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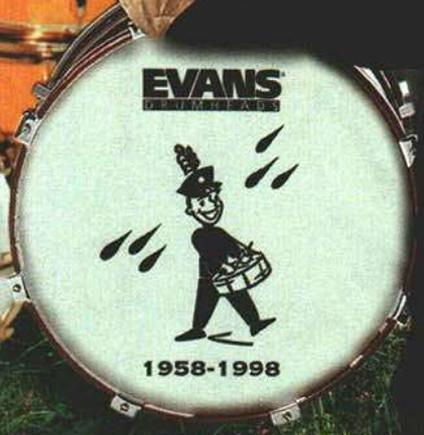
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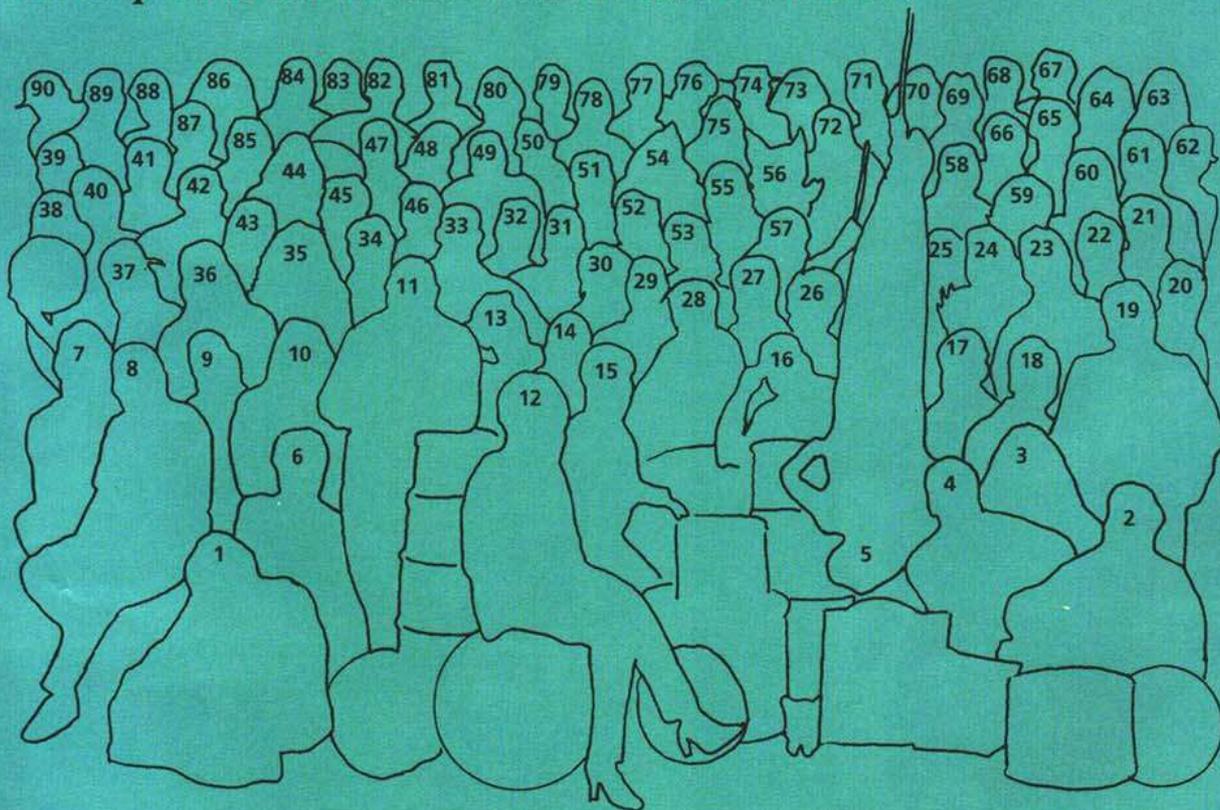


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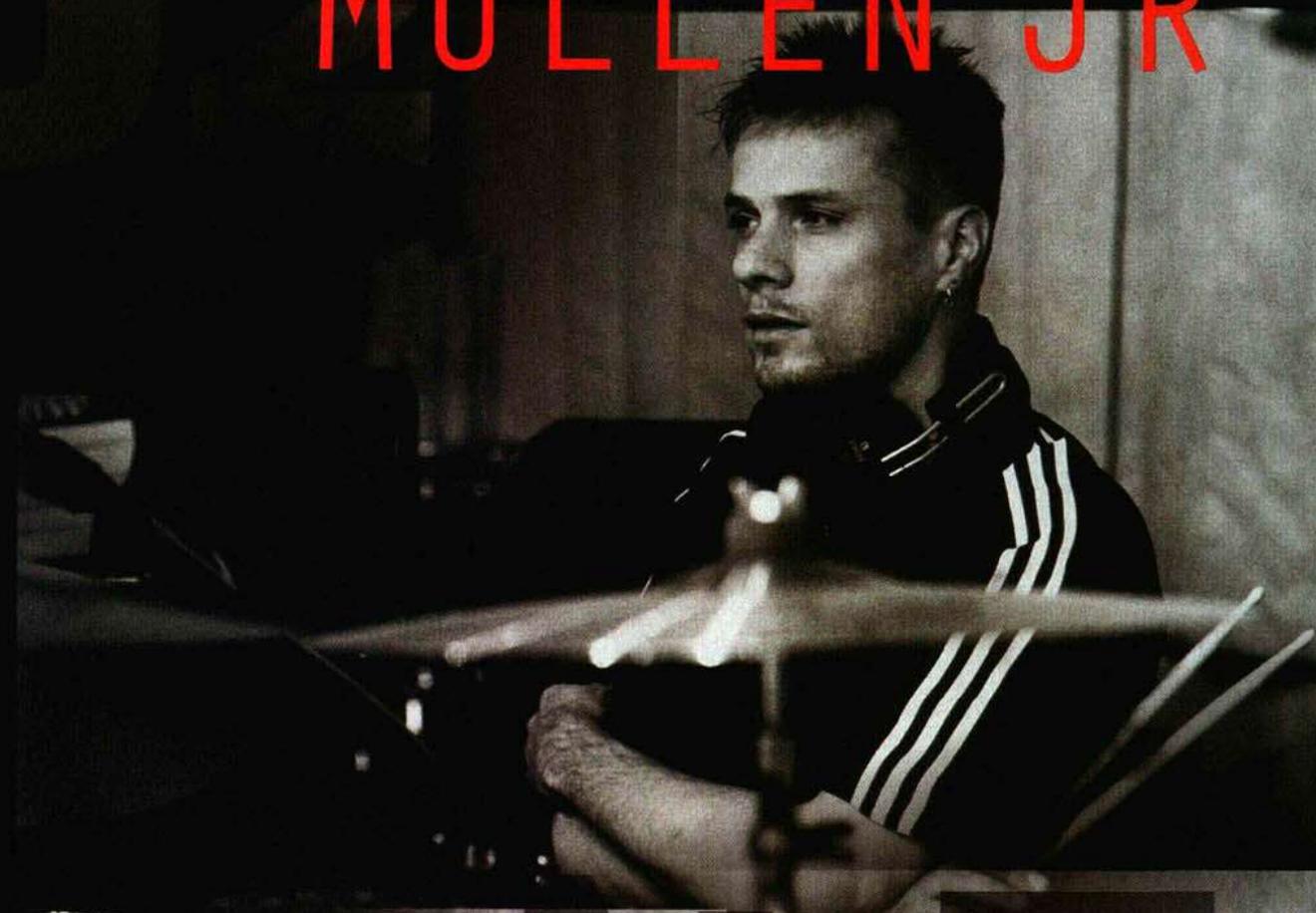
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ROD MORGENSTEIN

A lot of musical trends have come and gone since Rod Morgenstein and his cohorts in the Dixie Dregs originated their own brand of southern-fried progressive rock. Today Morgenstein's playing is as vital as ever, as several new and exciting projects prove.

by Robin Tolleson

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BILLY MASON

Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie, and country music: We're talking good ol' American family values, yessiree. Of course, before landing the gig with country star Tim McGraw, drummer Billy Mason put in some hard time at the FBI. And then there was that exotic dancer phase. Uh...perhaps we should let *him* explain.

by John M. Aldridge

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VERNEL FOURNIER

Vernel Fournier has made a career of swimming in those strange musical tributaries just off of the mainstream. But examining his resume—including his highly influential take on Ahmad Jamal's "Poinciana"—reveals a drummer of singular style and importance.

by Rick Mattingly

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ON THE ROAD: THE LIFE OF A TOURING DRUMMER

Experience is the wisest teacher. Just ask Enrique Iglesias's Chuck Burgi, Boyz II Men's Fred Holliday, Buckshot LeFonque's Rocky Bryant, and Sawyer Brown's Joe Smyth. They've traveled all the miles, broken all the sticks—and eaten all the back-stage fried chicken it takes to learn what road life is *really* all about. An exclusive *MD* report.

by Lauren Vogel Weiss

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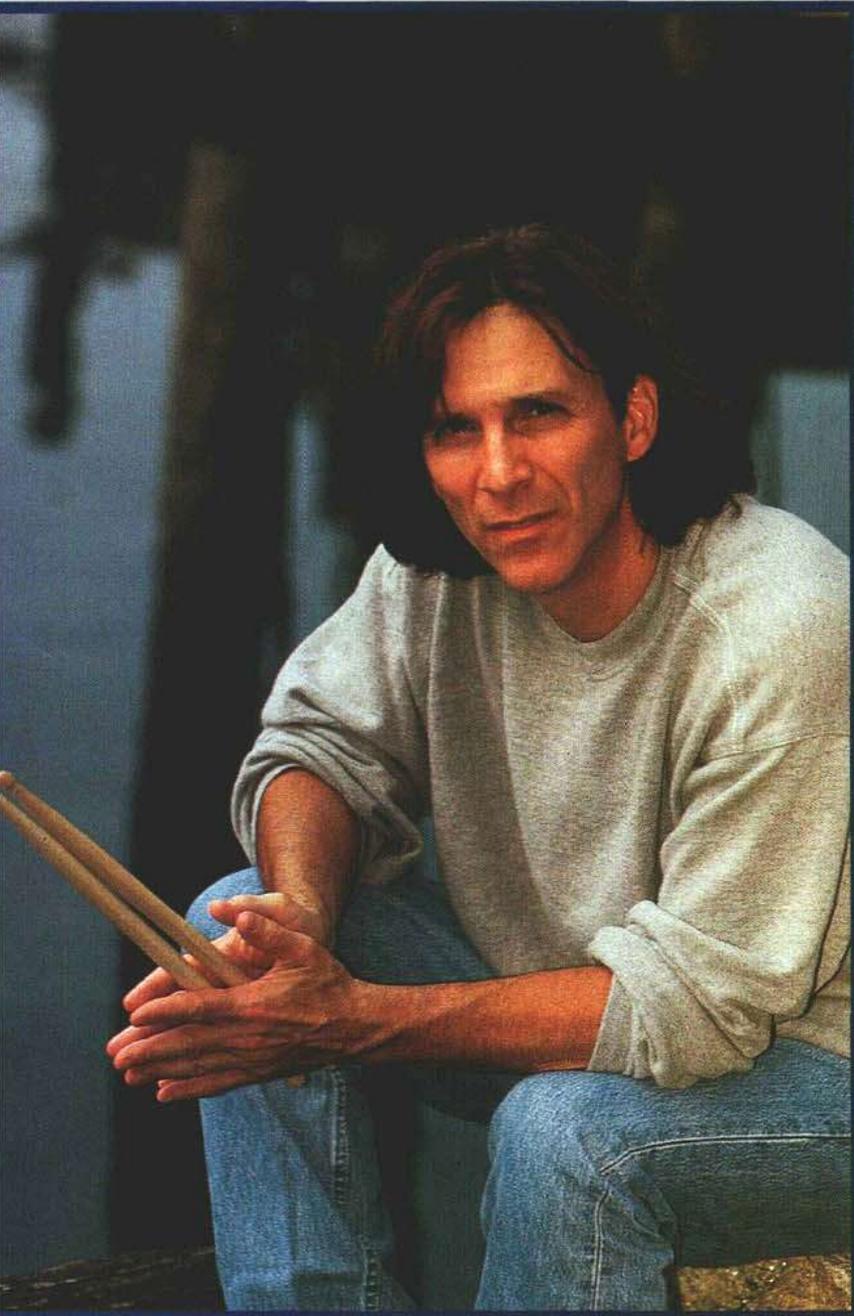


photo by Paul La Raia

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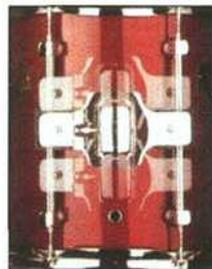


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First Person

This month we're pleased to introduce another new department to the regular *MD* column roster, *First Person*.

The idea for this new series came about after receiving many articles from *MD* readers, relating their own *personal* experiences on the job, at the audition, in the practice room, or with the music business in general. Though some of this material fell neatly into *MD*'s *Concepts* department, the editorial slant of many of the articles simply didn't seem to fit well in that slot—or any other *MD* department for that matter. And so some of the articles were returned to the authors, while others were held in the hopes that we might ultimately find a place for them.

However, we were recently sorting through our inventory of these "personal experience" type articles, and began to wonder if perhaps *MD* readers might get more out of them than we'd originally thought. Would other drummers perhaps gain some valuable insight from fellow players who experienced similar situations? Might some of these articles offer inspiration to another drummer struggling to make it? Could one drummer see a reflection of himself through the experience of another and learn an important lesson from it? Well, we figured we'd never really know until we created a specific department for this type of article. Thus, the birth of *First Person*.

The kind of topics you'll be seeing in *First Person*? A name player recalls meeting a drumming idol as a youngster, and the long-lasting effect that this experience had on his career. Another local player speaks out on the trials and tribulations of working his way up the musical success ladder. A middle-aged beginner offers his perspective on starting out in drumming late in life, while another reflects on his return to playing after being away from the kit for many years. And in our opener this month, the author relates a humiliating audition experience that taught him a lesson about preparation he's not likely to forget.

We're sure many of you out there have equally interesting stories to tell, and we'd certainly like to hear them. Should you decide to submit a manuscript, please keep it to five or six double-spaced, typewritten pages, and include a self-addressed stamped envelope. You may enclose a photo if you like, which could be used if space permits. Send your articles to Modern Drummer, c/o First Person Editor, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. By the way, if we decide to publish your story, we'll send you a check for \$100 when it appears in the magazine.

MODERN DRUMMER

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine



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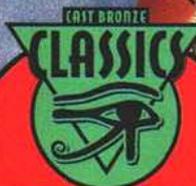
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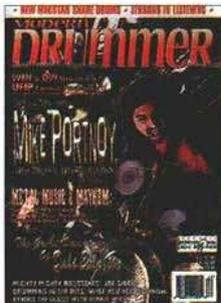
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MIKE PORTNOY



Thanks for such a revealing interview with Mike Portnoy in your December '97 issue. It's refreshing to experience the humor, humanity, and candor of such a talented individual.

During my short three years as an *MD* subscriber, I have seen a plethora of references made to the "less is more" mentality—along with many incidents of "prog bashing"—in your pages. I think William F. Miller pinpointed the true source of these views with his comment to Mike: "A lot of the technical

things you play are out of reach for most drummers."

As a nation of progressive people, we have pushed—and continue to push—the boundaries of sports, science, literature, and frequently, the arts. Have we now decided to limit our creativity to that of society's dictates? Modern/progressive drummers like Mike Portnoy give me hope. Let's not stunt the growth and expressiveness of our passion. There is so much more to learn and so much more opportunity to grow as musicians.

John Webb
 Portland, OR

The interview with Mike Portnoy was phenomenal. It addressed many important issues, such as commercialism, technique, and odd times. Clearly Mike is one of the best drummers in the industry today. From the way he expressed himself in the article, he seems to be a class act, as well.

I am writing also because I would like to see the comments attributed in the interview to Neil Peart clarified by Neil. In the

past, Neil has seemed to be a very intelligent musician. But if he really did state that the *Working Man* tribute was nothing but a bunch of "bar-band musicians" trying to get money, then I may have been wrong in my optimistic assumption.

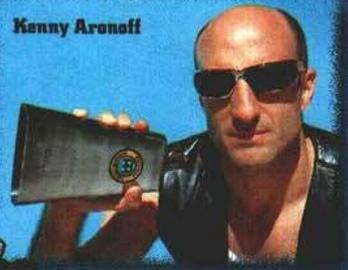
Magna Carta is a music label whose first priority is not money, but is for the artist and for progressive music. And the "bar band" musicians referred to are legends. I am sure most of them were as disappointed as Mike Portnoy was when they heard about these alleged comments by Neil.

Perhaps in light of seeing his comments being criticized, Neil will finally give credit to the great musicians on the album, who made it out of reverence to one of the greatest bands ever.

Ian Bradley
 via Internet

My subscription to your outstanding magazine started in October '97, and I have not been able to put it down since it started coming (except when I play)! One thing that really got my attention was your

The real thing

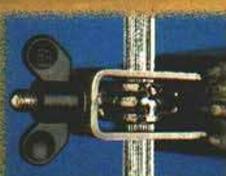


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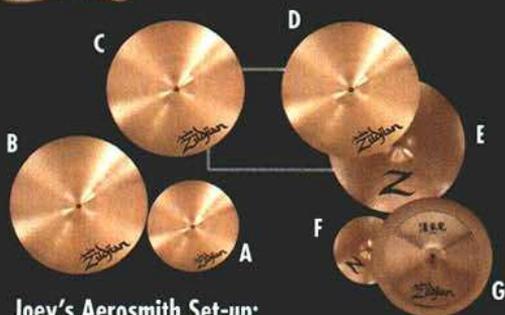
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"One of the great Rock drummers of all time."

Dennis Chambers
on Joey Kramer



"Joey is one of the great Rock drummers of all time. So many drummers grew up listening to Aerosmith and have imitated his grooves... not enough people appreciate how influential he has been. One of the few Rock drummers that can really groove and today his playing is fresher and hipper than ever."



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December '97 issue, in which you featured Mike Portnoy of Dream Theater, followed by an excellent article on the drummers on the OzzFest '97 tour. The way you thoughtfully constructed that article shows that metal drummers are not just "bash, boom monsters," but true musicians. I will continue to be a loyal subscriber for years to come!

Jay McDougald
Laurinburg, NC

Your article on Mike Portnoy was top shelf, with a great cover and great photos. I must admit that your man Miller had me close to indignant, making comments about Mike's "extended fills." I really thought that he was being a first-rate snob. After all, Mike makes a lot of fans and wins *MD* Readers Polls by being able to "play so much." And not just anyone can admit to working out double-bass patterns on the toilet! Hey Mike, is that why you really sit so high?

Brent Juve
Austin, TX

A DECADE OF SILENCE

I'm sending this note to express my thanks for what I found to be the most wonderful and concise tribute to Buddy Rich that I have ever read. [From *The Past*, December '97 *MD*] It says everything that needs to be said about Buddy, in a most respectful and succinct manner. Mark Nardi should be commended for his words, and I commend the *MD* editorial staff for recognizing a piece of such quality.

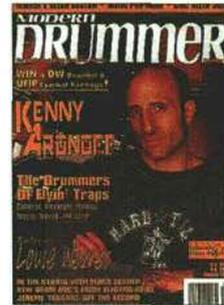
John Nasshan Jr.
Las Vegas, NV

Mr. Nardi goes out of his way to talk about Buddy's "lightning speed, perfect wrists, and astounding technique." While every one of those descriptions is accurate, I believe most drummers would agree that the ability to groove or swing a band is far more important than how technically proficient a drummer is. It's easy to see from articles like this why many drummers are so preoccupied with technical proficiency over the ability to play rhythm and keep time. Buddy Rich had a sense of rhythm that can only be considered genius. It would be a crime to remember the greatest

drummer who ever lived only for one aspect of his seemingly limitless abilities.

Rich Scannella
Ewing, NJ

A NOTE FROM KENNY



Thanks to *MD* for my cover story in your November '97 issue. Rick Mattingly did an excellent job, and Alex Solca took great pictures. However, after reviewing my own tour kit, I realized

that I inadvertently left out two items. I use a Meinl *Drummer Tambourine* as well as a Meinl *RealPlayer* steel cowbell as part of my live setup. These are important effects for the Fogerty gig, and I wanted to be sure that they were mentioned.

Kenny Aronoff
Bloomington, IN

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(Frank Sinatra)

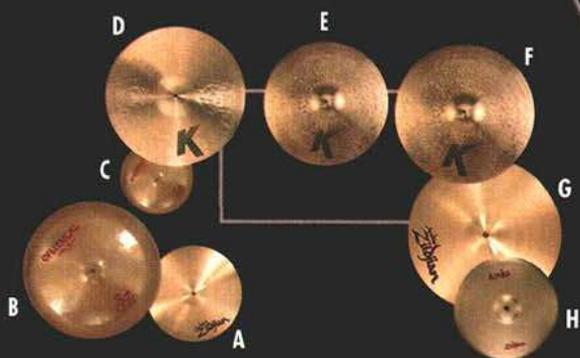
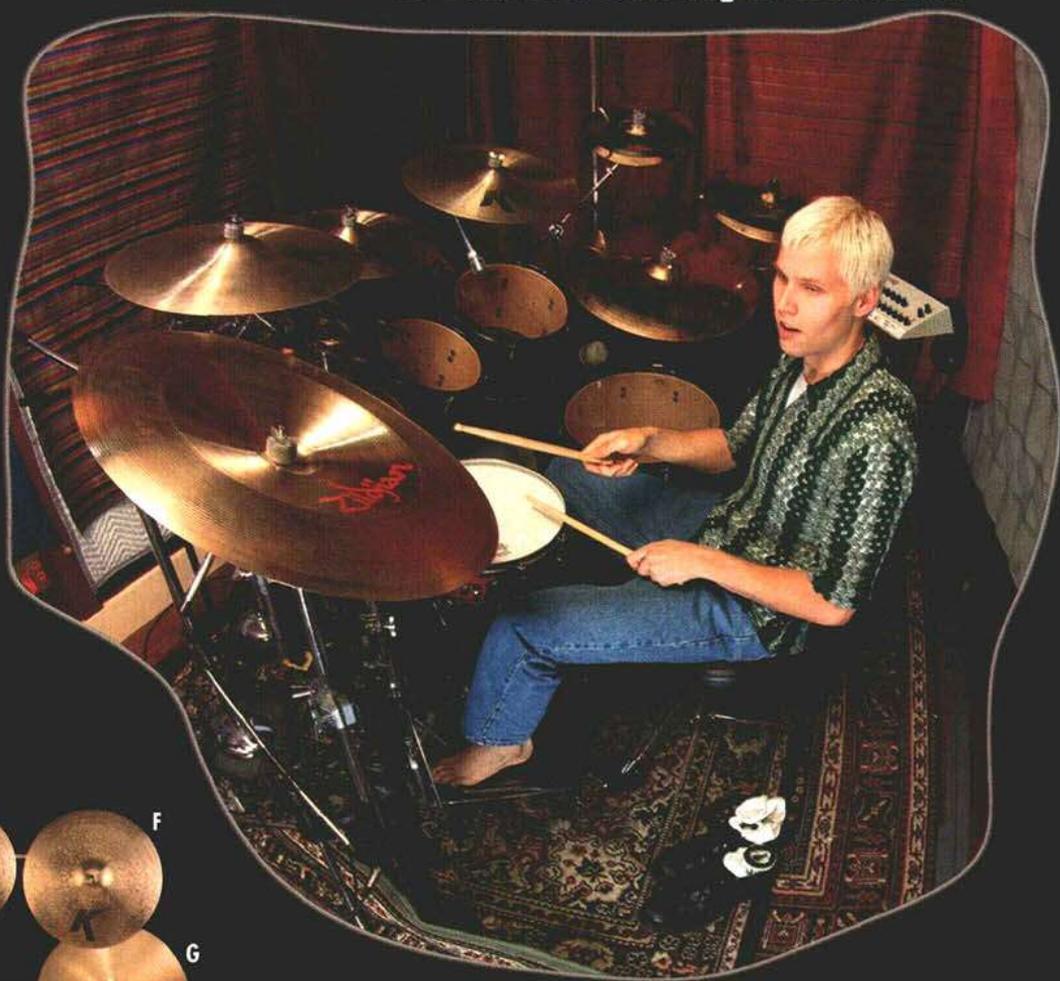
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"Chad can be very technical while still being down to earth and grooving."

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:

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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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MARK ZONDER

Thanks to *MD* and Matt Peiken for finally giving some more coverage to Mark Zonder—probably the most talented and tasteful drummer in the progressive rock genre! [*In The Studio*, November '97 *MD*] The music he's been creating with Fates Warning over the years has paved the way for the likes of Mike Portnoy and others, yet Mr. Zonder and Fates Warning are always overlooked. Their latest release, *A Pleasant Shade Of Gray*, is arguably the most emotionally moving and ambitious piece of work we'll see in a long, long time. Thanks so much!

Vance S. West
via Internet

ADS IN MODERN DRUMMER

I would like to thank Paiste for having the guts to apologize in the November '97 *MD* for the October '97 ad that depicted Tommy Lee romping in pig manure. While I value our basic freedom of speech, it comes with the responsibility to act in a respectable manner. Just because one makes millions of dollars is no reason to act like a child—or rather, like an idiot.

I applaud Paiste's ad apologizing for their Offense. It really means a lot in this day and age, when too often people like to make excuses for why they should be allowed to do the things they do.

Timothy J. Stegall
via Internet

Your October '97 issue was outstanding. I really liked the Paiste ad on page 45; my first thought was, "How very brave of Paiste and how typical of Tommy Lee." Then I received my November issue, and lo and behold, on page 26 Paiste goes belly up and apologizes to North America. (Jeez, just imagine the scope of that.) C'mon Paiste, it's only rock 'n' roll, it's only drumming, and it's only Tommy Lee.

Michael Boe
via Internet

Further to the *Editor's Overview* in the November '97 issue, I am one of those who enjoys reading the ads in each month's issue. They're a big part of why I subscribe to *Modern Drummer*. How else would one stay current on what is available generally, and with new innovations specifically? I certainly don't have the time to hang around my local percussion dealer.

Magazines such as *GQ* and *Vogue* have a much higher advertising-to-editorial ratio than does *Modern Drummer*. But as fashion magazines this makes perfect sense. (I have never purchased *GQ* for the editorial content.) I agree that plowing through a magazine with excessive ads and business reply cards can be cumbersome. I canceled my subscription to *Sports Illustrated* for exactly this reason. However, I view *Modern Drummer* as a trade journal, and as such, the ads only complement the excellent interviews, reviews, and instruction contained in each issue. Keep up the good work!

Mark Blossil
via Internet

MARIO CALIRE



The remarks and perspectives that Mario Calire shared in your October '97 issue were very inspiring and influential. Although I have heard only a little of the Wallflowers' music in the past, because of the interview, I will be open to listening to a lot more.

Thanks for interviewing the newer drummers on the music scene. It's nice to see that *MD* can change with the times. That doesn't imply that *MD* should forget the masters of the present and past. But let's give the new drummers the same opportunities to reach that level of influence.

Dave Maccaroni
Rochester, New York

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DAVE ABBRUZZESE

Feeling Green

Sure, there was some anger, sadness, sense of loss—even a bit of self-pity. Who wouldn't go through that after losing a gig, especially one as prized as the drum throne in Pearl Jam? But now, three years later, Dave Abbruzzese says that in many ways he's better off for what happened. Anyhow, the drummer has little time these days to dwell on it.

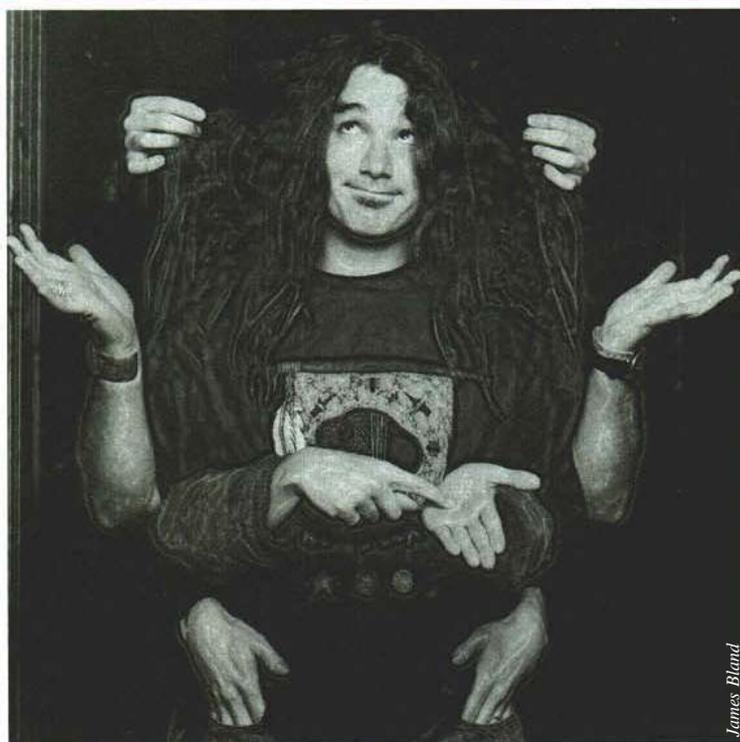
Topping the list of Dave's new interests are the roles of drummer, producer, and one-man record label for his new band, the Green Romance Orchestra, which recently released a home-spun debut, *Play Parts I And V*. The mere fact that the CD is in record stores is somewhat of a triumph for Abbruzzese, who says the music was originally intended to be nothing more than spontaneous expression between four Texas homeboys.

"The album was conceived and written as we tracked, and my role as producer was documenting our experience rather than overseeing some regimented, sterile product," Abbruzzese says. "All we wanted was a great experience, just sharing with each other."

While Abbruzzese didn't plan for anything beyond an extended jam session, he certainly isn't grumbling about the return on his investment—more in heart and soul than to his wallet. Abbruzzese says he's playing music again for the only reasons that matter to him. And maybe not entirely out of coincidence, his drumming has never been better. While Dave has always woven his personality into his playing, you can hear a versatility and charisma on *Play* that speak of a reborn confidence.

"I didn't approach my playing any differently than I did with Pearl Jam," he insists. "I'm a melodic player, but the melodic aspect of this band is a little more open. I was really happy with how the drums came off, and I think some of that has to do with the time off. There's maybe more finesse, but just as much power as anything I did with Pearl Jam."

Abbruzzese's days in Pearl Jam ended when his growing renown within drumming circles didn't mesh with his bandmates' bent to control their image. After commiserating with other drummers who'd either quit or been canned from big gigs, including Stan Lynch (Tom Petty's Heartbreakers) and Grant Young (Soul Asylum), Abbruzzese went home—literally and psychologically—to ground his emotions and get back in touch with the spirit for music he thought he'd lost. Back in Texas, Dave and old friends Gary Muller, Paul Slavens, and Doug Neil wrote seven songs in three days. The drummer then spent the next year commuting between Texas and his home in Seattle, taking on the role of executive producer and funding the band's time in a Denton, Texas recording studio.



James Bland

Abbruzzese eventually formed Free Association Records to print up an initial run of 20,000 CDs. At first he sold copies one at a time to anyone who wanted them. Requests came in like an avalanche, though, and soon he found himself giving discs away rather than dealing with the bookkeeping efforts that go along with cashing checks. Reviews have been so positive that now the Green Romance Orchestra is considering a national tour.

Regardless of a tour and any future records, Abbruzzese says he owes a life-long debt to the other members of Green Romance Orchestra and to his fans for the support that helped him climb out of emotional turmoil. "Pearl Jam was the best—and the worst—thing that ever happened to me. It was a big life lesson, and a public lesson, that I'm still dealing with. The first year was incredibly difficult, the second was a little better, and the third? I'm just starting to be okay with it."

Matt Peiken

"All we wanted with the Green Romance Orchestra was a great experience, just sharing with each other."



Grant Vanzo

"Are You With Me?"

To watch Mick Fleetwood play a show is to watch a man who simply *loves* to perform. For most of the gig fans can spot that familiar wide-eyed, open-mouthed, hyper presence behind the kit. Then there's Fleetwood's current version of a drum solo: Perhaps the most playful artist in the business, Mick surprised the audience on Fleetwood Mac's recent tour when he jumped out from behind his drumset and began slapping his chest, playing trigger pads that had been sewn into his vest. Prancing around the stage, Fleetwood kept something of a running dialog, yelling to the audience several times, "Are you with me?"

Fleetwood was demanding no less of the audience than he demands of himself. That sort of emotional connection defines the musical experience for the drummer. "I have a lot of vocals in my monitors, as well as lead guitar, because I want to hear every little nuance," Mick says. "That's the way I trained myself, to listen like a hawk for those emotional moments. If Lindsey [Buckingham] turns around, he just has to look in my eyes to know that I'm thinking, I'm not just sitting here, I'm *with* you."

While Fleetwood says he plays from a more emotional than technical place, he still takes his playing seriously. Insisting that his approach has changed little since Fleetwood Mac's pop domination in the 1970s, Mick reiterates that he focuses on keeping a good beat mixed with relatively simple fills. Providing a strong foundation for the rest of the band is his priority.

While his basic style hasn't changed, though, Fleetwood believes that his drumming today is some of the best of his career. "I hope that people say they think I'm playing better," he says. "I'm more consistent than I've ever been. I think it has something to do with the fact that I'm a little more leveled out as a person; I use to play flat-out drunk most of the time. I don't drink anymore, but I still play very emotionally. I grab the moment."

Harriet L. Schwartz

Doane Perry has been keeping busy between Jethro Tull obligations. In addition to working on a Tull 30th-anniversary studio LP, Perry and singer Ellis Hall are in pre-production for the recording of their next Thread project, with plans to tour in the spring. Doane can also be heard on an album by Stan Bush.

Andy Peake has been working live with Delbert McClinton.

In addition to working with David Benoit, **John Ferraro** can be heard on Tim Weisberg's latest recording. John also performed at the huge Promise Keepers meeting in Washington a few months back, as well as playing some gigs with Abe Laboriel and Justo Almario.

Cliff Almond is on the road with Manhattan Transfer.

Eddie Bayers recently recorded with Randy Travis, Matreca Berg, Patty Loveless, Rhett Akins, John Anderson, Neal McCoy, the Kinleys, David Kersh, Rick Trevino, Sammy Kershaw, the Wilsons, George Jones, Colin Raye, Clint Black, Hank Williams III, George

NEWS

Strait, John Berry, Mark Wills, Brian Wilson, Alan Jackson, and Pam Tillis.

Stan Lynch recently produced releases by the Grand Street Criers, Jackpierce, and Zaca Creek. In addition, Matreca Berg, the Cikadis, Meredith Brooks, and Toto all covered songs written by Lynch on their last records.

Paul Cook is on Edwyn Collins' *I'm Not Following You*.

Jim Keltner, Brian Blade, David Kemper, and Winston Watson are on Bob Dylan's latest, *Time Out Of Mind*.

Ex-Sugarclubes drummer **Siggi Baldursson** on the Reptile Palace Orchestra's *Hwy X*.

Craig Krampf and Jeff Finlan are on Matthew Ryan's *May Day*.

Gregg Bissonette is on Steve Lukather's new solo recording, *Luke*.

Pat McDonald is now with Tanya Tucker.

Congratulations to John Cougar Mellencamp drummer **Dane Clark** and his wife Tina on the birth of their daughter, Abigail Rose.

Teenage Fanclub's Paul Quinn

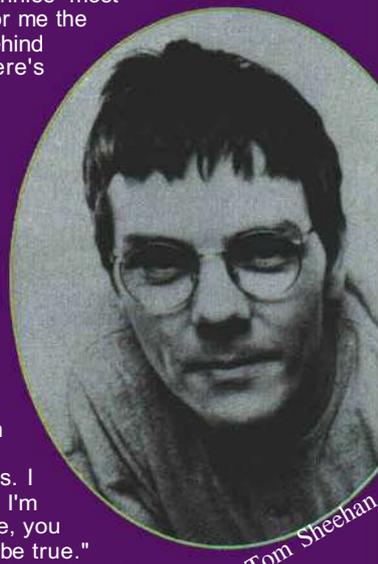
For many fans, last year's Radiohead tour was one of the most eagerly anticipated in many a moon. It certainly says something about opening band Teenage Fanclub that the buzz surrounding *their* set seemed as loud as that for the eminently hot 'Heads. Where that band appeals with theater and mystery, the Fannies (as they're fondly known) attract with immediately likable guitar jangle and warm & fuzzy vocal harmonies.

Drummer Paul Quinn is very aware of his band's (deceptively) simple strengths, and does his part to accentuate them. "Simple things are probably the hardest to do," Quinn suggests, "You know, setting the right beat for a song without allowing it to move. And I'm a perfectionist; I don't like things wavering. I get upset with myself quite a lot."

No need for that, from this angle at least. Since leaving the dancey Soup Dragons (remember their hit cover of the Stones' "I'm Free"?), Quinn has supplied solid, stripped-down backing to some of the most lauded pop songs of the last decade, including the Fannies' most recent album, *Songs From Northern Britain*. "For me the most exciting aspect of this band is playing behind three great songwriters. You can get stale if there's only one writer and he likes drums played in a certain way. Each guy has his own style, and with Raymond (McGinley) in particular, there's hardly ever a simple 4/4...well, it may be simple upstairs, but there's loads of off-beats happening with the bass drum and stuff. So I don't get bored."

Quinn certainly had his share of distractions in the Soup Dragons: Their Manchester sound required him to play quasi-hip-hop beats to sequencers, with a lot of percussion scattered about his setup. "When I started to play with the Fanclub," the drummer explains, "the first thing I did was strip my kit right down to basics. I don't need to be too flamboyant in the Fanclub; I like to sit back there and let the harmonies and the guitars provide the subtleties. I would rather under-play things than over-play. I'm a firm believer that if there is a great song there, you just have to play behind it, and everything will be true."

Adam Budofsky

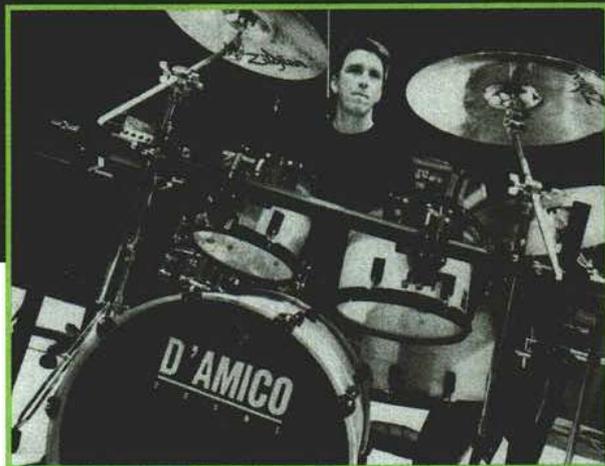


Tom Sheehan

MICK FLEETWOOD

KEVIN HAYES

GROOVE OBJECTIVE



As Kevin Hayes explains it, every so often he gets a visit from one of the old-school blues drummers he's idolized over the years. Sometimes they'll say to him, "I like the way you play," to which he quickly responds with a laugh, "I hope you don't recognize all that stuff I've lifted from you." Stuff like playing a 12/8 beat, or playing the ride cymbal without a swing feel, or just getting the groove as deep as possible—those are the things Hayes has taken from listening to albums by such blues greats as B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, and T-Bone Walker. Hayes has applied the secrets he learned to both his Robert Cray Band day job and his session gigs with the legendary John Lee Hooker on such albums as *Mr. Lucky*, *Boom Boom*, and *Don't Look Back*.

Hayes first joined the Cray band full-time around eight years ago, after playing with various members of the group in various San Francisco Bay Area bands. Cray was in the middle of a tour, and Hayes was working at home "juggling a bunch of possible gigs." Apparently the band was aware of who Kevin was, the drummer says, because, "When Robert called and said, 'We've decided to make a change, and you're the guy we want,' I leapt at the chance."

From then till now, Hayes admits, "I've never been a real 'chops' guy." Instead, Kevin says he has worked on the art of the pocket. "Basically I've been more of a groove player. I've always been fascinated by the way the pocket works depending on who you're playing with in the band, and how the push and pull happens. How a groove feels and where the placement of the beat is makes such a difference in terms of the way the groove feels."

Hayes says being focused on the time is his main job. "In the Cray band, if you can't make the groove happen, there's nothing there. The songs are good, and his singing and playing are great, but it really is about making that groove happen. That's got to be the objective for me every night."

David John Farinella

David Sanborn's Jonathan Joseph

Freelance musicians in the jazz/fusion world know that the keys to success are developing the technique to play practically any piece of music, and the ears to play with any ensemble. Look at the resume of saxophonist David Sanborn's drummer, Jonathan Joseph, and you may conclude that he's taken this philosophy to the extreme.

The thirty-year-old Floridian leads a musical double-life, touring internationally both with Sanborn's contemporary sextet and with his jazz standards quartet, the latter of which incorporates a fifty-piece symphony into each performance. "They're totally different gigs," Joseph says. "The sextet is basically a funk/R&B group—more intense, louder, and more 8th- and 16th-note oriented. The symphonic group is more textural, and I'm allowed more improvisation."

Joseph's diversity comes naturally. His mother was choir director for their Miami church, so he started out playing gospel services at age six. Private instruction through his formative schooling years led to acceptance at the University of Miami,

then to polar-opposite touring and recording stints with R&B vocalist Betty Wright (the 1993 CD *Beatitudes*) and steel drummer Othello Molineaux (*It's About Time*, released that same year). Weather Report's Joe Zawinul recruited Joseph for tours by his Zawinul Syndicate in 1993 and 1994; 1994 also included touring with Latin jazz flutist Nestor Torres.

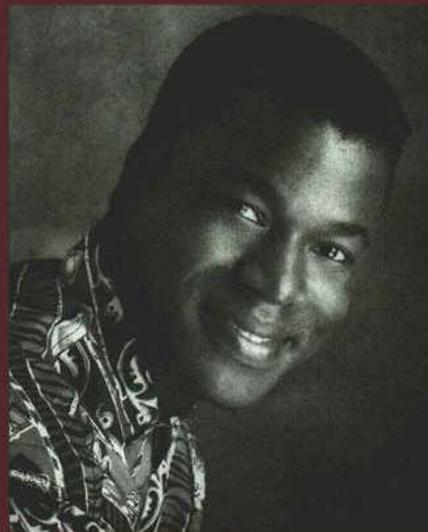
Nineteen-ninety-five proved to be Joseph's breakthrough year. Aside from joining forces with Sanborn, the drummer was spotted in Miami by guitarist Pat Metheny, who hired him to substitute for Paul Wertico on upcoming Asian dates. Joseph calls the Japan-and-Korea tour "one of the musical highs of my career." Late in '95, trumpeter Randy Brecker called Joseph about recording; the New York sessions resulted in his new *Into The Sun* CD.

Joseph's speed and precision are reminiscent of Billy Cobham, who he considers a big influence. But even someone who practices exercises from George Stone's *Stick Control* before each gig knows that dexterity comes more from the head than the hands. "I'd say it has less to do with tech-

nique than with musicality and your musical environment," Jonathan suggests. "The technical stuff is more of a personal thing."

In addition to his work with Sanborn, Joseph recently performed Yamaha clinics with guitarist Mike Stern and bassist Jeff Andrews, a Japanese tour with Torres, and shows with vocalist Al Jarreau. Even by Sunshine State standards, this drummer's future looks very bright.

Bill Meredith



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Tommy Wells - My primary work is in the studio. I do multiple load ins and load outs each day. My Gibraltar stands are 7500 Series. The elliptical leg brace has the stability of double-braced stands with the weight of a single-braced stand. This weight-to-strength ratio is why I use Gibraltar.



