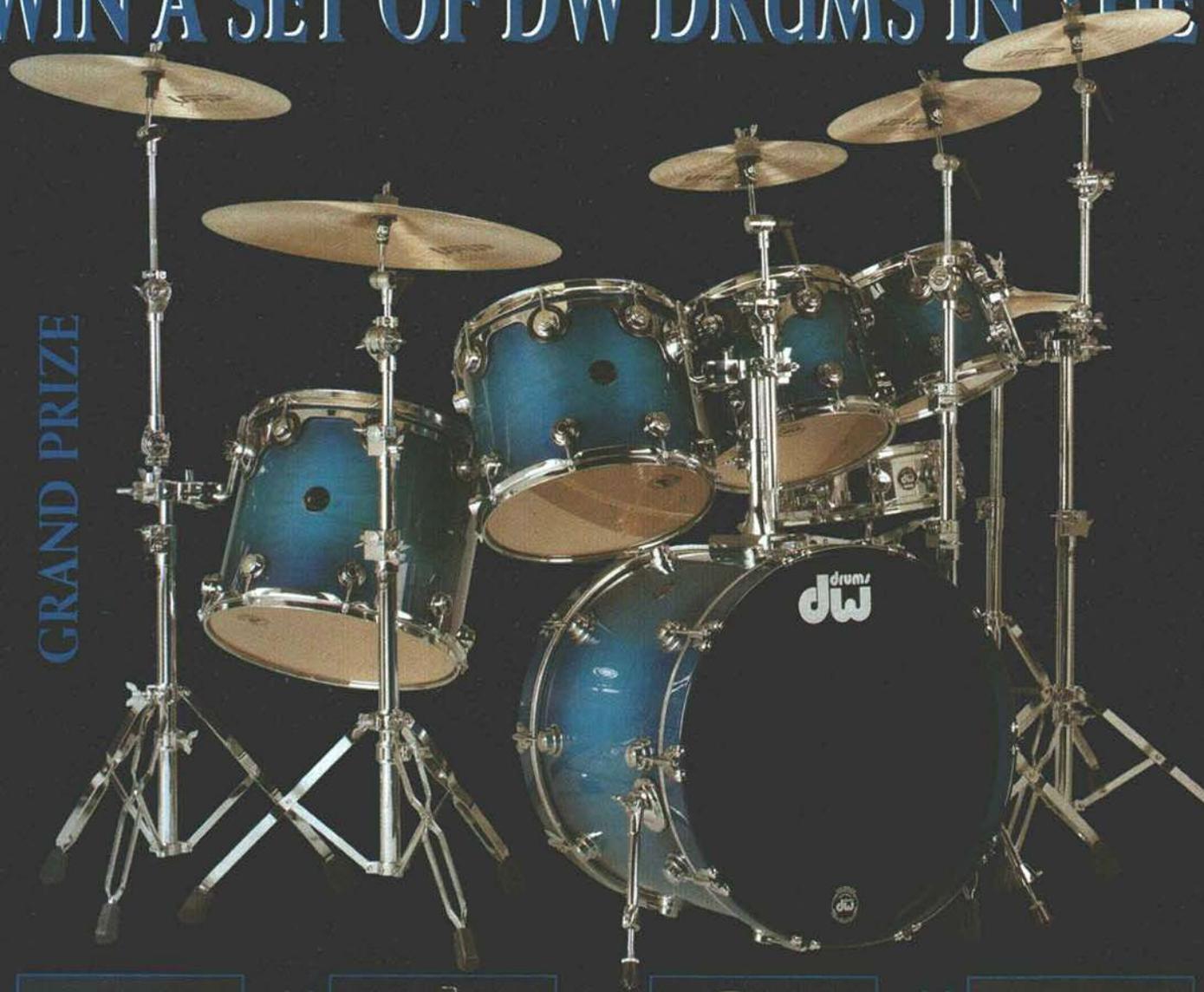
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Fifth Montreal Drum Fest

The Montreal Drum Fest, Canada's largest drum event, will celebrate its fifth anniversary on November 8 and 9. Produced by *Le Musicien* (Canada's French-language music magazine), the event will present some of the world's greatest drummers to an expected audience of over 1,500 drumming enthusiasts. Artists currently confirmed include Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, Will Calhoun, Chad Smith, Joe Morello, Mike Mangini, John Riley, Kozo Suganuma, Dom Famularo, Giovanni Hidalgo, and Magella Cormier, with more to be added.