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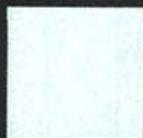
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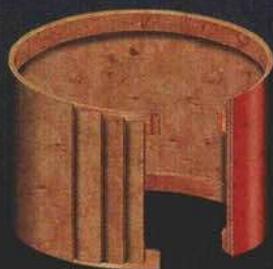
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- 31 Step Exterior Finish Process



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Masters Series shells are designed for maximum resonance and tone. Every piece of hardware that touches the shell has been kept to a minimum in order to allow the shell to resonate fully unrestricted. Our Low-Mass Minimum Contact Lugs with new solid brass swivel nuts are perfect examples of this design philosophy. Together with our new 23mm solid steel SuperHoop II rims, they provide the ultimate tuning integrity without muffling the shell with unneeded mass and weight.



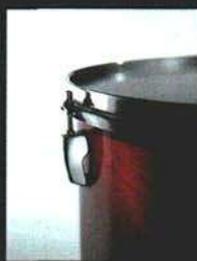
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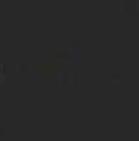
#110 Opal White



#120 Orange Burnish



#121 Amber Burnish



#122 Walnut Burnish



#123 Wine Burnish

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Gregg Field first met Louie Bellson at a band camp in Lake Tahoe when Gregg was sixteen years old. Bellson recognized Gregg's talent then, even asking how he got his unique bass drum sound.) It was a cheese cloth that covered the entire batter side of the bass drum with a hole cut in the middle.) Not long after, Field begged to accompany Bellson to some Canadian jazz festivals, and Bellson agreed.

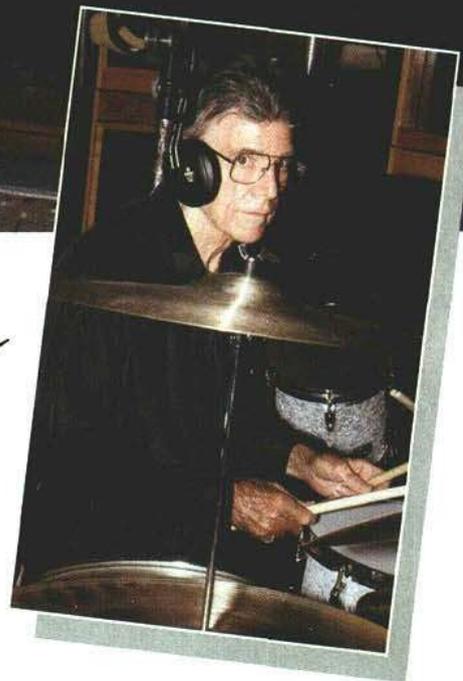
Fast forward twenty-six years. Gregg Field has just finished producing a Louie Bellson recording for the second time. He produced Bellson's last Concord release. Air Bellson, with a small band. This new big band project (still untitled as of this writing) should be out on Concord early in 1998. The album contains never-before-released recordings of pieces by such notable arrangers as Thad Jones, Bill Holman, Tommy Newsom, and Bob Florence (many co-written by Bellson). Louie is a featured performer along with such stellar musicians as Pete Christlieb, Mike Lang, and Chuck Berghofer. **MD** was able to attend some of the sessions, and to obtain the following comments from both the performer and the producer.

by Robyn Flans
Photos by Sharyl Noday



In Session:

Louie Bellson And Gregg Field



LB: Gregg really knows what to do in a recording session. Years ago everything sounded great while we were in the studio, but when the record came out we'd say, "Where's the band?" We didn't realize that the mixing and the editing were the most important things. Gregg got me the best drum sound I've ever had in my life. We all respect him as a great drummer, but we respect him even more as a musician who can tell not only the rhythm section

what to do, but the entire band. He also knows what to do in the booth.

RF: What was Gregg able to give you in a sound that you hadn't had before?

LB: Don't get me wrong—the other albums were good. But Gregg said, "We need an hour and a half to get a good drum sound before anybody comes in," and we had never done that before. The engi-

neer would say, "Hit the bass drum once...hit the toms...the snare drum. Okay." But that's not enough. It takes an ear like Gregg's—along with an engineer like Don Murray—to really know how to capture the sound of that drumset. When Gregg did the *Air Bellson* album, all the reviews—and lots of other drummers—raved about the drum sound.

RF: What is it you do, Gregg?

GF: Often, in a situation where there are a lot of musicians playing live, the drummer is the person who suffers the most in the process. With twenty-four tracks, I've run across situations where the brass and the reeds are individually miked, the piano is miked in stereo, the bass has both a direct line and a mic' track, and five or six tracks are left for the

drums. Traditionally, engineers will mix the tom mic's in with the overhead mic's because they are simply running out of tracks. But that way, if you try to add a nice reverb to the toms, then you're adding reverb to the ride cymbal, which really washes it out.

When I was asked to produce Bob Florence's record (*Earth*), it was also the first record I was going to play on. I thought, "I want to get an engineer who is able and willing to put the time in to get the detail of drums." For my money, Don Murray is as good as it gets. When I was brought in to produce *Air Bellson* at the eleventh hour, the studio and the engineer had already been picked, so I had to use some of the tricks I had learned from Don Murray. During playback, he likes to keep the tom mic's at a rather low level, because there is an ambient rumble in those mic's from the entire kit. Then he finds all the tom spots in a particular tune. He moves the tom mic's up just for the times you're hitting, and then he pulls them back down. That tends to result in a very clean, punchy, and present drum sound. He doesn't spare the tracks, either. Nothing is being combined, so the detail is there. I've never seen an engineer who takes that kind of time. I first heard him when he recorded the GRP Big Band with Dave Weckl—and of course Weckl's sound is wonderful.

Fortunately I came into this new project at the very beginning, so I was able to pick the studio and engineer. We picked Capitol, and we picked Don Murray. The detail in Louie Bellson's dynamic drumming has to be captured by a great engineer, and that's what Don does. I've been listening to Louie for thirty years. I know his sound and I know what he likes, and I want to give that to him.

When you turn on a traditional pop or rock station—or even a smooth jazz station—it's exciting to hear the really punchy,



smashing recordings. For so long I wondered why jazz musicians are not afforded the excitement of a really clean, punchy, present recording. It's like Louie said: Oftentimes there's a lack of awareness among the musicians as to what *can* be done.

RF: Is it budget, too?

GF: That's the first thought a lot of artists have, but it's not really so. We tracked this entire album in four sessions, so we're talking about twelve hours. Maybe you have to spend \$50 an hour more to go to Capitol, but when you're talking about twelve hours, that's only \$600. When you're talking about your life and your art, and

"I've been listening to Louie for thirty years. I know his sound and I know what he likes, and as producer I want to give that to him."

Gregg Field

it's a matter of \$600 to go from a mediocre studio to the best, there's not even a question for me. If you don't have the money now, save up and wait.

There's also the fact that you want to be able to compete with the sound quality of what's out there. As an artist and a producer, I really can't afford to put out a recording that doesn't come up to that level.

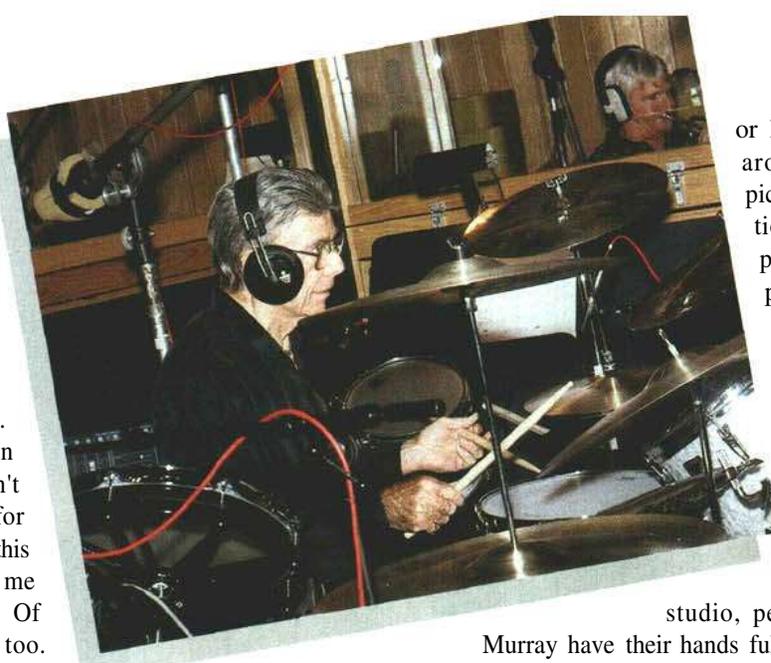
RF: What can you do at Capitol that you can't do somewhere else?

GF: It's not that it can't be done at other places, but it can be done *easier* at Capitol. It's a room that has been used a lot and is very understood by the engineers. Don Murray has done countless records there, so he knows its shortcomings and its sweet spots. They have a great Neve board in there, which I really like working on. I've probably done fifteen or twenty records on that board as a producer. Whatever you need, they have. Also, it's very much a

family environment. Everybody knows each other, and everybody is comfortable. They don't sit and watch the clock there; they want to help you make a great project.

LB: I told Gregg from the beginning that I liked the way he felt about the setup. Sometimes producers put me in my own little house, so I can't see anybody. If it weren't for headphones, I'd be lost. On this session, everyone could see me and I could see everybody. Of course, we had headphones too. But it was more comfortable because it was more like a band setup—almost like the Glenn Miller setup: saxophones on one side, brass on the other side, and me in the middle. When you think of all these technicalities ahead of time, it saves a lot of time.

GF: You have to take into consideration that the musicians are used to hearing the drums acoustically at a particular distance from



or loud instrument washing around the room and being picked up by the mic's" situation. We experimented with putting the slats in different positions to "dry the room out" a bit and to control that ambient problem. But the main concern was to get the band in a place where they could hear each other.

LB: Preparing for an album as a band is a major time-saver, because once you get into the

studio, people like Gregg and Don

Murray have their hands full just producing a sound. If

we're not prepared music-wise, that's where the money goes. One of my concerns was to make sure, without spoiling the effect, that everybody had a chance to play. You can't have players of that quality just sitting there playing whole notes. So everybody had a chance to do some solos, within the context of the idea we had, which was a salute to the arrangers. All of this was out of the way before we ever went into the studio.

GF: Louie arranged a pretty rigorous rehearsal schedule, along with a live performance a week before the sessions. By the time the red light was on, they'd been playing it.

LB: The worst thing for a big band to do is have a great arranger come to a record date with twelve charts they've never seen before. Even though the band is super, it's going to take hours and hours to

get it. Then you put it down real fast, and when you hear it six months later you think, "Gosh darnit, I wish we had played it better." It's important to lay it down the right way, because you have to live with it.

GF: I made a number of albums with Count Basie with a producer who had a completely different attitude. We would go in the studio, get the music, rehearse the tune one time, and then record. It was tremendous pressure, and exactly what Louie said came true:

We'd play the arrangements on the road, and six months later we'd hear them really

come into something to which the recording didn't even compare.

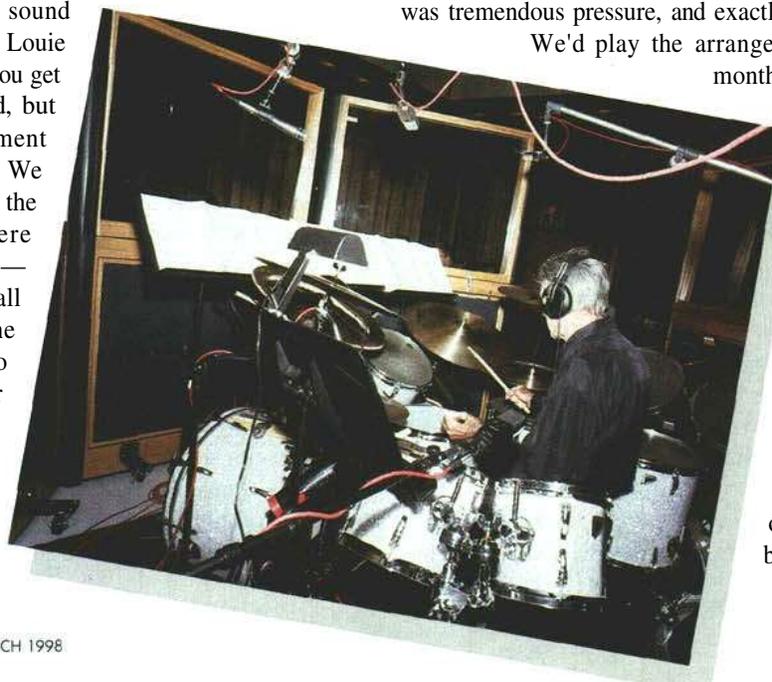
RF: Usually, no matter how well you prepare, something doesn't go as planned. What obstacles did you find yourself having to conquer once you began these latest sessions?

LB: To tell you the truth, I don't think there were any. I thought maybe it would take one or two tunes to get ready, but even though we started a

"Gregg knows the music and the drum parts. That really made it so much easier for me."

Louie Bellson

where they are. If you completely change that variable, not only are you asking the musicians to play their best, but you're asking them now to make a sonic readjustment to their spatial environment. I've done big band records in the same studio we used, Capitol A, where I was playing on the loud side, and I found that my drums would leak into microphones that were twenty and thirty feet away. It would create a gymnasium effect and wash my sound out. It's a trade-off: If you put Louie in the booth and isolate him, you get a really clean, punchy sound, but then you have this readjustment problem of "How do I listen?" We worked diligently on finding the best spot in the room where Louie's sound was controlled—so it wasn't spreading out all over the room—and yet the musicians didn't even have to play with headphones to hear him if they didn't want to. On the walls of Capitol A are slats that can be opened to diffuse the sound and help with that "ambient drums



little late, on the very first take of the first tune, I felt comfortable.

GF: That first tune is *so* important. It sets the tone for the whole date. You don't want to keep guys waiting.

LB: I didn't have any problems with anything at all. I think a couple of times I said, "Let's try this part over," or "Let's make another take," which is natural. But this session was very much like the one we did with the small band. On that one, we did nine sides the first day.

GF: When we did that first *Duets* session with Frank Sinatra, he didn't want to sing for two days. When he finally felt like singing, we did nine tunes in three hours.

LB: When I was with Benny Goodman, we were out here doing a movie. We did a number called "Paducah," and Frank was singing on it. I'll never forget it. We spent nine hours on that tune, and he wound up taking the first take.

RF: What were some of the difficulties for each one of you individually on this project?

LB: Sometimes a leader can try to express something to a drummer, but he doesn't succeed because he can't explain what he wants. With Gregg, it was, "Lou, watch this bar...see if you can fill in this bar," because he knows the music and the drum parts. That really made it so much easier for me. I can remember doing record dates years ago at a place in New York called Leiderkranz Hall, which was like the old concert halls in Vienna. They had two Telefunken microphones in front of the band and that was it, and *boy* what a sound. Today you don't have a Leiderkranz Hall, so you have to have those mic's set up like Gregg said, or you're out of luck. Before Benny Goodman died, he tried to reenact those Leiderkranz Hall days by recording with very few mic's, and he didn't get a good sound at all.

RF: Do you always record live?

GF: I've been watching Louie record for twenty-five years. He always records live with everybody.

LB: It's a more honest way of playing.

GF: It's like a pendulum that keeps swinging. When I first started recording in the late '70s, doing a lot of R&B sessions, I would lay the drum part down by myself. Then they would overdub the bass, and the song was built up like that. But the nature of that music was not about spontaneity; it was about a groove and a sound. That's never been what jazz is about. Jazz is about the interaction of musicians. To take that element away just to get a slightly better sound would really be not seeing the forest for the trees. When we recorded with Frank, we would go into Capitol A and B because there were about seventy of us. Frank wasn't there in the afternoon, so those sessions were strictly for all the notes to be worked out. That way, when the old man came in and was ready to sing, the third trombone player wasn't saying, "Is that a B or a B flat in bar 33?" We would record those afternoon sessions, though, just for reference.

One time they asked Frank to put on a set of headphones and sing over something we had recorded earlier that day. They hadn't laid more than twenty bars when he pulled the phones off and said, "This is hooley. I have to hear the band." When we record, he's in the middle of the room. He wants to hear that brass hitting him and the drums hitting him. It fires him up. He never overdubbed; he never fixed a note. Whatever you hear Frank Sinatra sing on any record is what he sang from top to bottom.

LB: That's the way the old masters like Benny, Tommy Dorsey, and Duke Ellington all recorded. Whatever you heard is how they did it.

GF: And Louie, too. During this date, we had a problem on one tune with Louie's right bass drum. It was only three or four notes, but it seemed like when Louie really jumped on that bass drum, it was distorting the mic'. Fortunately I had another mic' very close to the bass drum, so I was able to deal with it. But initially, I was trying to think, "Could I have Louie just go in and overdub those bass drum parts?" Forget it—that's not what he's about. It was more important to capture what he played, so we covered it with another mic'.

The other challenge during the date was realizing that we had seventeen of the highest-paid, highest-profile, most accomplished musicians in the world sitting in a studio, fired with energy—and to make sure not to waste their time or cause them to lose that energy. I remember watching Phil Ramone produce Sinatra. Even under the most tense circumstances, he could diffuse it and get the job done. I really respected that. Part of that is knowing when to take a break, when to get things going, and when they've played a tune too many times. If a musician loses the fire, it's going to come out on tape.

LB: I have little signals with my guys in the brass section and reed section. All I have to do is look up there and one of them will point at their chops and say, "Lou, give us a few minutes so the blood comes back." Those guys are *blowing*, and after a tough tune, they might need five minutes to get their heads together.

Louie Bellson
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RF: On the other hand, you want to make sure they don't lose the momentum, so you can't let them get into goofing around.

GF: Welcome to the world of producing. The other thing you can't lose sight of is that when you're making music, you're supposed to have fun.

LB: When we assembled the band, we were very careful to get guys who knew one another—not only musically, but as human beings. That mixture really makes it—especially in a rhythm section. The foundation is there, and you build a house that way. When you have that going, you're 90% there.

GF: Especially with Chuck Berghofer playing bass.

LB: Yeah, I'll tell you, he's just like a rock. He gives the drummer a lot of freedom to express himself. I don't have to beat the bass drum to death, because I have that rock-bottom feel there. Jo Jones said to me a long time ago, "Play the bass drum, but not like you're marching down the street. Play it so it's felt and not heard." Those words have rung in my ears for years.

RF: Any other interesting, unexpected, or problematic moments in the studio?

GF: We started at 4:00 in the afternoon the first day, and it was a double session. Everybody was working very hard. We took a one-hour dinner break between the two sessions, but our food was late in coming. Louie hadn't eaten yet when all the musicians were back, and it was time to get back to work. I was thinking, just from the producer's standpoint, "Now I've got a drummer who has to put out a bunch of energy, and we have three more hours to go. How much can I expect of Louie at this point?" The food showed

up five minutes into the second session, but Louie said, "No, no, let's keep working." He grabbed little pieces of bread between takes, and all of a sudden it was 10:00 at night. We were doing "Your Wake-Up Call"—which is really difficult—and Louie wasn't backing off one iota. I kept wondering, "How can this guy be doing this?" Louie has always been my hero, but now he's even more my hero.

LB: I remember the days when we used to play nine shows a day at the Apollo with Duke. Sometimes there wasn't a chance to eat, so we'd have to go ahead and play. Somehow you did it.

GF: This is Louie's record, yet in the two days of recording, he never complained about anything. Talk about a producer's dream. I can't wait until the next one.

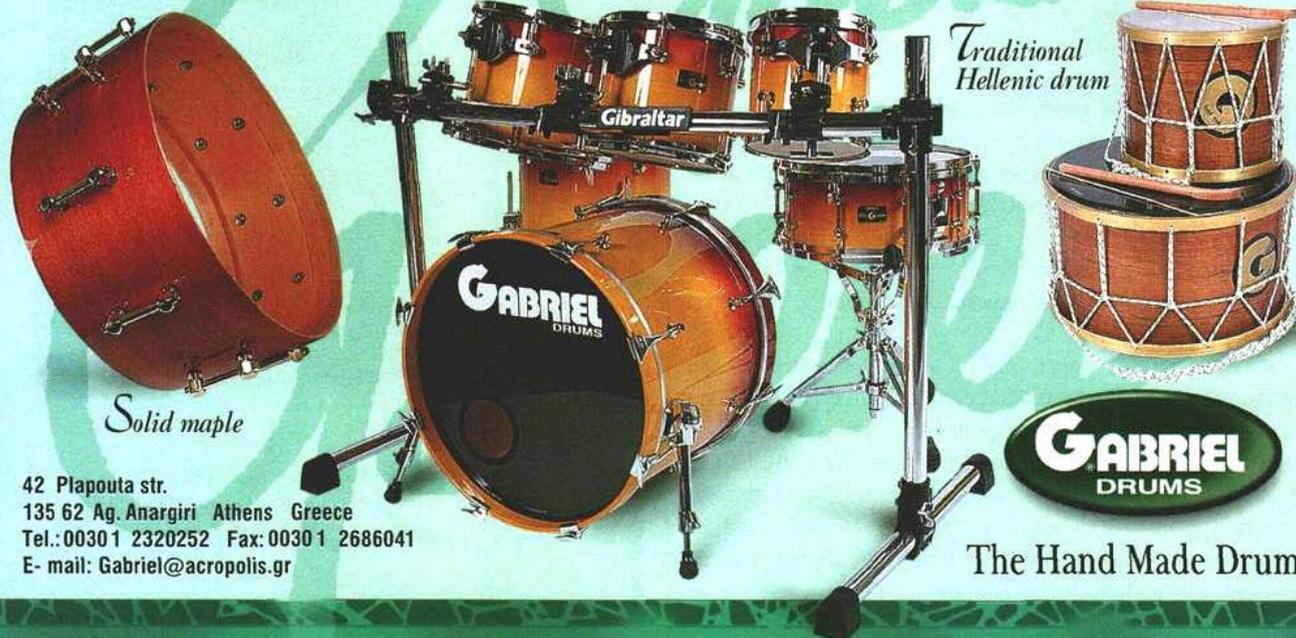
LB: I told Gregg last night that I'm already working on music. I learned from Duke to write music every day. I don't care if it's four bars or eight bars. You can never tell when you're going to want to use those four or eight bars.



The Festival Is Coming!
The Festival Is Coming!
See page 175

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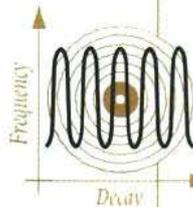
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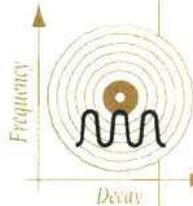
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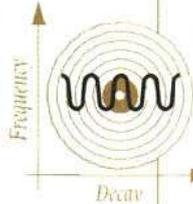
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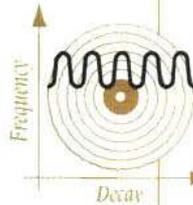
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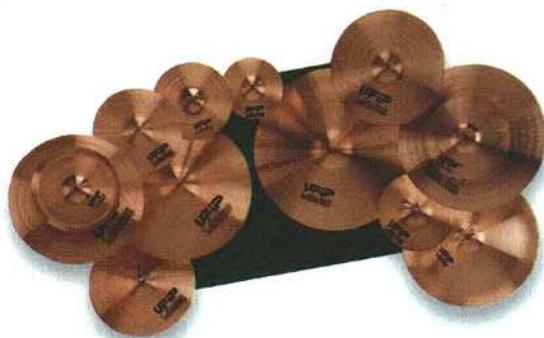


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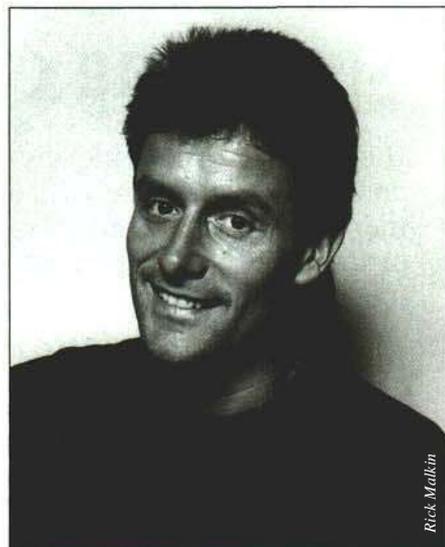
Q I've been a fan of yours for about twenty years. I was recently very fortunate to attend one of your rare drum clinics. I'd like to thank you for sharing the tips and insights you gave me.

I've read that you will soon have a solo project available. If so, what is it titled, and when will it be available? Also, you are such a great talent...why have you never released an instructional video?

Ivan Weissbuch
via Internet

A I will be putting my solo project out some time in 1998. It's part of an ELP program, and will be a Carl Palmer Anthology including recordings from 1965 onwards—right up to the Percussion Concerto I've had ready for years. I'm afraid I can't give you an exact release date; perhaps you should call the label (Rhino Records) to inquire.

Thanks for all the complimentary words about my clinic. I like to do six to eight clinics per year; they're very important to me. I love to talk about drums, and to play as much as I can at my clinics. As for a video, I honestly have no plans to make one. There are many good videos on the market, but I must say there are also many bad ones. Of course, I won't rule out the possibility that I *might* make a video some day—or perhaps a CD ROM would be even better!



Rick Malkin

Dave Weckl

Q I saw you in clinic in Fresno about a year and a half ago. During the clinic you did a one-handed roll with your left hand. It was incredibly quick and clean. I've tried to do the same, but I haven't got it yet. I'm judging that the secret lies in the fingers, but I can't be sure. Can you explain the technique involved with that roll?

Jimmie Adams
via Internet

A First of all, thanks for writing! The roll I think you're referring to is played with the left hand, using conventional or "traditional" grip. It's done mostly with a bounce technique similar to—but probably not exactly like—the one Buddy Rich used on the hi-hat on the second of his two documentary videos (available from Warner Bros.

Publications), which is where I saw it and became inspired to try to learn it. Although the fingers are *involved* in the stroke, they are not totally responsible for making it happen. There is a *lot* of thumb involved.

I think the easiest way to understand it is this: Play a shuffle with your left hand. On the quarter notes, throw your fingers out to the side—basically making the stroke with your thumb. (Bounce and balance are critical for getting this to work, so don't hold the stick too far back.) On the little strokes in between the quarter notes, bring the fingers back in to the stick. Once you can do this, try to "even out" the shuffle so it becomes "straight." From there you just have to work at the "action/reaction" of the stick using the technique above, and try to increase speed.

This technique is obviously *not* a priority in playing drums for most applications. It was really something that I just wanted to attempt to learn for the heck of it. I have found some musical applications for it, though. One would be in an up-tempo straight-ahead jazz style for continuous 8th notes on the snare. Another is to do it with both hands at the same time—one on a ride cymbal and the other on the snare—for a jazz samba feel. I've also recently been messing around, *just for fun*, at attempting to do a single-stroke roll with that technique applied to both hands, which is *much* faster than I could ever play it using any other conventional technique. But *please* be aware that this, as with any technical concept, is a means to an end—that end being good-feeling music. The cardinal rule is: *If it doesn't feel good, don't play it.*



Sean Vennart



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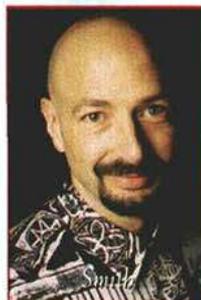
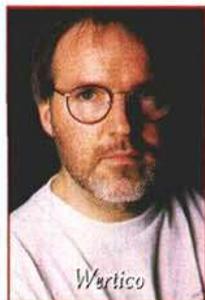
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Flyin' Traps

Q Thanks a lot for the great article about the *Flyin' Traps* album. It was great to hear the artists' views on the tracks they recorded. However, when I asked about the CD at the record stores in my town, they had not heard of it. Is *Flyin' Traps* out yet? If not, when will it be released?

Patrick Bastedo
via Internet

A *Flyin' Traps*, on Hollywood Records can be found in any good record store.

The Right Cymbal

Q I am a sixteen-year-old drummer and I play all kinds of styles. I practice music for the school jazz band, and with an alternative/groove-rock band, and I have offers to join a reggae/original ska type band. I'm looking for some light, not-too-loud cymbals that give some stick definition during jazz but can give somewhat of a cut for rock while producing a light wash. I've

tried many kinds of cymbals, and I have made some expensive mistakes and had to sell some really great cymbals. I now think its time to ask a pro what to do. What brand and type of cymbals do you recommend for my situation?

Guapo
via Internet

A Asking for "light, not-too-loud cymbals that give some stick definition during jazz but can give somewhat of a cut for rock while producing a light wash" is sort of like saying you want a family sedan that can also haul concrete and win Indy races on weekends. Asking any single type of cymbal to serve all the needs you describe is asking a lot. We've entered an age of specialization within cymbal selection; most manufacturers offer models "targeted" for jazz, rock, Latin, etc. Many drummers take advantage of this specialization and create different cymbal setups for each type of playing that they do.

Of course, creating different setups can get expensive, and at your age you may not

be ready for such acoustical diversification. In that case, your best bet may be to ignore all the specialized cymbal models for the time being, and instead to look for some good, general-purpose cymbals that offer versatility. All of the major brands offer what can best be described as "middle of the road" lines, offering a bit less specialization and a bit more flexibility than their other lines. (These would include Zildjian As, Sabian AAs, Paiste 2002 models, and Meinl *Classics*.) Within those lines, look for medium-weight rides and medium-thin to medium crashes. Because you don't want to overpower your jazz situation, 15" to 17" crashes would do well there. But for the added cut and sustain you'll need in a rock/ska situation, you might want to consider an 18" crash as well. Hi-hats of 13" or 14" sizes (again in a medium weight) will prove most versatile for your purposes. If budget is a major consideration, look for the same *types* of cymbals within Zildjian's new *ZBT Plus* line, Sabian's *Pro* line, or Paiste's *Alpha* series.

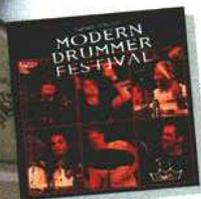
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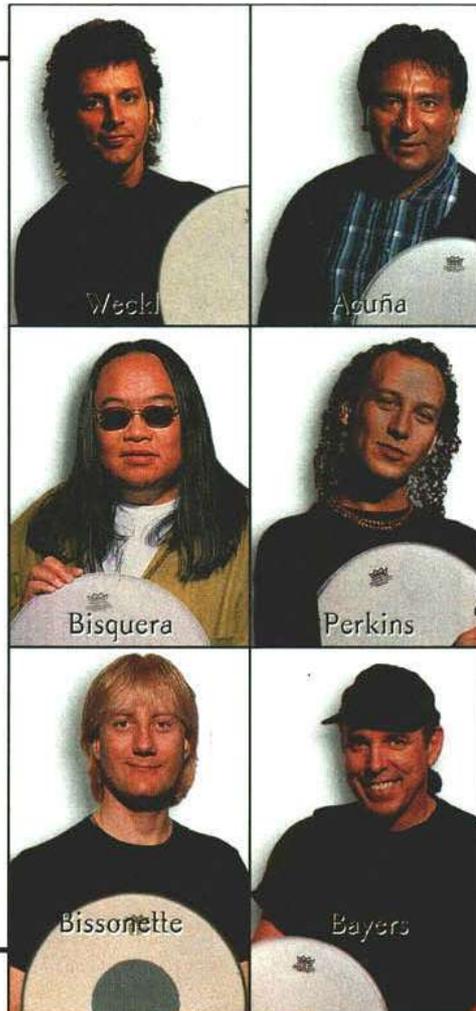
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type is that they will serve in almost any application now, and can be the core of a more sophisticated and esoteric selection of cymbals that you collect as your career and experience develops.

Safe Storage

Q I recently bought a five-piece, mid-'70s Slingerland set in great condition. As this is my first kit, I am concerned about keeping it in a safe place to avoid damage. At the moment, I am keeping it in my basement. Is this a good idea? The basement is not "musty" and it does not require that I run a dehumidifier to keep out dampness. But I am still looking for reassurance. I would hate to unwittingly cause any damage to this prized possession.

Scott Burggraf
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

A As you have already surmised, dampness in a basement is the greatest risk to drums stored or set up there. If, as you say, you don't have that problem, then it's likely that your drums will not be at risk in that area. However, since accidents involving

plumbing sometimes happen (resulting in flooded basements), we recommend that you set up your kit (or store it in its cases) on some sort of elevated platform. This can be as simple or as fancy as you desire. A "safety riser" can easily be created from industrial wood pallets covered with a sheet of 1/2" plywood. Cinder blocks or plastic crates can also be used as supports for a plywood top. Carpeting can be added to make the platform more aesthetically appealing (and to cut down on sound reflected off the bare plywood).

Carl Palmer Transcriptions

Q My high school band is planning on playing Emerson, Lake & Palmer's "Karn Evil 9" at our spring concert. The music we got for the drum part isn't very good or accurate. Is a drum transcription included in Mr. Palmer's book *Applied Rhythms*?

Stephanie Piotrowski
via Internet

A Unfortunately, "Karn Evil 9" is not included among the transcriptions in

Carl's book. However, if your band is interested in performing ELP material, you will find excellent drum transcriptions of "Hoedown," "Jerusalem," "Letters From The Front," and "Brain Salad Surgery" (along with six Asia tunes) in *Applied Rhythms*, which is available through the MD Library.

Rogers Details

Q I own a Rogers XP-8 kit from the late '70s. It has a 5x14 chrome *Dyna-Sonic* snare drum. A vintage drum collector friend told me that if the Rogers badge has "USA" on it, the drum is a brass shell, and if not, it is a steel shell. Can you confirm this? Also, the shells on the toms seem quite thick, with no reinforcement rings. Are these shells 100% maple?

Will DeBouver
Conyers, GA

A Although we cannot state unequivocally that every USA-made *Dyna-Sonic* featured a brass shell, we can say that the majority of them did. (It's possible that the last American-made drums—manufactured



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in the Fullerton, California plant during the days of CBS ownership in the early '80s—used steel shells.) Any shells made from the mid-'80s on (when the Rogers name was owned by Island Music of Staten Island, New York and the drums were made in Taiwan) were made of steel. The easiest way to determine the nature of your drum's shell is to apply a magnet to it. If the magnet sticks, the shell is steel. If not, it's brass.

All XP-8 shells were made of 8-ply maple.

Hearing Horacio

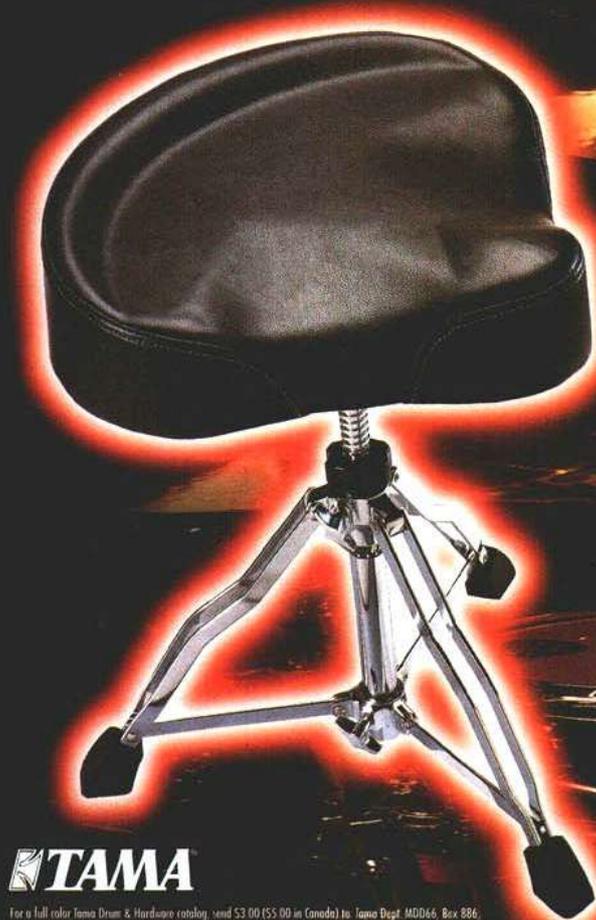
Q I've heard it said that listening to Horacio Hernandez play is like hearing two great drummers performing together. I always try to listen to great drummers (like Chambers, Weckl, Portnoy, etc.), so I've been trying to find recordings by Horacio. But so far I haven't been able to find anything that features him. Can you give me some suggestions?

Rick Lee
 via Internet

A Here's a list of suggested recordings that feature Horacio:

1. Michel Camilo, *Thru My Eyes* (TropiJazz RMD 82067)
2. Gonzalo Rubalcaba, *Giraldilla* (Messidor 15801)
3. Victor Mendoza, *This Is Why* (Ram Records 4515-2)
4. Paquito D'Rivera, *Cuba Jazz* (TropiJazz RMD 82016)
5. TropiJazz All Stars, *TropiJazz All Stars* (TropiJazz RMD 82028)

You can also see and hear Horacio's incredible playing at *Modern Drummer's* 10th Anniversary Festival Weekend on video. Horacio appears both on the *Highlights* video and on his own solo performance video. Both are available from DCI Music Video and may be ordered through MD.



BILL BRUFORD "SET IT. FORGET IT."

The last thing Bill Bruford wants to talk about is thrones. Because it's the music that's important, not worrying about the nuts and bolts. "Set it. Forget it." is how he sums it up.

What he does want is to get around the drum set with the minimum of fuss and the maximum of restraint. To achieve his sort of effortless elegance, Bill does admit that "you have to think ergonomically. And that begins with how you sit."

And, of course, what you sit on.

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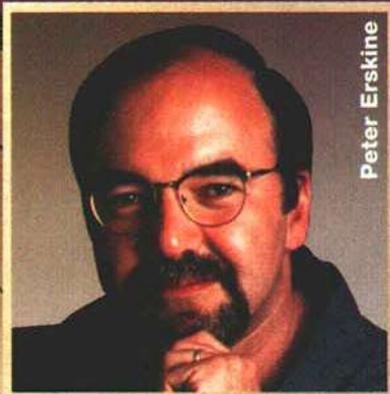
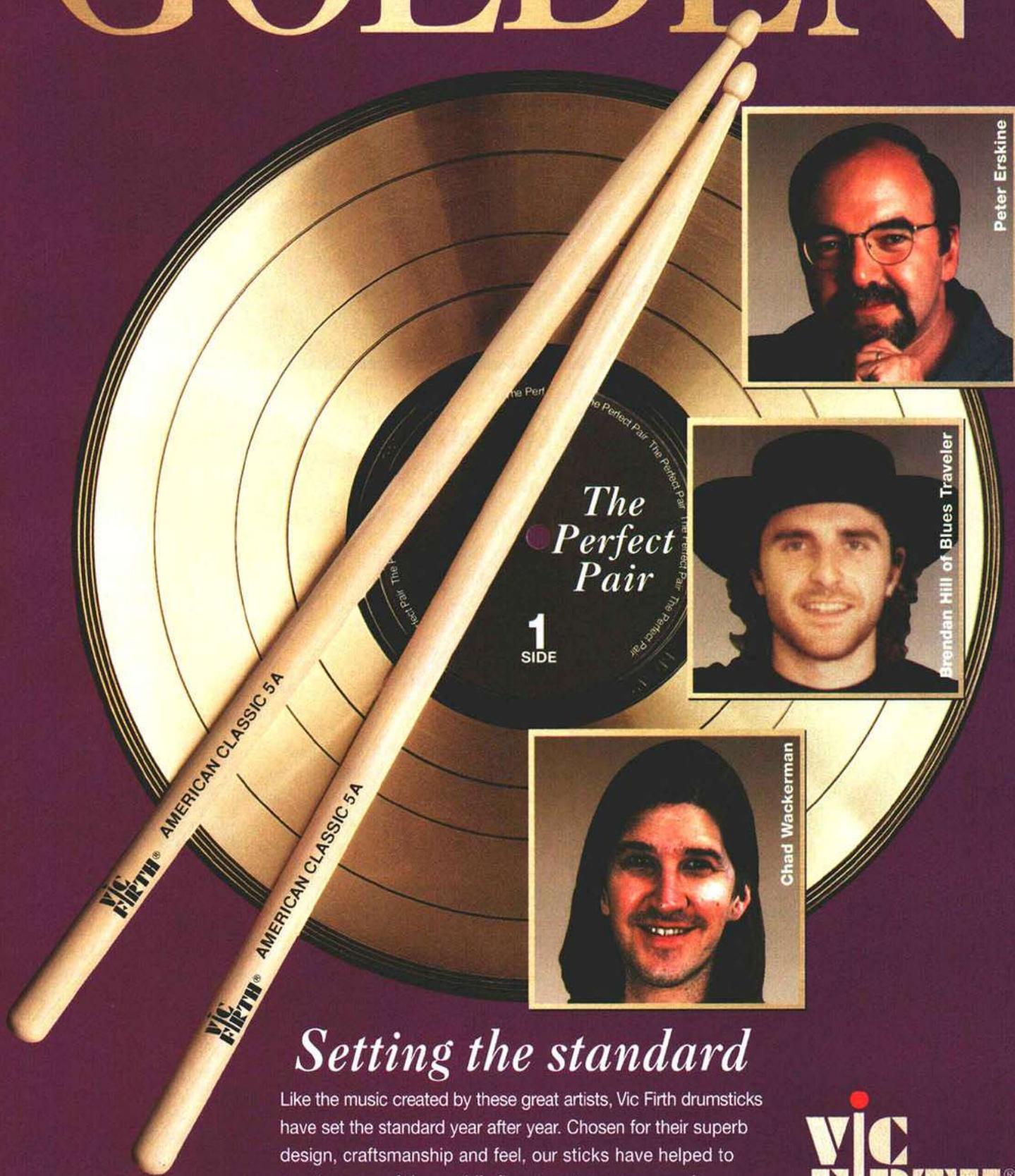
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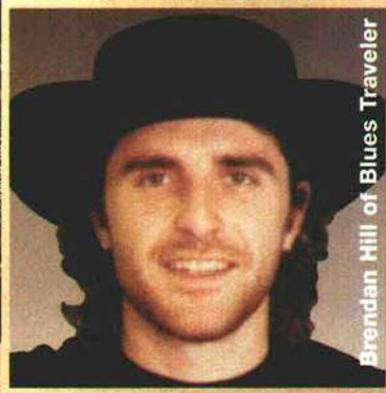
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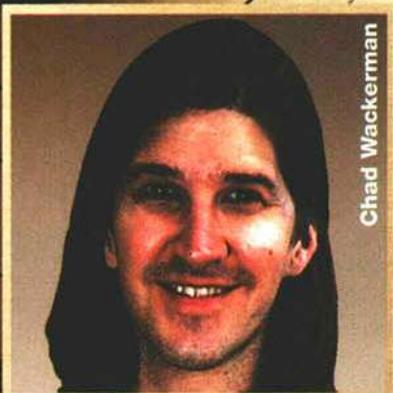
GOLDEN



Peter Erskine



Brendan Hill of Blues Traveler

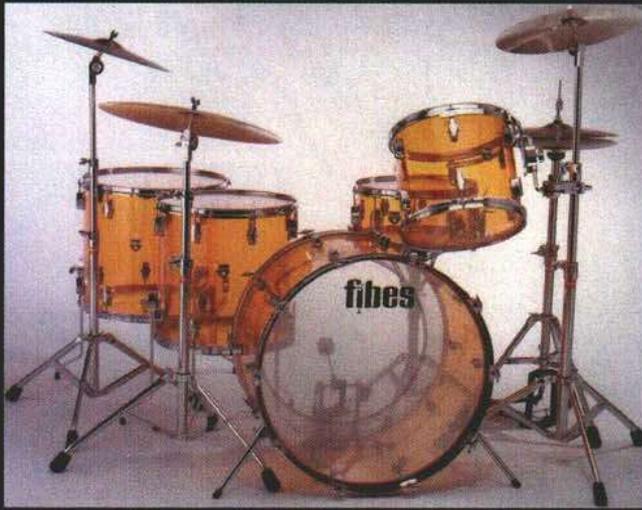


Chad Wackerman

Setting the standard

Like the music created by these great artists, Vic Firth drumsticks have set the standard year after year. Chosen for their superb design, craftsmanship and feel, our sticks have helped to create some of the world's finest contemporary music. Thanks for letting us sit in.