The Drum Fest will take place at the Pierre-Mercure Hall, 300 Boulevard De Maisonneuve East, Montreal, Canada. Special rates are available at hotels close to the venue. Tickets are now on sale, at \$50 (US) for two full days from 10:30 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. For further information or to order tickets, contact Ralph Angelillo at (514)928-1726.

exhibits, clinics, concerts, master classes, competitions, and seminars" covering a variety of drumming styles from around the world. According to the event's official host, local studio percussionist Theresa Dimond, organizers are making a concerted effort to see that this year's convention is more accessible to drummers and percussionists of all ages. In fact, one of the highlights of the event is a "Be A Player" program featuring the Pacific Sticks percussion ensemble. For information on registration, travel, and accommodations, call PAS at (405) 353-1455. For reservations call (800) 540-9030 or go on-line at www.pas.org.

Zildjian Day In Mexico



From left: Tim Root, Gregg Bissonette, Salvador Merchand, Matt Sorum, and Stephen Perkins

The first-ever Zildjian Day in Mexico was held in Mexico City recently. The roster featured Zildjian artists Gregg Bissonette, Matt Sorum, Stephen Perkins, Mexican drum star Salvador Merchand, and clinician "Texas" Tim Root. The sold-out event drew an enthusi-

PASIC '97 In Anaheim

The Percussive Arts Society's 1997 International Conference (PASIC) will be held at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California from Wednesday, November 19 through Saturday, November 22. The event is being billed as "four days of non-stop

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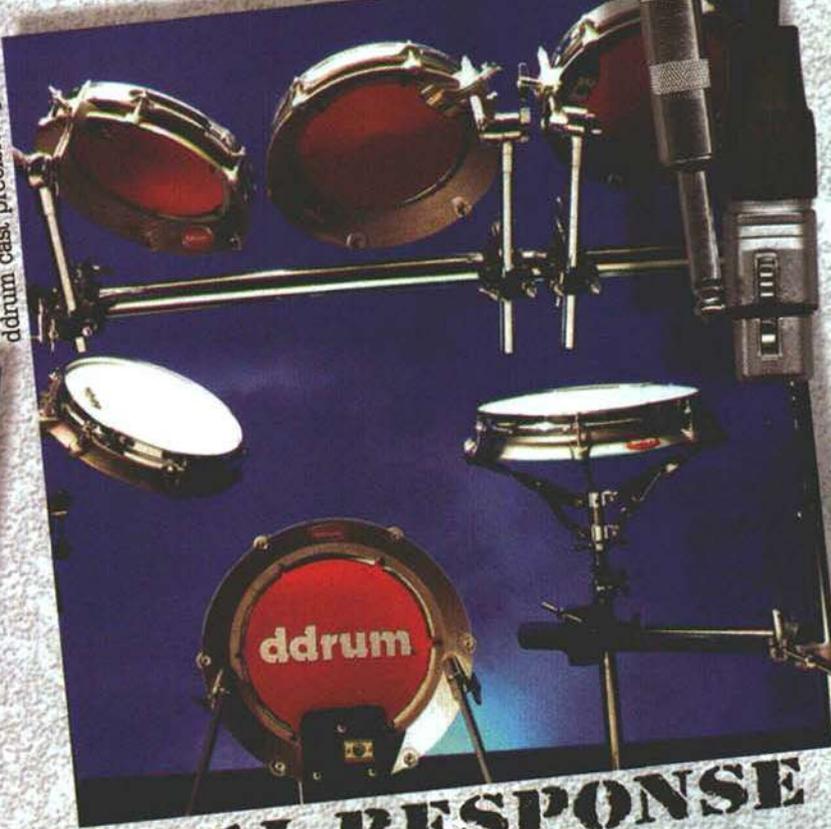
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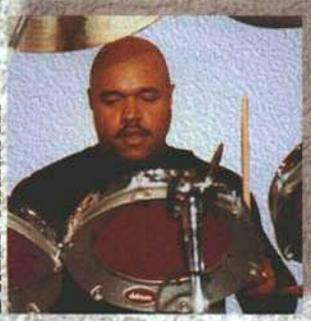
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astic crowd of more than 6,000 people—the largest turnout for a single percussion event ever in Mexico. Unfortunately, the number was much larger than expected; the venue could only accommodate 4,000, so some 2,000 drummers had to be turned away. (The show was preceded by an in-store appearance at a local music store with yet more fans patiently waiting for autographs and photos with the show's famous drummers.)

According to Zildjian's director of artist relations, John DeChristopher, "Zildjian Days have been an important and inspirational way for us to give something back to drummers everywhere. This one was a spectacular event, and the crowd reaction was just amazing. All of the individual performances were top-notch, and the grand finale—which had all the guys playing together—literally brought the house down."

Indy Quickies

Remo has recently become a major sponsor of *The Charlie Horse Music Pizza*, an innovative PBS children's music-making program starring twelve-time Emmy award winner Shari Lewis. Twenty episodes are being filmed in preparation for the series debut on January 5, 1998. Touted as a great means of promoting kids' awareness and appreciation of music, the show will be available to 90% of US households. The multi-million dollar series is also being funded by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Josh Touchton has been promoted to the position of national

sales manager for Mapex drums. Touchton will also oversee the artist relations and customer service departments. A professional drummer and drum tech for the past ten years, Josh got his start in the industry as a customer service rep at Gibson Guitar Corporation in 1993. He moved quickly within the percussion industry as customer relations director for Mapex drums (when they were distributed by Gibson) and later as the product specialist for Slingerland.

New among Pearl's clinicians is **Dr. J.B. Smith**. An associate professor of music and the coordinator of percussion studies at Arizona State University, Dr. Smith is also the director of ASU's percussion ensemble, which toured Russia and Poland in 1990 and performed at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Anaheim in 1991. An active performer, Smith has served as principal percussionist with Ensemble 21, and as principal percussionist with the Daniel Lentz Group. He also performs with Summit Brass and the Phoenix Symphony.

Manny's Music recently hosted Drum Mania III, a drum & percussion extravaganza featuring corps-style ensemble Hip Pickles (promoting their new CD), Australian double bass phenom Virgil Donati, congero-of-the-century Giovanni Hidalgo, and chops-meister Dennis Chambers. Emceed by Manny's drum department manager Marko Soccoli, the show closed with a jam that began with Dennis and Virgil, who were first joined by Giovanni—and eventually (on a slew of extra drumsets and percussion instruments) by a who's who of drumming that included Bobby Amende, Will Calhoun, Luis Conte, Anton Fig, Robby Gonzalez, Tommy Igoe, JoJo Mayer, Joel Rosenblatt, Bobby Sanabria, and Tony "Thunder" Smith. The event was sponsored by **Manny's, S.I.R., Evans, LP, Pearl, Premier, Remo, Sabian, Shure, Vater, and Zildjian.**

Endorser News

Terry Bozzio is now a Sabian artist. In addition to presenting clinics for Sabian, he will be collaborating with the manufacturer on a new series of cymbals called *Radio*.

Dennis Davis (Roy Ayers, David Bowie, Stevie Wonder), **Norman Hassan** (percussionist, UB-40), and **Ted Duggan** (Banco de Gaia) are playing the Wernick *Notepad*, a British-made electronic trigger pad system.

New Paiste endorsers include **David Lauser** (Sammy Hagar), **Curt Bisquera** (Spice Girls), **Gavin Hammon** (Dance Hall Crashers), **Matt Laug** (Slash, Venice), **Bob Leatherbarrow** (Bill Holman Big Band), **Rick May** (DC Talk), **Raymond Herrera** (Fear Factory), **Martina Axen** (Drain S.T.H.), **Olbin Burgos** (Gloria Estefan), **Mario Calire** (the Wallflowers), **Ken Coomer** (Wilco), **Frank Bua** (the Radiators), **Paul Deakin** (the Mavericks), **Shannon Forrest** (Nashville studio), **Dave Hooper and M.B. Gordy** (John Tesh), **Owen Hale** (Lynyrd Skynyrd), **Joe Hunt** (Berklee College), **Ben Riley** (Bruce Cockburn), **Kirk Johnson** (the Artist), **Robbie Magruder** (Mary Chapin Carpenter), **Erick Morgan** (Kirk Franklin & the Family), **Butch** (eels), **Jeff Quay** (Blue Man Group), **Nathaniel Townsley** (Special EFX), **Joey Waronker** (Beck), and **Stan Frazier** (Sugar Ray).

Mario Calire Plays Vater!