Through A Drumshell, Darkly

Fibes Amber Crystalite Drums

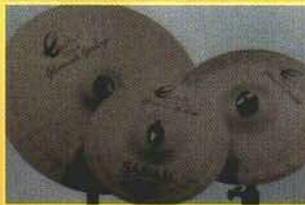
Intrigued by the look and sound of transparent drums, but a little intimidated by the thought of sitting behind an almost totally invisible kit? How about adding a hint of color? Fibes now offers their *Crystalite* acrylic drums in an amber tint. The new color will be available in all thirty-three standard shell-depth and -diameter combinations (with some custom sizes also available).

A Sampler Of Signature Cymbals And Special Sounds

Sabian Terry Bozzio *Radia*, Evelyn Glennie "Glennie's Garbage," Chad Smith *Explosion*, and David Garibaldi *Jam Master* Cymbals, PRO Series Rock Hats, Crashes, and Rides, and AAX Past Hats and Bright Crash



Sabian's new *Radia* lineup comprises cymbals, effects, and sounds created to Terry Bozzio's specs. The cymbals are individually hand-hammered for tonal complexity and increased musical value, with their surface scored (in gong fashion) to create an "ancient oriental" appearance.

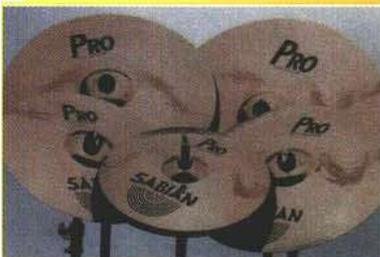


Affectionately termed "Glennie's Garbage," renowned solo percussionist Evelyn Glennie's signature models are 10", 12", and 16" accent cymbals shaped from a heavily hammered nickel/silver alloy. They're said to produce "raw and biting accents with raspy, exotic voices."

Chad Smith's *Explosion Crash* is made of Sabian's B8 bronze for maximum cut and explosive power. It's available in 18½" and 20½" sizes.



David Garibaldi's *Jam Master* cymbals are hand-hammered for increased musical tone. According to Sabian, the 22" ride produces "a definite stick response balanced with a controllable degree of warm spread," while the 18" crash/ride emits "a powerful crash response and a ride sound of moderate definition and maximum spread."

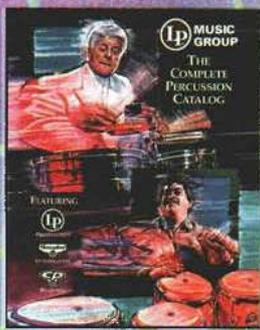


Also new from Sabian are *PRO Rock* models, including 14" *Rock Hats*, 16" and 18" *Rock* crashes, and 20" and 22" *Rock* rides. These are now the loudest cymbals in the *PRO* series. Finally, the *AAX* series has been augmented with an 18" *Bright* crash and 13" and 14" *Fast Hats*, all with boosted high-end response, clarity, and projection.



Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About LP...And More

LP Complete Percussion Catalog, New Web Site,
Valje Armando Peraza Series Congas And Bongos, And Udu Drums



The all-new LP Music Group Complete Percussion Catalog contains over 120 full-color pages of highly detailed product photos with complete descriptions outlining LP's

array of instruments. The collection of products are available in three brands: LP (professional), Matador (intermediate or aspiring pro), and CP (school or beginner).

The catalog also includes an illustrated history of LP Music Group, an alphanumeric index, and a complete parts section. A retail price list accompanies the catalog. To receive the catalog (as well as a rebate coupon for \$10 towards any new LP, Matador, or CP purchase), send a \$10 check or money order to: Customer Service, LP Music Group, 160 Belmont Avenue, Garfield, NJ 07026. If you don't want to wait for a catalog, check out LP's new Web site, located at www.lpmusic.com. The site utilizes the latest in audio and visual internet technologies, including the use of PDF files, Quick Time Movies, and Real Audio.

Not content to deal only in new information, LP has also introduced Valje Armando Peraza Series congas and bongos. These drums feature authentic Valje styling and

are crafted from kiln-dried, North American cherry wood in a satin finish. Designed in conjunction with master conguero Armando Peraza, the congas stand 30" tall and are available in three sizes. Each drum is equipped with traditional-style chrome hardware, Valje-style side plates, and non-marring rubber bottoms. LP *Conga Shell Protectors* help to shield the fine finish on these drums. Prices are as follows: 11" quinto—\$620; 11 3/4" conga—\$665; 12 1/2" tumbadora—\$700.

Valje Armando Peraza bongos feature

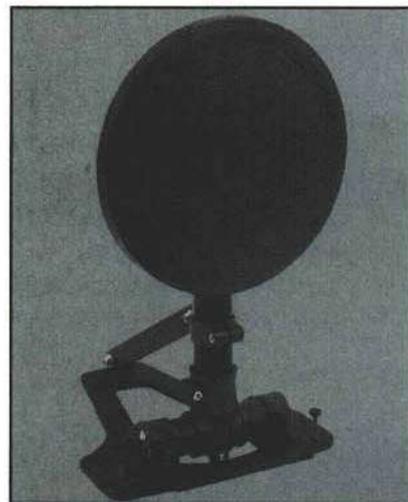


cherry wood shells with 7 1/4" and 8 5/8" head sizes, and are fitted with natural rawhide skins. The steel traditional rims and

Cuban-style bottoms have a bright, durable chrome finish. A short center block brings the shells close together for easy seated playing, yet still allows the drums to be mounted on a stand for standing players. Suggested list price is \$315.

Finally, LP now offers the original Udu Drums designed and created by Frank Giorgini. Based upon ancient West African clay drums, LP Udu Drums possess distinct tonal qualities ranging from subtle bass to soothing tabla-like tones. They are available in six styles: *Claytone* (in four sizes), *Hadgini*, *Mbwata*, *Tambuta*, *Utar*, and *Udongo IL*. LP Udu Drums can be played in a seated position or on the floor or table-top (using the included LP *Udu Drum Straw Ring*). Special microphone ports allow for small mic's to be mounted internally for amplification.

Put Your Foot Down...Electronically Drum Tech Kick Pad



Designed for use with a conventional bass drum pedal or double pedal, Drum Tech's *Kick Pad* combines elements of their 10" *Flat Pad* with a more durable sensor assembly and a modified playing surface (to provide an acoustic bass drum-like feel). The pad adjusts for height and tilt, has dual outputs for chaining, and folds up for transport. Retail price is \$229.

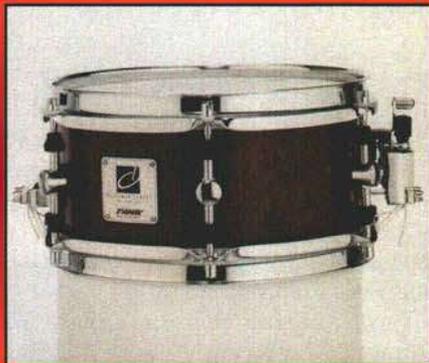
A New Case History SKB Cases

SKB corporation is now offering totally redesigned roto-molded cases in 8", 10", 12", 13", 14", 16", and 22" sizes. The cases are designed to "telescope" in order to accommodate drums of any depth. For ease of storage, the cases "nest" within each other, and they feature a contour that allows them to stack without sliding. Each case is fitted with special foam inserts to hold the drum securely, and a heavy-duty web strap with a side-release buckle to ensure secure closing. A "package" set of cases (12", 14", 16", and 22") is currently available at a list price of \$389.95.

Marching Into The Next Century Regal Tip Drum Corps 2000 Line



Regal Tip is now offering a complete line of marching percussion mallets and drumsticks. The mallets feature heads of a composite material said to be as strong and responsive as felt, but that will continue to work even when exposed to water (unlike felt). Also new are wood or vinyl grip multi-tom mallets with an aluminum shaft and a disk-shaped nylon head. Wood or nylon-tipped 17"-long snare drum sticks round out the line.



Looks Little...Sounds Big

Sonor Trilok Gurtu Signature Snare Drum

Sonor's *Trilok Gurtu* model 5x10 snare drum is now available in the entire range of *Designer Series* high-luster finishes. The 9-ply *Maple Light* shell comes equipped with Sonor's *Advanced Projection System*, which features rubber insulators on all tuning lugs. Tension rods are fitted with the *Tune Safe* system, which prevents de-tuning. An updated snare strainer tensions the snare wires in an even and dependable manner. The drum is recommended as a secondary snare for most applications, or as a primary snare in hip-hop, drum & bass, Latin, or funk.

And What's More

MEINL PERCUSSION

Realplayer Steelbells are new professional-quality cowbells. Thinly lacquered to prevent discoloration and corrosion,



each bell has fully welded seams and is equipped with a sturdy mounting bracket that accepts L-arms up to

10 mm in diameter. Small muffling pads are included as tone controls, but can be removed for additional sustain and volume. Sizes currently available are 8" large or small mouth, 6 1/4" medium mouth, and 4 1/2" small mouth.

BEYERDYNAMIC'S TG-X10

supercardioid percussion microphone is designed for drummers and percussionists who need a high-quality mic' capable of accepting very high sound pressure levels. It's small enough for close miking, but is said to be robust enough to withstand "the occasional knocks that drum mic's are often subjected to." It features an acoustic shock mount to reject mechanical noise transmitted through the shell of the drum. Retail price is \$279.



EVANS has expanded their *Pre Pak* line of prepackaged heads. Configured to

replace the batter heads in the most frequently purchased drumsets, the new *Pre Paks* (*EPP-3* and *EPP-4*) include three popular tom batters (coated *Genera G2s*) in the most requested sizes, plus a free *Genera G1* coated snare batter and a free *Clip Key*.



MUSICIAN'S PHARMACY

offers *Pro-Techt*, a dietary supplement formulated to help the body heal from injuries incurred as a result of repetitive motion—such as carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS)—along with arthritis and joint pain in general. The product contains glucosamine sulfate and chondroitin sulfate, which are said to be major components of cartilage, tendons, and bones, and which provide raw materials for the body to produce connective tissues. Vitamin B-6, vitamin E (for protection of nerve sheaths), and Vitamin C are also ingredients.

LEVY'S LEATHERS

is a leather specialty company that's been making stick and cymbal bags for years. Now they're offering the *EMK* line of soft-sided drum bags, featuring a polyester shell with foam core and plush liner. Bags are offered for standard kits, as well as options for toms and kick drums. Snare bags feature a detachable shoulder strap.

Making Contact

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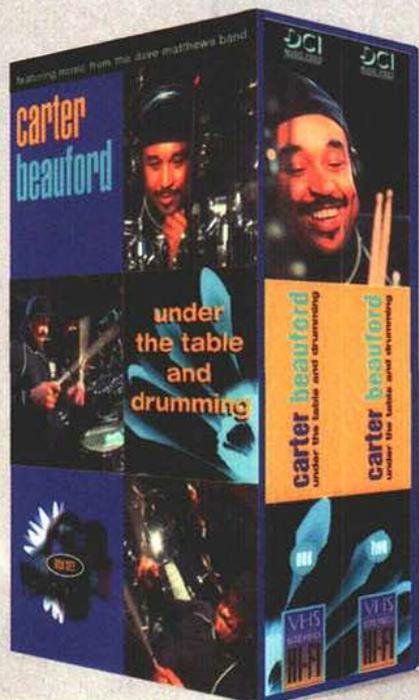
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carter beauford

under the table and drumming



Carter Beauford was voted the #1 "Up and Coming Drummer" in 1996's *Modern Drummer's* Reader's Poll. The following year, he shot straight to the top of the "Best Pop/Mainstream Rock" category. On this new DCI Music Video box set from Warner Bros. Publications, he shows you why.

Carter performs along with the rhythm tracks from six great Dave Matthews Band songs: "Ants Marching," "Satellite," "#41," "Lie in Our Graves," "Tripping Billies," and "Say Goodbye." In each piece, he employs a style which combines a dynamic and vigorous approach with a rock-solid groove.

Topics which Carter touches on include left hand lead/open-hand approach, fills, double bass drums, drum set and cymbal setup, time feel, background and influences, the early days of the Dave Matthews Band, and more.

These tapes also feature previously unreleased live footage of the Dave Matthews Band.



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JC's Custom Drums

by Rick Van Horn

Here's a little kit that offers big performance.

JC's Custom Drums are the brainchild of drum designer Joe Chila. Joe custom-crafts each kit in his shop in Michigan, using shells of American hard rock maple. His drums are available in two series: *JC Customs* and *JC Juniors*.

Custom models feature 5-ply toms and 6-ply bass drums—both with 3-ply reinforcing rings—as standard. "Thin is in, as far as I'm

concerned," says Joe. "However, I will make drums with other shell configurations if desired, along with solid-shell snare drums."

Classic tube lugs (or optional small, brass "button" lugs), heavy-duty steel rims, and RIMS mounts are standard and included in the purchase price of *Custom* series drums; die-cast rims are available at extra cost. All sets are timbre-matched and are available in catalyzed urethane finishes ("in almost any color imaginable"), with covered wraps, or in a variety of satin hand-rubbed finishes. ("Satin finishes allow the wood to breathe a bit, they look good, and they're more environmentally friendly," says Joe.) Every drum is personally signed and dated by Joe upon completion.

JC Juniors feature the same quality shells as the *Custom* series, but with toms and snares only in 6-ply configurations and bass drums in 8-ply. The drums feature the same custom-crafted 45° bearing edges and RIMS mounts as the *Customs* as well. However, the use of low-mass lugs, lighter-duty rims, and satin finishes help to keep the prices lower for this line.

Small Drums

Although he offers drums in all contemporary sizes, Joe wanted us to try a kit that was a little different from the sizes we generally receive for review. So he sent us his personal gigging kit, in what is usually termed "jazz sizes." It consisted of an 18x18 bass drum, 8x10 and 8x12 rack toms, and a 14x14 floor tom—all from the *Custom* series. The snare was a 4x14 *Junior*, but was a slight exception to the norm in that it featured an 8-ply shell. All of the drums were finished in a hand-rubbed satin finish in a classy burnt-orange color. The snare and toms came fitted with Attack single-ply, white-coated



Jim Exposito

WHAT'S HOT

- outstanding construction quality
- drums offer acoustic versatility that belies their size
- "gigging kit" sizes make kit compact and portable

WHAT'S NOT

- 18" bass drum needs to be elevated so pedal beater can strike batter head at its center

batter heads and clear, single-ply, medium-weight *Terry Bozzio* model bottom heads. The bass drum was equipped with a Remo *Ambassador* batter (because an 18" bass drum head was not available in the Attack line) and a Remo *Ebony* front head with no hole.

In terms of construction quality, all of the drums were done beautifully, with smooth, sanded precision bearing edges and snare beds. The tube lugs were attached to the shells at the top and bottom with very small posts, each of which was secured with one Allen set screw. The brass tubing looked natural and warm against the burnt-orange finish, giving the kit the look of a fine, hand-crafted instrument.

Owing to their thin shells and small si/es (especially the bass drum), the drums were light and easy to handle—making the kit *very* appealing from a portability standpoint. Joe leaves the choice of hardware up to the customer; in the case of our test kit the "rack" toms were suspended via multi-clamps and L-arms attached to cymbal stands on either side of the bass drum.

Big Sound

When played with the "factory-installed" thin, white-coated heads, the small kit had a predictably lively, "jazz" sort of sound. The toms sang clearly, and offered a surprising amount of underlying tone behind a crisp-sounding stick attack. The *Junior* snare drum was exceptionally crisp, clear, and cutting, offering plenty of dynamic range and excellent brush response.

My first experience with the bass drum was less than overwhelming. It's a small drum, and it was fitted with a thin batter head, so I didn't expect it to produce a thunderous low end. But my major objection was that the small diameter of the drum made it impossible for my bass drum beater to hit the batter head at its center (when the pedal was clamped to the hoop in normal fashion). However, I improved on this situation by elevating the drum to a point where the beater *could* hit the center of the head. I accomplished this by extending the spurs and propping the batter side of the bass drum up on some foam rubber pads. My bass drum pedal has a baseplate equipped with enough non-slip material that I didn't need to clamp the pedal to the bass drum hoop; I could just place it in the appropriate position in front of the batter head. But since not everyone has such a bass drum pedal, it would be nice if JC's could offer some sort of factory-installed elevation device (such as are available from some other manufacturers who offer 18" drums).

Once I could strike the bass drum head in the optimum position, the drum produced a good deal more body and fullness—if still not a lot of low end. Owing to its 18" depth it also had a good deal of punch and projection, and plenty of resonance. (Remember,

there was no hole in the front head.) Jazz drummers would probably leave that resonance alone; other players might want to add some muffling for control.

My overall evaluation of the kit as it came out of the box (and with the described elevation of the bass drum) is that it would be a joy to play for any "traditional" small-group jazzer, and could quite respectably cover most types of low-volume acoustic gigs where tonality would be prized above sheer power or thunderous depth.

But I wanted to find out if this highly portable kit could cut the mustard in a more intense situation—like a small rock club, or a wedding band playing a variety of styles. With that in mind, my first goal was to see if I could get more "bottom" out of the bass drum. So I replaced the *Ambassador* batter with a twin-ply, self-muffling *Pinstripe*. Whoa—*big* difference (emphasis on the "big"). The drum suddenly sounded fat, punchy, and...well...*deep*. I'm not talking Carlsbad Caverns, here—it still was an 18" drum, after all. But it was definitely a *bass* drum, with enough depth and power (and boominess, which one could take or leave) to compete quite adequately in a small club situation. (And if you were to mike up this baby, you could probably compete in *any* situation.)

Given my success with the bass drum, I popped *Pinstripes* onto the three toms as well. As with the bass drum, the difference was impressive. The fundamental pitches dropped considerably, and the overall "bigness" of the drums' sounds increased dramatically. Again, I'm not saying that the drums suddenly sounded three times bigger than they really were. But they did sound fat, full, and powerful. As long as you weren't looking for earthquake-inducing low end, you could very likely get all the rock 'n' roll tom sound you'd ever want out of these little beauties.

I really didn't *need* to change anything about the snare drum; its sound would work beautifully for a rock gig. But just for the sake of durability (assuming that a rock player would hit harder than a jazz or pop player) I put a white coated *Emperor* on the drum. It lost a tiny bit of brush sensitivity, but other than that I could discern no appreciable change in performance.

My final impression of this compact kit was one of pleasant surprise. I expected it to work well in a classic "jazz" context, and it certainly did. I did not really expect it to apply as well to general-purpose use, and certainly not to a rock situation—but the kit proved me wrong. Given the proper heads (and the possibility of miking where applicable), this "gigging kit" could cut just about *any* gig musically, while offering compactness and portability into the bargain! With today's trend toward smaller drumkits, it's nice to know that one can also consider smaller *drums* as well.

But That Ain't All

My favorable impression of Joe Chila's small "gigging kit" shouldn't imply that those are the only JC's Custom Drums you should consider. As I said earlier, Joe offers drums in *all* sizes, and he would be thrilled to create monster tubs for you, if that's your preference. The point is that JC's Custom Drums offer outstanding quality—both in sound and construction. No matter what sizes you're interested in or what type of music you play, you could be confident that JC's Custom Drums would serve your needs in an outstanding manner.

Joe Chila builds each JC's Custom kit to order, according to the

instructions and personal preferences of the customer. That, in itself, is a large part of the value of a custom kit. Then there is the craftsmanship of the builder, and the uniqueness of the materials and design. Factoring all those things in, JC's prices are surprisingly competitive. The *Custom Series* drums in our review kit are priced as follows: 18x18 bass drum—\$695; 8x10 tom—\$385; 8x12 tom—\$390; 14x14 tom—\$475. (Just for your information, a more "standard-size" 16x22 *Custom* bass drum lists for \$715. Solid-shell snare drums run from \$695 for a 4x14 to \$755 for a 6x14.)

If acoustic performance and economy are higher priorities for you than aesthetics, JC's *Juniors* offer essentially the same acoustic elements as the *Customs*, yet they are priced considerably lower. For example, the 4x14 *Junior* snare drum we tested is priced at \$295; a comparable *Custom* snare drum would cost \$495.

For further information contact JC's Custom Drums at 933 E. Auburn Rd., Rochester Hills, MI 48307, tel: (248) 852-3660, fax: (248) 852-3723.

Zildjian ZBT And ZBT-Plus Series

by Rick Mattingly

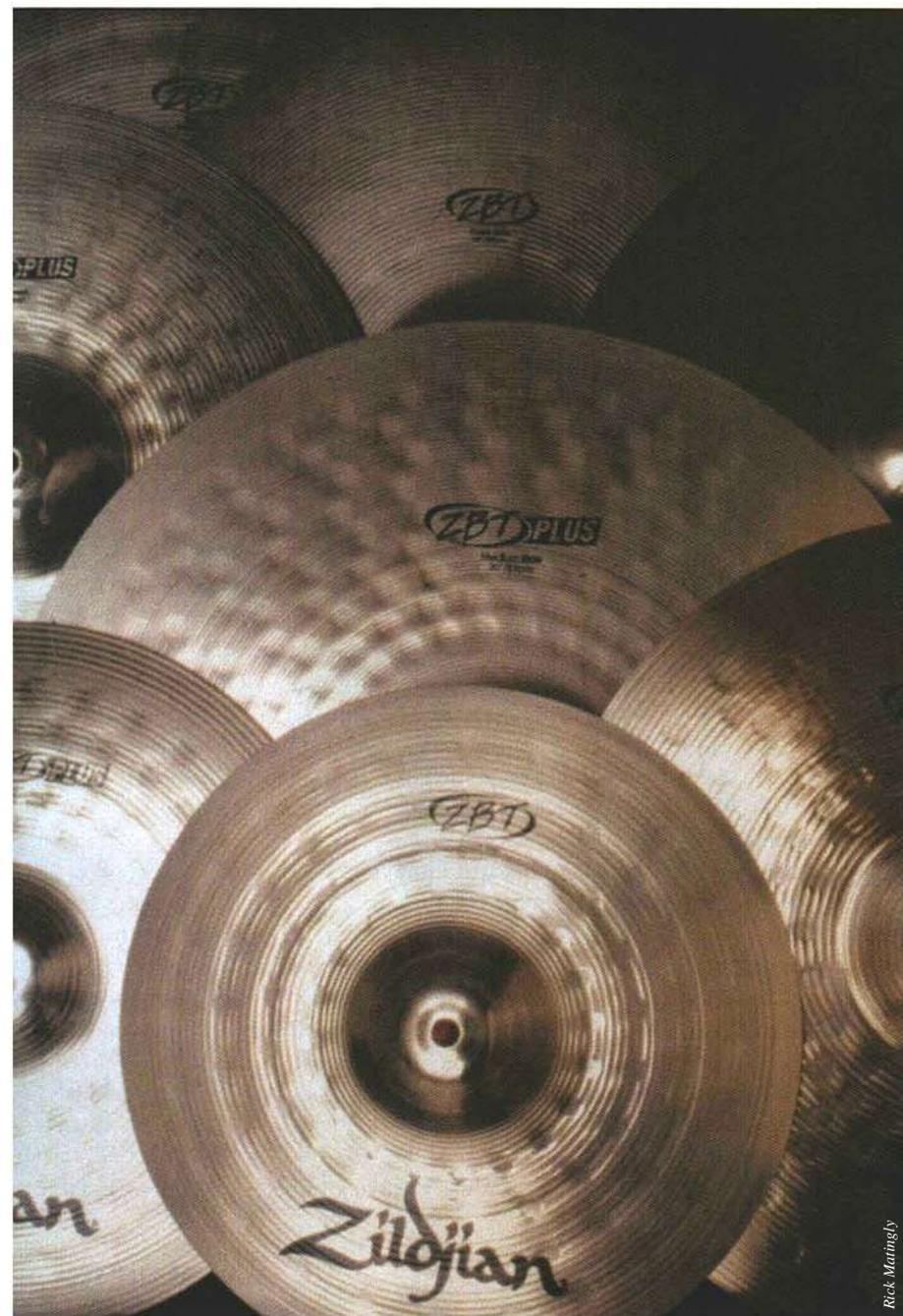
"Low Price" doesn't automatically mean "low quality."

You don't have to be all that old to remember a time when cymbals could be grouped into two basic categories: good professional-quality ones, and bad student models—which were *really* bad. The student, or budget, models were essentially stamped out of sheet metal, and that was it. One would never use the words "workmanship" and "budget cymbals" in the same sentence.

Times have changed. Some of the technology originally developed for top-line cymbals has trickled down to the budget lines. Even though most budget cymbals still start as sheets of bronze, many then go through some of the same computer-controlled finishing processes as cast cymbals, resulting in instruments that often approach pro quality.

Such is the situation with Zildjian's *ZBT* and *ZBT-Plus* series. The *ZBT* stands for "Zildjian Bronze Technology." The cymbals are made from the typical sheet-bronze formula of 92% copper and 8% tin, but they're lathed and hammered so as to produce significantly more musical sounds than their stamped-out ancestors. The lower-cost *ZBT* cymbals are lathed only on the top; the *ZBT-Plus* models are lathed on each side. Both are then computer-hammered.

Producing better-quality instruments geared for beginners and students is crucial to the survival of the art of drumming. It goes beyond econom-



ics. Young players are not inspired to practice on instruments that don't sound good. Guitar companies realized this years ago. As a result, companies such as Fender introduced quality versions of their *Stratocaster* and *Telecaster* guitars in the low-cost *Squier* series. They look good, sound good, and are affordable.

It's worthy of note that *Squier* instruments are made in Korea. Zildjian is turning out good-looking, good-sounding, and affordable *ZBT* and *ZBT-Plus* cymbals in Massachusetts. Yankee ingenuity is alive and well in the cymbal business.

Rides

The 20" *ZBT* ride has a very nice blend of definition and overtones. You can lay into it without the sound dissolving into a wash, but it also produces a good spread that would provide a nice blanket of sound behind a ballad, and its bell produces a clean tone. Of the three ride cymbals reviewed here, this one would probably be the most appealing to jazz drummers due to its slightly darker sound and lower pitch. It proved to be one of the strongest entries in the *ZBT*" series. List price is \$140.

The 20" *ZBT-Plus* medium ride shares some of the characteristics of the 20" *ZBT* model, but the overtone spread is not quite as wide and the pitch is higher, giving it a slightly brighter and more cutting sound. The 20" *ZBT-Plus* also has a stronger undertone, which disappears in the sound of a band (and helps fill up the sound). Although that undertone might be annoying to beginning drummers who do most of their playing by themselves, this cymbal would be an excellent choice for players who are starting to rehearse and gig with bands. List price is \$175.

There is no question that the 20" *ZBT-Plus Rock* ride was designed for band use. It has a dry, cutting sound that will project through just about anything. But the one I tested also had an undertone that sounded like a shrill whistle. In a loud situation that sound would be absorbed; in low- or medium-volume settings it might not (and it's *not* a sound one would enjoy hearing while practicing alone). But for those who need a heavy, dry, almost anvil-like ride cymbal that will slice through a band's sound, this is an affordable option. List price is \$175.

Crashes

Starting at the small end, the 14" *ZBT* crash is fast, high-pitched, and reasonably full-bodied for a 14" crash. In really loud situations it might sound more like a meaty splash cymbal, but in moderate volumes it has the pitch to cut through, and its fast decay makes it ideal for quick punctuations. List price is \$76.

The 16" *ZBT* crash is an excellent, general-purpose crash cymbal. Being on the light side, its pitch is somewhat low for a 16" cymbal, but it is fast and relatively full-bodied. List price is \$99.

Likewise, the 16" *ZBT-Plus* medium-thin crash is also a fine general-purpose crash. It's just a bit thicker than the 16" *ZBT* version, which gives it a higher pitch and a bit more body. I would rate this as one of the "best buys" of the *ZBT-Plus* series. List price is \$128.

Compared to the general-purpose nature of the 16" *ZBT-Plus* medium-thin crash, the 16" *ZBT-Plus Rock* crash is for more specialized purposes—specifically the need for more power in loud settings. Because of its thickness, the *Rock* crash is not quite as

WHAT'S HOT

- *ZBT* 20" ride has dark character that might appeal to jazz drummers
- *ZBT-Plus* 16" medium-thin crash is a "best buy" for versatility
- *ZBT-Plus* hi-hats offer a full range of overtones and excellent definition; could be used by a pro

WHAT'S NOT

- *ZBT*" hi-hats lack character, and are not as impressive as other models

fast as the medium-thin version, and it doesn't have quite as wide a spread of overtones. But it is still full-bodied and can stand up to aggressive playing. List price is \$128.

Both the *ZBT* and *ZBT-Plus* series include an 18" crash ride; we received the *ZBT* version for review. At best, most cymbals marked "crash ride" are either okay crash cymbals and mediocre ride cymbals, or vice-versa. At worst they are mediocre (or just plain lousy) in both applications. But the 18" *ZBT* crash ride is a pretty darn good crash cymbal with a full-bodied sound and relatively quick response. Although I wouldn't recommend it to a pro for its ride capabilities, it sounds good enough that I would have no trouble recommending it to students who are trying to piece together their first kit and who can only afford one cymbal. It would work fine as a "starter" ride for private practice. Later, once the student can afford to add an actual 20" ride, the 18" *ZBT* crash ride could do what it does best as a crash. List price is \$115.

Hi-Hats

Compared to the quality of the *ZBT* rides and crashes, the 13" and 14" *ZBT*" hi-hats lacked body and overtones. The 13" hats had a predictably high pitch, so they cut through reasonably well—but the sound lacked character. The 14" model had a bit more body (reinforced by its lower pitch), but overall the sound was unimpressive. They pretty much sound exactly like what they are: budget hi-hat cymbals. The 13" *ZBT* hi-hats list for \$136 per pair; the 14" *ZBT* hats go for \$152 a pair.

By contrast, the 14" *ZBT-Plus* medium hi-hats are a delight. They have a full range of overtones for a fat "chick" sound when played with the pedal, but the sound also has good definition. The bottom cymbal is just a bit heavier than the top one, in the classic Zildjian *New Beat* hi-hat tradition. When the cymbals are played with sticks the sound is full, and open hi-hat "barks" are gutsy. A pro could use these with no problem in a wide range of settings. List price is \$196 per pair.

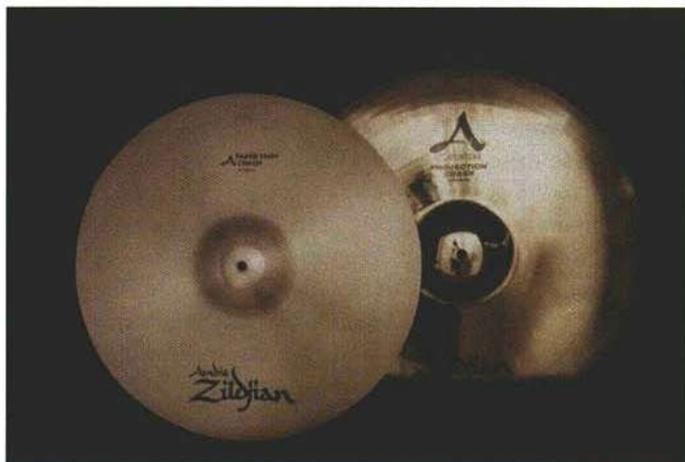
Like the other "rock" models in the *ZBT-Plus* series, the 14" *ZBT-Plus Rock* hi-hats were designed for volume, and they deliver. The sound is more focused (i.e., the cymbals have fewer overtones) than the *ZBT-Plus* medium hats. But there is still enough overtone spread to produce a meaty "chick" sound with the pedal and a strong, full-bodied sound with sticks. List price is \$196 per pair.

New Zildjian Professional Cymbals

Text and photos by Rick Mattingly



This review almost didn't make the deadline for this issue of *Modern Drummer*, because I was having trouble tearing myself away from playing Zildjian's new 20" *K Custom Flat Top* ride long enough to write it. This is an ideal ride for those who like to hear a good "click" when the tip of the stick contacts the cymbal, and who also enjoy being able to really lay into a ride cymbal without overpowering an acoustic trio. The *K Custom Flat Top* ride is somewhat drier than the "regular" *K Flat Top* ride, but it

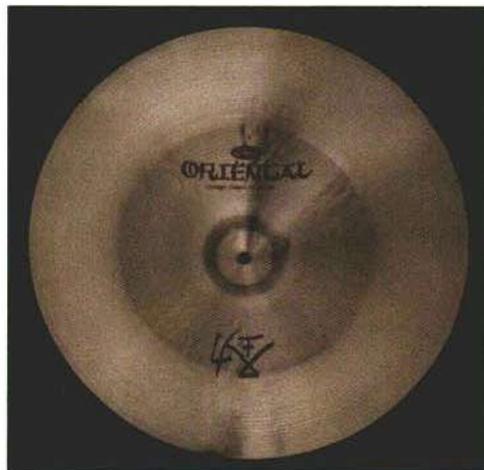


still has enough overtones to give it some shimmer.

Jazz drummers will appreciate the *K Custom's* articulation: Even at the fastest tempos every subdivision is audible. It might be a bit too dry for really slow tempos, though, so in some situations it might work better as a complement to a more overtone-rich cymbal than as the only ride. But it sounds great from medium tempos to blistering ones, and it should find favor in a variety of setups. The 20" *K Custom Flat Top* ride lists for \$393.

Zildjian's 19" *A Custom Projection* crash is not for the faint-of-heart. Because of its size it requires a solid hit to bring out its true character. Those who expend the necessary energy will be rewarded with a full-bodied explosion that is brighter than one might expect from a 19" crash, and that has a healthy amount of sustain. It also has a cutting bell sound, and while "traditional" types might complain that the sound is too washy to work as a ride, some grungers I've heard bashing away on crash cymbals would probably be delighted by its amount of ring. The 19" *A Custom Projection* crash lists for \$309.

By contrast, the 18" *A Zildjian Paper Thin* crash responds quickly to a much lighter touch (although it can still stand up to a fairly aggressive smack). Because of its thinness, the pitch is dark and low, and would tend to reinforce a band's sound from within rather than cut through it or stick out over the top. The cymbal's sound dies quickly—making it good for fast punctuations—but its 18" size gives it more body than the typical "fast" crash.



The 18" *A Zildjian Paper Thin* crash lists for \$265.

After the success of the 20" and 22" *Oriental Classic* China cymbals (reviewed in the July 1997 issue of *MD*), Zildjian has now added an 18" size to the line. Although this cymbal has a nasty sound like its big brothers, its smaller size makes it less likely to scare your guitar player when you hit it. Crashes are dark and gongy; ride patterns come out trashy and aggressive. And there is plenty of room to ride, even when the cymbal is mounted the standard way. The "lip" of the cymbal begins about halfway between the bell and the edge. The 18" *Oriental Classic* China lists for \$277.

Groove Juice

by Rick Van Horn

Let it shine, shine, shine, let it shine!

Anyone who's read my "Club Scene" columns over the years knows that I'm absolutely fanatical about clean, shiny cymbals. Not only do they make a drumkit look nicer, they also better project the sound they were originally designed to produce. Oxidation, tarnish, cigarette smoke, kitchen grease, skin oils, and stick marks are just some of the grungy elements that can get on a cymbal and dramatically interfere with its capacity to sound its best.

With that in mind, I've tried virtually every commercial cymbal cleaner that's ever been on the market—along with a lot of "home methods" as well. Over the years I've written about several that were my favorites at the time. Well, here I go again.

Groove Juice, distributed by MBT International, is the easiest and most effective cymbal cleaner I've ever encountered. In fact it's so good and so easy that an accurate description borders on the unbelievable. Rather than a powder, paste, or cream, it's a liquid that you spray on. And best of all, it requires no rubbing or polishing; the entire cleaning operation is done by chemical action.

Groove Juice is intended to be sprayed onto the cymbal, left for a minute, and then rinsed off with water. However, any sprayer applies a cleaner in a somewhat "spotty" fashion (unless you spray it on *very* heavily). I got better results by spraying on a moderate amount of the cleaner, and then using a folded paper towel like a "paintbrush" to spread the liquid evenly across the cymbal's surface. But this minor departure from the "spray on/rinse off" instructions was still far less work than most "spread on/rub like crazy/buff off" systems I've used in the past.

For this review I cleaned a variety of cymbals, including a thirty-five-year-old *A Zildjian* ride (the first ride cymbal I ever owned), a ten-year-old Sabian AA ride, three different pairs of *A Zildjian* and Sabian AA hi-hats, a ten-year-old Sabian AA *Brilliant* crash, and two five-year-old UFIP crashes. None of them were what you'd call grimy to begin with, but all showed the effects of age and hard use in smoky clubs.

I cleaned all of the cymbals listed above in less than half an hour, using absolutely no "elbow grease" at all. They all came out looking as good as (or in some cases better than) new—really!

Tarnish and discoloration simply melted away, leaving a gleaming, virtually unblemished surface.

Okay, so it melts away tarnish. What about encrusted stick marks? *Groove Juice* is non-abrasive, so the directions on the bottle suggest using a "soft-bristle brush along tonal grooves" to remove such marks. I had good success against moderately heavy stick marks using this method. For really heavily built-up marks you might try a nylon "scrubie" with the *Groove Juice*, or use a bit of baking-soda paste first, just to "scrape off the marks."

Is *Groove Juice* safe for printed logos? That seems to depend on the nature and age of the cymbal. The logos on the newer cymbals in our test group (the UFIP crashes) were in good shape to begin with, and were absolutely unaffected by the *Groove Juice*. Logos on older standard-finish cymbals—which had already started to wear off—were lightened a bit. The logo on the Sabian AA *Brilliant* crash was removed completely. If retaining your logo is important to you, you'll want to check the effect of the *Groove Juice* on a small part of the logo first, by dabbing a little on with a *Q-Tip*. (Don't try spraying on a small amount; it won't be accurate enough.)

Groove Juice's effectiveness comes from its chemical content, which includes "organic acid detergents." I didn't wear any rubber gloves for the first couple of cymbals I cleaned, and I found that my skin was tingling afterward. (Remember, I was using a paper towel to wipe the cleaner onto the cymbal.) So I used gloves thereafter, and I suggest that you do. And as with almost any household cleaning product, you'll want to keep it away

from children. Normal common sense should prevail.

Groove Juice is also recommended for use on drum hardware (in diluted form), and I found it very effective for bringing chrome stands (which had become dull from constant handling) back to their shiniest. It is *not* recommended for drumshells, however, so if you want to use it to clean your lugs, you should remove them from the shells first.

An 8 oz. bottle of *Groove Juice* sells for \$8.95. As far as I'm concerned, it could be the best nine bucks you'll ever spend. If your dealer isn't carrying *Groove Juice*, ask him to order it from MBT International, PO Box 30819, Charleston, SC 29417, tel: (803) 763-9083, fax: (803) 763-9096.



Alternate Mode drumKAT Turbo 4.0

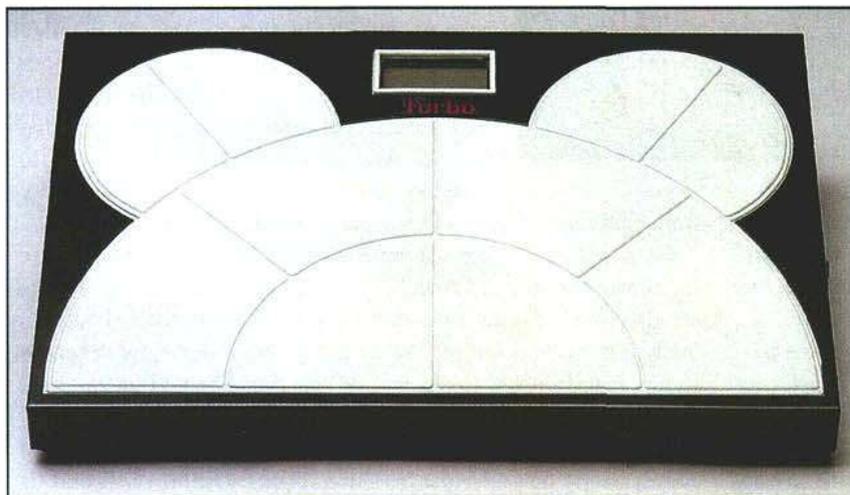
by Rich Watson

Alternate Mode unleashes a faster, more muscular KAT,

Cats are independent creatures. They tend to go precisely where they want, and seem genetically disinclined to follow. KAT was like that too, and remains so in its new life as Alternate Mode. While other manufacturers have focused on electronic percussion's ergonomics and emulation of acoustic drum conventions, Alternate Mode has forged on to explore frontiers of control and sonic gymnastics that acoustic drums & percussion will never see. The *drumKAT Turbo 4.0* includes new software and hardware, improving the old *KAT's* performance and expanding its prodigious list of features.

Katching Up

Because the *drumKAT* has undergone many changes since MD's last full review (June '89), a whirlwind recap of some of its "older" features is in order to help us appreciate the upgrades in the new *Turbo 4.0* version.



The *drumKAT* is a MIDI controller, which converts your drumming into a digital format and transmits it to a sound source such as a synthesizer module or sampler; the *drumKAT* itself does not "contain" or produce any sounds. Its ten onboard pads, which are

WHAT'S HOT

- more kits
- bank, program, volume, tempo, and kit can be changed with single pad
- up to three pads can be linked

WHAT'S NOT

- chick velocity sensitivity not very smooth

laid out in the now-familiar "Mickey Mouse" pattern, employ Force-Sensitive Resistor (FSR) sensors, which are more sensitive and cross-talk-free than pads with piezo transducers. It also has mono inputs for nine additional trigger pads (including kick and hi-hat) of virtually any type and brand, allowing you to physically expand your setup beyond the *drumKAT's* modest dimensions. All playing surfaces can be independently micro-tuned for optimal interpretation of your dynamic range and "comfort zone."

Used in conjunction with a hi-hat controller (through a separate dedicated input), the *drumKAT* is capable of good facsimile hi-hat functions, including foot "splashes." The only area that falls a bit short of realism (even in the new model) is the somewhat uneven velocity sensitivity of the chick and splash sounds, whose transition from soft to loud is pretty abrupt, regardless of which of the sixteen velocity sensitivity curves is used. But this is true of all controller-type electronic hi-hats on the market. Alternate Mode's Mario DeCiutiis explains that such pedals interpret dynamics by the velocity of the pedal's downstroke (the splash function clocks the upstroke), not its "impact," and the short length of that stroke doesn't allow for a wide range of variance. For purists, the *fatKAT* hi-hat controller pedal has an additional trigger output that will yield much better velocity sensitivity, but of course using it will occupy another input in the controller.

The *drumKAT* also has a special input for a breath controller (not included). It is probably best suited to modulation or pitch bend on instruments like talking drums and cuica, and effects like timpani "boings" and tabla "gulps," but conceivably it could be assigned to any MIDI control parameter.

Each pad and trigger can be independently set to play a single

note; or multiple notes simultaneously or in specific or random succession; or to respond to dynamic variation in several ways, such as with velocity cross-fade, gate shift, or delays programmable in increments as small as five milliseconds. (This multiple note delay option facilitates some really cool effects, like "fattened" drums or "flams," echoes, and arpeggiated chords, especially because the volume of each note in the stack can be set independently.) Supremely adapted to playing melodic percussion and other instruments, four melodic modes coordinate with thirty-one pre-programmed harmonic structures, including major, minor, diminished, augmented, dorian, and mixolydian scales, several variations on blues scales, and various inversions of seventh chords. Pads and triggers can also be used to activate or control many MIDI functions and external devices such as synths and sequencers. Pads (but not triggers) can be programmed to respond to continuous pressure, as from a finger or drumstick, to control many MIDI parameters such as volume, pitch bend, sustain, and panning.