Mario Calire plays with the Wallflowers and uses Vater 5B and Acoustick.

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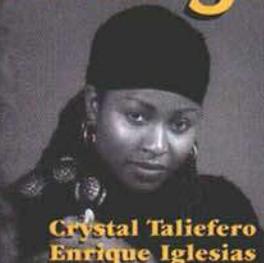
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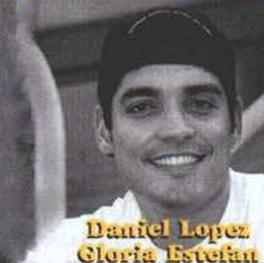
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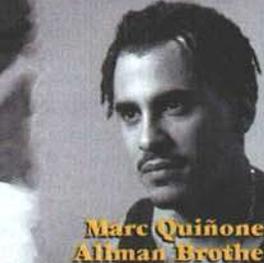
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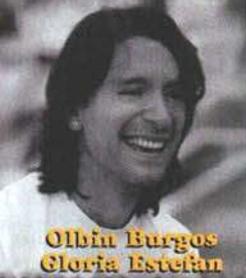
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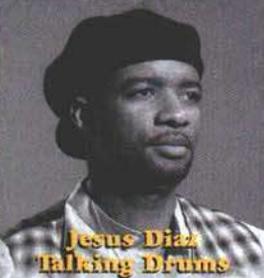
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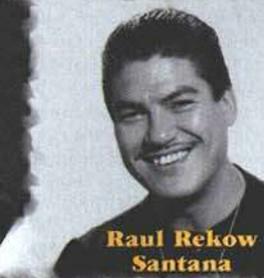
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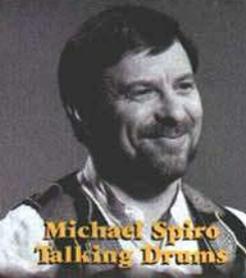
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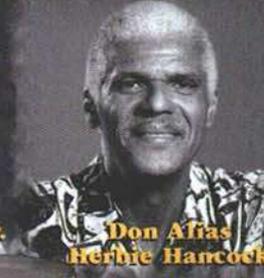
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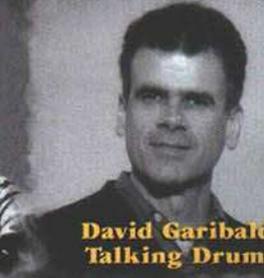
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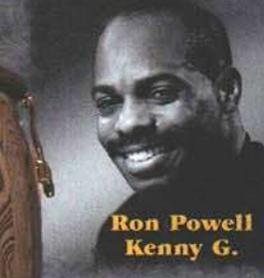
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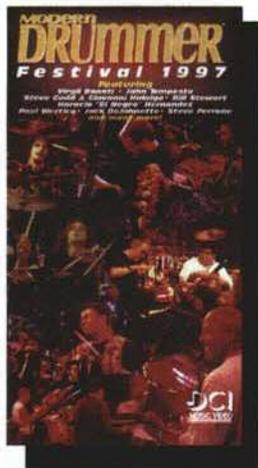
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MD's 10th Anniversary

Festival Weekend...

In commemoration of Modern Drummer's 10th Anniversary Festival, DCI Music Video recorded the entire weekend of historic performances on video. If you were lucky enough to have been there, this six-tape series will serve as a great memento. If not, then these tapes will give you the feeling of having been there yourself!



MD Festival Weekend '97 video:

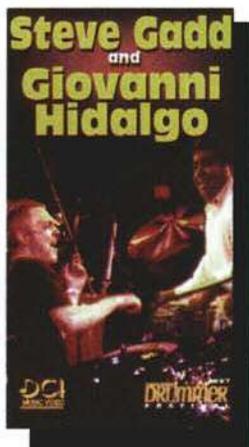
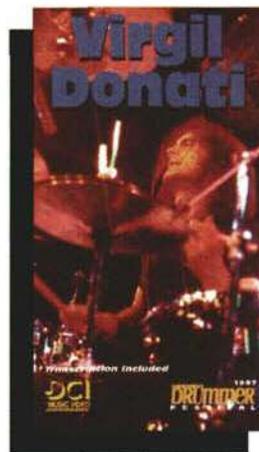
Excerpts of each great clinic and performance, plus backstage footage, interviews, and more! Artists include:

- The Percussion Originators Ensemble
- Virgil Donati
- John Tempesta
- Steve Gadd and Giovanni Hidalgo
- Bill Stewart and his band
- Tony Royster Jr.
- Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez with John Patitucci
- Paul Wertico
- Jack DeJohnette
- Steve Ferrone and musical guests

Running time: 95 minutes

Virgil Donati:

The complete clinic performance of this fiery double bass virtuoso.
Running time: 55 minutes

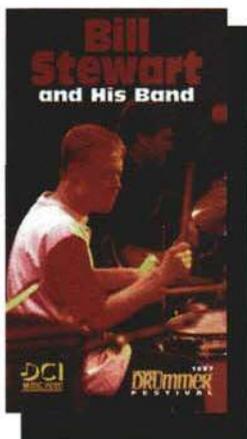


Steve Gadd and Giovanni Hidalgo:

Steve and Giovanni performed together for the very first time at the 10th Anniversary MD Festival. This video features their historic performance plus fascinating footage from their three-day rehearsal and preparation.

Running time: over 95 minutes

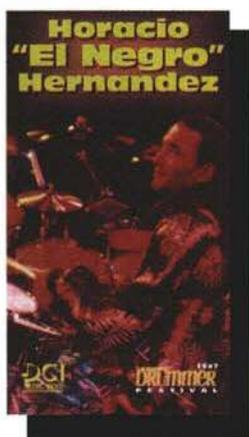
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Bill Stewart and his Band:

A beautiful performance by one of today's most creative jazz drummers, with Larry Goldings on organ and Peter Bernstein on guitar.

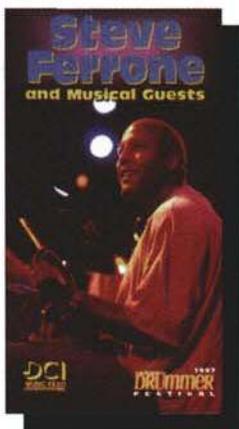
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Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez:

A clinic by Santana's drummer and a master of Afro-Cuban styles, featuring the great bassist John Patitucci.

Running time: 45 minutes



Steve Ferrone with Musical Guests:

An incredible performance by one of the funkiest drummers in the world. Also features David Garfield on keyboards, Carol Steele on percussion, Jeff Golub on guitar, and Lincoln Goines on bass.

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Dear Frustrated Drummer: If you're tired of feeling frustrated with your feet, and wonder why you don't get any better, keep reading this article. You're about to discover how to learn the one aspect of your double bass drums that everyone's taught you incorrectly . . . and how to INSTANTLY correct this simple mistake. Joe Stronsick, a true double bass genius, knows most drummers want to get better NOW, but don't! Think about this: If all the technical advances in pedals are so great, why are 98% of all double bass players' feet still going to hell? If all it took was a super speed pedal plate, you'd be getting better. But you aren't, so something is wrong. Then there's the so called "training" you get from drum pros, books, videos, etc. They've been teaching this same stuff forever, and you still can't play your bass drums like you dream of! So what's the problem? Why can't you do this? Do you really want to find out? Stronsick will reveal to you: **The Greatest Myth In Double Bass Drumming!** in the Free Report, "Ballistic Bass Drums."

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- * The Secret Of Economy Of Motion to take your feet from the typical repetitive fast single strokes... to easily mastering single and double