The *drumKAT* has a pair of MIDI inputs and two pairs of MIDI outputs, and much of the data it transmits (notes, controller and sequencing messages, etc.) can be directed to either or both. A sophisticated onboard sequencer allows rhythmic patterns (referred to as "motifs") to be recorded and played back.

All drumset configuration and control parameters can be saved as "kits," and these kits can be arranged in any order as "songs." All the *drumKAT's* programming is achieved through tapping its various pads, sometimes in conjunction with use of one of its four footswitches.

A couple of major upgrades ago, the *drumKAT's* playing surface was changed to a darker gray rubber, so as to reduce visibility of stick marks and make it less susceptible to yellowing by ultraviolet light. The newer surface is also slightly bouncier.

Turbo's Hard Stuff...

Some of the new *drumKAT's* most important upgrades are in its hardware. All justify the "turbo" tag with clear, real-world benefits for the drummer.

An additional memory chip doubles the total amount of kit and sequence memory. In concert with software-based dynamic

memory allocation, this chip facilitates storage of as many as 48 kits (depending on their complexity), up from the 3.5's 30. For me, this is a significant improvement, since I had occasionally bumped my head on the old *drumKAT's* 30-kit ceiling at gigs that required using one or two highly specialized setups per song (versus generic setups that would work for several songs). Almost as welcome is *Turbo's* increased motif capacity. Previously limited to 8 motifs—1 with 380 "events", 2 with 100, and 5 with 49—*Turbo* handles up to 32 motifs, (depending on their length), and their individual event capacity is no longer limited.

A new sequence timing chip doubles the *KAT's* motif resolution to 32nd notes (up from 16th-note triplets). This facilitates more accurate reading and (optional) quantization of sequenced data.

The *drumKAT's* new microprocessor chip is claimed to be 40-50% faster than the one in version 3.5. Just as speed in personal computers has skyrocketed to meet the demands of complex software and impatient consumers, *drumKAT's* supercharged processor speed keeps pace with more sophisticated data manipulation capabilities, as well as electronic drummers' escalated demands for temporal accuracy.

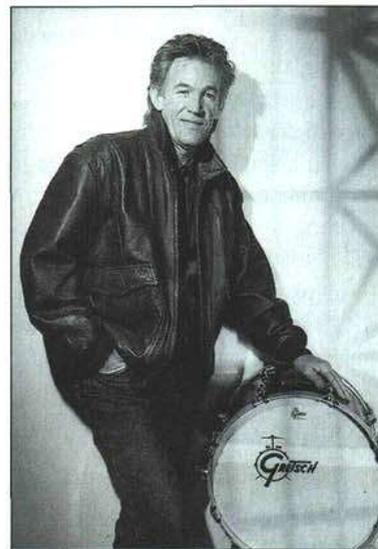
To test it under a "full load," I tried to dump the data from my *drumKAT* into the *turboKAT*, but the latter would allow neither an All Memory or All Kits dump. Alternate Mode's Rod Squire explains that the units are too different for large-scale data transfers, but that the new model will allow the dump of one 3.5 kit at a time. While not terribly convenient, even this slower method is better than none at all, since the *KAT's* sophistication encourages investment of a fair amount of time in programming.

Through my older-model Roland *TD-7*, which is not known for its lightning response to MIDI data, the difference was negligible with normal real-time playing. However, through my sampler, and through a borrowed Alesis *D-4*, I did detect quicker response from the *Turbo*. Compared with industry standards, even the old *drumKAT* was quite fast; delays were commonly attributable to other points in the MIDI chain, such as the sound module. I did notice that the *4.0* was quicker on the draw in two particular applications: when I played fast, busy patterns on kits



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with many pads in complex modes (such as multiple notes, some of which have *programmed* delays) and when playing along with pre-recorded motifs.

...And New Tricks

Alternate Mode has taught its old *KAT* many new tricks. Topping the usefulness list are several new pad control screens for changing the kit in the *drumKAT*, changing a program, bank, or volume in a sound module, or changing the tempo in the *drumKAT*, external sequencer, and/or drum machine. Now any of these changes can be accomplished with a single hit on any pad or trigger. Being able to make program, bank, and volume changes simultaneously with a single stroke is a godsend. Also, by dedicating the bank and program pages to a pad, the *drumKAT*'s storage of data becomes more efficient, because sending the command that initiates these "external" changes no longer requires changing to an additional kit in the *drumKAT*. For example, let's say you want to change the sound of your snare, kick, and toms during one section of a song. Before 4.0, you would have had to dedicate an entire *drumKAT* kit with different MIDI note numbers for that section, or with the same note numbers but with an "imbedded" program change. Now you can simply strike the designated bank or program change pad while remaining in the same kit.

Another of the cooler *Turbo* upgrades is Chick Link. (No, it's not an online dating service, you animals!) Now the hi-hat pedal can be linked to another pad, so that

depressing it will simultaneously "activate" another pad as if it had been struck. This can result in some interesting effects. For example, it could be linked to one or two pads that alternate among numerous percussion sounds, sound effects, or brief melodic sequences.

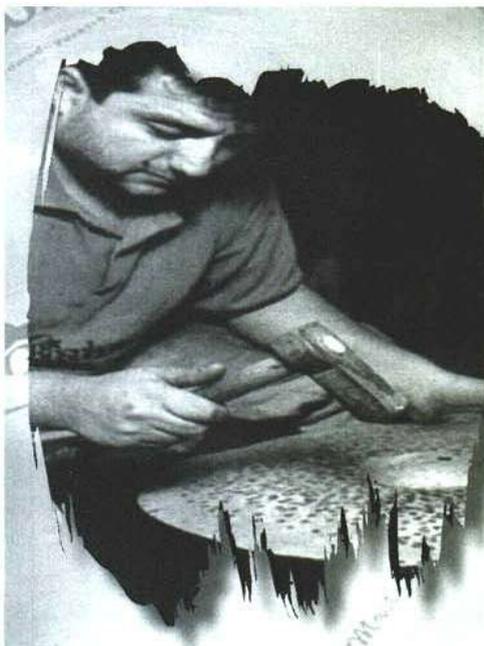
And speaking of links, Multiple Link now allows you to link up to three items, including pads, triggers, the breath controller, or chick. Linking playing surfaces might seem unnecessary when you consider that each can play up to 4 stacked or 128 alternated notes, but the feature is great for several perfectly practical scenarios: combining "ride-type" sounds that, except for volume or gate/duration, remain constant with others that dramatically change; linking a non-sound-producing pad, such as one that affects a kit, volume, or tempo change, with a sound-producing pad, to make control-type changes fit seamlessly into the musical pattern you're playing; combining alternating sounds on different "rotation cycles"; and initiating overlapping motifs or complex delayed effects as described above that would otherwise be impossible to play without disturbing the basic groove.

Event Slice Mode, now "fully implemented," plays back "time slices" of a pre-recorded motif each time any so-designated pad is struck. In its most straightforward application, this means that one motif "event" (one or more notes played at the same time, a note off, or 2.5 seconds of silence) plays with each stroke. By selecting different note values (double whole

note, whole note, half note, etc.) relative to the quantization of the motif, different portions of the motif will be played back with each stroke on any Event Slice pad. I confess that I never could get this to work properly in my old 3.5, but after a few initial failures, it worked great in the *Turbo*, and I can see that it could be a great tool, especially for "accompanying" your drumming with a melody or bass line. (And this is one bass player with whom you'll *never* be out of sync.)

As its name suggests, Alternate 128 Mode (offered in addition to Alternate 8) alternates among as many as 128 notes on any or all pads and triggers. Perhaps I suffer from a stunted imagination, but I can't think of how I would use the full capability of this feature. For me, the only conceivable need for repeating this many different notes in a predetermined sequence from a single pad would be to generate an accompanying melody or bass line, and Event Slice is ideally suited to this task. Then again, Alternate Mode products enjoy a reputation for not just meeting drummers' needs and expectations, but surpassing them, providing tools and inspiration for *tomorrow's* imaginings.

The new Roll Mode, integrated into the gate time feature and assignable to any or all pads and triggers, was designed to improve the sound of drum rolls in some drum machines and samplers. In this mode, no note off message is sent until you stop playing on the pad, thus eliminating the dreaded "machine gun" effect produced by



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some sound sources.

Notation Mode interfaces with most computer sequencers through the right pair of MIDI outputs, allowing notation software to notate what is played on the *drumKATs* pads and triggers.

In addition to all the other functions (Sustain, External Sequencer Start/Stop or Continue/Stop, Click On/Off, Home Base Reset, and Freeze Alternate 8) that can be assigned to Footswitch 3, depressing it twice can now also set the tap tempo, which controls the *drumKATs* click, motifs, and/or external sequencing devices.

The *drumKAT 3.5* allowed MIDI note numbers assigned to any pad to be transposed by a programmable degree by striking a designated pad or trigger. Version *4.0* adds this capability to motifs. The first of two Motif Transpose screens allows you to select any or all of the 30 motifs to be transposed for any or all of the 48 kits. The second screen selects one of several types of transposition, how many times (up to 8) the motif is transposed, the degree of each transposition, and which pad or trigger effects the change(s). This feature is especially useful for changing keys or tonal centers of melodic motifs or chordal note stacks.

The new Memory Usage screen indicates how much memory remains to be used, and how much has been used by kits and by motifs. The Kit Clear screen indicates whether each kit is being used in any Songs and the amount of memory it occupies. It also allows all data to be erased from individual kits. Similarly, the Motif Clear screen indicates whether each motif is being used in a kit and its memory usage, and allows you to clear it. These features help you manage your data and avoid erasing something you mistakenly think you don't need.

For all its complex functionality, the *KAT* remains a pretty tame, user-friendly critter. Its programming structures are logical and efficiently accessible. And while in many ways (such as the size and layout of its pads) it is not even intended to mimic the acoustic drumming interface, it is still the only controller whose programming is accomplished by tapping on the various pads with sticks. Most drummers find this method eminently more natural than the dreaded button pushing/knob dialing reality of other electronic percussion products. Also, the *drumKATs* plain-English documentation is comprehensive and "project-oriented," walking you

through each of its many features. (However, even veteran *KAT* owners should be prepared to read the *4.0* manual, since some things don't look or operate in quite the same way they did in previous versions. I made some dumb mistakes by assuming I already knew what to do.)

One enduring—and endearing—feature built in to every Alternate Mode product might be called "perpetuity." While other companies have begun to adopt similar policies, *KAT's* groundbreaking "War On Obsolescence" built expandability and upgradability into all its controllers. Old *KATs* can be endowed with even the major changes described above through factory upgrade. The extensive hardware improvements in *4.0* make it more costly than previous upgrades, many of which allowed simple home installation of an inexpensive chip. But providing an alternative to "starting over" with a new purchase is laudable in a world where growth and change are not only inevitable, they are demanded by the products' end-users. Recognizing this business philosophy, we shouldn't be surprised that Alternate Mode is also known for unequaled customer service.

Conclusion

Like *KAT* before it, Alternate Mode has continued to gamble on drummers' desires to expand their musical role. Their rationale, which seems to counter conventional wisdom in the industry, is embraced by drummers who pose this pointed question: If the best thing that can be said about an electronic kit is that it looks, sounds, and feels almost like acoustic drums, then why not just *use* acoustic drums? The inveterate iconoclast, Alternate Mode continues to expect consumers to adapt to their vision of drumming's possibilities—as evidenced in features like the *drumKATs* melodic modes and breath controller—rather than the other way around. For those who want electronic percussion magic that looks back at acoustic drumming from a considerable distance, now, more than ever, *drumKAT* is the most powerful wand on the market.

The new *drumKAT Turbo 4.0* retails for \$1,179. An upgrade from 3.5, which includes the new microprocessor, memory, and sequence timing chips, goes for \$260.



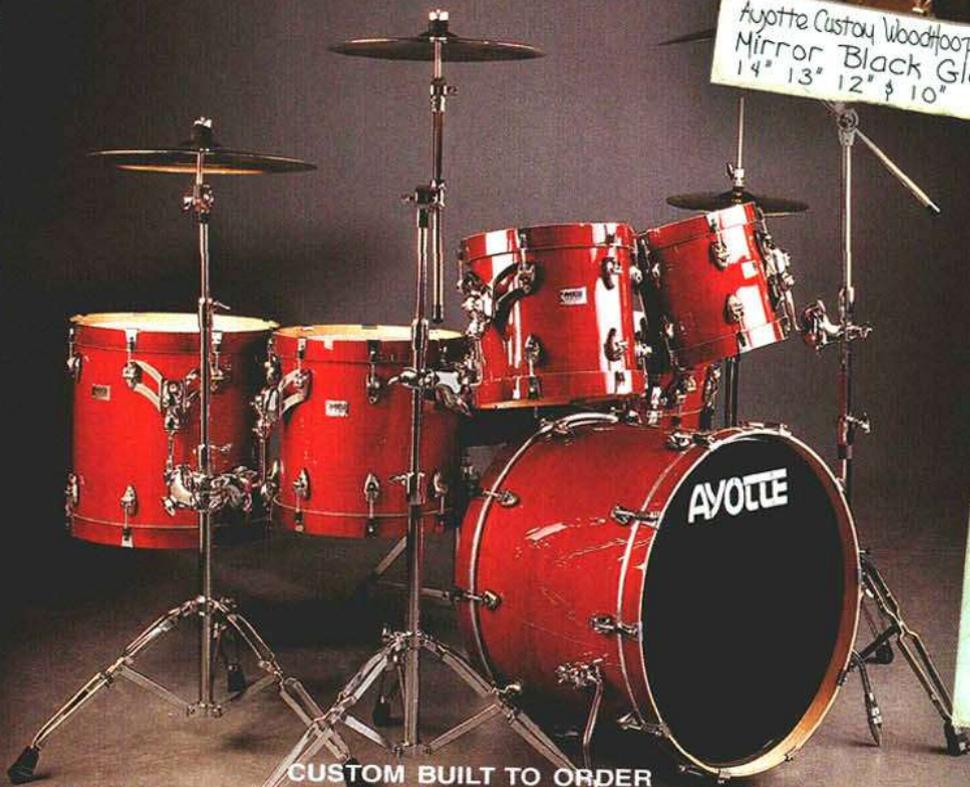
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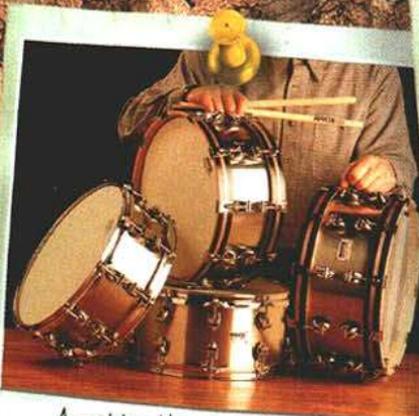
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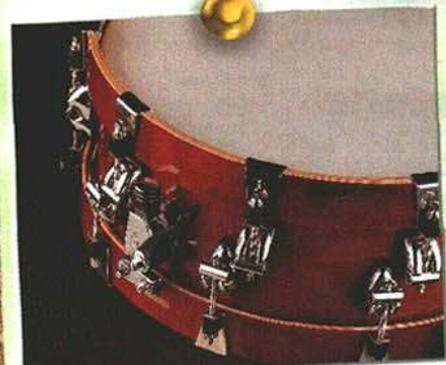
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Rod

Morgenstein



Rod Morgenstein has won the Progressive Rock category of *Modern Drummer's* Readers Poll so many times that his throne has been retired to the magazine's prestigious Honor Roll. Ever since the formation of the Dixie Dregs at the University of Miami in 1975, and right up to his most recent projects, Rod has played the most interesting beats, navigated the boldest odd-time passages, and tastefully revealed some of the most impressive chops of any drummer in the genre.

Watching Morgenstein perform is fascinating: His face projects many emotions—joy, anticipation, determination, satisfaction—whether he's playing in 5/4, 9/8, or 13/16 with Steve Morse, or propelling a piece of Winger's platinum power pop. And his huge "backwards" setup (he's a lefty) only adds to the interest.

So where is the challenge for Rod in 1998 to rival the success he's had with the Dregs, Steve Morse, and Kip Winger? Is he content to rest on these admittedly heavy musical laurels? Well, no. Enter Jordan Rudess, the keyboardist who proved a very worthy foil for Morse on the last Dixie Dregs tour. The keyboard phenom more than kept up with the amazing guitarist on several high-speed duet sections that had left previous Dregs gasping for air.

Jordan now provides the musical challenge for Rod as they venture out as an astoundingly gutsy duo. On their debut Domo Records release, titled *Rudess Morgenstein Project* (people are starting to refer to the group as "RPM"), Rod is again the ideal combination of musical servant and instigator. He caresses the music, then turns it upside down.

Morgenstein's restless nature is quite evident lately, especially when you consider all of the projects he has going. Rod is now a couple of semesters into a part-time teaching position at the Berklee College of Music. He has also just had a method book published by Hal Leonard. Titled *The Drumset Musician*, it's a hip and unpatronizing book designed for the beginning drummer. In addition, Rod composed twenty hard rock and progressive rock parts for a MIDI drum-file project (*Beat Boy*). And he has a Web site, which is located at home.earthlink.net/Wmorgenstein. Plus, die-hard Dregs fans will be thrilled to learn that plans are in the works for a new album and tour later this year.

We may have a tendency to prop up our drumming heroes, but in Rod Morgenstein's case, there's no need to do any propping: He's still slamming 'em.

Restless As Ever

by Robin Tolleson

Photos by Paul La Raia

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RT: Has the Rudess Morgenstein Project been an adjustment for you, playing or technology-wise?

RM: Musically, it's really exciting. I'm starting to add things to my drumset. For the song "Odd Man Out," I added a piccolo snare to the right of my hi-hat so I could switch back and forth between it and my main snare. It's a nice added effect that can be used in a song here and there or as part of a solo.

I've also started adding a few sound-effects cymbals to my setup. In particular, I have double-stacked cymbals: I'm using an 8" splash underneath a 10" splash, and I use that a lot in conjunction with the hi-hat. Instead of playing all the notes on the hi-hat, I put my left

'For the time being we're separating church and state: Jordan is the electronic, high-tech guy, and I'm the backwoods, primitive basher of trees.'

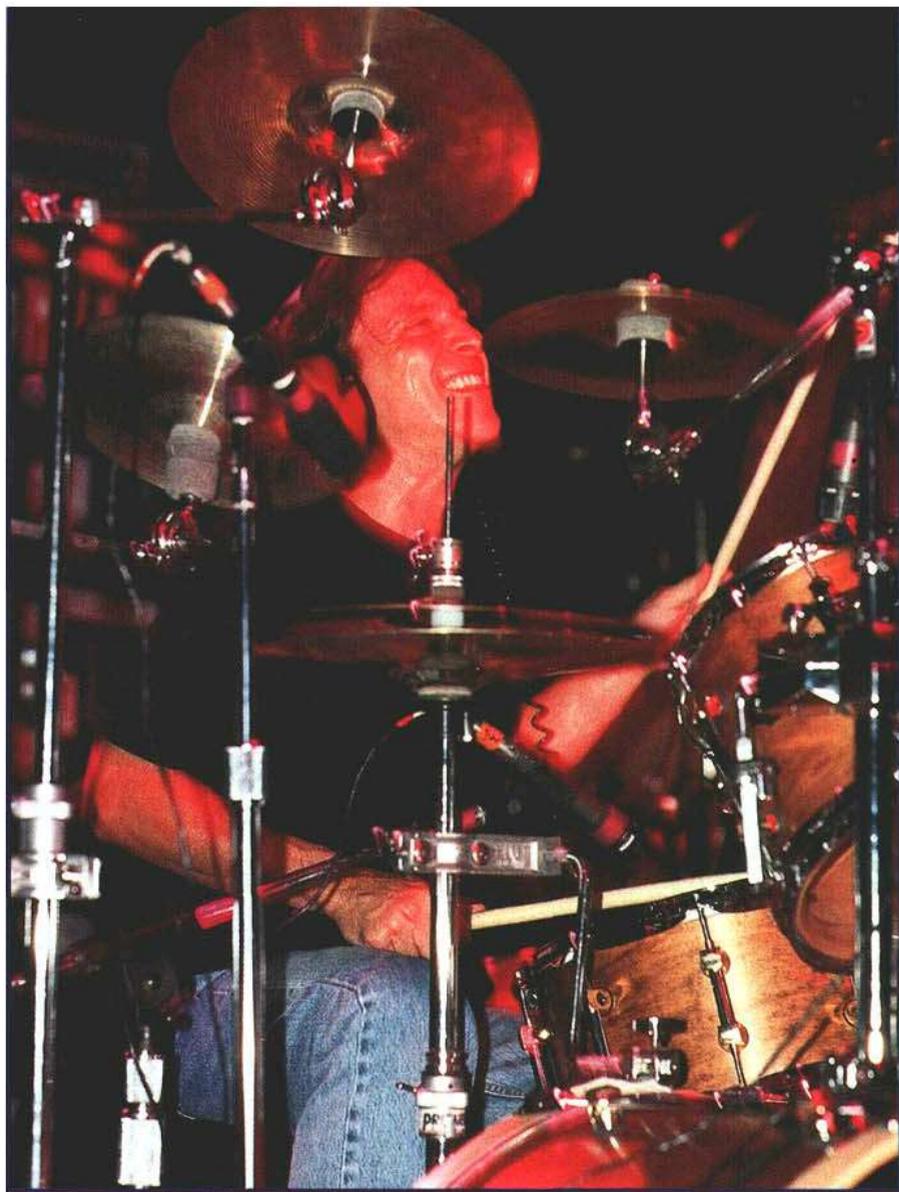
hand on that double stack and right hand on the hi-hat. That's how I play the marching beat on "Cartoon Parade."

I recently added two cymbals on top of each other above the right side of the hi-hat—a 10" splash with a 10" China cymbal on top of it. That is a very brutal sound, a very good splash effect. The 10" is upside down and the China sits upside down on top of it.

I really enjoy playing beats where I hit a lot of the instruments on the kit. I've been working on beats that incorporate the bell of the ride cymbal, those two effects cymbals I mentioned, a 6" cymbal disk, and a thick bell cymbal that I mount upside down on top of my 18" crash. Then I have the cowbell and







the China. I'm trying to keep up with the variety of sounds that the keyboard has.

Playing with Jordan hasn't been that much of an adjustment, because I'm pretty much still playing everything acoustically. For the time being we're separating church and state: Jordan is the electronic high-tech guy, and I'm the backwoods, primitive basher of trees. As we evolve, I plan to incorporate some electronic things into my drumset so I can take a little bit of the burden off of him and also enhance the sound.

When we play live, at least ninety-five percent of the show is totally live—no sequence, no loop, no tape. But on the recording, I'd say thirty-five percent was done live. For the other two-thirds of the recording we took advantage of what the studio had to offer. We did more layering, like having a big symphonic sound, like we did on "Cartoon Parade" or "Masada."

RT: Some of the sounds on "Cartoon Parade" are very drum-ish.

RM: Jordan would ask, "What are you hearing here?" and I'd describe as best I could what was in my head. He'd start with some stock sounds and then go to town with it. It's really neat to work with somebody like him.

"Cartoon Parade" was one of the first complete songs I ever wrote, and we

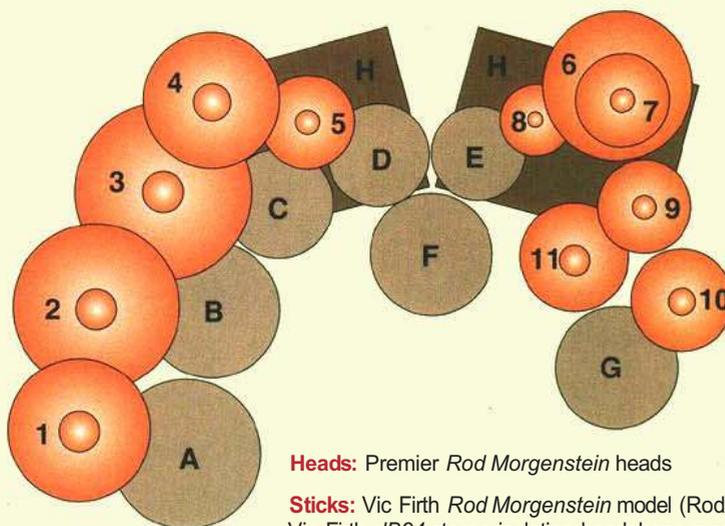
Rod-Man's Colors

Drumset: Premier Signia

- A. 16x18 floor tom
- B. 16x16 floor tom
- C. 11x13 tom
- D. 10x12 tom
- E. 9x10 tom
- F. 6 1/2x14snare drum
- G. 4x14 piccolo
- H. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1. 17" AAX Studio crash
- 2. 20" HH Hand Hammered Chinese
- 3. 21" AA Dry ride
- 4. 16" AAX Studio crash
- 5. 10" AA splash
- 6. 18" AAX Studio crash
- 7. 12" Bell Cymbal
- 8. 6" Cymbal Disc
- 9. 10" AA splash on top of an 8" AA splash
- 10. 10" Mini Chinese on top of a 10" AA splash (both inverted)
- 11. 13" AA Regular (or Fusion) hi-hats



Heads: Premier Rod Morgenstein heads

Sticks: Vic Firth Rod Morgenstein model (Rod also uses Vic Firth dB24 stereo isolation headphone monitors)

Microphones: All Shure, including SM91s for bass drums, SM98s for toms, SM57s for snare drums, and SM91s for hi-hats and overheads

played it for a year or so in the Dixie Dregs around 1976. Through attrition it kind of fell off the set list and never made it onto a record. I've always been proud of it, because it's a pretty elaborate song. So when Jordan and I decided to work together, that was up on my list, and it was his suggestion to use a lot of orchestral synth sounds, brassy sounds doing that marching part, and then in the mellow parts there's a harp sound.

RT: Your tune "Drop The Puck" has some beautiful chords in it.

RM: That song has kind of a Dregs vibe to it. From all the years working with Steve Morse and his compositions, I'm such a fan of his that I think I picked up a little bit of his method of creating music. So some of the things I write tend to have a hint of a Dregs sound.

The melody on "Drop The Puck" is based on fifths, and then it has a little bit of a country flavor to it. We were set on making sure that every second that passed was right, and we'd spend time on the smallest thing, like sticking a harmony onto one particular melody. And it's the little things that probably go by most people that brighten my day. I'm so glad that we went the extra mile to put them in and make ourselves happy.

RT: How do you guys write together?

RM: That's interesting. For "Tailspin" I said, "Let's try to write something that's got a straight rock beat to it, almost in that Jan Hammer style." So I wrote a bass line and a scratch drum beat, and then Jordan started messing around doing leads to try to find the beginning of a melody. I'll just sit next to him saying, "Yeah," "No," "Go up here," "No, no, make it go down." Then he'd continue that or search for chord changes.

When two heads get together, so much magic can happen. I can only get so far by myself, and if a second person comes into it, he can point me in a direction I never thought of. It's a time-consuming process, though, because most of what we do is pretty harmonically involved and elaborate. It's not like, "Okay, let's hold this one chord and jam for a while."

RT: You play some great flourishes on "Tailspin." I'm amazed by your internal clock, how you get these things happening while the time stays so straight

And Then There Were Two...

One of several projects Rod Morgenstein has been busy with lately is the Rudess Morgenstein Project, the drum/keyboard duo he has with Jordan Rudess. Their recently released, self-titled album (on Domo records) features some inventive and technically amazing progressive rock drumming.

The following examples are a few of the different patterns Morgenstein plays on the album. As always with Rod, it's some fun stuff! (The triangle-shaped symbol that appears above the staff in the third example, "Cartoon Parade," indicates the two splashes Rod has mounted on top of each other.)

MUSIC KEY			
Open	O	China	X
H.H.	X	R.C.	X
T.T.	X		
S.D.	●		
F.T.	●		
R.D.	●		
	2nd	Add'l	Ghost
	B.D.	Toms	Note

"Drop The Puck"

Two staves of musical notation for "Drop The Puck" in common time (C). The notation shows a complex drum pattern with various symbols (X, ●) and rests, indicating a mix of drum sounds and dynamics.

"Crossing Over"

Two staves of musical notation for "Crossing Over" in common time (C). The notation features a mix of drum sounds and rests, with some notes marked with a triangle symbol (△) above them.

"Cartoon Parade"

Two staves of musical notation for "Cartoon Parade" in common time (C). The notation includes triplets (indicated by '3' above the notes) and various drum sounds, with triangle symbols (△) above some notes.

"Sloth"

Two staves of musical notation for "Sloth" in common time (C). The notation shows a dense, fast drum pattern with many notes and rests.

"Over The Edge"

Two staves of musical notation for "Over The Edge" in common time (C). The notation features a complex drum pattern with many notes and rests, including some notes marked with a triangle symbol (△) above them.

"Don't Look Down"

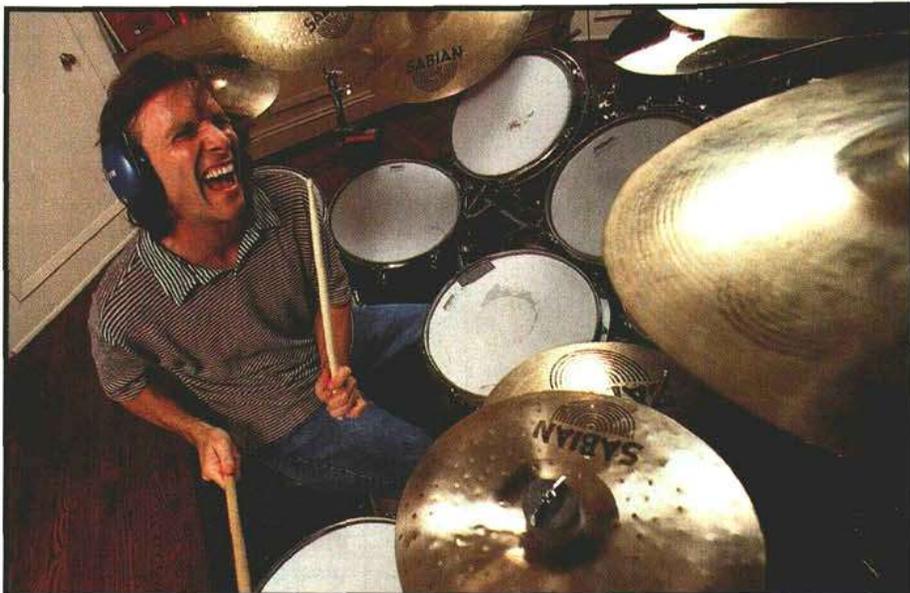
Two staves of musical notation for "Don't Look Down" in common time (C). The notation shows a complex drum pattern with many notes and rests, including some notes marked with a triangle symbol (△) above them.

underneath.

RM: Sometimes if you're listening to guys like Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, Dennis Chambers, and Virgil Donati, they'll go off into a bizarre lick, and at a certain point you just don't know where they are. It gets so off-the-wall that you don't think they know where they are. And then when it seems like all hell is gonna break loose, everybody's right back on the money.

To get that sort of ability together, whether they know how to read music or not, drummers have to have a working knowledge of notes and rests, from whole notes all the way down to 32nd notes, half-note triplets, quarter-note triplets, all the rests, and the infinite number of rhythmic possibilities that exist when you combine notes and rests. Once you have a working knowledge of that, the thing is to sit on your drumset and play rhythms and force yourself to count out loud to start developing that inner clock. Counting out loud just does something to the brain. You're using a fifth limb—hands, feet, and then voice. And it begins to give you a clearer picture of how the rhythms fall on the pulse.

I sit down at the drums, count out loud,



and start playing fairly basic stuff. Then I'll take it further and further out, playing over the bar line and doing polyrhythmic things, all the while keeping the counting going. Initially I wasn't all that good at it, but by doing it on a regular basis it really started to help things fall into place.

Getting familiar with the sound and feel of certain things is the key. A drummer can

be playing something and I'll instantly know, "They're playing 16th notes, accenting every third note—which is creating a three-note grouping over quarter notes, which creates a four-against-three polyrhythm.... It's like ear-training for guitarists or keyboardists. You should be able to hear something and say, "That's that really cool thing when you play five-note

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groupings."

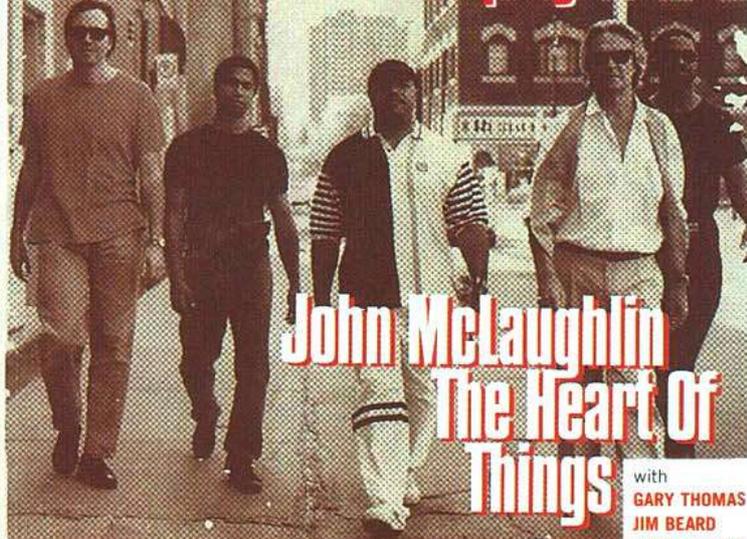
A lot of stuff that is exciting to listen to is basically different patterns superimposed over the existing time. You hear someone playing something in an odd time signature that's somehow fitting in perfectly over the quarter notes, but it's not going to repeat until five measures later. The excitement is that the listener's ears don't know whether to focus on the 4/4 time or the pattern that's in five.

RT: And in the new band, you don't have to worry about throwing off the bass player.

RM: Everybody should think about having a two-person band: You don't have too many disagreements, and the band isn't always breaking up. Every musician has been through that with different personalities clashing, and it's nice if you can avoid it. In the real world, a trio is probably the minimum number you can have in a "band." It's really unusual what we're able to pull off with only the two of us.

Occasionally one of us will get lost, but if Jordan plays something not quite the way it's intended to be, it doesn't matter. I just keep playing and eventually we know

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Rod Morgenstein

where we are. It's impossible to have a train wreck with only two people playing.

I have memories of the Dregs in the early days when Andy West was the bassist, playing the "Wabash Cannonball" real fast, the ultimate "oom-pah" tune. Once in a blue moon something would happen where we would get off from each other, and what he thought was quarter notes on the beat would somehow become upbeats to me. He would be feeling them as downbeats and I would be feeling them as upbeats. I would switch to try to find him, and that would throw *him* off, and then he would go the other way. It was hysterical. The other guys in the band would be looking at us, and *everyone* would be trying to find where the time was. **RT:** You put some heavy fills into very small spaces on "Sloth."

RM: Those were totally spontaneous. I didn't play what I was planning on doing in those holes. I just went for it and hoped for the best. Sometimes it comes out good, and sometimes not. You take a deep breath, hear the click track, and start playing. Sometimes you get lucky, but if you think



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about it, you have to be luckier than baseball players are. In music, if you only get lucky 280 out of 1,000 tries, you're not going to make it. You've got to have a .600 batting average.

"Sloth" is like a hi-tech industrial song. We were thinking Nine Inch Nails and some other weird techno bands. Jordan put in a CD ROM of industrial sounds with interesting loops. We went through dozens of them, and when something would hit us in a cool way, we would put it down. Then his sound design technique would go into action, and it would evolve into something.

The song starts with me playing this beat on real drums, and I doubled it by playing ten or twenty passes of the same thing. But underneath the real drums is this synth drum pattern. We found different sounds like chain saws and other machinery and started stacking them, and then we had this really cool-sounding rhythm track.

"Sloth" was really a stream-of-consciousness recording. We had no idea what was going to happen, but we wanted it to be more of a textural kind of thing, not just a chops song. That's one that we're still

Coming Full Circle

Rod Morgenstein is famous as one of the most awesome progressive-style drummers in history. Though he's taken some interesting stylistic pit stops along the way, now, with the Rudess Morgenstein Project, he's back on the prog track. Here are the albums Rod considers most representative of his drumming over the years.

Artist	Album
Rod Morgenstein/Jordan Rudess	Rudess Morgenstein Project
Kip Winger	This Conversation Seems Like A Dream
Dixie Dregs	Full Circle
Winger	Pull
Dixie Dregs	Bring 'Em Back Alive
T Lavitz	Mood Swing
various	Burning For Buddy, Part 1
Dixie Dregs	The Great Spectacular

figuring out how to play live.

RT: Once you play a cool fill in a certain space, do you hang on to it and keep playing it in the same spot?

RM: In certain spaces a fill stays fairly much the same for a while, and then it'll probably go through some metamorphosis. But most of the time I try to change things.

RT: A friend of mine saw a recent Steely Dan show and was disappointed a little when the drummer didn't play some of the signature fills and beats.

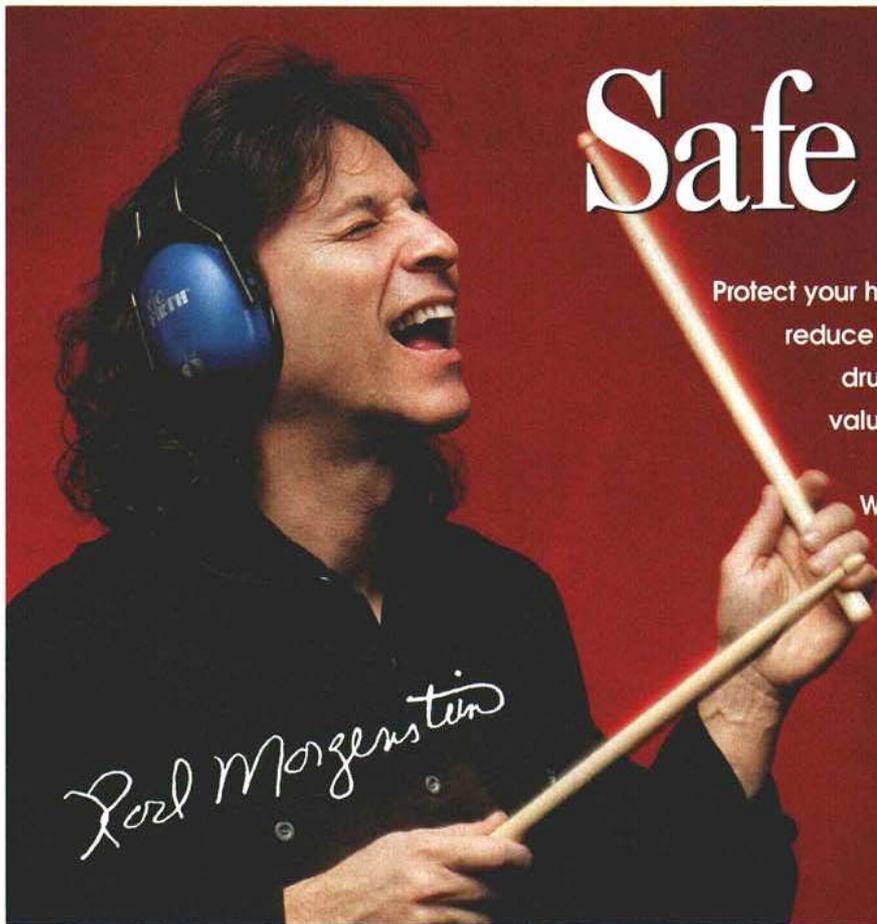
RM: I can understand that. When you see

Rush perform, there are 5,000 drummers in the audience playing air drums, all doing the lick that they know Neil's going to do. There is actually a certain beauty to that. It's a very neat thing when you think about it. I know there are certain classic guitar solos—like the "Stairway To Heaven" solo—that are as much a part of the song as the lyrics.

Some musicians feel like they're cheating the audience if they're playing the same thing. It's as if it's not really a solo if you're playing it the same exact way every

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time. Isn't a solo supposed to be something extemporaneous?

RT: The opening groove of "Odd Man Out" is great, and it develops into a convincing solo piece for you.

RM: I start that song using Vic Firth timp/maraca mallets, which are timpani

mallets with maraca beads in them. The solo is in 5/4 time, so I played that simple pattern with my left hand on the large floor tom and my right hand on the other floor tom. For all the in-between 8th notes I was shaking the mallet in the air, which gave the effect of two different things happening at the same time. I kept that going, and then worked out an exact pattern between the floor toms, snare drum, hi-hat, piccolo snare drum, and that 10" cymbal on top of the 8" cymbal. I took time to find something that would work nicely together, then I used a pair of timp mallets to solo on top of what was now an ostinato pattern. Then I soloed over it with drumsticks. I played most of the keyboards on it as well.

RT: It reminds me of the solo you did on the last Dregs tour, where you played along with sequences.

RM: When the Dregs re-formed in 1992 and did that live album, *Bring 'Em Back Alive*, I knew I was going to do a long drum solo on "Cruise Control." Instead of just playing an unaccompanied solo, I thought it would be interesting to try to bring some other elements into it. Since I play keyboards and love writing music, I thought it would be neat to write a piece of music with a drum solo in mind.

So the first couple of minutes is just me playing unaccompanied, and then I bring in this piece of music that I wrote and continue playing the live drums around it. I use keyboard sounds and a lot of different percussive sounds. So I've just made that part

of who I am at this point.

I wrote another piece to use on tour with the Dregs and Winger in 1993 and '94, and then I wrote this one and thought it would be great for our CD. Music involves not just rhythm, but harmony and melody. The more you know, the more of a total musician you will become—and then we will begin to hear fewer drummers jokes! That's another reason why I've started to create these drum pieces. It's showing the drummer in a different light.

RT: I like solos where the drummer is wailing over some pre-existing vamp, loop, or sequence.

RM: Yeah, it's good practice for your timing, too. We need to spend some time working with something that's giving us a steady beat, whether it's a click track or a drum machine with something programmed on it, or a piece of music that you know is in time. It really helps develop that consistency.

I'm a firm believer in working with a metronome. I *don't* think it makes somebody become a stiff player. It helps your overall concept of timing. Not that you should do it the whole time you practice, but certainly for a portion of it. As soon as you find yourself in the studio doing some kind of serious recording, chances are that thing is going to be clicking in your ears. So be familiar with how to work with it.

RT: If nothing else, it should put some caution in you and let you see how easy it is to speed up.



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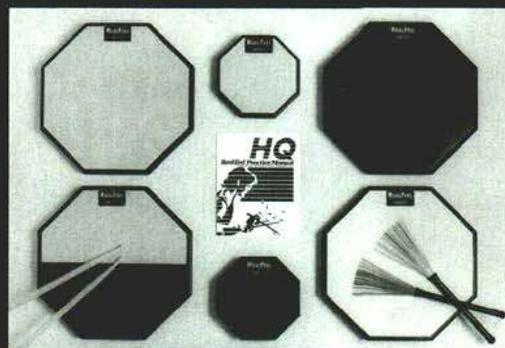
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RM: Isn't it amazing how click tracks speed up and slow when you do a fill? [laughs]

RT: If a drummer is having a miserable time playing along with a click, does that mean he has bad time?

RM: No, what it means is he's had very little experience with it, and has to spend some time getting comfortable with it. I've actually been very surprised at how good most of the people I'm working with play with the click. It's not a totally new thing for a lot of them. And if it's at a medium or slower tempo, I talk to them about subdividing the beat in their head. So if it's quarter notes that are going by relatively slow, try to hear 8th notes or 16th notes in your head, which might help. The longer the space between clicks, the harder it is to keep your playing consistent and flowing.

RT: Can you tell if you are playing better or worse on a given night?

RM: I can tell that I'm playing really well if I'm not uptight and feeling under the gun, and not giving too much thought to what's going on. Occasionally I have times when my body is really loose and I feel

like I can do anything, and I don't know how I get there. I wish I could harness that, because it doesn't happen most of the time.

I've never been one of those musicians who could just pick up the sticks and play without warming up for an hour or two. My friend Danny Gottlieb seems to be able to pick up the sticks and play with flawless technique, faster and smoother at any volume level than anyone I've ever heard. He'll talk to me about Joe Morello's technique and the physics of a stick coming back without your having to bring it back, letting the stick do all the work and just letting your hand control it. I understand the concept, but I don't understand how to put it into motion. For me to feel comfortable and give a really good performance, I have to sit at the drums for an hour by myself and warm up.

RT: Is your playing built more on reacting to the music or on the storehouse of ideas and chops that you have?

RM: It's a combination, because I don't like to have a preconceived notion of *everything* I'm playing. I like to react to the musicians I'm facing. But we all have our

arsenal of favorite licks and things that we do best, so we can't help but use those—especially when we're playing it safe sometimes. For instance, if you're performing on television and have one shot, you want to play great. You don't want to make a fool of yourself, so you play something a little bit safer and go for the licks that you know work.

I'm very critical of myself, as I guess most of us are, and I think I sometimes tend to take things too seriously. I got together with Freddie Gruber a few years ago, and he suggested that I had made a mark in drumming, so why not have fun now? Drumming is supposed to be a joyous experience, not a torturous one. We tend to put so much on ourselves to try to get to that next level, we sometimes forget about enjoying the moment. That was a revelation to me, and a lot of times I'm able to think that way. Stop being competitive. You're not going to be the best drummer ever, and there's always going to be someone that can do this or that better than you. That's not what it's all about. Maybe it's about doing the best that you can do

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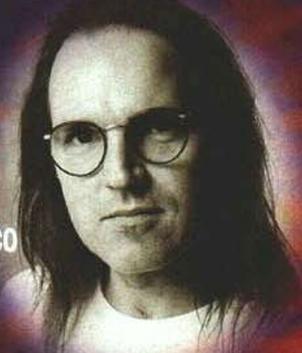
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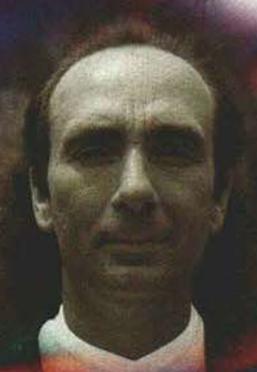
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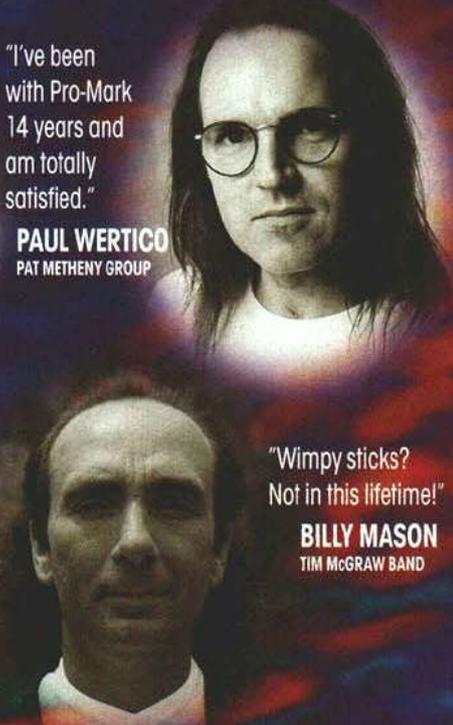
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and having fun, and hopefully people will appreciate what you do.

RT: The Rudess Morgenstein release really has your stamp all over it.

RM: It really is my proudest moment, being actively involved in the creation of the music. I've always created the drum parts, but I've never been a focal point in the songwriting. In this project Jordan and I are 50/50 partners.

Now I've proven to myself that I can write music. It's not easy—sometimes I struggle for weeks on end. But it's been a void in my musical life, like a little knot in my stomach that said, "You have to do this, you're not going to feel like you've completed the cycle as a musician until you do your own thing."

RT: Kip Winger's album, *This Conversation Seems Like A Dream*, is some remarkable music. It sounds like a good bit of layering was done there, too.

RM: Oh, definitely. Kip is a multi-dimensional musician with a lot of talent. Unfortunately, a lot of people could not see beyond the MTV image of him. We were doing a lot of very cool musical things.

Reb Beach is a fantastic guitarist, Kip is an incredible musician, and Paul Taylor and later Jon Roth were also terrific musicians. This record is quite mature and has a lot of interesting things going on with the drums and the percussion.

RT: How would you compare your work on Kip's album to when you first started with the band Winger?

RM: It's a different approach. The band was trying to do a particular thing and fit into a certain sound, but they still wanted my drumming to occasionally step out into areas that would normally not be heard in metal bands, which made being in the band an awful lot of fun. We had moments in songs like "Headed For A Heartbreak," but a lot of it was hard-hitting and relatively simple.

On Kip's solo record, he kept encouraging me in a lot of places, like "Do hi-hat stuff, change up the rhythm on the hi-hat." So on the first track there's a lot of doubling up on the hi-hat, and ghost strokes, and a lot of little fills. He'd say, "Just go for it, make it interesting." So I did, and I don't think that I've really gotten to play

like that on other records. I don't play that way with the Dregs.

RT: Speaking of the Dregs, what's the latest news?

RM: We have set up Dregs Records, which at the moment offers product through stevemorse.com on the Internet. *Industry Standard* [1982] is now available for the first time on CD. We also licensed the Steve Morse Band album *Stand Up*. And we have a live "King Biscuit Flour Hour" recording from 1979.

We also have a record called *The Great Spectacular*, which we recorded when we were still college students back in 1975. It's become a collector's item, because originally there were only 1,000 to 1,500 copies printed. We've now made it available on CD, and the four original members of the band individually signed each one. It's a total no-overdub, no-frills thing, the first recorded stuff the Dregs ever did. I'm not overwhelmingly excited about the way I played on it, and my drums sound like cardboard because I was too lazy to take off the muffling that I'd put on to practice with. But it's a nice piece of history.

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RT: Please tell us about your new book.

RM: Rick Mattingly and I came up with something that we felt would light a fire under a student who's going to sit at the drums for the first time. We do this by showing the student how to play a drum beat he or she has heard a hundred times before. The material in the book is practical because it's based on music that's been played time and again over the last thirty or forty years of rock and pop music.

When you play the drums you're supposed to make music, so as the book progresses some very simple things get introduced. What is a phrase? What is song form, like verse, chorus, bridge, and introduction and ending? What is the blues form? When is the proper time to crash a

cymbal? When are you supposed to play a drum fill? There didn't seem to be any books that logically set it up for a young drummer or for drum teachers.

To have things make sense in a musical context, I wrote fourteen pieces of music in different styles and feels and recorded it for an accompanying CD. Other play-alongs I've heard are very generic-sounding, with the same one or two instruments being played, and it often sounds corny. So I picked different musicians to play on the different styles. Everything sounds like real music that people can jam along with.

A lot of the stuff is at medium to slow tempos, which are more difficult to get a good feel on. To just lay something down and groove is not easy. I thought it was easy years ago, but then I learned that everything takes a certain attitude, and we shouldn't neglect it in our studies. I'm certainly not going to say that chops aren't important, because I'm totally into them. But it's what you *do* with the chops, and being able to leave some of that stuff out when asked to, that's important.

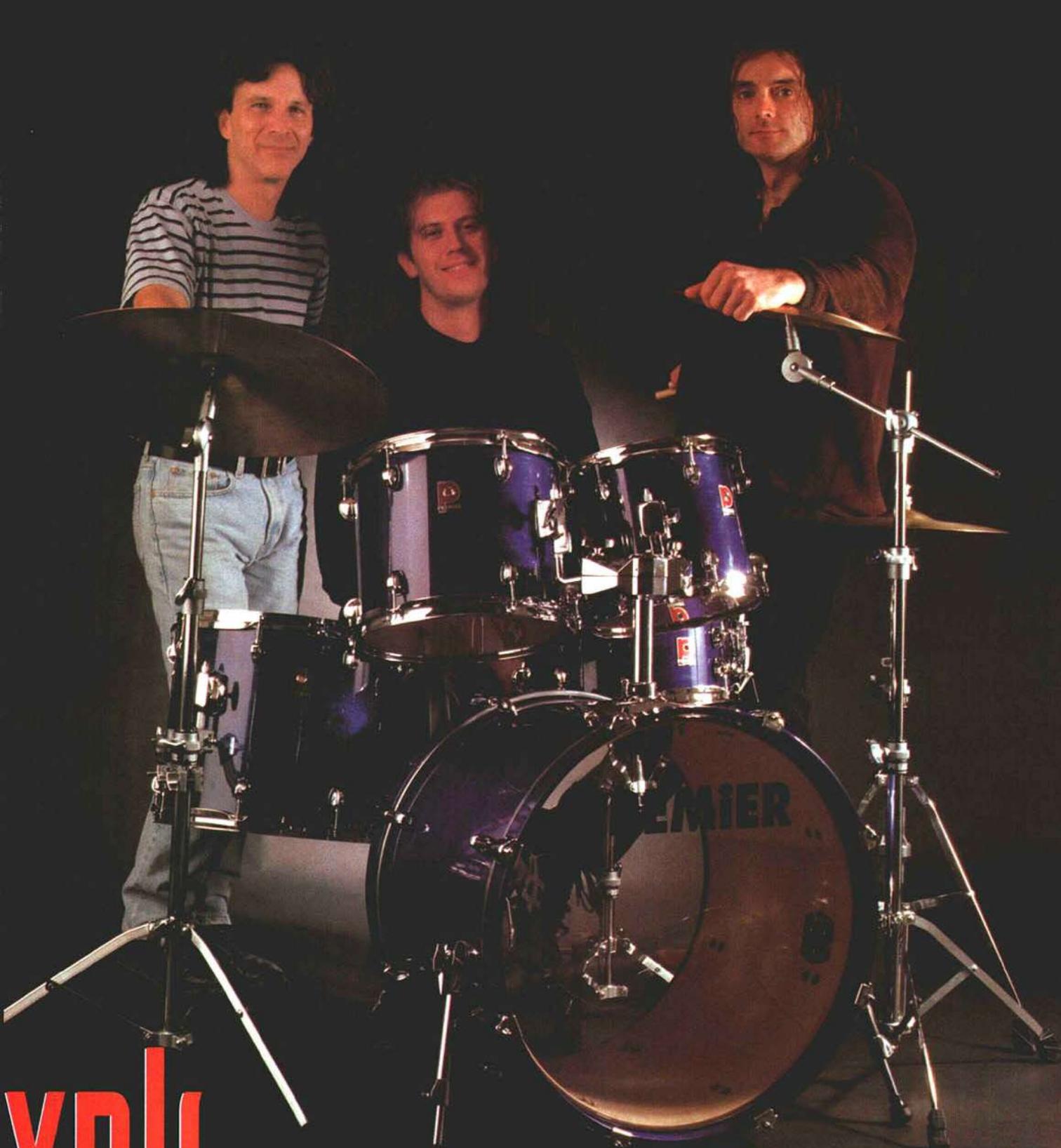
RT: What are your thoughts about your

new teaching position at Berklee?

RM: When it comes time to share what you do with others, you have to take a step back and watch yourself play and think about what it is you do. It gets to a point where as a student of the instrument, you don't work out of books and you don't practice in the way that you used to; you just kind of play, and things happen based on all of this accumulated knowledge.

I've come to two conclusions about drumming: One is that if you're really into the instrument you need to take it as far as you can from a technical standpoint: understanding rhythm, playing over the bar line, playing in odd-time signatures, polyrhythms—all the great stuff that you hear the fantastic contemporary drummers doing. Why not? Why should you limit yourself? Stretch the limits of your abilities. That's the excitement of being a musician.

But I also learned an equally important lesson the hard way by having people that I auditioned for tell me, "You play all that fusion stuff in the Dixie Dregs, but you really don't have the feel for playing sim-



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pier kinds of music." Before I got in Winger I had this attitude that when you play simple you're playing stupid, and that anybody could do it. I learned that it's equally important to be able to sit at your drums and play the beats and fills that we've all heard a billion times that keep people like Kenny Aronoff and J.R. Robinson getting the calls. You have to be real serious about it, make every note count, and make the spaces in between the notes count as much as what you're playing. I'm going to be stressing that with my students at Berklee as much as the technical side of things. You have to do both.

You also don't know when you're going to get your lucky break, and when it comes you might as well be prepared for it. I think it should be mandatory for anyone who goes to a music college to take certain business classes. My friends and I weren't prepared for the fact that the music is a business, and not just about creating beautiful music. In the eyes of the music business, you are a commodity, and in six months you have to deliver the product. And if they don't sell a certain number of

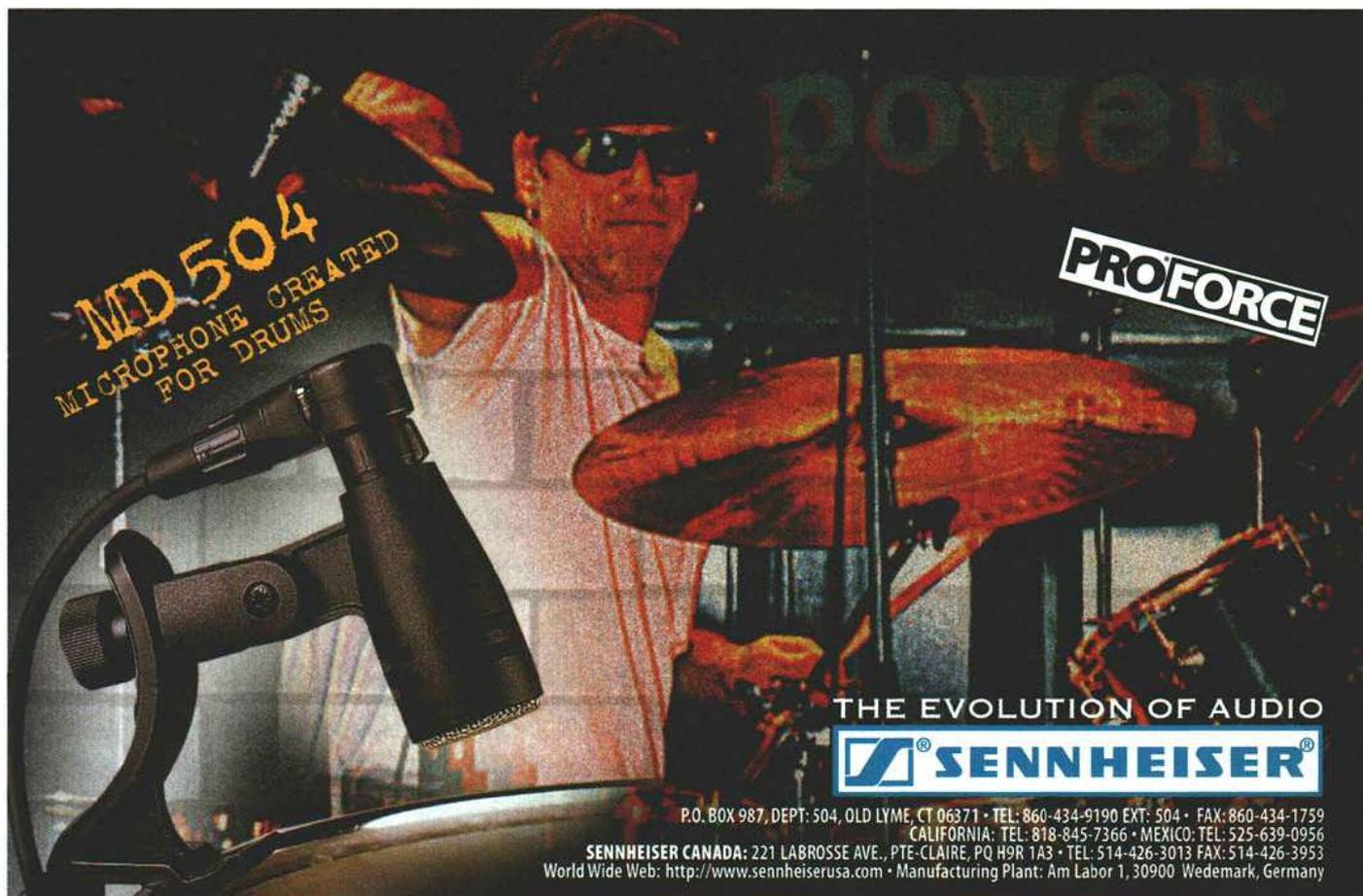
units of their commodity's product, their doors are going to close. That's a harsh reality.

RT: If you were just starting to listen to music now, what drummers would you be listening to?

RM: Vinnie Colaiuta, John Bonham, Carter Beauford. Carter does a lot of stuff doubling up on the hi-hat. I like groups that have mass appeal but that have a terrific level of musicianship. When it's time to pull out all the stops they're more than capable of doing it. You know you're not going to hear three or four chords rearranged through the night without the ability to stretch. The Dave Matthews Band does interesting things, where the first time through the song you can't really tell what the time is. It's great for drummers who are just into mainstream music to see that on MTV, because they're not really exposed to people who play that stuff.

RT: You've been using the Vic Firth full-earcup protector headphones with the speakers in them [dB24] for several years.

RM: I have tinnitus. I have suffered some hearing loss, and I clearly remember when



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it happened: For years my ears would ring after concerts, but the ringing would stop by the next day. But when I was on tour with Winger I woke up one morning and the ring was still there, loud and clear. For years I would roll up tissue and put it in my ears, and it might have helped a little, but it clearly didn't do the job. Now the ringing is terribly annoying when I'm in quiet places.

I started using foam earplugs whenever I played, then gun headphones that you would use at a shooting range. These Vic Firth full-earcup protector headphones dramatically reduce the sound that comes into your ear, and I had the idea that if you added speakers to that kind of headphone, you could comfortably listen to the music that you're jamming along to or recording to. And you can play your heart out on your drums, because no matter how hard you hit them, there's going to be this 24dB reduction. Using these headphones also makes the drums sound very cool; it gives them a very low-end sound with a crisp attack so you can hear everything you play very clearly. I've come to love the way the

drums sound while I'm wearing them.

RT: What's the story of your connection to Dream Theater?

RM: Over the last couple of years Jordan and I have done several shows opening for Dream Theater. Their audience is very into musician-oriented, chops-oriented music, and they really liked what we did. We're hoping that we'll be doing more stuff with them.

I recently got a phone call to do a record with John Myung, Dream Theater's bass player, and their keyboard player, Derek Sherinian. So we'll be going into the studio soon. A lot of the music for this project is going to be improvisational, and some very interesting things come out when every note isn't worked out. That's why demos sometimes out-kick studio recordings. I'm looking forward to it.

A lot of musicians fear those situations because not everything is under their control. I think when you're under the gun like that and not sure of what's going to happen, you really tap into the creative side of yourself. You're playing on the edge—and anything can happen.



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Tim McGraw's Billy Mason

BY JOHN M. ALDRIDGE

Billy Mason is living proof that if you hang in there and keep trying, eventually someone will notice that you're good enough to do the job. But if you're planning a move into the music business, Billy will be the first to tell you, "Don't quit your day job." Having lived through several sidelines—painter, carpenter, exotic dancer (!)—in his struggle to succeed in the music business, Billy really appreciates the success he's now enjoying as the drummer with one of today's top country acts. But when he thinks back to the time his kit burned up in a nightclub fire and he had to borrow a set just to take the gig with Tim McGraw, Billy almost can't believe the ups and downs his musical life has taken.

Mason had a very musical childhood. His father was a drummer, and Billy was exposed to jazz from the moment he was old enough to go to a gig. (See the "Vintage Billy" sidebar.) His first opportunity to play drums in public was while sitting in with his father's Dixieland band.

Billy was being groomed to be a *jazz*er from the beginning, but around 1964 his tastes took a sharp turn towards rock 'n' roll. (Chalk up another victory for Ringo!) From that point on it was a different story for Billy, and he knew what he wanted to be for the rest of his life. In

the late '70s and early '80s, Billy did all the things that most drummers do as they grow up. After spending several years playing rock 'n' roll, he eventually found himself moving to Nashville to get work.

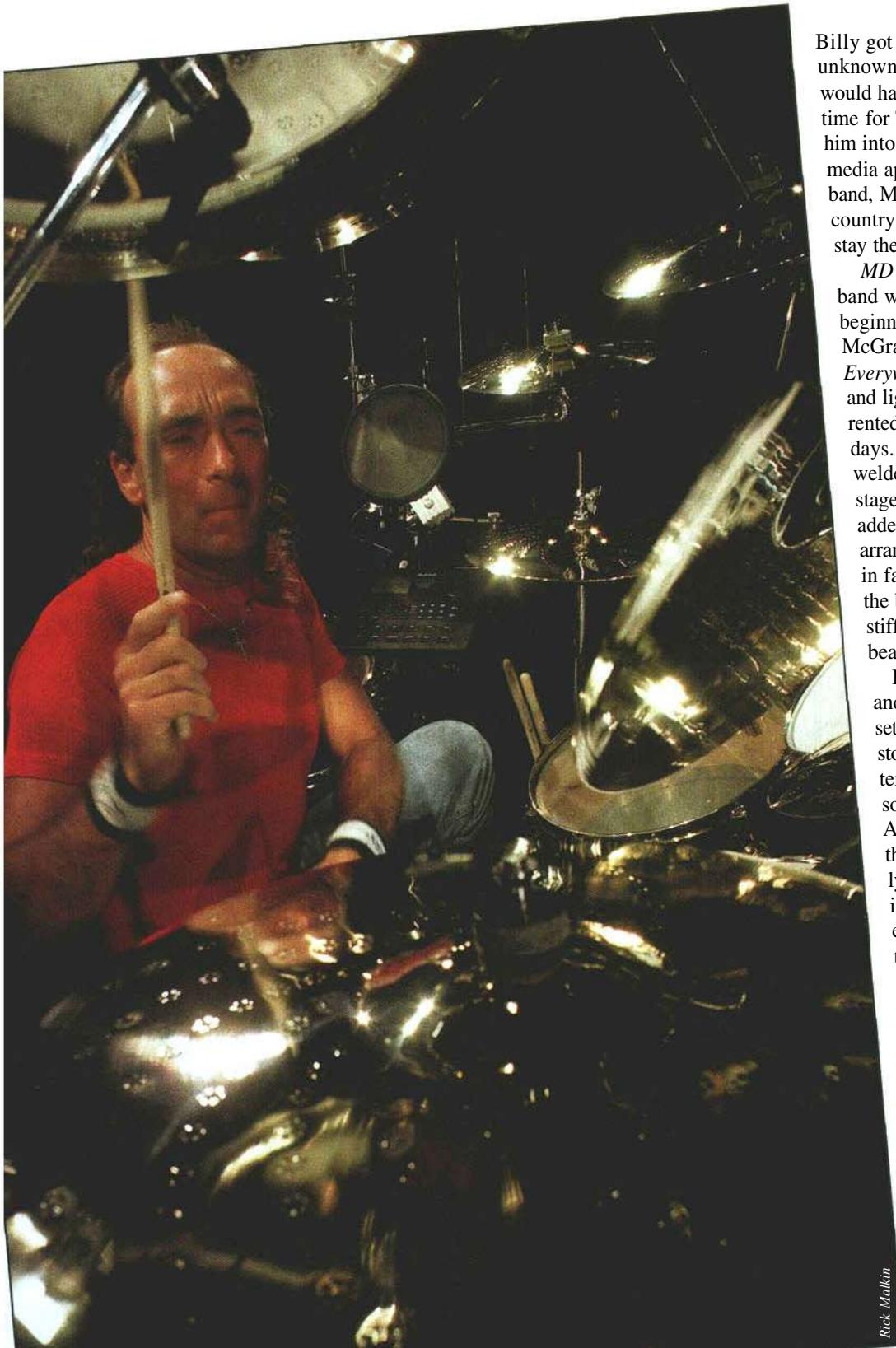
Moving to a new city with nothing but his family, \$300, and a drumset wasn't easy, but Billy took on any and all jobs to make his dream a reality. After a very short but harsh introduction to the Nashville music scene, Billy realized that he wouldn't be able to survive on the meager earnings that an unknown drummer can make. Taking a variety of day jobs to put food on the table, he was able to continue going to all the "cattle call" auditions and numerous low-paying gigs around town that are a part of becoming established in Nashville.

Thunder In The Country

Billy's first gig with a recognized artist was with "Whispering" Bill Anderson, a Grand Ole Opry member and country music legend. After a three-month stint with Anderson, Billy left to join Jo-El Sonnier, a Cajun country artist. Three years of road work with Sonnier led to a gig with female vocalist Paulette Carlson, who had just left the very successful band Highway 101. Since Carlson's conceit schedule had a three-month break in it after the first year, Billy took up the slack with a tour with Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown before going back out with Paulette.

Four years ago, as his second tour with Carlson was ending,





Rick Mullin

Billy got a call to play for a then relatively unknown singer, Tim McGraw. As fate would have it, Billy got the gig just in time for Tim's first hit single to propel him into a steady stream of touring and media appearances. Since Billy joined the band, McGraw has risen to the top of the country music charts and managed to stay there.

MD caught up with Billy as the band was rehearsing for a week before beginning a new tour in support of McGraw's latest hit album, *Everywhere*. With an all-new staging and light system to debug, the band had rented the Nashville Arena for four days. Amid a flurry of lighting riggers, welders, sound and light technicians, stagehands, and carpenters, the band added the final touches to new arrangements and reviewed changes in familiar songs. Slowly but surely, the band went from sounding slightly stiff to becoming a grooving back-beat machine.

Billy's playing is very focused and arrangement-driven. The band's set list is pretty much written in stone, so Billy handles setting the tempos and counting off all the songs with the help of his trusty Alesis *SR-16* click. Everyone in the band is wearing *EARS*, a highly adjustable, individually tailored in-ear monitoring system, and the entire show is played to a click track. But what initially catches your eye when looking at Billy's kit are the two transducers bolted to the bottom of his drum throne. Since there are no monitor speakers on the drum riser other than the *EARS*, the transducers provide a "bass you can feel," and really help give the ear monitors more of a realistic sound. They are also a prime contributor to Billy's nickname in the band—"Thunder."

"It boils down to choices. If I chose to pursue a recording career, it would mean that I wouldn't be able to go on the road. Given that choice, I'd rather be out there playing for an audience every night."

JA: How did you get started as a drummer?

BM: Well, obviously my dad being a drummer was a large part of it. But I think what really inspired me was Ringo Starr. He just looked and sounded happy when he was playing. Buddy Rich was definitely cool too, but he looked like he was in pain when he was playing. When I saw an early Beatles movie with Ringo playing, he was always smiling and seemed to enjoy it much more.

JA: What was your first drumset?

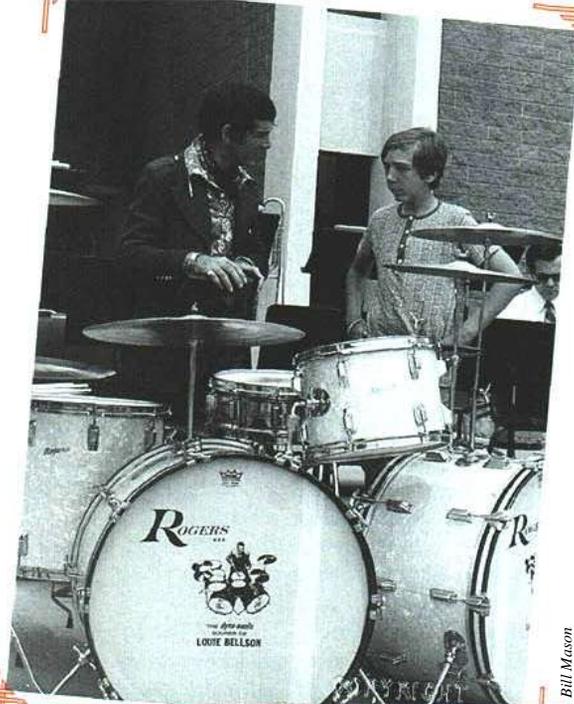
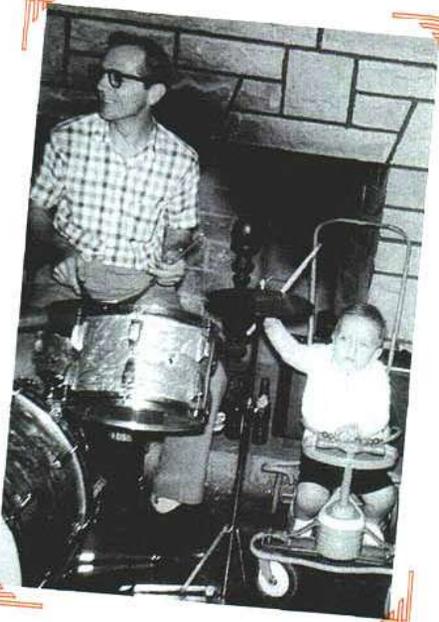
BM: It was an old blue sparkle kit—I don't remember the brand—a cheap Japanese kit. My dad bought it for me when I was eight years old. It was kind of funny. My dad brought it home and told me it belonged to the son of one of his co-workers, and he wanted me to clean it up for them. I worked really hard getting the drums cleaned and set up, and after I played them for a while, he said, "Well, we better take them down and get them packed up." I told him I sure would like to have a set like that someday, and he just smiled and said, "They're yours."

JA: That's a pretty cool story!

BM: Yeah, my dad's a drummer, always has been. But he sold his drums a few years ago. I finally had a chance to pay him back last January. I gave him a new set. It was kind of fitting: He gave me my first set, and I gave him his last.

JA: You mentioned earlier that you had done a wide variety of things to make a living between gigs, but one of the ones that stuck in my mind for some reason was the "exotic dancer" thing. What's up with that?

BM: [shaking his head] Well, I



Bill Mason

Vintage Billy

Billy's father, who drummed under the stage name of Bobby Mason, nurtured Billy's talent by taking him to see every famous jazz drummer within driving distance. Being a professional photographer, Bobby always seemed to have a camera handy when his son was in the company of the "greats," like Louie Bellson (top right) and Buddy Rich (bottom right). Raised in a Dixieland jazz environment, Billy went to gigs with his dad and to see concerts featuring the hot jazz drummers of the late '60s and early '70s.

Being the son of a drummer is a really cool thing—especially if you want to be a drummer yourself! These photos show Billy performing on the drums from an early age, and soaking up the aura of his favorite drumming influences. From his Dixieland foundation, Billy branched out into rock before finding his niche as one of today's top touring drummers in country music. Look for Billy with Tim McGraw coming to a town near you!



Bill Mason



Bill Mason

Mason's Workshop



Although the drums in these photos may look like standard DW variety, they are actually a prototype kit built just for Billy. According to John Good, DW's drum designer, "Billy and I have a very close working relationship. He has always played a birch drumset, so when he came to us we wanted to give him the drums he wanted and needed rather than asking him to conform to our standard-production maple set. Billy has also been very kind in allowing us to test and evaluate prototype drums in his studio and on his road gigs. We feel that this relationship is mutually beneficial in that Billy gets the sound he's looking for, and his ideas and feedback contribute to the development of new products for DW."

The Drum Workshop prototype kit Billy is playing on this tour with Tim McGraw features chrome-plated DW hardware, and birch shells with a high-gloss, candy apple red finish. The kit includes a 6½x14 Edge

model snare, a 6x10 satin-oil-finished Collector series snare (all maple with reinforcement rings), 8x10, 8x12, 10x14, and 14x16 toms, and an 18x22 bass drum. Billy also uses Attack drumheads, Pro-Mark sticks, Protecator cases, and a DW 5000 hi-hat stand and single bass drum pedal with a Rhythm Tech beater.

As for cymbals, Billy uses models from Zildjian's Z series, including three 18" crashes, two 20" Chinas, a 20" ride, a 12" splash, 13" hi-hats, and 14" hats mounted on the right side of the kit.

Billy's electronic setup includes an Alesis SR-16 (for click track), an Alesis D-4 drum machine, and a

single Roland pad for triggering a cross-stick sound. His microphone choices include a Shure SM57 on top and a Shure Beta 57 underneath the snare, a Shure SM91 (taped to a DW bass drum muffling pillow) for the kick, a Sennheiser 421 positioned just off the top head of each tom, and AKG 460s for his hi-hats and overheads.

did that for about a year. The money was good, but it sure was a stretch. I even had my dad shoot a publicity shot for me to use for bookings, which he really didn't want to do.

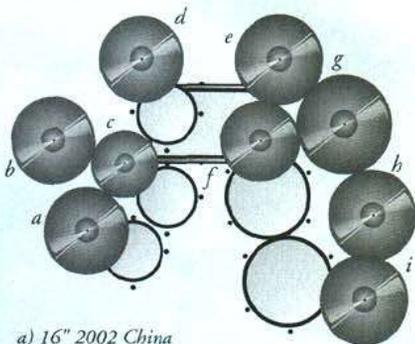
One day I was talking to Tim [McGraw] while we were backstage about things we did before to make ends meet, and I came across one of those photos in my trap case. Tim got a good laugh out of it and asked me if he could borrow it for a second to show to Faith [Hill, now Tim's wife]. I told him not to lose it as it was the last one I had, and one of the last pictures of me

when I still had hair!

A little while later, we were getting ready to go on, and I heard the band laughing up a storm. Faith was on stage finishing up her show, and she was announcing that Tim McGraw would be out shortly. There were these big projection screens on both sides of the stage, and I heard her say, "This is Tim's drummer," and the crowd went wild. Tim had somehow gotten that picture out to the video guy, and he'd put it up on the screens in front of 15,000 people. It took me a while to live that one down!

JA: Any other unusual gigs?

BM: Well, my dad had a job at a detective agency that was working with the FBI on a case. He asked me to work for him on the job, and I got to do some undercover work—carry a gun, the whole deal. That was interesting and certainly one of the better jobs. I also worked for a while as an usher in a movie theater, did some painting and drywalling, and even washed tour buses for a while. I was actually washing a bus one day during a break from the Paulette Carlson gig, and Tracy Lawrence's drummer told me they were holding auditions for a new artist named



- a) 16" 2002 China
- b) 16" 2002 Crash
- c) 14" 2002 Sound Edge Hi-Hat
- d) 17" 2002 Crash
- e) 18" 2002 Medium
- f) 15" 2002 Sound Edge Hi-Hat
- g) 20" 2002 Power Ride
- h) 18" 2002 Crash
- i) 18" 2002 China

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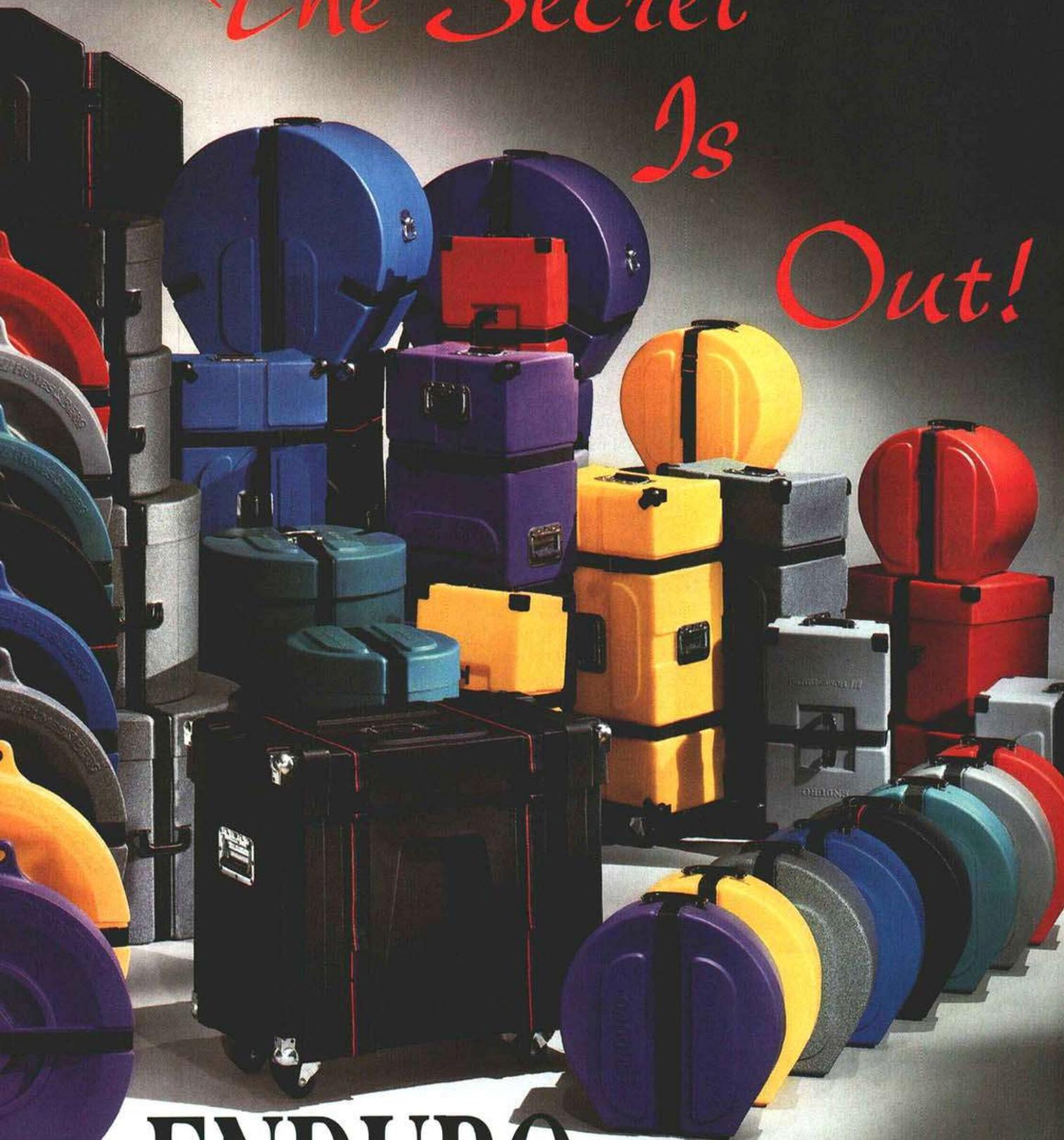
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Clay Walker. I ran inside to the office and called to see if I could audition, and they said they'd keep it open if I could come over.

Usually when you're auditioning you're the only drummer in the room. But at this one all of the drummers were sitting there watching each other as they went down the list. I came in and sat down and started making a few notes about the songs since I hadn't had enough advance notice to get hold of a tape. When my turn came, I was walking towards the riser when I heard somebody call my name. The singer walked up and said, "Hey man, it's me, Clay. I opened some shows for Jo-El Sonnier when you were playing with him in Texas a couple of years ago." You, should have seen the rest of the drummers' faces sag. I knew they were all thinking, "Oh, shit, this guy *knows* him!"

I got up to the set and raised all the cymbals up to rock 'n' roll height, and just killed the drums. Even though Clay had heard me before and knew I could play, I still had to play like I meant it. All the rest of the drummers had been approaching it from a more "traditional" quiet country angle, and I think that was what did it for me. The band and I were rocking, and after one song Clay said, "You got the gig man! We rehearse for the rest of this week, and the first show is on Friday."

I was really psyched—no more washing buses for me! But then I remembered that I had a gig booked with Paulette on Friday

in Canada. Clay told me, "Call the manager and let him know you're out of there." The manager told me that there was no way they could get another drummer on such short notice. If I couldn't do the show, nine other guys would be out of work. Well, it hurt to do it, but I had to do the right thing by the band I was playing with.

JA: What was it like working with Bill Anderson?

BM: It was really a thrill. I joined the band on a Wednesday, and two days later we did *Nashville Now* [Country Music Television series in the late '80s]. The following week we did the Grand Ole Opry radio show. On the Opry, you usually play your one or two songs and then take a break while other acts go on, and then you come back later for another song or two. Well, we broke for a commercial, and thinking I had time to spare, I went to the bathroom. Something told me I'd better hurry, so I ran out of the bathroom and towards the stage just in time to hear Bill Anderson saying, "Well folks, I don't know where my drummer went, he was here just a minute ago...." I came running back on stage saying, "Bill, I'm here." Now remember, this was live radio. Bill said, "Where have you been?" I told him and he said, "Well, boy, don't go to the bathroom now, get on out here and drum!" Everyone in the audience was cracking up. My wife works over there in the office now, and to this day people still make cracks about Bill Anderson's drummer and his first night on the Opry.

JA: So after they fired you...

BM: No, Bill thought it was funny. I played with him for another three months after that.

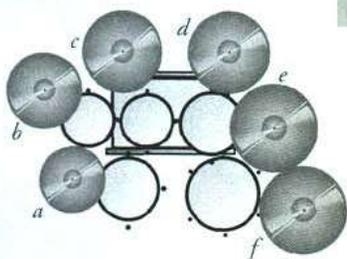
JA: What prompted you to leave Bill Anderson?

BM: Bill decided to take some time off, and I got a call to audition for Jo-El Sonnier. I got that gig and really had to do some listening and adapting. Jo-El believed you couldn't play Cajun music if you didn't eat crawfish. I ate a lot of crawfish!

Going from traditional country to Cajun country rock took some getting used to. I think my Dixieland background helped me out a lot with that. Being able to adapt saved my job on many occasions. I played with a guy named Cooper Curry for a while, and when I first talked to the leader, he asked me if I was familiar with "beach" music. I said, "Oh yeah, I know all the Beach Boys stuff." He said, "No, no...I mean *beach* music—you know, like Motown...shaggin' music." It was really cool because it was kind of like Motown, but really had its own unique style.

JA: I get the idea that you enjoy playing a wide variety of music.

BM: I really do. I was brought up listening to and playing Dixieland jazz, but I listened to just about everything that was out there while I was growing up. It's really paid off in the past few years. For instance, I got a call from a studio in Dayton that I had worked in before, and they had a band in there that was kind of a cross between



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the Dave Matthews Band and Little Feat. They already had a drummer on the entire album, but it just wasn't happening. I went in with a very positive attitude and a lot of energy and was able to give them what they wanted. A lot of it was about energy. The other drummer was probably just com-

placent or nervous and the playing was kind of flat.

JA: I noticed from watching you play earlier that you don't hold anything back. It's still got dynamics, but I guess I'd describe your playing by saying you play with conviction.

BM: Yeah, when I'm playing I give it all I've got. I go for the meat of the sound and hit hard, but I also play for the song. If it needs to be sensitive, I'm there, but it's still going to have some emotion, even if it's soft. When I'm performing live with Tim, I'm usually screaming right along with the audience. I love what I do, and I put my heart into it.

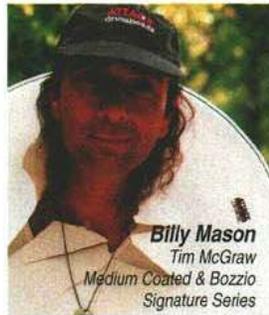
JA: What do you do to keep yourself up when you're on tour?

BM: Well, we have a routine that we pretty much stick to. Most days, we'll get up and play a round of golf until noon, then I'll go and run after lunch. Soundcheck is usually around 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon, and I usually practice for an hour or so after that before I go to dinner. I have a rack in the dressing room with my practice kit mounted in it, which is a *drumKAT*, pedals, headphones, and an Alesis drum machine to trigger sounds from. I'll practice on that by myself for a while, and I'll usually hit it again for a half hour or so before the show to warm up. I practice every day regardless of whether there's a gig that night or not.

JA: How did you get the gig with Tim McGraw?