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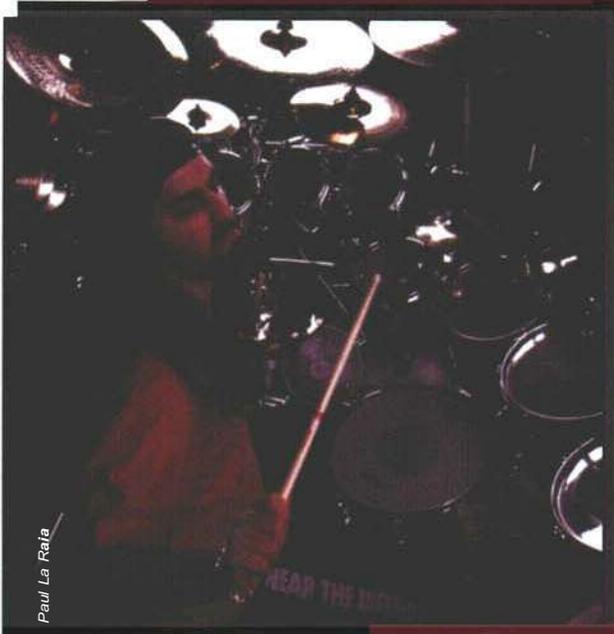
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- O. 13" tom (inverted, mounted from above)
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- W. Bar Chimes
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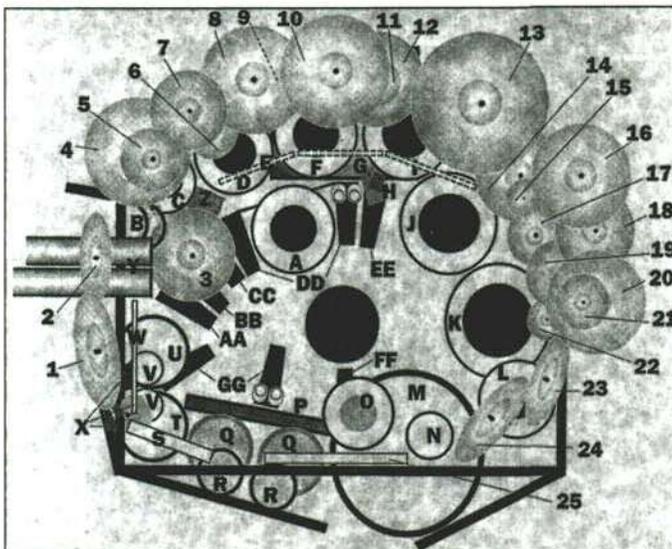
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- 6. 10" *Z Custom* splash
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- 8. 16" medium crash
- 9. 8" *A Custom* splash
- 10. 18" *Z Custom* medium crash
- 11. 6" *A Custom* splash
- 12. 15" *Quick Beat* hi-hats

- 13. 22" *Z Heavy Power* ride
- 14. 14" *Z Custom* hi-hats
- 15. 6½" *Zil-Bel*
- 16. 17" *Z Custom* medium
- 17. 10" mini hi-hats
- 18. 14" *A Custom* crash
- 19. 12" *K top* hi-hat cymbal