BM: I was playing for Paulette Carlson at the time. She'd taken some time off during the winter. Tim McGraw's guitar player was a friend of mine, and Tim was just breaking at the time. The first time we talked it was sort of like, "Tim who?" You know how things go here in Nashville; they were saying Tim was going to be "the next

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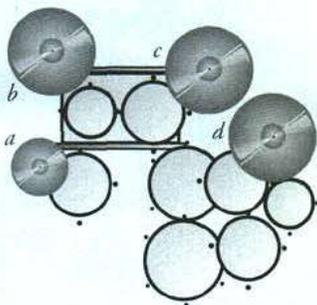
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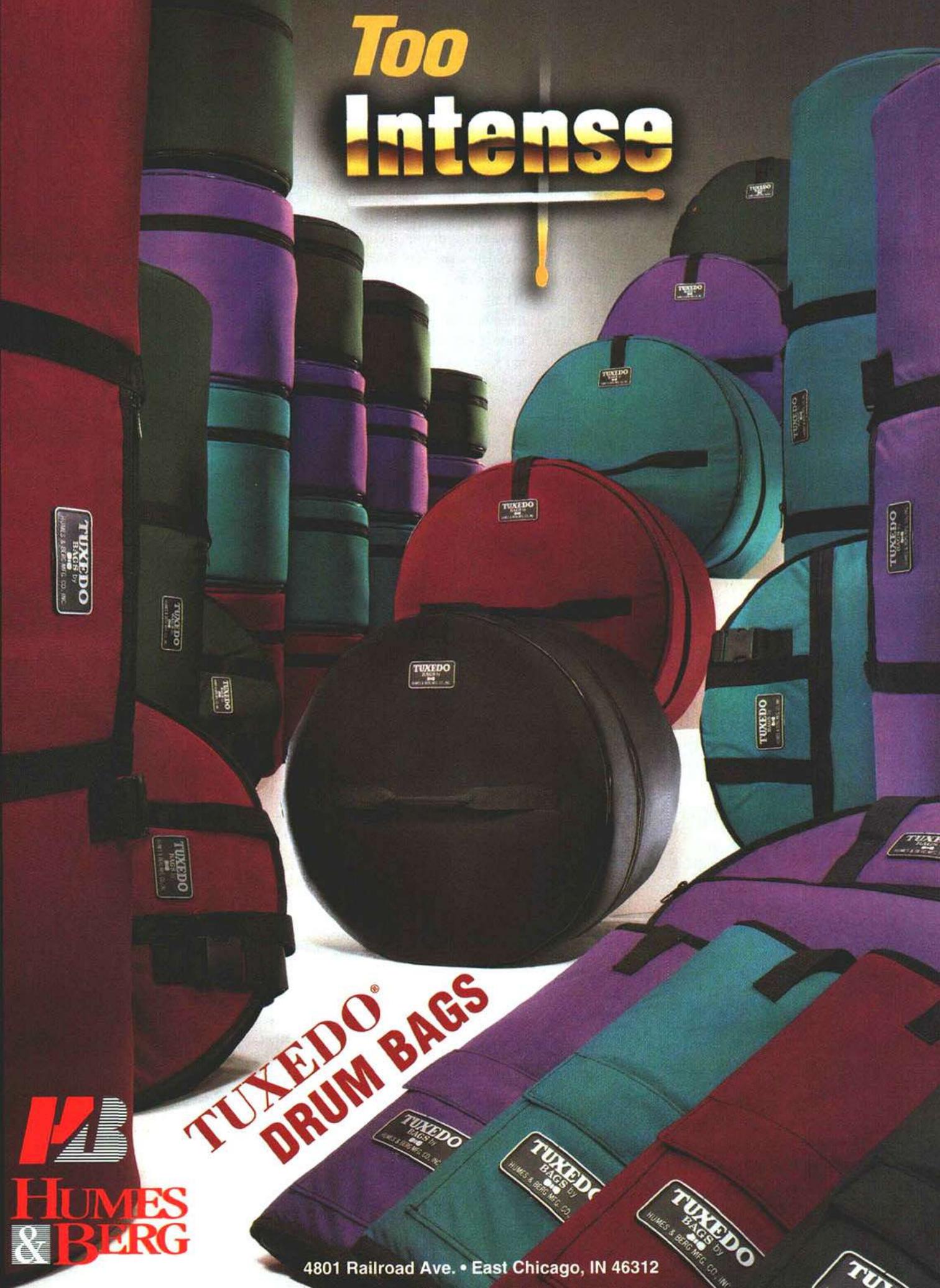
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Garth." My friend told me that Tim's drummer might be leaving and they might be looking for a replacement.

I didn't think anything more about it until I did a gig in North Carolina backing a female singer named Marty Carroll, and Tim McGraw's guitar player was on the gig. When we were coming back to Nashville, the van caught fire while we were driving down the road. I was asleep in the back seat when the van started swerving and everyone was yelling "fire, fire!" I was kind of groggy because I'd been sleeping for a while. When I got out of the van and sidestepped a truck that was passing by, I realized that the \$300 I got from the gig was in my coat pocket on the back of the seat that I was sleeping in. I ran back into the van to get the money, 'cause things were really tight around my house.

We finally got back to Nashville, and about a week later Darren called and said that Tim McGraw's drummer was gone. It was a lucky break that we'd played together the week before, because my playing was fresh in his mind. I joined the band, and three months later "Outlaw"

[McGraw's first single] came out, and it really took off.

JA: It really makes you wonder about the guys who move here who don't know anyone. Personal connections go a long way towards making you or breaking you.

BM: Exactly! A lot of guys move here with the idea of getting a day job and breaking in slowly. I came here with just my family, \$300, and a dream. People at the church I attended were very helpful in finding me a job as a painter and getting us an apartment. Things kind of fell into place that way, but the music thing didn't happen right away. I know guys who've been here for ten or fifteen years and have never gotten an artist gig. It all depends on how badly you want it and how much you're willing to do to achieve your goal.

JA: One of the things that intrigues me about Nashville is the dichotomy between studio musicians and the actual bands that perform live with the artists. I'm always curious about who plays on the albums. Do you record with Tim McGraw?

BM: No. Like most Nashville acts, the albums are cut with some of the best studio musicians around. I don't get to cut Tim's records, but I do play on a lot of the demos, which are the starting point for most of the record sessions. We'll be doing a live album before long, and of course that will be my chance to play on a record. But Lonnie Wilson is the drummer on most of Tim's albums.

JA: I know it's the "Nashville way" to use a separate cutting crew and a live band, but if I were in your shoes, I think my ego would take a severe beating every time a new record came out.

BM: It's hard on you. There have been times when I wished that I could play on just one cut on the album, just so I could point to it and say, "I'm on there." But that's not my call. And what it all boils down to is knowing my job, which is to make Tim McGraw sound as good as I possibly can. I have to give it my best shot every time so that I know I've done everything I can. If a studio drummer helps the record company to cut down on recording time and guarantees a solid recording, then that's good too. But the ultimate goal of everyone involved is to make the artist sound good.

It also boils down to choices. If I chose to pursue a recording career as a studio musician, it would mean that I wouldn't be available to go on the road. Given that choice, I'd rather be out there playing for an audience every night. The energy I get from the crowd makes my job the best one in the world, and drives me to perform to the best of my abilities.

JA: How do you go about learning the songs for a tour after the album has been recorded?

BM: Each guy in the band gets a tape that will have his part a little hotter in the mix. It's a challenge in itself to learn to play that part note-for-note strictly by listening to it. I'm expected to be able to duplicate that perfect performance night after night, so I'm very conscious of drummer Lonnie Wilson's style when I'm learning the songs.

JA: Obviously you like his playing, but who do you look to now for inspiration?

BM: I really admire groove players like Mickey Curry [Bryan Adams] and Liberty DeVitto [Billy Joel]. Those guys don't play a lot of flashy fills, but they play what the music requires. Their entire focus is on making the song sound good. In the kind of music I'm playing, you don't have to be a Dave Weckl. In fact, it can really get in the way of the music if a guy is trying to show all of his technique on the gig.

JA: I've noticed that you still have a strong desire to play. It seems odd to me that you have a gig with one of the top acts in country music, and yet you still play local gigs when you get the chance—gigs that don't pay a lot.

BM: Well, a lot of guys reach the big time and get comfortable. If someone calls them with a \$35 gig, they'll laugh in their face. Not me. If I'm in town for more than a day, I'll be on the phone looking for a gig to play.

Playing the drums is my life, and I'm not too good to play a local gig for the going rate, which is \$35-\$50 a night for the downtown clubs. You have to do it because you love to play. If you're doing it for money, then you're in it for the wrong reason. It's the same thing in any career, whether you're a doctor or a musician. If you love your work and put your heart and soul into it for the love of doing it, then the money will eventually come. If you keep a positive attitude and just *play*, you'll get noticed, and more work will come your way.

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10"	-	DHA10	DHA10C	DHTS10	DHTS10C
12"	-	DHA12	DHA12C	DHTS12	DHTS12C
13"	-	DHA13	DHA13C	DHTS13	DHTS13C
14"	-	DHA14	DHA14C	DHTS14	DHTS14C
15"	-	DHA15	DHA15C	DHTS15	DHTS15C
16"	-	DHA16	DHA16C	DHTS16	DHTS16C
18"	SW18	DHA18	DHA18C	DHTS18	DHTS18C
20"	SW20	DHA20	DHA20C	-	-
22"	SW22	DHA22	DHA22C	-	-
24"	SW24	DHA24	DHA24C	-	-
26"	SW26	-	-	-	-
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13"	DHA13R	DHA13CR
14"	DHA14R	DHA14CR
15"	DHA15R	DHA15CR
16"	DHA16R	DHA16CR
18"	DHA18R	DHA18CR
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13"	-	SS13T	-
14"	-	SS14M	-
14"	-	SS14T	-
18"	DH18P	-	DHNO18
18"	-	-	DHNO18C
20"	DH20P	-	DHNO20
20"	-	-	DHNO20C
22"	DH22P	-	DHNO22
22"	-	-	DHNO22C
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24"	-	-	DHNO24C

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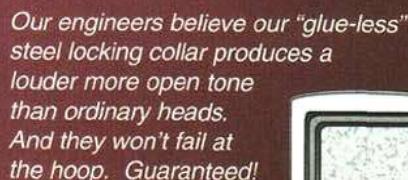
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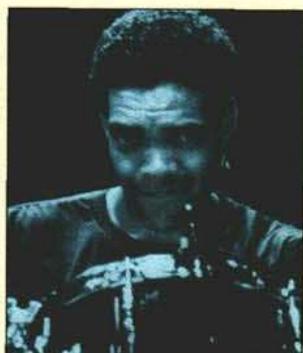


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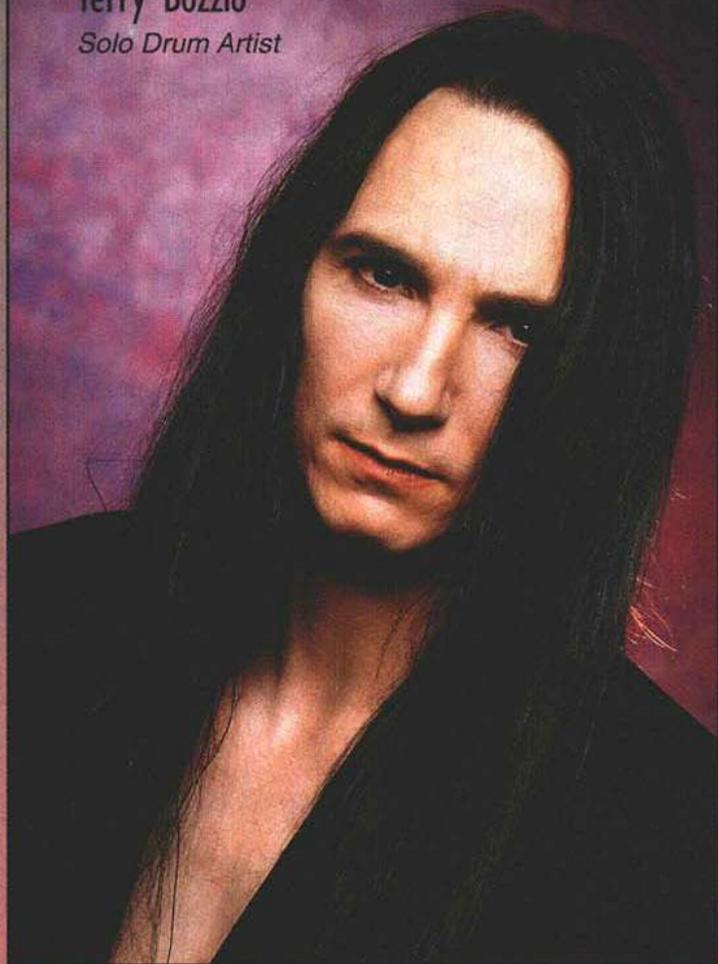


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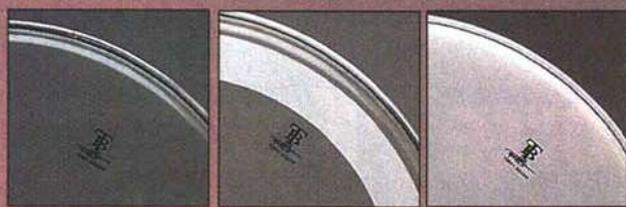
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15"	TB15	TB15CS	TB15C
16"	TB16	TB16CS	TB16C
18"	TB18	TB18CS	TB18C
20"	TB20	TB20CS	TB20C
22"	TB22	TB22CS	TB22C
24"	TB24	TB24CS	TB24C
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28"	TB28		TB28C



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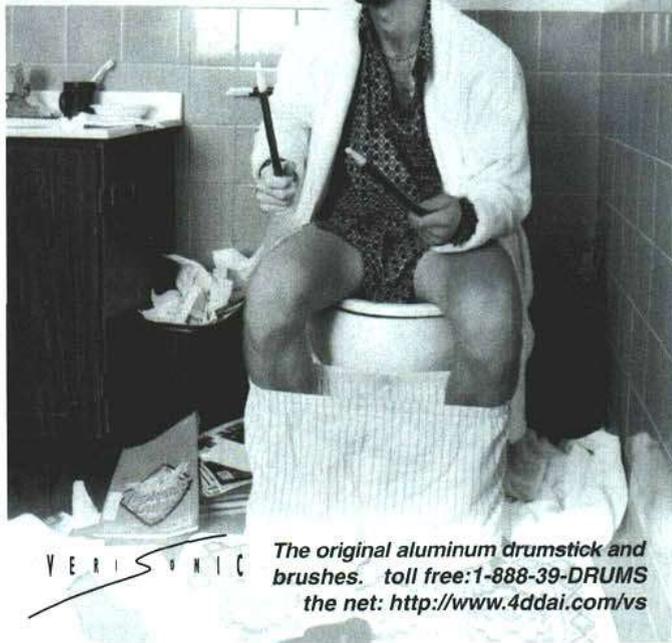
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Vernel Fournier

by Rick Mattingly

In the late 1950s, a young Chicago pianist named Jack DeJohnette was a big fan of another Chicago pianist, Ahmad Jamal. But the more time DeJohnette spent hearing Jamal's trio live, the more he was captivated by Jamal's drummer, Vernel Fournier.

"Hearing Vernel with the Ahmad Jamal Trio inspired me to be a drummer," DeJohnette says today. "It was his finesse and his feel. He'd be sitting there with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth looking very suave and relaxed, but his intensity was right in there. Whatever he played stood out because he wasn't busy all the time. He left space, and when he played solos, you took note of them because they were very interesting."



A lot of people took note of Fournier's playing on Jamal's recording of "Poinciana." Recorded live at the Pershing Club in Chicago in 1958, "Poinciana" became a jazz and R&B staple, and a shortened version of the tune became a radio and jukebox favorite. Jamal was the first jazz artist to be signed to the Chess label, which was known for records by such artists as Muddy Waters, Bo Diddley, and Chuck Berry, and "Poinciana" was the label's first jazz hit. Much of the tune's success was based on Fournier's distinctive drum pattern.

"I didn't create the part, I discovered it," Fournier says. "It wasn't an original thing at all. It came from the bass drummers in the parade bands and funeral bands in New Orleans. They would play rhythms on the beat with the right hand on the drum, and they would have a cymbal on top of the drum that they'd hit on the offbeat with a stick or a coathanger. I heard that beat all the time when I was growing

up in New Orleans."

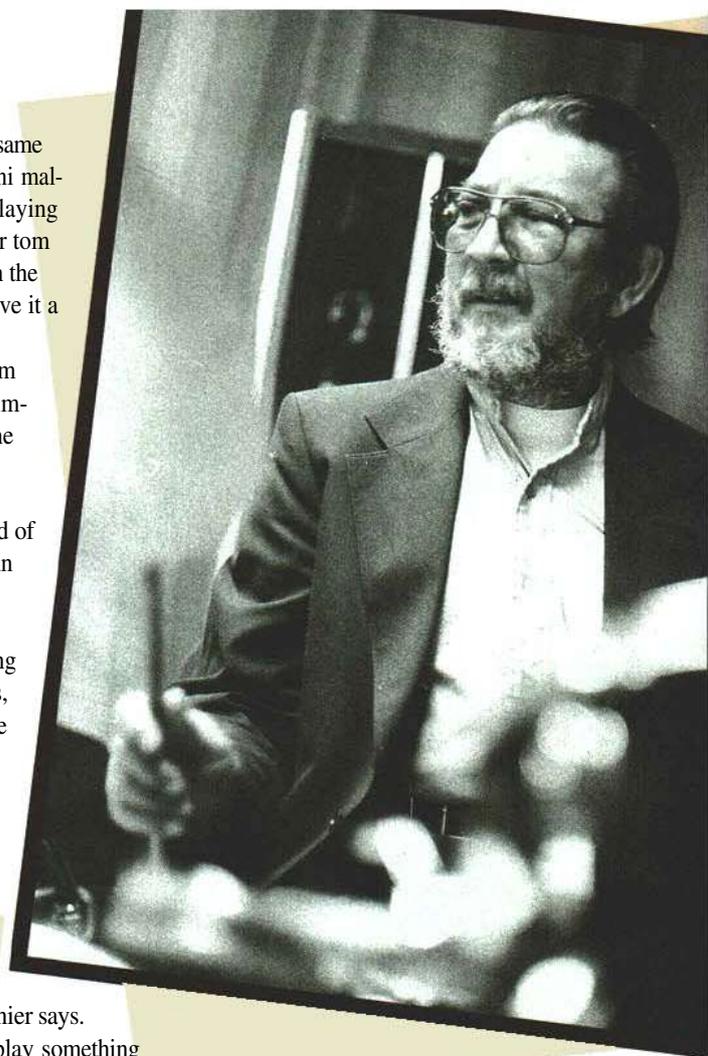
Fournier achieved the same effect by holding a timpani mallet in his right hand and playing rhythms between the floor tom and snare drum, on which the snares were released to give it a tom-like timbre. Hitting rimshots on the snare drum with the shoulder of the timpani mallet brought out the accents and also gave a conga-like quality to the sound. Using the back end of a regular drumstick held in the left hand, Fournier struck his closed hi-hat cymbals on offbeats during the intro and out choruses, and played offbeats on the bell of a crash-ride cymbal during the choruses.

"Ahmad played five choruses on the tune, and each chorus had a different bass

line," Fournier says.

"I tried to play something that matched the bass line Israel Crosby was playing. The drum part evolved over a period of several months."

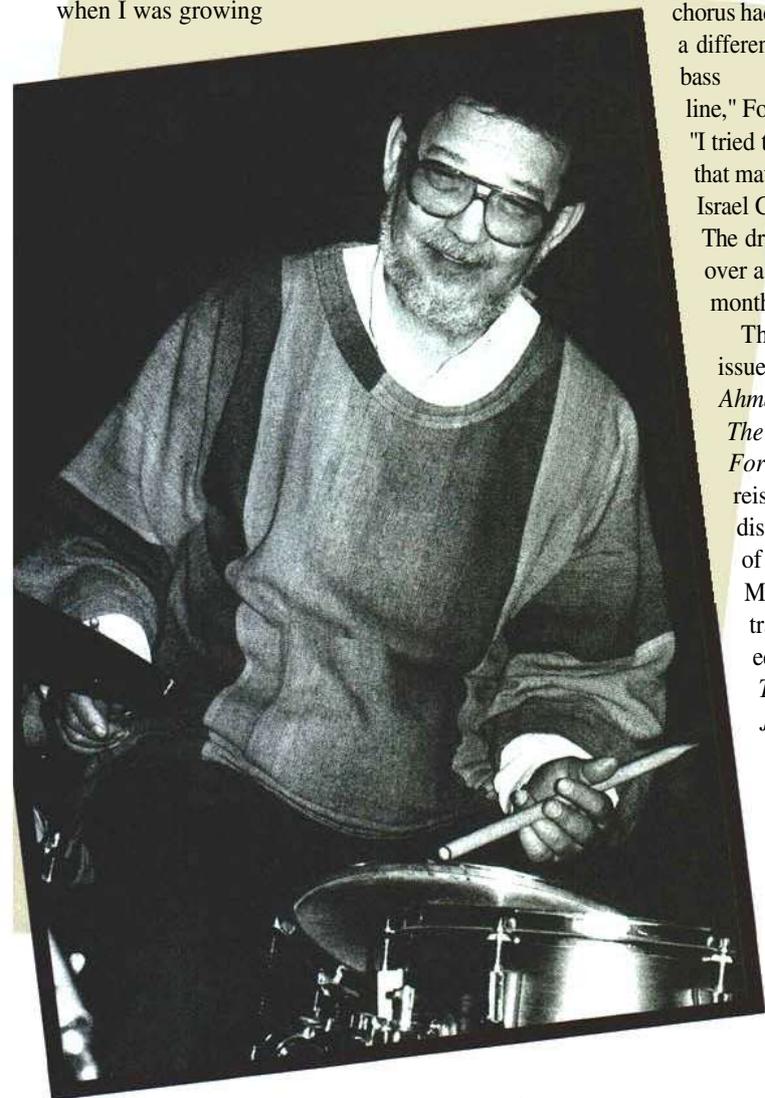
The recording was issued on Chess as *Ahmad Jamal Live At The Pershing, But Not For Me*, and has been reissued on compact disc by MCA as part of its Original Chess Masters series. The track was also included in the collection *The Best Of Chess Jazz*, but the credits misidentified the drummer as Walter Perkins. (A new book, *Vernel Fournier / Drum Techniques*, published by Hal Leonard Corporation, includes



"Some guys play the jazz cymbal beat with a quarter note and a triplet, with the middle beat of the triplet missing. Some guys play it with a quarter note and two 8th notes. Well, I always played it the New Orleans style, with a quarter, a dotted 8th, and a 16th. It's much more syncopated; I guess you could say it's more military."

a complete transcription of Fournier's drum part to "Poinciana.")

Fournier was born in New Orleans in 1928, and one of his earliest experiences



involved a drum. "My mother told me that I was two years old before I could walk," Fournier explains. "They were afraid that something was wrong with me. But then one day my uncle started playing a toy drum, and I got up and started walking and following him."

Fournier got his first drum at age ten and began playing in the band at Joseph A. Craig Grammar School. "That was a marching band,"

Fournier recalls. "From within that band we formed a little group called the Young Swingsters. When the music teacher at school, Miss Duvignia, found out what we were doing, she started coming to our rehearsals to play piano and help us."

But Fournier didn't have a drumset; he was swinging the band by playing press rolls on a parade drum. "In New Orleans parade bands, all they had was a snare drum and bass drum," he says. "So that's where I learned the Dixie beat. I took lessons from a drummer named Sidney Montegue, who used to play things like the 'Poet And Peasant' march in the WPA (Works Projects Administration) bands.

"I would go over to his house on Saturday mornings and wake him up about ten or eleven o'clock, because he would have worked Bourbon Street the night before. He would have his snare drum set up, and he would tell me to sit down and make a roll while he fixed coffee. And that's all I did for the first three or four lessons. I was sick of it, but I can roll all day long now—no problem.

"The press roll was one of the most difficult rolls in the world to make, but that's where the Dixie beat came from. The guy with the best press roll was the guy who got all the work. And Sidney had the best press roll."

Fournier continued playing a parade drum for a couple more years. "My mother wanted to make sure I was serious," he says. Vernel finally got a drumset when he was thirteen.

"I was in high school by then, and our band had grown to thirteen or fourteen pieces," he recalls. "We were all about fourteen years old. Our band had gotten

good enough that guys on Bourbon Street were hiring us to play on weekends. They had a rule in Louisiana that a local band had to play before an out-of-town band, so the Young Swingsters started getting gigs to play before the out-of-town guys. Some of them would come in and say, 'What are those kids doing up there?' But when we started playing, we were better than some of

them."

Meanwhile, Fournier had dropped out of the school band. "I was too smart for that—or thought I was," he says. "Playing in the school band wasn't hip to me, because I was making money on Bourbon Street."

Although the music on Bourbon Street was straight Dixieland, the bebop influence was starting to be felt. "In

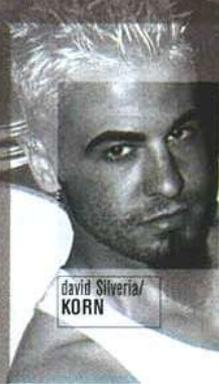
SYNCOPIATION STUDY

When playing the following etude, Fournier suggests singing or humming the rhythms, giving each note its full value. "If you just play the rhythms on the snare drum, each note sounds like a 32nd," he says. "You hit it and it's gone. But if you hum it, you find out how long the note really lasts. That helps you be as musical as possible."

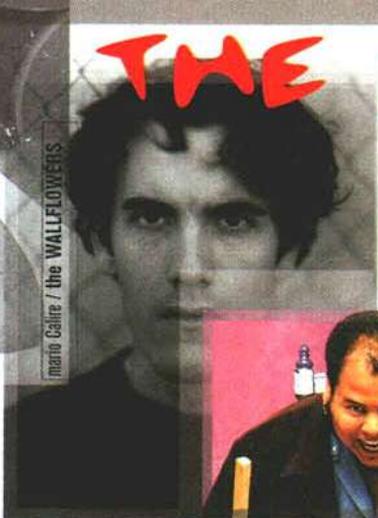
Play the written rhythms on snare drum with alternating hands, with the bass drum playing on beats 1 and 3 and the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4. "A moderate tempo will work best," Fournier says. "But you can play it at any tempo that's possible. The main thing is to play it in time."

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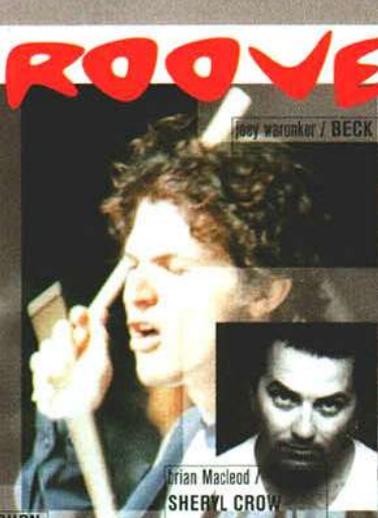
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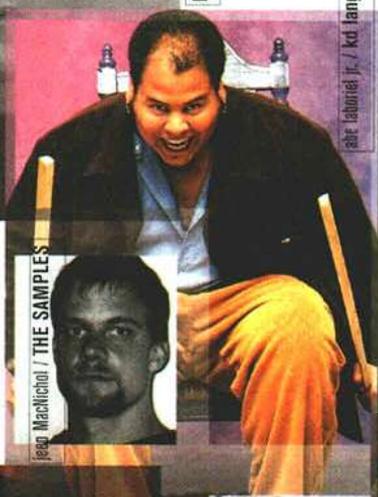
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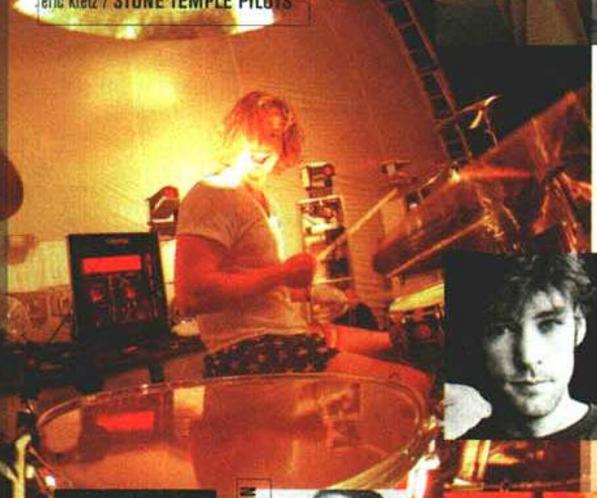
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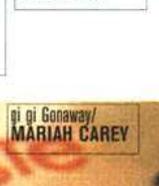
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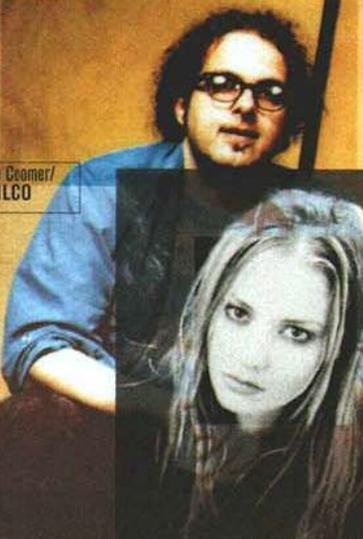


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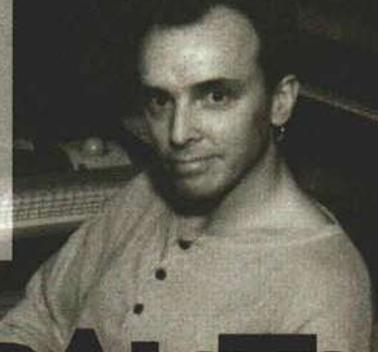
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CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS

New Orleans, when a band would come to town, there would be a show on Sunday that the kids could go to," Fournier says. "Our parents would take us because they knew we were trying to play jazz, so I got to hear Art Blakey with the Billy Eckstine band. When I heard Blakey, I knew that's what I wanted to do. He played a lot of beats that are standard beats now.

"So even though I was playing Dixie on Bourbon Street, I was also playing for the shake dancers, because that was part of the gig. I guess shake dancers would be called exotic dancers now. When they would do bumps, I could 'drop bombs' like Blakey and Max [Roach] and all them cats."

After high school Fournier attended college at Alabama State Teachers College for a year and a half until getting a call to join the King Kolax band. "Kolax was a bebop band," Fournier says. "I was ready for it; I *thought* I was anyway. But the guitarist kept telling me, 'You've got to get the beat together.' One night he looked at me and smiled, and I knew I was straight. I finally got the feel he wanted.

"But I was still playing the New Orleans style," Fournier is quick to add. "Some guys play the jazz cymbal beat with a quarter note and a triplet, with the middle beat of the triplet missing. Then some guys play it with a quarter note and two 8th notes. Well, I always played it the New Orleans style with a quarter, a dotted 8th, and a 16th. It's much more syncopated; I guess you could say it's more military. Those three ways of playing don't sound too different when you play fast, but when you play slow you can really tell the difference between the three styles."

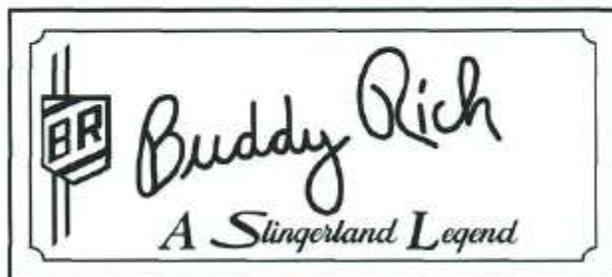
The New Orleans Dixieland influence is obvious even in Fournier's bebop playing. Whereas some bop drummers have a more pulse-oriented approach in which all four beats in a bar are more or less equal, Fournier makes a clear distinction between downbeats and backbeats. "The basis of jazz is 1 and 3," he insists. "People clap on 1 and 3; the bass player plays on 1 and 3. If you don't have 1 and 3, you can't swing. The 2 and 4 backbeat helps the foundation. A lot of guys want to start off playing bebop, but they don't know anything about backbeat."

After leaving the Kolax band, Fournier returned to New Orleans for a few months, relocating to Chicago in 1948. "The general trend was to go from New Orleans to Chicago, and when you got your stuff together in Chicago, then you moved to New York," Fournier says. "I did so well in Chicago that I stayed there for thirty years."

Fournier worked some gigs with the King Kolax quartet, and soon he was working with a variety of bands. Eventually he landed a job as drummer with the house band at the Bee Hive club, where he backed such artists as J.J. Johnson, Kai Winding, Lester Young, Sonny Stitt, Ben Webster, and Red Rodney. He also worked at the Happy Medium club, where comedians such as Bill Cosby, Totie Fields, Louie Nye, and Jackie Leonard often performed. And he played with some blues bands and did rock 'n' roll session work on records with the Dells and the Oreos.

Fournier also became friends with a legendary Chicago drummer named Ike Day. "He was a great influence on me as a drummer," Fournier says. "He used to come to my house and we'd play fours and eights on kitchen chairs. He's the one who really started

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me playing musically. When I solo, I try to be as musical as possible, just like the horn players."

In 1957, Fournier joined the Ahmad Jamal Trio. For over a year, Jamal wanted Fournier to play brushes on almost everything. "When Ahmad hired me, he had never heard me play brushes; I'm sure of it," Fournier says. "Everybody in Chicago was a stick man, except on ballads. Tenor players, trumpet players, trombone players—they didn't want brushes."

DeJohnette recalls being very impressed by Fournier's ability with brushes. "Vernel had real precise articulation when he used brushes," DeJohnette says. "I noticed that he pulled his brushes in so they weren't fully flanged out, and that contributed to his articulate sound."

Fournier says that he came up with his approach to brushes mostly on his own. "I didn't have any special brush players as influences, because there weren't many brush players around at that time, except Connie Kay with the Modern Jazz Quartet, but I didn't see him much," Fournier says. "I heard that Kenny Clarke and Denzil Best were good brush players, but I didn't see those guys much either. My brush playing developed from playing them every night. I always wanted to improve and find different ways of doing things.

"One night we were playing a gig opposite Dave Brubeck in Cleveland. All of a sudden Ahmad looked at me and said 'sticks.' After that, I played sticks sixty or seventy percent of the time. Luckily, I had the sticks there because of 'Poinciana.'

"Other than that, Ahmad never told me what to play," Fournier

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says. "He'd play something and I'd play with him, and if he liked it, he'd smile. If he didn't like it, he would keep playing until I came up with something he liked. I always tried to play what I thought he wanted, and it came out fine. I don't know why our styles fit together so well, but it might be because Ahmad is one of the most percussive pianists I've ever worked with."

Fournier stayed with Jamal until 1962, at which time he joined George Shearing's band for two years, appearing on such Capitol albums as *Rare Form* and *Touch Me Softly*. During that time, a teenaged vibraphonist named Gary Burton joined Shearing's band. When Burton recorded four tracks for an RCA album called *5 In Jazz*, Fournier was the drummer. (Those tracks appear on the CD reissue of Burton's 1963 album *Something's Coming*, on the RCA Jazz Line label.)

After the stint with Shearing, Fournier went back with Jamal for two years, and then spent 1965 and '66 backing singer Nancy Wilson. "That was a great experience," Fournier says. "With Ahmad and George, we would sometimes play with a symphony orchestra. In fact, Leonard Chess never forgave himself for not recording a great concert the Ahmad Jamal Trio did with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. But with Nancy, we always had a twenty-five- or thirty-piece orchestra."

In 1967 Fournier went back to Chicago and dropped out of sight in terms of the national scene. "I was always working with different people," he says. "And I had a trio at the Shalom Restaurant on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays for ten years. I was doing okay playing, but I got tired of sitting around all day, so I got a job at Sears Roebuck. I got to be a manager of the Decorative Accessories & Linen division. I had gone back to school and gotten a degree, so that helped me get the manager's job."

Fournier moved to New York in 1980. "I knew the only way I could make any money or do anything worthwhile for myself was through music," he says. "At Sears, you could only go so far. And the music business in Chicago was almost kaput. So I moved to New York, and Clifford Jordan came to my rescue as soon as he found out I was in town. He hired me and I never looked back." Some of Fournier's work with Jordan is documented on the albums *Repetition* (Soul Note) and *Royal Ballads* (Criss Cross).

Fournier also gigged with singers Joe Williams and Billy Eckstine. "Working with 'Mr. B' [Eckstine] was like a dream come true," Fournier says of the man whose band with Art Blakey first inspired young Vernel to play bebop. "He was such a wonderful person, and he had one of the world's greatest pianists, Bobby Tucker. You didn't even have to know how to read; you could just follow him."

Fournier also led his own trio, which played gigs around New York. In 1991, the Vernel Fournier Trio recorded a self-titled album for the TCB label in Switzerland. "Nobody will record me in the States," Fournier says. "But I met a guy in Switzerland when I was there with Clifford, and he set up a record date here in New York. I produced it myself, and wrote some of the tunes, too."

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Fournier also recorded with a Dixieland band from Switzerland called the Red Hot Peppers. The album, *New Orleans*, is on the Horn Records label. "I think that Dixie record is the greatest thing I ever did," Fournier says. "Those guys from Switzerland love Dixie; it's not like here. It was such a pleasure playing with those cats. They were doctors and lawyers and engineers, but man, they could play that stuff."

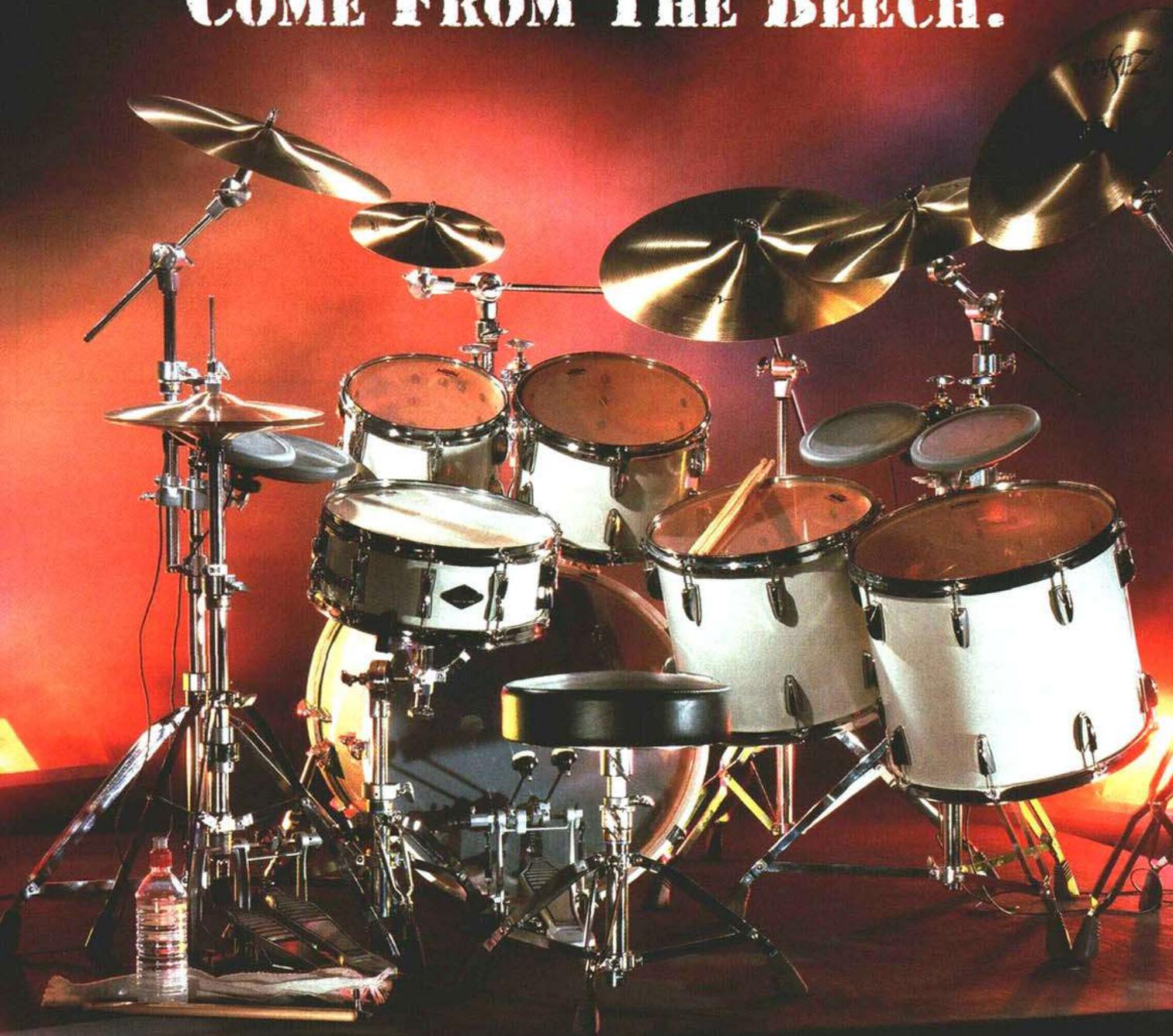
Between gigs, Fournier did some teaching at the Mannes College of Music in New York City. Many of the exercises and etudes he wrote out for his students are included in his *Drum Techniques* book. (See sidebar.) "I had a lot of students, mostly pros," he says. "A lot of them needed fluidity on the drums. Most of them were very good at coordination, but didn't have their own sound. Most drummers sound alike. And another thing: Most of them didn't know how to tune their drums, so I used to teach them how to get a sound."

In May, 1994, Fournier was returning home from a gig when he suffered a stroke that left his legs paralyzed. "Luckily, I had worked at Sears and paid my taxes, so I was able to get Social Security and everything I needed," Fournier says.

"My legs are coming back. My right leg is good and my upper body is good. My lower back muscles are weak, so I don't have much control sitting, but I'm working on it, believe me. I sit on my drum stool every day for an hour, and hopefully I'll be playing again soon."



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ON THE ROAD: THE LIFE OF A TOURING DRUMMER

BY LAUREN VOGEL WEISS

Four different artists: Enrique Iglesias, Buckshot LeFonque, Boyz II Men, and Sawyer Brown. Four different styles of music: pop/rock, jazz, heavy funk, R&B, and country. Despite the musical differences, there are many similarities for the drummers touring with these top acts: practice sessions on pads in a hotel room or backstage...noisy maids who unintentionally wake up sleeping musicians too early...the special camaraderie of a unique musical experience...and those cheering audiences.

To give you an idea of what the real world of touring is all about, *MD* sat down with Sawyer Brown's Joe Smyth, Buckshot LeFonque's Rocky Bryant, Enrique Iglesias's Chuck Burgi, and Boyz II Men's Fred Holliday—each a *serious* veteran of the road. These drummers have progressed from bouncing across the country in the back of a van to riding in custom tour buses and chartered planes. Instead of sleeping in the backseat, today they check in and out of the world's finest hotels, paying only for their incidental room charges while tour managers take care of their expenses. They eat at restaurants all over the world, at mall food courts, and, of course, from backstage catering. But none have forgotten the long, tough road that led them to this point.

Even at this level, though, all tours are not alike. Some involve playing a different city from one night to the next, while others only involve two to three performances a week. Some groups bring their own sound systems and technicians on tour, while others rely on "house" equipment. Some play in clubs while others play in arenas.

But almost all agree that touring is a wonderful experience, and, best of all, the drummers get paid for doing something they love—performing live music.

POSITIVES

- Contact With Fans
- Playing In Front Of New Audiences
- Playing In Different Venues
- Exposure To Various Cultures
- Travel—Sightseeing

NEGATIVES

- Missing Loved Ones
- Losing Musical Contacts
- Lack Of Sleep
- Poor Nutrition
- Travel—Long Bus Rides

Joe Smyth has been on the road for more than 5,500 days (that's over sixteen years!) with the same band—country phenomenon Sawyer Brown. With a music composition degree from the prestigious Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he studied with Dean Anderson and Alan Dawson, and a masters of music in percussion and composition from the University of Miami, where he studied with Fred Wickstrom, Smyth is not your typical "country" drummer.

While searching for a position teaching percussion at the college level in 1981, Smyth moved to Nashville and began looking for temporary work through the local musicians union. Eventually he landed a gig playing drumset with a country/pop singer whose career fizzled—but the other musicians he met there became friends. "We stayed together," Smyth recalls, "and did a couple of things on our own. The following spring we put a group together and thought we could make a little money." And thus Sawyer Brown was born—singer and principal songwriter Mark Miller, keyboardist/vocalist Gregg "Hobie" Hubbard, bassist Jim Scholten, guitarist/vocalist Duncan Cameron (who joined in 1992), and Smyth. "We realized we could make *very* little money in Nashville," Joe chuckles, "so we had to go out on the road. For the next year and a half we played Holiday Inns and Ramada Inns and honky-tonks from Michigan to Florida and from Norfolk, Virginia to San Angelo, Texas—five hours a night, six nights a week."

Smyth says the band's first year on the road included three hundred fifteen dates! "We had my old van and a homemade trailer," he laughs. "For our first job we didn't even have lights or a sound system. But we all had the same vision: We didn't want to play lounges and nightclubs forever. And we were great friends, trusted each other, and focused in the same direction.

"We used to play this Ramada Inn in Jackson, Mississippi that

was across the street from the Coliseum," Smyth recalls. "We would sneak in during the afternoon and watch the Oak Ridge Boys or Kenny Rogers or the Beach Boys set up. I'll never forget the first time we actually played on that stage—it was neat because

it was a real homecoming. Those were *my* drums on the stage, and I remember sitting out there watching someone else set up. It seems like we've been doing this forever, but at the same time it's still very new and exciting and a lot of fun, and I think we all remember what it was like on the other side."

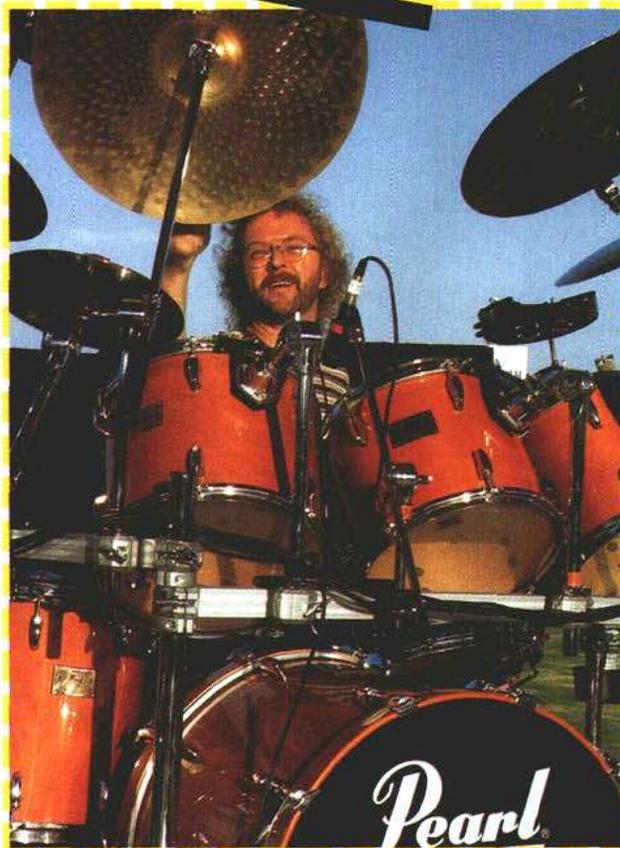
Instead of Joe's old van, the group now travels in custom buses and even owns a five-passenger jet. So now their transportation is a combination of private flying, commercial airlines, and bus. "The jet is great if you want to play a festival in Toronto and be back in Nashville for dinner," Smyth says with a grin. "But there's a lot

to be said for bus travel—you can relax, watch a movie, read a book, listen to CDs, or take a nap whenever you want to. Depending on production dates, we've had as many as four buses and six trucks out under our own name, so these days it's a pretty big tour."

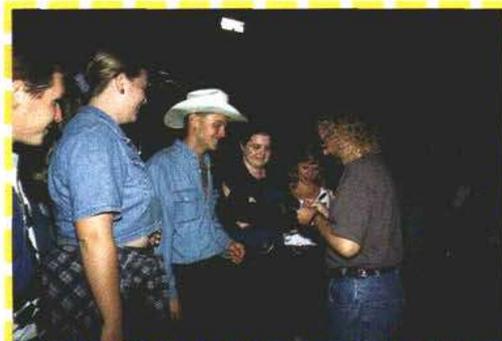
Still, Joe suggests there's almost a "garage band" mentality to Sawyer Brown. "We always try to keep that immediacy and that energy," explains Smyth. "We're known for real high-energy fun on stage. I endeavor to play everything with a lot of emotion

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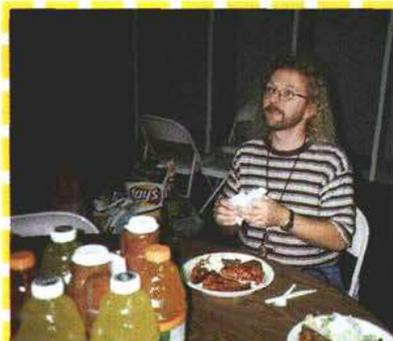
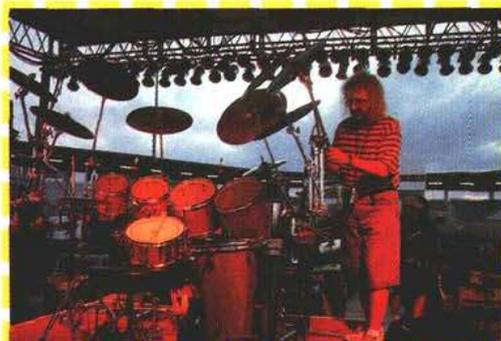
JOE SMYTH WITH SAWYER BROWN



Rick Malkin



Rick Malkin



ROCKY BRYANT

WITH BRANFORD MARSALIS'S BUCKSHOT LEFONQUE

Soulful enough for David

Sanborn, rousing enough for Cyndi Lauper, and lyrical enough for Des'ree, Daryl Hall, and Regina Carter, Rocky Bryant's style is that of diversity—from jazz to funk, from hip-hop to rock. Fluent in many genres of music, he has been on the road for the past three years with Branford Marsalis's Buckshot LeFonque, a group of eight musicians where "the band" is the star of the show.

Bryant and Marsalis met through the musical scene in New York, but it wasn't until Rocky performed a few times on *The Tonight Show* (while Branford was the musical director), with Cyndi Lauper and then again with Daryl Hall, that Marsalis really noticed his drumming. "He was looking for a particular concept for Buckshot," recalls Bryant. "He was in the process of leaving *The Tonight Show* and putting a band together, because he had just written the first Buckshot record. He thought some of the things I was doing with Cyndi and Daryl would work real well with his ideas."

One of the things that Bryant did to capture Marsalis's attention was trigger samples through a *drumKAT* in addition to his acoustic drumset. "Most of the sounds that I'm triggering on tour are samples taken from the record itself," Bryant explains. "The main challenge is just staying in the pocket with the sample. The way I do it on this particular gig is that I have one- and two-bar loops that start when I trigger them. So I'll just trigger one at the top of every bar or at the top of every two bars. The trick is keeping your drumming free while still being able to hit that sample on the downbeat. I have a trigger set up on my left side that I hit with my left hand, which is normally



"SINGERS TEND TO TAKE MORE DAYS OFF. WITH BUCKSHOT, WE USUALLY PLAY FOUR OR FIVE NIGHTS A WEEK. IT'S BETTER FOR ME TO STAY IN THE RHYTHM OF TOURING."

functioning on the snare drum backbeat on 2 and 4, so it's free to play on 1. But at the same time, it's a pretty odd thing to get used to—playing and hitting something on 1 with both hands."

Bryant describes the music as "diverse, creative, open, and grooving—although not necessarily in that order. "I guess grooving would probably be pretty high up on the list," he laughs. "The gig certainly pulls on all my influences, from jazz all the way to high-volume rock. One of my pet projects is always trying to find something different in the music. If I hear myself playing the same thing a couple of times, I almost feel like I've played it too many times."

Although he was on Cyndi Lauper's *Hat Full Of Stars* tour and Daryl Hall's *Soul Alone* tour, this was Rocky's first tour where the musicians are the featured performers. "Singers tend to take more days off on tour," says Bryant. "With Buckshot, we usually play four or five nights a week, so I enjoy the touring more with this situation because I prefer to be playing. I don't really care for days off on the road so much. It's better for me to stay in the rhythm of touring."

Buckshot LeFonque began its tour early in 1995, performing in New York and Los Angeles before heading off to Europe. They crisscrossed the Atlantic Ocean, usually playing for two to three weeks at a time before having a week off. Before they knew it, the year was over, and they've been touring ever since. The band plays a combination of clubs—both large and small—plus music festivals around the world.

"You're standing a lot closer to each other when you're in a small club than when you're on a large stage at, say, a festival," states Bryant. "If you're spread out on stage, there tends to be trouble hearing each other, so you sometimes just play straight-ahead—almost by rote. You don't get the privilege of hearing the intimacies or the little details of each other's playing that way. But at the same time, you have this massive crowd energy when you're at a festival, so you're feeding off of that vibe. I like both situations, although I actually enjoy playing in a smaller setting better because I really like the interaction between the details in the music."

Buckshot LeFonque spent last summer touring Europe by bus. When asked to describe the bus, Bryant jokingly

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CHUCK BÜRGI WITH ENRIQUE IGLESIAS

Chuck Burgi, a thirty-eight-year-old New Jersey native currently living in Manhattan, has been touring with various artists for twenty years. From his first national tour with fusion guitarist Al DiMeola in 1977, through two platinum albums with pop sensations Daryl Hall & John Oates in the early 1980s, and a five-year association with Meatloaf, Burgi has amassed a great deal of experience, all of which he brought to his latest affiliation: the Grammy-winning Latin pop sensation Enrique Iglesias.

"I've been fortunate enough to keep working with a variety of well-known people most of the time," says Burgi, who just completed Iglesias's *Vivir* tour. Chuck says knowing the right people helped him obtain his current position in Enrique's band, which was put together by a good friend of his, guitarist Tommy Byrnes.

Byrnes had been Billy Joel's guitarist for his last three tours, and he had been contacted by Steve Cohen (the lighting designer for Billy Joel's *River Of Dreams* tour), who had been hired to design the set for the *Vivir* tour. Byrnes, as guitarist and musical director for Enrique Iglesias, hired Burgi, along with percussionist/vocalist Crystal Taliefero, guitarist Jorge Cintron, bassist Kevin Jenkins, and keyboard player David Rosenthal.

Following a month of rehearsals in March 1997, the tour began in Odessa, Texas, succeeded by numerous sold-out shows in arenas throughout the southwestern United States, Mexico, and Spain. "Enrique's albums are very pop," Burgi describes, "almost like an '80s rock 'n' roll band. His influences are the American rock 'n' roll institutions—bands like Heart, Foreigner, and Journey. By virtue of the fact that we only had two albums' worth of material to put a two-hour show together with, we had to extend and open up his songs' three-minute versions. So we inserted sambas into some of them, as well as some reggae feels and extended grooves. We're actually playing a very sophisticated type of rock 'n' roll. When people see me play in the Enrique show, they're seeing a better cross-section of my playing than I've been able to present in years.

"This particular tour is an anomaly in my life," laughs Burgi. "In terms of scheduling, this has been the easiest tour I've ever been on. Because Enrique's a brand-new touring artist, his management did

not know how many shows per week he would be able to sing, so they booked several months in advance with only two to three shows per week! I'm well rested and well fed, and I've done more sight-seeing than I ever have in my life."

On a typical show day with Enrique, Burgi sleeps until noon,

slowly waking up to a breakfast of black coffee and some reading. (Chuck is an avid science fiction and thriller fan and usually tries to do a lot of reading while on the road.) After a forty-minute jog at an easy pace, he showers, shaves, and gets dressed. If he's in a town he hasn't been in before, this is the time he'll explore and do a little walking and sightseeing, or perhaps even warm up a bit on a practice pad (which he will do again when he reaches the per-



"A DRUMMER CAN BE AN EXCELLENT STUDIO MUSICIAN AND YET BE A BORING LIVE PERFORMER. AND BY THE SAME TOKEN, SOMEBODY CAN BE A GREAT LIVE PERFORMER AND BE ABSOLUTELY TRASH IN THE STUDIO. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN WORKING FOR SOME TYPE OF BALANCE BETWEEN THE TWO."

formance venue). "I feel like I could take friends back to each city and show them the best time," he relates, "because I've had the time to explore the nightlife, restaurants, and cultural and historical places."

Soundcheck is usually around 4:30 P.M. "We do a lot of jamming," Burgi says. "We have things we want to check, but we're working with a crack sound system and technicians. This is one of the few tours that I've ever been on that was, in my opinion, done really right. These people had our sounds done before we ever left rehearsals, so when we walk on stage with Enrique, it's the same sound every night. Sometimes we'll jam on his songs or classic rock tunes, or the guitarist will start a riff or I'll start a groove, and since everybody's such good players, we just start going. If Enrique is there, he'll start riffing on vocals. You have to realize that this is the first time he's ever had a live band, so this whole experience is quite new for him. I think he enjoys the fact that we're not rigid and we're into playing and experimenting. And having fun is definitely one of the major aspects of this tour."

After soundcheck, it's off to catering, which is Burgi's big meal of the day. Being a vegetarian sometimes poses problems, especially outside of the States, but Chuck says they've had some great cooks on their current tour. Between dinner and showtime, he goes back to

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FREDDIE "GOLDEN STIX" HOLLIDAY

WITH BOYZ II MEN

Freddie Holliday received a drumset for Christmas when he was twelve years old, and now, twenty-two years later, he is a steadily employed professional musician earning his place among the dozens of modern performers who started in his hometown of Philadelphia. Since 1984 Holliday has toured with artists such as Ursula's First Choice, (former Heavy-weight Champion) Smokin' Joe Frazier, Liz Hogue, The Manhattans, Gerald Alston, the Delphonics, Blue Magic, and Ray, Goodman & Brown. Today he holds the post of drummer for Boyz II Men, a job he's had since 1992.

"My group—the E.T. Band—was playing at a Philadelphia nightclub on a Wednesday night," remembers Holliday, "and our bass player said that Boyz II Men was having auditions on Thursday." During the evening, one of Holliday's friends, Charlie Mack—who was the bodyguard for actor Will Smith—brought three members of Boyz II Men to the club to check out his drummer friend. Before they left, one of the members of the group asked Holliday to come to the audition.

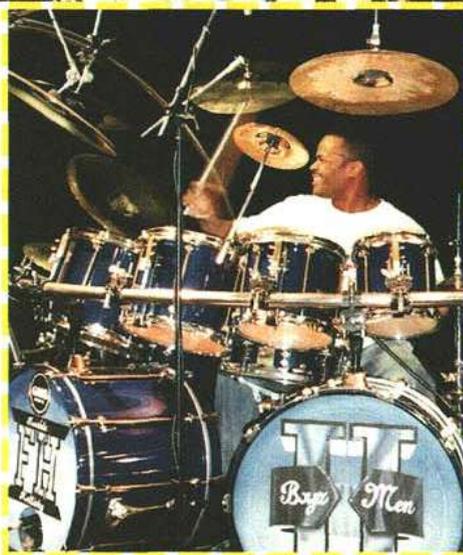
Holliday continues the story: "When I arrived, every drummer in Philadelphia and the surrounding area was there—at least forty of them. Khalil Roundtree [who before his tragic death in 1992 was a driving force behind the group's success] announced that they were auditioning drummers first and pointed at me. I was worried that if I went first, by the time they heard all these guys, they would forget what I sounded like. They asked me a series of questions and then asked me to play something. Then they got a bass player in and I played with him, then with a keyboard player, then another keyboard player, then a guitar player. I played for about two hours with lots of different musicians.

"Khalil told me, 'Look man, I think we want to use you, but it's only fair that we listen to all the other guys.' So I sat outside and



Maxine Wolf

"I GUESS THE WORST PART ABOUT TOURING FOR ME IS MISSING HOME...UNTIL I GET HOME. THEN I MISS BEING ON THE ROAD!"



Rick Malkin

listened to all these guys come in and show off their chops, you know? They were playing all the Cobham, Gadd, and Weckl licks. This was not that gig, if you know what I'm saying. They finally called me that night and told me I got the gig."

Since then the group has traveled all over the world, including the United States, Europe, Japan, Korea, and Australia. "It's easier to say where we haven't traveled," Holliday laughs. "We haven't been to China or Africa yet." Today Holliday and Boyz II Men perform in stadiums, often selling out several shows in one city.

The drummer hasn't always played in stadiums, though. An earlier tour with Liz Hogue took him on the "college circuit," performing in small theaters in college towns across the US. "I prefer theaters," Freddie confesses. "They're more intimate. The acoustics are better. You don't have to play as

hard, and you can hear what you're doing a lot better. Clubs are fun, too. You get to link with the people more. You can almost feel whether they like you or not. You can find one person who's digging you, and that will carry you for the whole night."

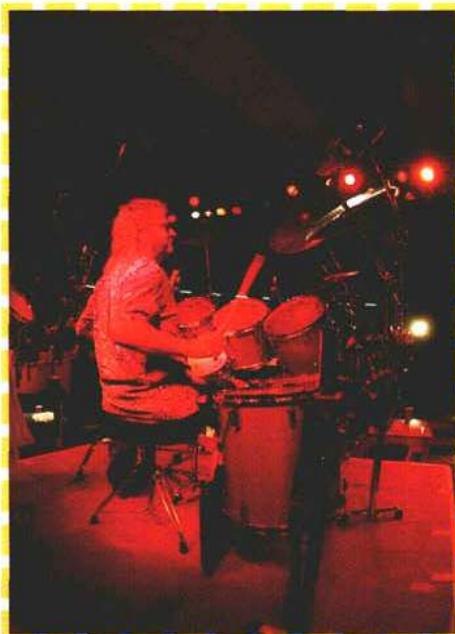
Holliday says a day on tour with Boyz II Men falls into one of two types of twenty-four hour periods—one if they are on the bus, and another if they stay overnight at a hotel with no travel. The tour bus has lounges in the front and back—complete with televisions, sofas, a microwave, a refrigerator, and a restroom—and twelve bunks in the middle. There is one bus for the six bandmembers and another for the four singers and security.

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behind it and as authentically as I can. We attempt to make a 16,000-seat basketball arena as intimate as possible. We do that not by creating a wall, but by going out and grabbing people. On a rare occasion, we might play a small, intimate place where we're up close to folks, which is fun because it reminds us of the old days. To me, playing on stage is such a great release. We tell people that they pay for the twenty-two hours between shows when we're traveling, and then we play for free!"

Recently celebrating his fortieth birthday, Smyth says he's reevaluating his lifestyle on the road lately. "I was as heavy as I've ever been," he confides, "so I said, enough is enough. I decided to get into shape and stay healthy, and I've dropped fifty pounds since last January. But basically my life is 'second shift'—I work from 4:00 P.M. to midnight. My day starts with soundcheck and ends after the concert.

Rick Malkin



and know that you had six or eight hours to look out the window."

After checking into the hotel the next morning, Joe's off to a coffee shop to read the local papers. Sometime during the day he'll hit the hotel health club and try to do several miles on an exercise bike, which he says has helped him keep in shape. "I'm a real history buff, and I collect books," Smyth adds, "so I'm usually looking for a used book store or a museum or a local historical landmark. Some of the guys are into shopping or golf, but we're always walking

around, finding places, and meeting up with people." Soundcheck can be as early as 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon, especially if there are three or four acts in the show.

"I love having dinner at 4:30 in the afternoon," says Smyth, "because then it's digested by the time the show comes along. In the old days, everybody was pumped up and hung out in the locker room, but I

find that really depletes my energy now. So I try to leave the venue and go for a walk just to get away from it."

Smyth says he doesn't practice much on the road. "I do a bunch of analytical listening, which is a type of mental practicing. Between reading and some of the other things that I do, it keeps me fresh and takes my mind in a different direction, so when it comes time for soundcheck or the show, I'm really looking forward to playing drums again.

"Every day I try to go in early and tweak the drums," he adds, "either repairs or tuning—just getting a feel for the instrument or the stage. I couldn't just show up and play the show and be gone and 'see you in the next city.' I really enjoy having some time each day to have the drums under my own hands. It's also nice to have a very close relationship with the sound guy out

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front, because he's certainly the person who either makes you or breaks you. Thankfully, I've had really good relationships with the guys I work with."

Traditionally, Sawyer Brown leaves on tour in mid-January for about two months. Their tour begins in the west, heads north to Vancouver, then goes across Western Canada and back into the States. They have also traveled to Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong, and were the first country band to play in China. The band is also quite busy in the summer at state and county fairs and numerous country music or radio station festivals. "We look forward to the first date of each tour," Smyth explains, "and especially the last date before we go back to Nashville. We want that to be a great concert because that is the 'taste in our mouths' until we get to go out and do it again."

How does Smyth's family cope with his being gone so many days? "As far as the kids are concerned," he answers with a chuckle, "it's the only life they've ever known. Last summer I always had one of my two kids [Tristan and Jenna] on the road with me—but not both at the same time! And when we're off the road, we really let go of everything and become normal humans and spend quality time with our families."

Before a tour, Smyth gathers together the "nuts and bolts" he will need on the road—drumheads, sticks, and whatever else has to last through the end of a tour. "I also get a big stack of books and magazines," he adds. "I'll bring whatever I'm in the middle of, whether it's a historic preservation project or computer stuff. I also carry a small case of shortwave radios with me so I can sit in the room and listen to great Arabic or Brazilian music."

Freddie Holliday

(Boyz II Men)



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Smyth describes the best part of touring: "It might sound kind of hokey, but when you go out on stage and there are thousands of people who have plunked down their hard-earned hourly wage to see you—that's still the rush. With so many other forms of entertainment besides concerts, the fact that the place is filled with folks who have come to see you—that's *still* what pumps me up to sit down behind the drums. That's the payback." And the worst part? "Early morning flights," he says with a laugh. "The music business either makes you old before your time, or it allows you to be youthful forever. The secret is to keep it fun!"

ROCKY BRYANT

continued from page 104

replied that he wanted "to keep this positive." But he obviously preferred American tour buses to their European counterparts, mainly due to the two-lounge versus one-lounge layout—an important consideration when a dozen people are basically living on the bus between shows.

A typical scenario finds the band leaving between 11:00 P.M. and 1:00 A.M. after their show. Bryant relaxes by listening to music or watching a movie on video with the other musicians. Upon arrival in the next city (or country), he takes a quick shower and tries to grab breakfast at the hotel before they stop serving. Following a brief exploration of the city—or a nap if he's still tired—Rocky will try for a swim in the pool before soundcheck in the mid-afternoon. He doesn't work out regularly because "my real exercise of choice is

drumming. I feel like I work out enough by just playing—it's a self-contained kind of workout, which is a nice part of being the drummer.

"I try to practice in my room, but I end up practicing more mentally than physically," he confides. And how does he do that? "By just thinking about concepts, like how you might want to make transitions in songs—let's say from the verse to the bridge to the chorus. Or I'll hear music in different countries or even just sitting at a restaurant. I like Indian food and Chinese food, so I'll go to different restaurants and hear the music of those cultures. You might hear something rhythmically interesting or something that otherwise influences you musically—and you might want to keep that thought and see if you can bring something from that experience into a certain song. I like to inject different things, which keeps the band fired up, too."

Like all touring drummers, Bryant has to deal with the inevitable inconsistencies of sound systems. "Sometimes you end up in situations where you have a rough system and you just have to deal with it," he sighs. "You have to overcome it musically. Just accept what it is and hope that the engineer has found some magic in his bag, too. We have a great engineer who also happens to be a drummer, so I have a strong trust in what he hears."

Between dinner and catering at the venue, Bryant likes to warm up on a pad with "basic rudiments, like paradiddles, triplets—nothing real specific. I'm just trying to move my hands and get the fingers warmed up. I'll always try to put accents in different places so that the rudiments become more musical. And then sometimes I try to imagine those accents as being different drums or cymbals—like playing a paradiddle with every accent being a different part of the drumset."

Rocky says that pacing the show can sometimes be difficult. "I try to convince myself that I have enough energy to get from the beginning to the end regardless of what order the songs are in," he explains. "With Buckshot being as open as it is, we tend to mix up the order of the songs while we're on stage—as opposed to when I was playing with Cyndi Lauper and we would have a set list. The first few shows on this last tour, we went from 'Jungle Grove'—probably the fastest song on the CD—directly to the slowest song. That can be very difficult. At the end of the first song, you're totally wound up and your heart is racing. Then you have to get back to the slow tempo and make it feel comfortable and relaxed. So that is a challenge."

Pacing through an entire tour is another matter altogether. Rocky prefers not to keep a close eye on the itinerary, because that can make the time pass slower. But the thirty-five-year-old Bryant does try to call home every day or two to speak with his wife and two toddler sons.

"Besides the playing itself," Bryant believes, "the best part of touring is meeting different people, eating different kinds of food, experiencing different cultural aspects of life, and realizing that the world doesn't revolve around the place where you live. *Everybody* should have to experience going to a foreign country where you're the person who's different and needs help—all that kind of humbling stuff."

And the worst part of touring? "Being in a place where you're different," he laughs, "just not being able to regulate your system in terms of rest. And touring abroad is difficult because you have to constantly change currencies, so credit cards were a good invention."

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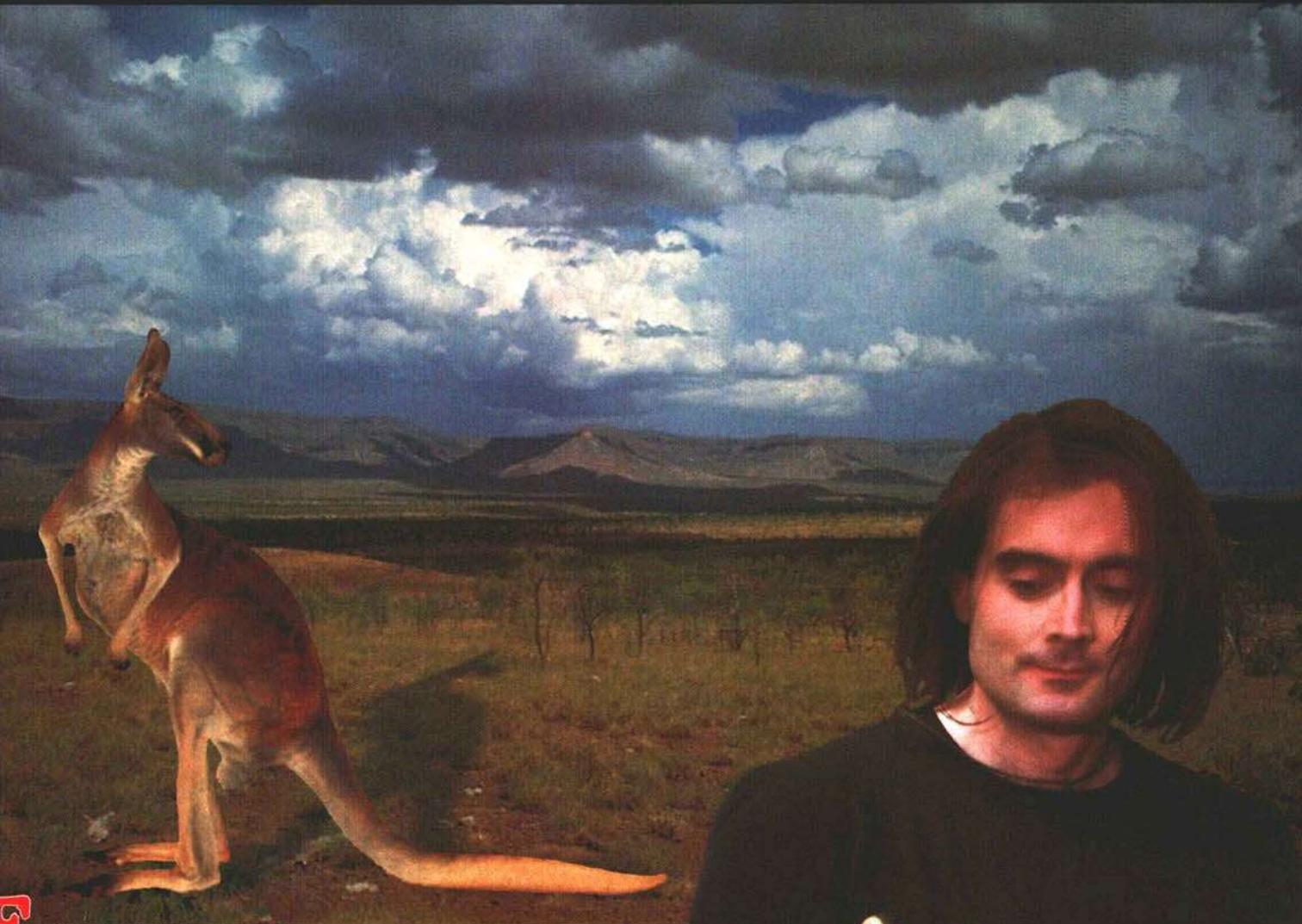


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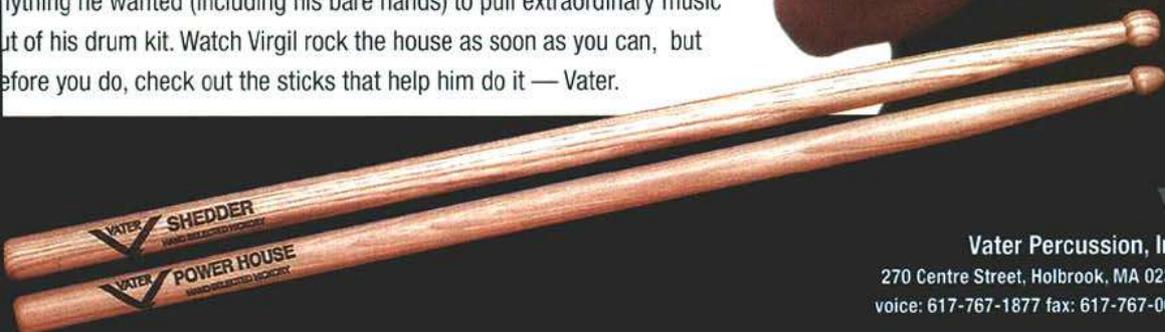
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Bryant has some advice for the young drummer just beginning to tour: "The best way to spend your time is by reading about the places that you're about to go to. It can make it a little bit more interesting and keep you from becoming bored. If you have an idea of what goes on in a city before you get there, it gives you direction on how to spend your time there. I'm definitely guilty of hanging out in the hotel room too much, but you have to take advantage of the opportunity of traveling."

CHUCK BÜRGI

continued from page 105

the dressing room, breaks out a practice pad, and starts warming up.

"I use singles and doubles to warm up," Burgi explains. "I do them for quite a while—slowly at first, until I start getting the blood going, and then I start working up speed. Then I go through as many rudiments as I can remember—paradiddles, double paradiddles, flams, flam taps, ratamacues. After that I go through single-stroke rolls—threes, fours, fives, and sevens. I try to put in at least an hour every day, sometimes more. I also do twenty minutes of calisthenics and stretching before performing. I like to do some 'runner stretches,' followed by some upper-body things like push-ups and sometimes sit-ups—if I've got a clean floor to do them on! Plus I do jumping-jack-type things. If I have the time, which I usually do on this tour, I spend up to half an hour just doing foot exercises. Basically they're the same things that I would do with my hands—singles, paradiddles, double paradiddles, flams—only I do them slower."

Following some shows, the musicians have had to do a "quick

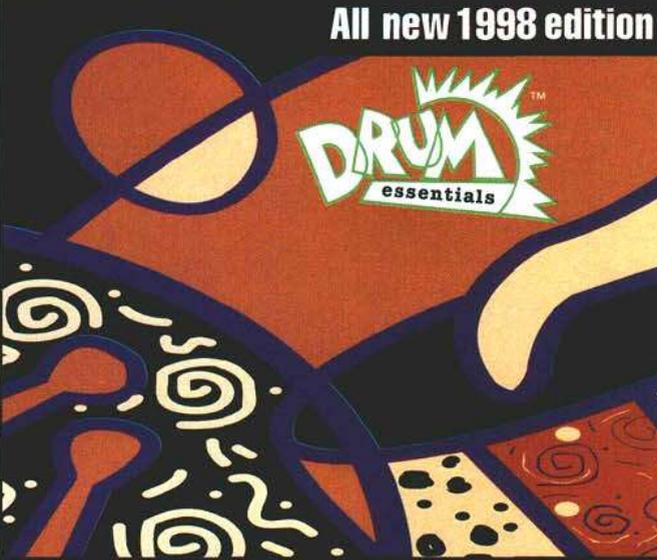
out," which involves immediately getting into a waiting van for a police escort off the premises. "It's been like the Beatles with Enrique," Burgi says in near disbelief, "thousands of screaming fans—mostly young girls. It's been deafening because these women are so nuts for him. It's so powerful, emotional, and loud—that's why we have to do these fast outs. Sometimes he has to secretly leave in an ambulance! Fortunately, our road manager has a bunch of towels waiting in the van and some cold water for those of us who want to rehydrate. I usually drink about a liter right after each show."

After a quick shower and change of clothes, Burgi and the band sometimes go out as a group, or he will meet fans for a drink in the hotel bar. Due to their relaxing schedule, the musicians will get to sleep most nights in the hotel and possibly have a day off before flying to the next stop. This is a real "musician's dream" compared to previous tours Chuck has done, which have included three shows in a row, with nights spent on a bus traveling to the next gig, followed by a "day off" of more bus travel.

In Mexico City, the band performed three shows in the Plaza de Toros, which holds 35,000 people. "I find playing those big gigs relatively stress-free," Chuck admits. "I always get up for playing, but I actually get nervous when I do a small venue because I know that people are going to be that much closer and there's going to be more scrutiny. I'm a bit more under the magnifying glass."

Chuck also believes there is a big difference between studio musicians and touring drummers. "It's two different art forms. One can be an excellent studio musician and yet be a boring live performer. And by the same token, somebody can be a great live performer and be

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absolutely trash in the studio. I've always been working for some type of balance between the two. I appreciate people who play hard and look exciting. I've tried to set my drums up so people can see my face. But I also have my cymbals up fairly high for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that it's more visual for people to see the arm movement than if I had all my cymbals down low and it was all wrist movement."

What is the best part of being on tour? "Being compensated for doing what I love to do," Burgi thoughtfully replies. "Simply being on the road and getting paid to play music every couple of days *and* being a professional tourist at the same time is the best thing about it.

"But it's a whole lot less glamorous than most people think," Chuck adds. "Some of the worst parts of being on the road are missing loved ones, losing sleep, and, for me, the food. I'm a vegetarian, and there are some places that just don't know what that's about. Going to Europe has been eye-opening because they're very meat-oriented societies. Also, when I'm on the road, I lose contacts in New York City, specifically the people who call me for commercials. They find out

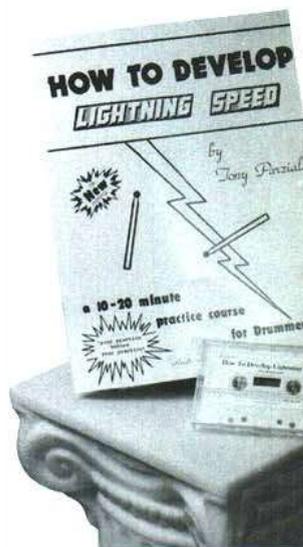
you're not home, so you might not get called for work next time."

Burgi sums up his reflections on touring: "Some people see the road as a constant party. I take it seriously because I want to stay in my best shape. I wasn't always this way, but I have been for the last ten years. Illicit substances are not a part of my life, although they were at one point in the '80s. They only made me sick and play worse. Now I pay more attention to my health and what I'm doing to my body. The drummer is the engine of the whole group. When you're out there doing it every day, the last thing you want to do is drink too much or wake up hung-over or tired. When I'm feeling well, I know the band is going to feel good and I can give everybody 100%. That's my job."

FREDDIE HOLLIDAY
continued from page 106

Even with only one performance in a town, after a show they return to the hotel for a real shower and some relaxation while preparing to leave, sometimes as late as 5:00 A.M. Holliday prefers to hang out in the bus's lounge until he can barely stay

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awake. "I literally have to crawl to bed," he smiles, "because if I go to my bunk any other way I'll just be staring at the ceiling." Not a fan of passing scenery, Freddie prefers to wake up as they arrive in the next city, which is usually about a four-hour ride, although some trips have been twelve hours or more.

"There are always kids outside the bus when we arrive," Holliday describes. "We go straight to the hotel, take a shower, and head to the mall! That's basically how we kill time, you know. We'll eat at the food court and flirt with the girls." Soundcheck is usually around 3:00, followed by dinner at the venue around 5:00. If there is no show that day, "It's mall day!" Holliday says he also tries to work out in the hotel gym for about an hour a day whenever possible.

"We eat real good food," he continues. "The caterers serve stuff like stir-fry or roasted chicken with mashed potatoes. When we were on the first tour, with M.C. Hammer, KFC sponsored it, and there was chicken in the dressing room every single day for six months!"

Freddie tries to practice in his hotel room every now and then, but he says it's hard to practice on stage because there is so much going on—from people hanging lights to technicians setting up the sound system. "I practice a lot of rudiments whenever I can, just to keep my wrists like they should be," he explains. "I go through flams, flam taps, paradiddles.... I think paradiddles are probably my favorite out of all the rudiments. I find myself using them a lot without even knowing it. It may even be a signature part

of my sound."

Boyz II Men's music is mainly R&B, with a pop twist and sometimes even a funky side. How does Holliday pace himself through the show? "Sometimes it does get a little monotonous," he admits. "What I do is just keep my mind on the music. And I hype myself up right before the show, usually by doing curls with dumbbells, about ten on each arm."

And it certainly is a "show" in every sense. Not only does Freddie have to

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dynamically reinforce the singers, he has to percussively emphasize their every movement. And while on their tour of Japan last year, Holliday had a featured drum solo. "I just played what I felt like," the drummer declares. "If I played something the night before that I liked, I would remember that and add it to something else."

Holliday feels the fans are the best part of touring. "I like the screaming," he laughs, recalling two sold-out shows in Sydney, Australia, where fans lined the ramps of a multi-story garage near the stage door just to watch the musicians leave. "They take you to a high like you've never been before. It's a job, but the kids make you feel like you're God."

Holliday readily admits he doesn't really have a "worst part" of touring. "Some guys would tell you they don't get any rest. I guess the worst part about touring for me is missing home...until I get home. Then I miss being on the road!" Freddie does call home every few days, though, to talk to his fifteen-year-old daughter Shaneka and his mother.

Holliday says some of his favorite touring locations have been overseas, due to the incredible fan response there to Boyz II Men. But he also has fond memories of gigs at home. "It's the little towns that I had never heard of—the towns you don't even want to go to—that are usually the places we have the most fun in. Everybody's been so nice."



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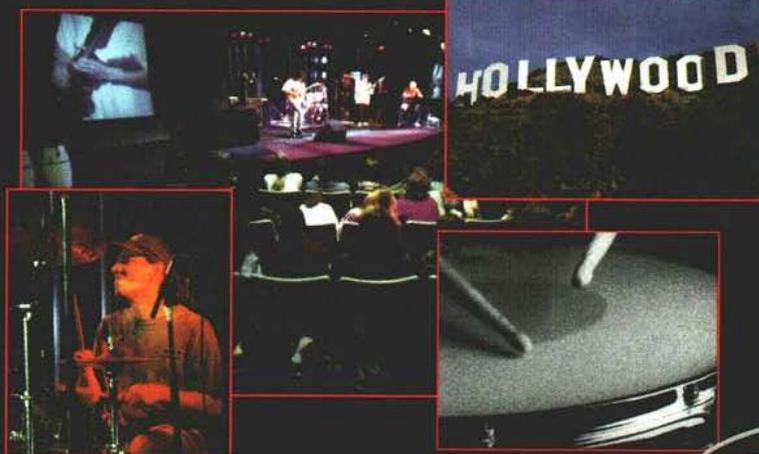
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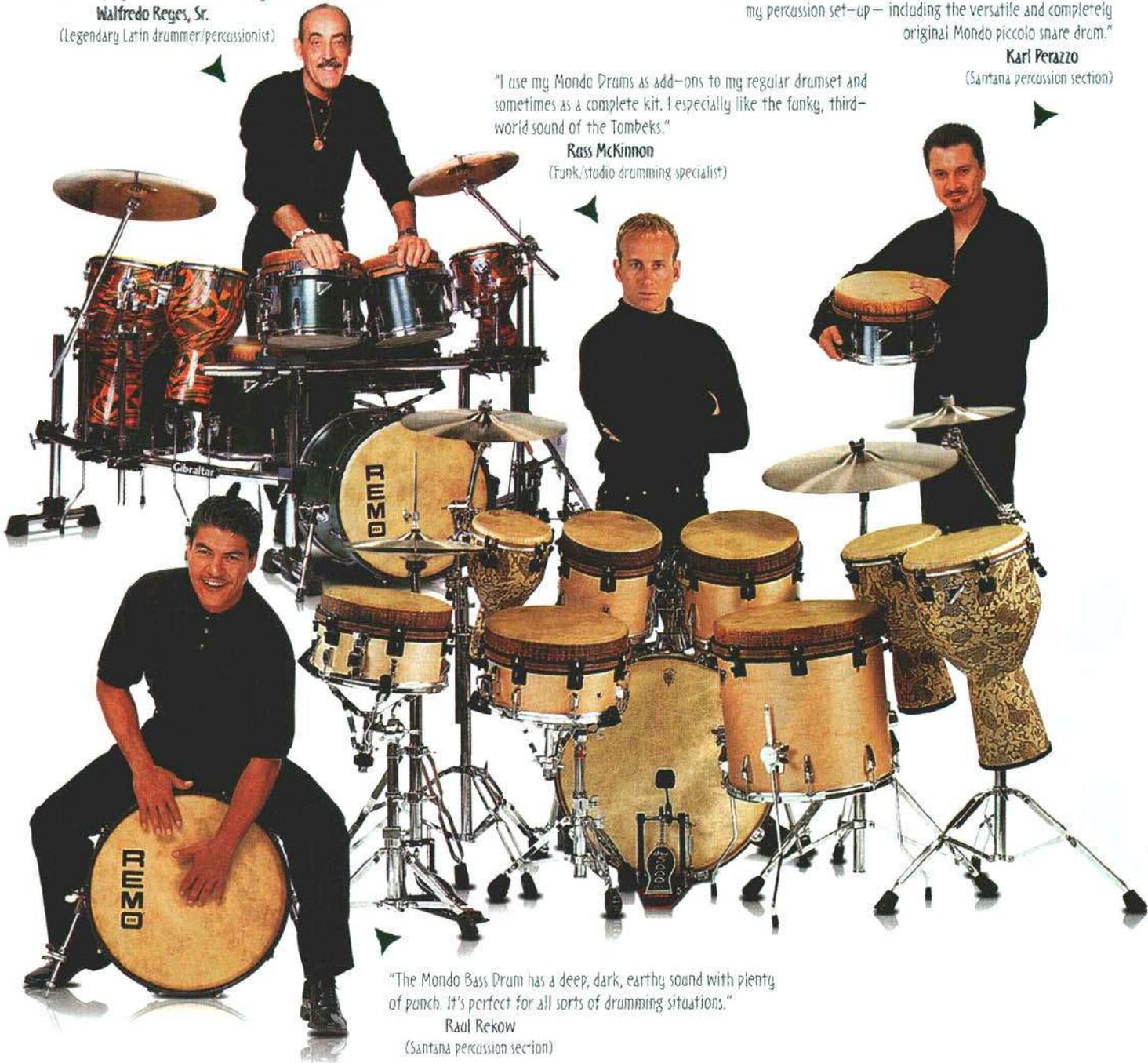
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This year, changes have been made to the ballot categories to reflect

current musical trends. The "Big Band" category has been eliminated; drummers who play primarily in the big band style will now be recognized within the "Mainstream Jazz" category. The "Funk" category has been broadened and renamed "R&B." And the term "Rock" has been removed from the "Pop/Mainstream" category, in recognition of the wide variety of musical styles that make up today's "pop" idiom.