- 20. 16" *K Custom Dark* crash
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- 23. Two cut, cracked Chinas (piggybacked)
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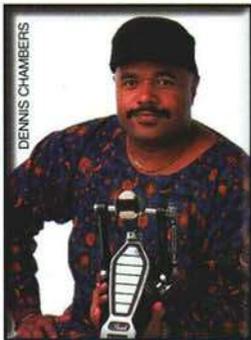
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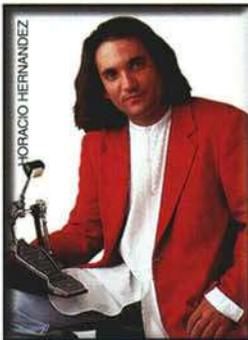
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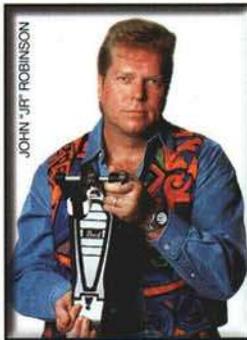
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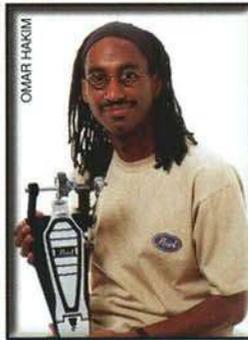
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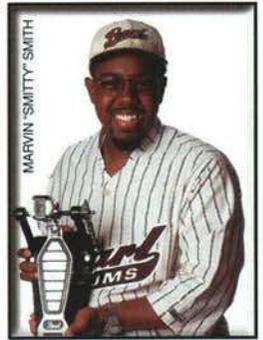
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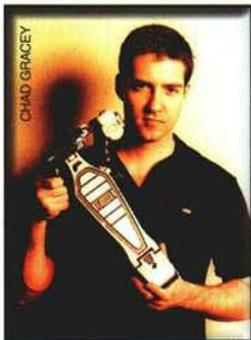
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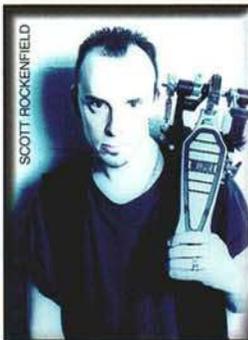
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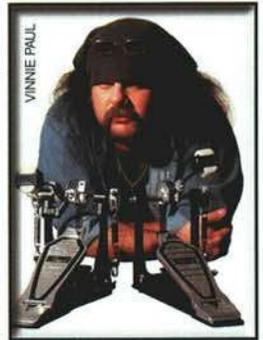
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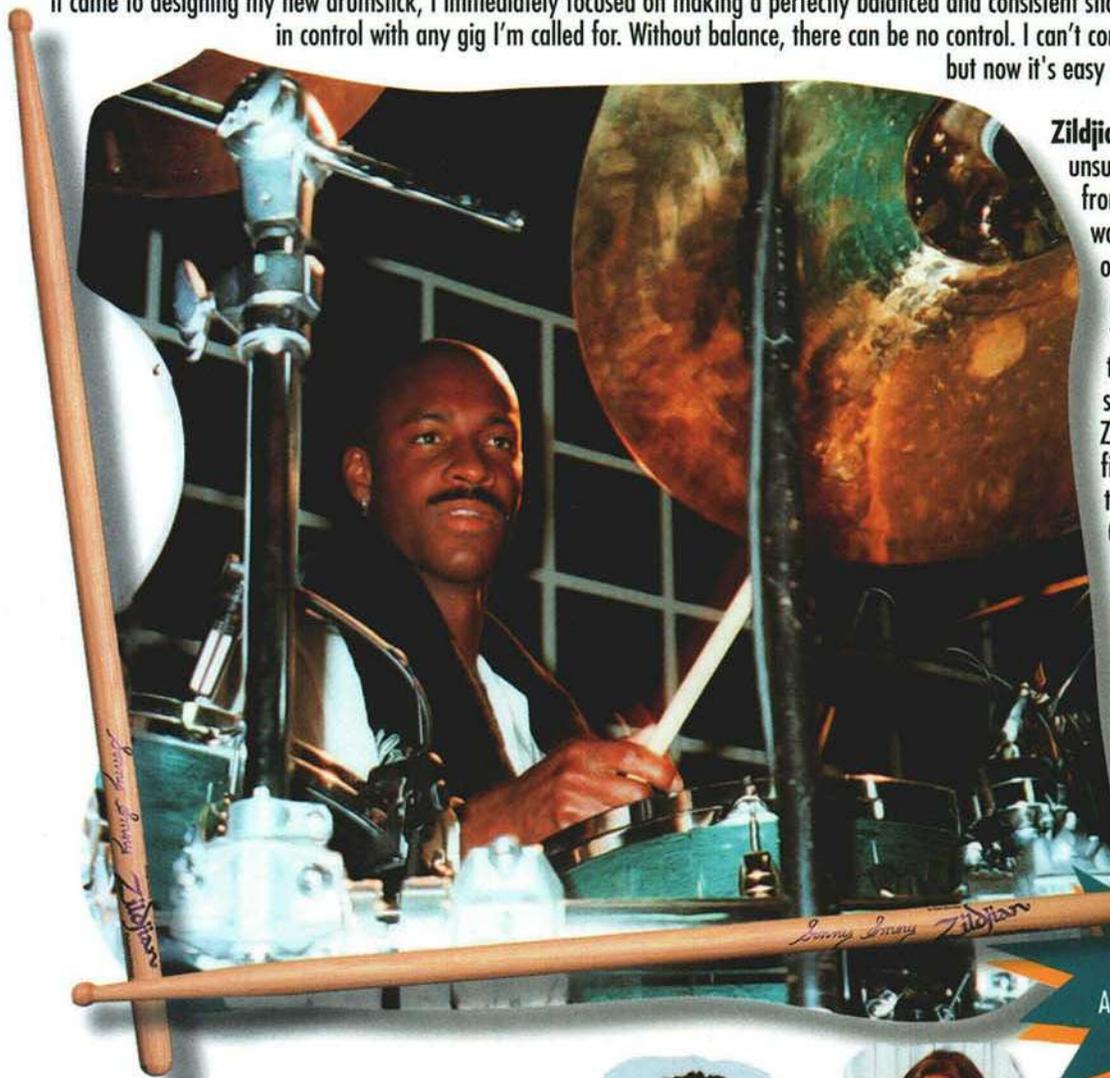


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