MD'S HONOR ROLL

Artists who have been selected by the *MD* readership as winners in any one category of the Readers Poll for a total of five years are placed on MD's Honor Roll as our way of recognizing their unique talent and lasting popularity. Individuals placed on the Honor Roll in any category are subsequently ineligible in that category, although they remain eligible in other categories. (The "Recorded Performance" category remains open to all artists.) Artists who have achieved Honor Roll status are listed below.

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R&B

Drummers performing funk, rap, hip-hop, blues, etc.

Recorded Performance

Your favorite recording released within the past twelve months. Please name the artist, the drummer, the song, and the album.

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2. Please print or type your selection in the corresponding box.
3. Make only one selection in each category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.
4. Affix appropriate postage and mail the ballot to *Modern Drummer's* offices at the address shown on the reverse of the ballot card.
5. Ballots must be postmarked no later than **March 1, 1998**. Results will be announced in the July '98 issue of *MD*.
6. **Return Address/Prize Drawing:** Fill in the return address lines on the address side of the ballot to be eligible for MD's voter-appreciation drawing. Three ballots will be drawn at random; each winner will receive a *Flashback Tee* shirt and a *Pit Stop Cap* from MD's *Classic Casuals* line.



Finding The Groove

by John Riley

You go into a club and the place is alive with energy. The band is smokin' and the audience is digging it. After one set you are both inspired and exhausted by the experience of hearing such a hot band. It's getting late so you head for home, but on the way you remember that another great band is playing just down the street, and you decide to pop in to check it out. Here the scene is quite different: The club is packed, but there is no "buzz" in the air. The band is playing, yet the audience is very passive: People are talking, and no one is bobbing their head or tapping their toes.

Some bands swing from the very first note. Others may not swing for an entire night. When a band is grooving, everyone feels loose and into the music; no one is tense. The players feel confident that they can play almost anything, and, at times, they are indeed "playing over their heads." How can a drummer create a good feeling every time he or she plays?

To answer this question, it might be helpful to step back for a moment and examine the ways that drummers and other musicians differ in how they appraise a good drummer. We most often speak about our idols in terms of how great their chops are or how wild their phrasing is or how wicked their bass drum foot is. But this is almost like "Drummers are from Mars, musicians are from Venus," because when another musician talks about his favorite drummer, his point of view is often totally different from ours.

Although music is a collective endeavor, bandleaders invariably talk about drummers in selfish terms—a great drummer is the one who plays in a way that allows the other musicians to feel that they are playing *their* best. Most bandleaders don't know a John Bonham lick from a five-stroke roll—and they don't need to! I've *never* heard a musician say that the reason that he hired a particular drummer was because of that drummer's chops. The bottom line is, people hire the drummers who make *them* sound good—period.

The intricacies of how a drummer creates that great feeling are immaterial to the other musicians. If you seek to become a "name" bandleader's drummer, what you need to do is play in a way that makes that bandleader feel even more comfortable and creative in his own playing than any *other* drummer makes him feel. Once

you've established that you can do that (which is obviously easier said than done), then you might get an opportunity to show the other aspects of your drumming prowess.

The way that we develop our skills shapes our concept. Most players go through very important formative periods in which they emulate their favorite players. They try to play the ride cymbal patterns or the backbeats of their idols. They dissect and analyze: "If only I can phrase my cymbal beat exactly like so-and-so, then I'll be grooving!"

I went through the same process, and, at first, felt as though I *was* swinging just like my idol. But after a month or two of playing "his" time, both on recordings and live, I became unsure whether it was really swinging or not. At that point I became dissatisfied with my feel, and I searched for an even *more* swinging player to emulate in the hopes that adopting another master's approach would be the answer for me.

Through emulating a number of great players—the process consisted of studying and playing with their recordings and going to their concerts seeking direct musical insight—I gained many things: more control of the instrument; a familiarity with the different "dialects" of drumming; the realization that in order to become a great drummer one also had to be a great musician; an increased awareness of the importance of knowing tunes; some concept of what was expected of a professional musician; and respect for the mastery and the passion that great musicians exhibit. What I *didn't* discover by copying people was how I could make a band swing. The reason for this is that as I attempted to play their time feel, I was more concerned with recreating their thing—"Is this the right way?"—than with creating a groove, and music, with the people I was actually playing with at that moment.

The things that my idols played worked well largely because they were played "in the moment." The ideas flowed in the context of that music, with those players, on that day. Their particular approach to playing the time grooved because of the chemistry of that combination of players. By emulating the masters, what I did discover was that, while each of my idols had a very personal way of playing the time, all the way from loose and on the bottom of the beat to tight and on top, there *were* certain similarities in their

"Whether it's Mozart, Miles, or Mötley Crüe, music works when the musicians are trying to play together. There should never be an 'I'm right and you're wrong' attitude."

approach and feeling for music that I had to incorporate into my playing in order to swing.

Okay, so back to my original question: Where does the groove come from? Why does one band swing and another flounder? What is happening on the bandstand when the band is smoking? What is missing when a band isn't grooving?

As a tune is being counted off, each player makes his own appraisal of exactly what the tempo is. The song begins, and each player plays the tempo that they think was counted off. At this point the really good players are *all ears*. They are simultaneously playing their parts and making instantaneous assessments of how the collective groove is jelling. If there is a problem hooking up, the players will subtly adjust by moving towards each other time-wise and find the groove before anyone off the bandstand is even aware that there is a problem. There is never an "I'm right and you're wrong" attitude. Music works—whether it's Mozart, Miles, or Motley Crue—when the musicians are trying to play together. Players give up a little of their own individualism, their egos, for the sake of the whole.

The groove is communicated through the quarter-note pulse. A grooving pulse will definitely be metronomic, but the feel will be more "alive" when it is apparent that people, not machines, are providing this pulse for the enjoyment of others. The groove must feel uplifting, like it is moving forward, going somewhere without rushing.

As the quarter note is being established, the other players and the audience listen. After a couple of measures they start to anticipate exactly where the quarter notes will fall. When the quarter notes are consistently placed exactly where the other players and the audience expect them, then everyone relaxes. The toes start to tap, the heads start to bob, and the musicians start to play with greater assuredness. Each player begins to feel that he can play almost any idea that comes into his head because it will sound great over this unwavering, infectious, unflappable quarter-note pulse.

Obviously music grooves most easily when the rhythm section is locked up. But playing in perfect unison isn't the only way to groove. As long as the relationship between the bass player's placement of the beat and the drummer's placement is consistent, the music will groove. One or the other can be "on top" as long as the distance between the two is not *so* great that there is no center to the time, and as long as the relationship is stable. When one player tries to push or pull the other, it just won't groove.

Listen for yourself. Check out two swinging rhythm sections: Philly Joe Jones and Paul Chambers with Miles Davis, and Elvin Jones and Jimmy Garrison with John Coltrane. With Miles, Philly Joe was always a little ahead of Chambers. Elvin and Garrison found that the opposite relationship was their ticket to grooving behind Coltrane. Sometimes a little tension between the bass and drums can add to the intensity of the music. The key to these two relationships was that the distance between them time-wise was small, and each individual played with a confident, consistent pulse.

Try this experiment: Record yourself playing to a CD. Set it up so that you record both your playing and the track, not just the drums alone. After you've recorded it, don't listen to it. Rather, record yourself playing to the same track again, but this time try to play on top of the beat. Don't listen to the tape yet. Record your-

self one more time, this time playing behind the beat. Now listen to the three takes of the same song to see how much of a difference you can hear in the groove. Most drummers find that they have to adjust their interpretation of the pulse a lot more than is musically or emotionally comfortable in order to be able to hear any difference on the playback. The moral: We want to play together, so our "big adjustments" tend to be small in reality. Therefore most of the tiny discrepancies that we feel on the bandstand probably don't travel into the audience.

Your volume also affects the feeling of your pulse. If you play with a consistent volume, the time feels more stable than it would if you were frequently accenting randomly. The louder notes will seem to be early and the softer notes will seem to be late. So when establishing the groove it is helpful to play the quarter notes with consistent spacing *and* consistent volume.

Okay, we've covered some general thoughts about grooving. But what if you find yourself playing in an unstable rhythm section? How should you deal with it?

As drummers, when we are confronted with a bass player who rushes, drags—or has no center to his pulse and is just plain all over the place—we usually attempt to improve the situation by playing the time super-clearly. We'll attempt to "show" the bass player exactly where he ought to be putting the beat by nailing it even more precisely than usual, making our beat feel more pointed. But contrary to the intent, tightening up our time will invariably make the discrepancies between the bass player's pulse and our pulse even more obvious and troublesome. If a bass player can't find your time when you play in your normal fashion, forcing the issue by playing extra clearly usually won't help to make the music sound better.

A better idea is to find a way to play that "camouflages" the discrepancies in the time. To do that, I try to make my beat feel as *broad* as possible so that some "corner" of the roving bass player's beat will intersect with a "corner" of my steady beat and make the time appear to jell. Try this approach. I think you will find that making your time feel as broad as possible, rather than as pointed, will put the bass player more at ease, and that alone will help the music to groove.

To recap:

1. Open your ears to the other players. Play together.
2. Think like a musician. Make the other players sound good.
3. Play your own time—not your idol's.
4. Think consistent spacing and volume. Hypnotize with you groove.
5. When there are problems, play strong but become more supple, not more rigid.

Next time we will discuss the two reasons—that's right, there are only two—that a drummer's time fluctuates. Good luck and keep swinging!

John Riley has had a stellar career as a jazz drummer, including gigs and recordings with artists such as John Scofield, Mike Stern, Woody Herman, Bob Mintzer, Dizzy Gillespie, and Stan Getz. He has also written two critically acclaimed books, The Art Of Bop Drumming and Beyond Bop Drumming, published by Manhattan Music Publishing.





Study In Rhythms, Part 1

by Joe Morello
 Transcribed by Jim Jacobus

MUSIC KEY

S.D. 

B.D. 

The purpose of this article is to help you develop the ability to play single or double bass drum patterns while playing various rhythms with your hands. These exercises may look simple at first, but once you begin working on them you'll notice that it will take practice to play them accurately.

There are several ways to approach the following exercises. For example, try playing the hand parts using alternate sticking. Then

play them as all left or right hand strokes. Likewise, try playing the bass drum as singles, and then as double bass (for example, RLRL, LRLR, RLRR). For further development of these exercises, try playing a jazz ride rhythm with your right hand while your left hand plays the notated snare drum line.

Practice these exercises at a comfortable tempo. Concentrate on accuracy rather than speed; speed will follow naturally once you achieve accuracy. It may be a cliché, but "practice makes perfect!"



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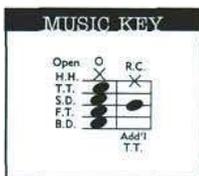
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Creating Drum Parts

by Brian Stephens



At some point in your drumming career you'll undoubtedly have the opportunity to compose original music with others in either a band format or as a hired gun in a studio situation. I am continually asked both in clinics and by my students how I go about creating a musically cohesive drum part that complements the song, especially in a funk context.

To understand how to create good drum parts, you must first understand that there is a dialog that happens, or *should* happen, when you play anything behind the kit. Whether playing jazz, rock, R&B, or funk, you must always treat the art of playing music as if you were in the act of participating in a conversation. The rhythms you play, both in grooves and fills, should take on a quality much like the sentences you use in talking casually with a friend. Your musical "sentence structure" must have an obvious beginning, middle, and end, with related segues from one section to another.

When writing a drum part for a song, you must begin with a central theme. The creation of this theme hinges upon the parts that the other musicians come up with. I listen to the line that the bass player has chosen to play to establish what my bass drum is going to say. These two instruments must work together to create a lower sonic foundation for the musical composition. Next, I look to the leading rhythmic/melodic voice, usually the guitar or keyboard player. This person is outlining the style of the music by the rhythms and subdivisions he or she chooses to play. I usually choose my main cymbal rhythm based on this person's part, complementing their part while leaving space for it to breathe. I place notes so that they complement the stated rhythmic line, much like the bass drum does for the bass player. I may play right along with this player's part or only choose the more salient points of the rhythm, reinforcing the strong points of that player's part.

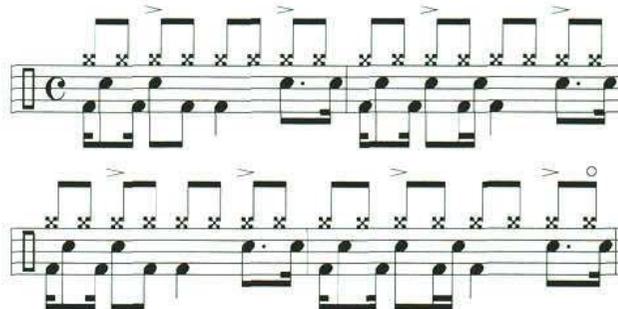
Let's suppose that all of these criteria were considered and the following drum part was created:



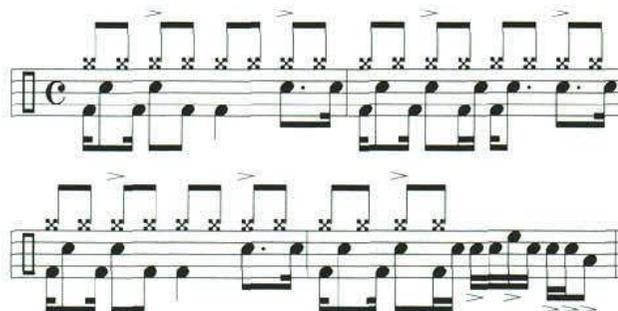
After establishing the main theme for my drum part, I look at the form of the tune. For this example we will use eight-bar phrases. The first eight-bar phrase will be the first point in our musical conversation. Each bar will be a sentence in that exchange of ideas, with the previous example becoming the topic of discussion.

Let's concentrate on the first four bars of the longer phrase. I begin with my main theme in bar one. The second bar continues the idea by restating the theme with a slight variation. This varia-

tion elongates the musical sentence's scope. In bar three, we restate the main theme for the sake of continuity. The fourth bar contains an open hi-hat on the "&" of 4 to give further depth to the conversation and break up our eight-bar point into two smaller four-bar subgroups. These musical sentences look like this:

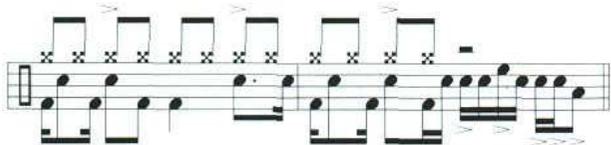


The second half of our eight-bar phrase is constructed in much the same way, using theme and variation. The last bar contains a two-beat fill that fits the tune stylistically:



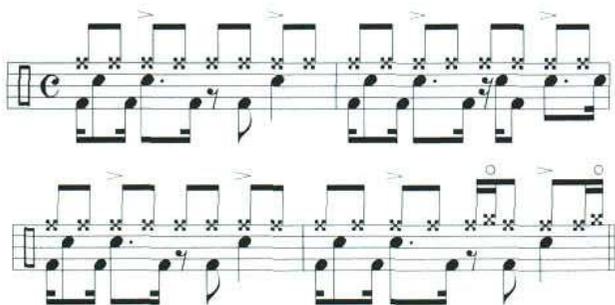
When put together, the first full point of our musical conversation will look like this:





The result of this compositional approach is a cohesive musical statement. There is a beginning in the main theme statement, a middle using variations on the theme and restatement of the theme, and an end with a stylistically fitting fill, which also will become a nice segue into the next section of the tune.

For the next eight-bar phrase, which for our purposes is the next section of our tune, we will move to the ride cymbal. The change of cymbal voices states an obvious move to another section of the tune, but it also introduces a new sonic color that adds depth to the overall musical picture. The use of the ride cymbal's ringing character also gives the chorus a little more intensity than the verse. Based on the parts written by other instrumentalists, our mock chorus drum part may look something like this:



Our construction of the first four bars of the chorus follows much the same scheme as before, using theme and variation to compose a coherent, meaningful part. The use of the hi-hat in bar four's turnaround links our chorus with things played previously in the verse section.

The second four bars of the chorus use the main chorus theme with a variation. For the fill segue back into the verse, I have chosen to use what I call an inside-out paradiddle. This sticking pattern (RLLR, LRRL) gives me a two-beat fill with built-in melodic phrasing. By placing the right hand notes on the toms, a descending melodic line is created, and the left hand plays the accent on the downbeat of 4:



The entire chorus section, on our first pass-through, would be this:



One last section that we should give some attention to is the bridge of the tune. With the bridge, I look for something to give the tune a lift that complements the modulation of the melodic instruments. There are many ways to do this, the main one being a change in the ride rhythm.

For our mock tune, I'm choosing to play the "&" of each beat on the bell of the ride cymbal. Rhythmic combinations of 8th notes and 16th notes are also options that can create the same effect. For this bridge, you might notice that I've chosen to play only 2 and 4 on the snare, leaving out any ghost notes for this section. For this particular bridge, I felt that a more straight-ahead approach creates an open, airy musical canvas that also serves as aural relief for the listener.



The previous examples give you a good idea of how we might continue to further develop our part as the song progresses. Intensity can be built in one of several ways. Placing emphasis, or a slightly pushed accent, on the downbeat or Upbeat of the riding pattern will carve a deeper pocket for our groove. The addition of more notes into the part would also be a method to create more intensity. This method should be introduced and developed in a gradual, step-by-step manner over the course of the entire tune. Careful attention must be paid when using this method so as not to



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clutter up the groove or get in the way of any other instrumentalist (or vocalist, as the case may be). Remember that this is a song and not a drum solo.

These same rules of rhythm composition apply to constructing fills. Try to keep fills simpler and more to the point at the beginning of the tune, increasing their length and complexity over the entire course of the tune. All this should be done while looking at the overall musical picture. Keep in mind that any additions or subtractions that are made in your drum part drastically affect the outcome of the tune.

When in a situation that calls for me to write an effective, musical drum part, the whole compositional process that I've taken you through usually takes only one or two run-throughs to create. In most cases, I am called upon to compose my parts and have them recorded in a very short amount of time. Developing the ability to do this quickly is a skill that is acquired by repetition. I suggest that you find other musicians on your same level and try writing your own tunes. The garage or basement practice room is an excellent place to develop and refine the skills of creating your own parts and interacting with others in a realistic situation.

Brian Stephens is an educator/clinician and freelance musician currently on the teaching faculty of the Atlanta Institute of Music. Brian has a new drum educational Web site called "The Working Drummer" at members.aol.com/profbonz.



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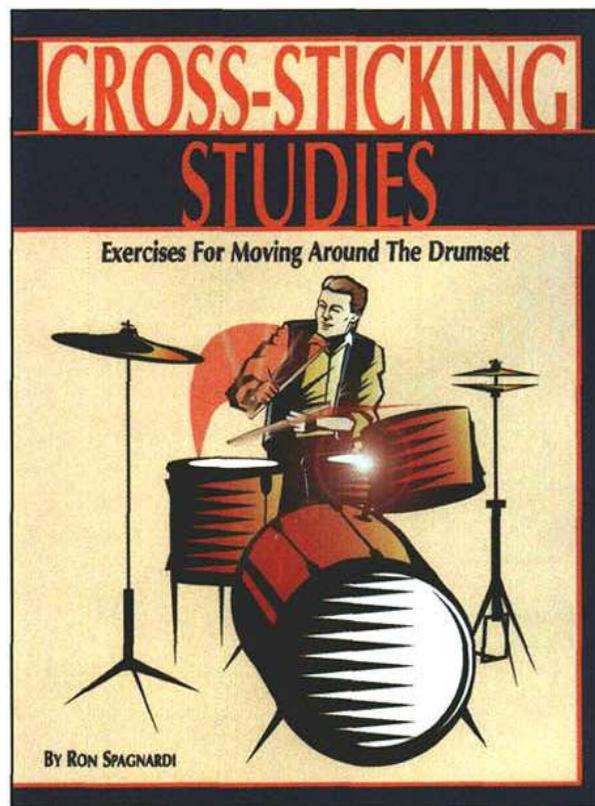
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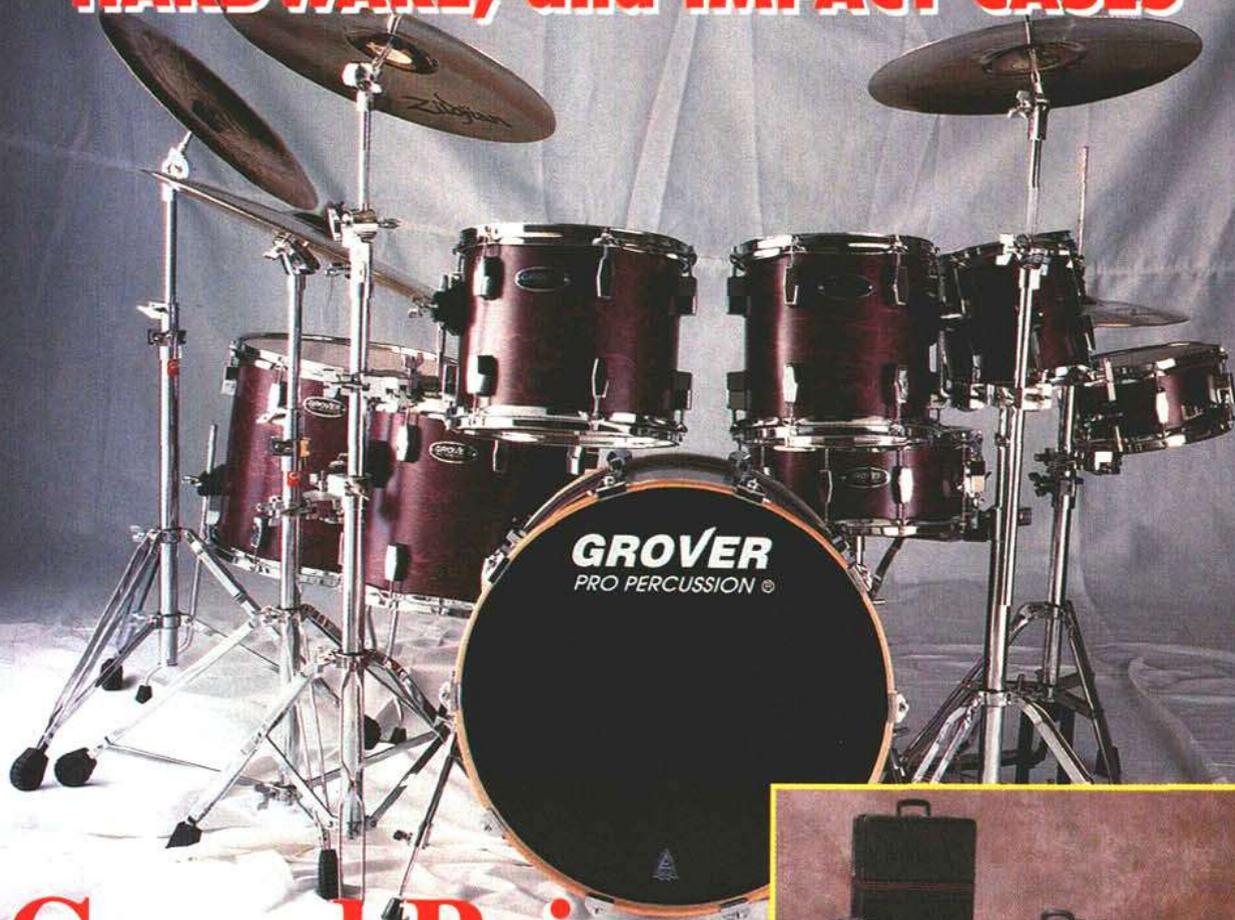
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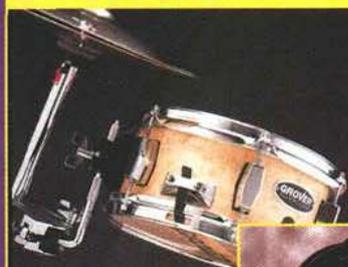


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The Value Of Practicing Slowly

by John A. Dorr

Faster and louder, faster and louder! That's how we know we're getting better. This is America, where bigger and faster is better, right?

With many of my students, it seems that their sense of accomplishment is at first directly related to how fast they can play that newly learned lick. Yet when you ask them to slow the pattern to a crawl, often they are unable to execute it. At first this seems a curious thing. After all, it's always harder to play something fast than it is to play it slow, isn't it? Let's explore that misconception.

Over the years I've become increasingly convinced of the superiority of learning by practicing something very deliberately. Although your brain is a "supercomputer," your body's "output devices" (your limbs) aren't able to keep up with its instructions *during the learning phase* of a new physical activity. An activity such as drumming, which can require four different limb motions simultaneously, is especially difficult to organize consciously. I have specifically chosen the verb "organize" here, as opposed to "coordinate," with a salute to David Garibaldi, who has taught us that we are more mentally *organized* than physically *coordinated*.

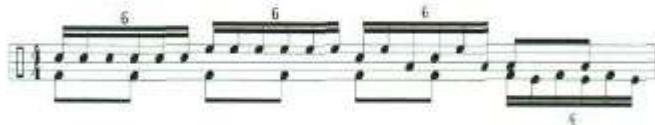
In order to illustrate the limits of our abilities to issue rapid-fire *conscious* commands for physical motion, allow me to digress momentarily. I'm a golfer, and I've found that the game of golf provides a great way to illustrate the need for focus and concentration when learning a physical activity like drumming.

First let me explain how golf is a unique game in many respects. Unlike other sports, in golf nobody is trying to steal your ball away from you. Nobody will try to tackle you or intercept your shot. Unlike other sports, you don't have to hit a ball coming at you at ninety miles per hour. You're allowed to hit it whenever you're good and ready, and everyone around it waits patiently and politely for you to do so. Success in golf only requires your focus and concentration.

Jack Nicklaus, whose well-known powers of concentration have kept him near the top of his game for decades, once wrote that he likes to keep one swing thought (a thought about the motion of his golf swing) in his mind. If necessary, he'd think two swing thoughts, and at the peak of his mental prowess, he felt he could handle three *at most*. In a game that demands extremely developed

powers of focus and single-minded concentration, this master says that during the two and a half seconds it takes to swing a golf club, he can entertain a maximum of three different thoughts.

How does this relate to drumset playing? Consider playing 16th-note triplets at a tempo of 120 beats per minute, with four limbs playing the kit. The math tells us that we could conceivably play more than thirty strokes using all our limbs in the time it takes to swing a golf club. Played at a metronome marking of 120 bpm, this fill, for example, would have 32 events happen in 2 seconds!



Do you suppose we could consciously send stroke-by-stroke thoughts to our muscles at that speed? Not on your life. This kind of pattern is learned from "muscle memory" and conceptualization of groups of notes. To truly learn the pattern, you must take it at a speed where your brain and your limbs can "learn from each other," stroke by stroke. Interestingly, you can often even read and carefully think about the patterns away from the drums and later execute them without ever actually physically practicing them, further proving the value of mental organization.

Our students can't play their new beats slowly because their brains and limbs haven't been accountable to each other on a note-by-note basis at a slower speed. They can play the patterns *a tempo* because they learned them that way, and because they learned how they sound—but not how they work. They don't know the role of each limb, or the exact placement of each note. Precise execution, learned by analytical, note-by-note practice, fosters a more complete understanding of what they play. By practicing more slowly, students invariably discover that they can achieve the breakneck tempos they aspire to even *sooner*. This approach additionally allows more time between note subdivisions, facilitating rhythmic accuracy, because imperfections are easier

"By practicing more slowly, students invariably discover that they can achieve the breakneck tempos they aspire to even sooner."

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The Perception Thing

by D.C. Beemon

The other day I was lurking around the Berklee College of Music looking for a place to hang one of my flyers so that I could lure one of their young sax players over to my house for a session. I didn't spot any billboards, but I overheard a couple of professors talking about a student.

One of them said, "He's absolutely brilliant. I've never seen a student with such a capability for diversity within a single phrase."

His companion chuckled and said, "Hmmm, I have to agree with you. But I was under the impression that the guy is just totally out to lunch. Wacko!"

The first prof replied, "So what's the difference?"

They had a cozy little laugh as they walked away, while I was thinking to myself about the old "fine line between genius and insanity" argument. The student in question was probably neither. It's part of the American phenomenon these days to make a quick analysis and then pigeonhole people as being one extreme or another. You know: "He's either a terrorist or a preacher."

That's what has been happening to me these days. People have been analyzing me and subjecting me to all kinds of indignities. Why? Because I'm forty-five years old, I've been playing the drums for five years, and I've been auditioning.

Before

I'm not half bad, but I'm hardly world-class at this point. I studied with Gary Chaffee for two years, then got into jazz and started what I call the Davis Square Jazz Workshop. We've been meeting for a few months now. Every Saturday we work on standards, picking them out of the *Real Book* in the basement of my house. I'm totally into learning to play in the jazz form.

At the same time, I'm auditioning for whatever comes along. This is where "the perception thing" gets tough. People out there

take a look at me and see somebody who should be at the peak of his game. But when they hear me play, it doesn't jibe. If I were eighteen years old, they might think, "Yeah, he's got potential." But I'm forty-five and losing my hair, and they figure I'm just some old guy who can't play. Or maybe I'm loco, or some kind of psycho killer. Yeah, that's it. I'm a killer.

When I got a call from one of the venerable blues guys in the community, I figured that I had it made.

I looked just like one of these old cats. And blues was swing, right? Just like jazz—only you didn't have to improvise, you just kept playing the same thing over and over again.

Four on the floor and step on the pedal, baby! I was ready for *this* gig. I even got my hands on a CD that these guys had just put out. It was all medium-tempo shuffles. Cake! I worked on my shuffles for two days straight, playing them every which way. Okay, maybe this stuff wasn't as cool as jazz, but I would do this gig. I would "stoop" to playing the blues, which was cool, because it swung. And it was real. This was no crybaby

punk music. There were real emotions being expressed. This was adult stuff. And like I told the guy on the phone, I could keep it simple. I'd just keep the hot licks under wraps.

Now, our subject here is "perceptions." I wanted them to *perceive* me as a bluesman, so I wore a funky suit jacket and a safari shirt buttoned up to my Adam's apple. I was cool. I contemplated shaving my head (to complete the job), but I decided I didn't have to get *that* drastic. My playing would talk the blues for me.

Ironically, my first blues audition was to take place at the House of Blues in Harvard Square—not an inconspicuous location. Rick Russell was in charge of the blues jam there, and he was looking for a drummer. His band played the first set and I came early to check them out.

I was convinced I had this thing nailed. Man, I *knew* I could swing harder than that guy they had up there filling in. I wasn't even nervous.

"He wasn't congratulating me, he was ushering me off the stage. Damn. The hook. I hadn't even gotten warmed up."

Not being nervous had me a little worried. I could use the adrenaline. But I had other things on my mind—like the configuration of this strange drumset. It took me a few minutes to screw the throne down to the proper playing level for me. This dude had practically been playing standing up. And then the 12" tom was set at an angle that I couldn't reach. I couldn't change it because there was a mic' in the way. I figured that I just wouldn't play it. The bass pedal was almost too fluid, and I couldn't hear the bass drum even though it was miked. Where were the monitors? Not back here, obviously. I wasn't used to playing in the back of a stage.

Rick Russell (as big as a house) was totally laid back and nice. He said something like, "This is it," with a little smile on his face. I liked the guy a lot. I think that he thought I was going to kick some butt.

During

I'm still somewhat baffled by what occurred. The experience was kind of a blur. The song called out was "Born In Chicago," which I'd heard many times. (The first time

was more than twenty years ago.)

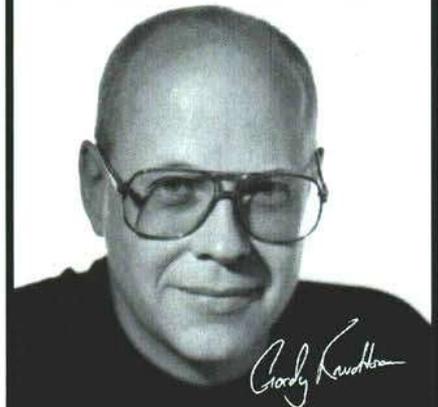
Before we started, Rick turned and said, "Kind of a march." That information immediately translated in my brain to "shuffle," and when the band started up, that's what I went for. Shuffle on the ride cymbal, backbeat on 2 and 4, steady four on the floor.

I was playing the Art Blakey shuffle. Rick turned around and said, "You're dragging the beat," so I kicked it up a little bit, but how much can you do when the thing's already started?

The bass player, a frizzy-haired Donovan/Dylan clone in red sneakers, was giving me these killer glances from time to time. I was thinking, "What the hell have I done wrong?" I was in a kind of isolation booth. I didn't even realize that there was a harp player up there until he came over by the drumset later to orchestrate the end of the song.

I fashioned a car-wreck-style finale to the thing, then looked up and saw that the harpist was kind of hanging there in mid-phrase. He hadn't finished yet, but I had, and the air just went out of the balloon.

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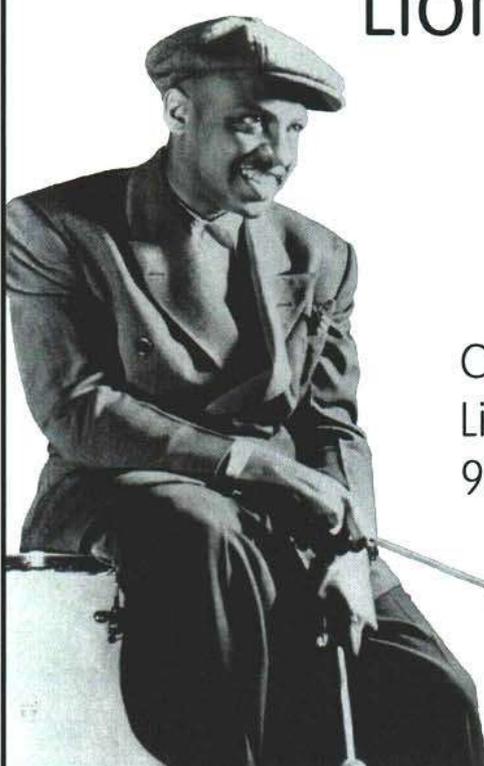
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Then Rick said, "Let's give a hand to Dave. Mr. Dave. Another hand for Mr. Dave."

Nobody had ever called me "Mr. Dave" before. But he wasn't congratulating me. He was ushering me off the stage. Damn. The hook. I hadn't even gotten warmed up.

I walked out of there while some kid took my place on the bandstand. I felt like I'd just lost my best girl. The room seemed to be in slow motion and I was totally in my own time and space zone. It was the kind of surreal feeling you get when you've been in an accident. I didn't know what had happened. I just knew I had to get out of there.

After

It wasn't until the next morning that I realized what "Born In Chicago" was about. My brain must have been working overtime while I was sleeping. I woke up and all of a sudden the beat popped into my head: A straight-8th feel with the accents on 1 and the & of 2. It's really more of a rock beat. All the drummer really has to do is keep 8th-note time on the hi-hat and throw in a few

snare drum fills. But for some reason I'd been playing a shuffle, which is 8th notes—but a different *kind* of 8th notes. Rounded 8ths. Jazz 8ths.

When Rick had told me, "You're dragging the beat," what he really meant was that I had the wrong *feel*. I was giving a rounded feeling to something that needed to be square, which had the effect of dragging the whole thing down. Ironically, it was a song that I'd heard many times. Maybe I kind of said to myself, "Piece of cake; I know that one," after which my brain went dead and I played one of the shuffles that I'd been practicing for two days.

I've tried to rationalize the experience by coming up with a positive angle to it. But what's really befuddling is that I was technically able to play the song. It was even a nice gesture by Rick to give me a "drummer's" song, something that really kicks.

My mistake seems to have been that I didn't focus quickly enough on what was going on. (In fact, not until the next morning.) I realize now that I wasn't even aware of what the bass player and the harp player were doing. Maybe I was playing so loud

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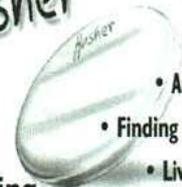
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that I couldn't hear them.

Right from the start, when I sat down, I was too busy tinkering with little problems relating to the strange drumset and worrying about what I would sound like. I should have wiped that stuff out of my mind and focused on what I'd be *playing*. I could have said something like, "Hey guys, what kind of feel do you want?" "A march kind of thing, Dave." "Yeah, but what *kind* of march? A funeral march? Want me to play a shuffle?" I had been so busy practicing shuffles that I wasn't prepared for anything else. And that's what they played: something else.

So what did I learn? First, when preparing for an audition, get your technique in shape, but otherwise wipe the slate clean. The music will dictate what is to be played. Second, listen to the bass player, and at least play the right feel. Unless it's some kind of fusion deal, there aren't that many different possibilities. Quarters...8ths...16ths...shuffles. But even if they had been playing a reggae beat to "Born In Chicago," I should have been ready to jump on it. Third, you only get one chance in this game. Talk about it. Snap your fingers.

"Like this, man? Like this?" Find out what's going to happen before it happens.

I feel better now that I've gotten this humiliating experience off of my chest. It was sitting there like a damp cloth. On the other hand, what if throwing people off the bandstand after one number is common procedure for these guys? Maybe they want them to come back week after week, begging for a job, groveling in the pit, waiting to be called up. I don't know, but I don't think so. I think that I probably stunk. I sure felt out of sync. Anyway, I don't like the blues enough to hang around in these places all night. Heck, I didn't even want the job. And besides, two weeks later some kid was down in my basement telling me that he thought I was a "great drummer."

See, it's all a perception thing—which, in the end, doesn't wash. Perceptions don't matter. Throw them out the window. What matters is the drumming.



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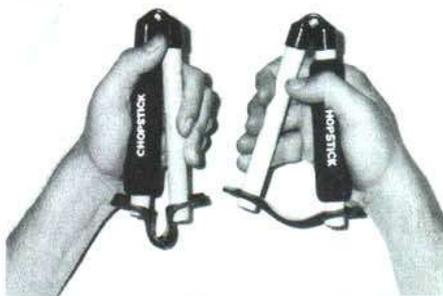
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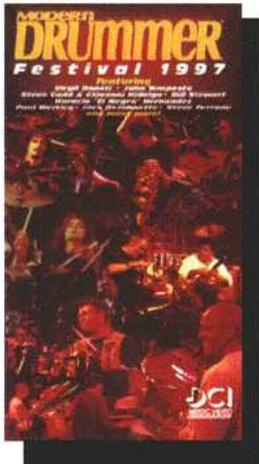
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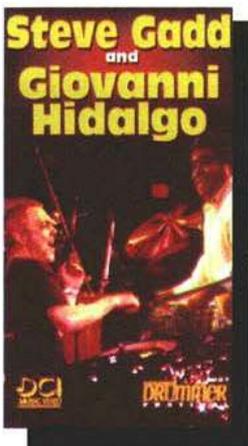
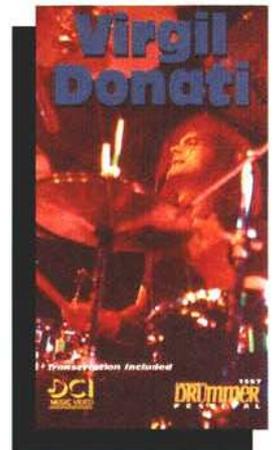
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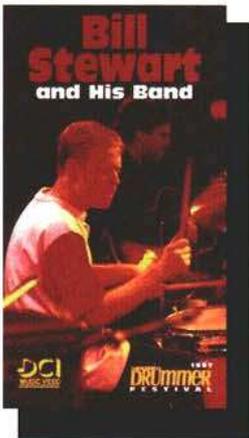


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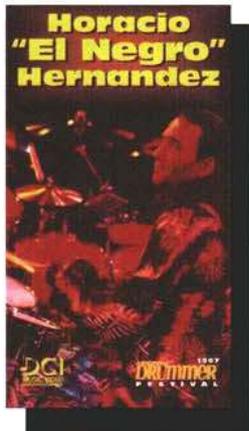
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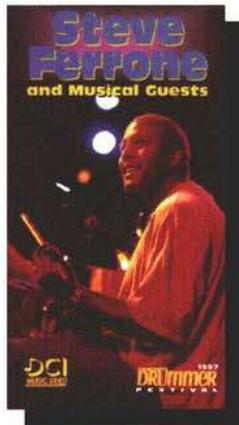
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drummer: John Bonham

with: John Paul Jones (bs, org), Jimmy Page (gtr), Robert Plant (vcl)

If the recent steady stream of Zeppelin compilations, offshoots, and tributes has left your thirst for their music still unquenched, this is the album for you. In fact, it's the most exhilarating stuff we've heard from these guys since *Presence*. Recorded in 1969 and 1971, *BBC Sessions* is everything a live record ought to be: loud, raw, nasty, daring, and totally sincere. Songs are played too fast, tempos occasionally fluctuate, and there's not a tentative note on the entire album. It's great. You'll love it.

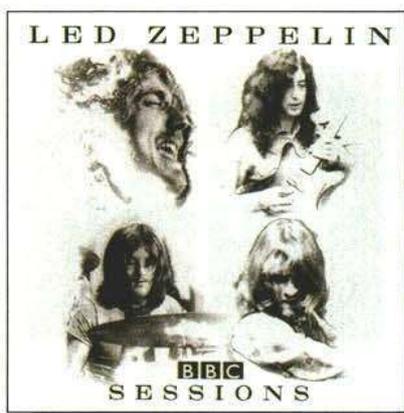
Much of this music has been circulating over the years on various bootlegs, but Jimmy Page's remastering ensures that you've never heard it so clearly. In addition to including several rare or unreleased tunes, *BBC Sessions* highlights

Zeppelin's improvisatory nature by featuring multiple versions of certain songs. Most notably, "Communication Breakdown" includes a half-time break (not found on the studio version) that gets more funky from one version to the next, and "Whole Lotta Love," streamlined and ferocious in '69, becomes part of an extended R&B medley in '71.

John Bonham's elemental genius is brought into sharp focus when you hear him interpret his recorded parts on stage. If on record he's direct and restrained, then live he's unbridled, wasting no opportunity to kick an audience's butt. (Speaking of kicking, *BBC Sessions* shows why John Paul Jones plainly states that his partner conveys more with his right foot than most drummers do with four limbs.) We're also reminded here of Bonzo's ability to play heavy as an anvil or light as a feather, with the deep groove of a Motown timekeeper. His propulsive playing is the spark that ignites his bandmates, pushing them to great heights while they, in turn, inspire their drummer to reach a fiery frenzy.

So even if you're just a casual fan of the mighty Zeppelin, this candid chronicle, their only official live release besides the overrated *Song Remains The Same*, is essential listening.

Michael Parillo



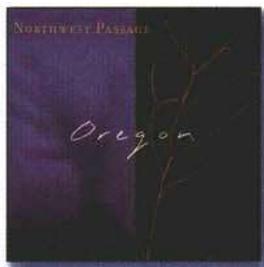
Oregon Northwest Passage (Intuition)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ½
drummers/percussionists: Mark Walker, Arto Tunçboyacıyan

with Ralph Towner (gtr, kybd), Paul McCandless (wdwns), Glen Moore (bs)

Few bands maintain as high and long-lasting a level of integrity as Oregon has over their twenty-seven-year history. On *Northwest Passage*, Oregon returns with their chamber blend of jazz, classical, and world music. As always, the shimmering acoustic sound sports strong writing, impeccable playing, and adventurous improvisation. The new twist is their return to using percussion.

It's a tough seat to fill, marked by a heavy history, beginning with the wonderful percussion of the late Colin Walcott, followed by the pan-cultural arsenal of Trilok Gurtu. And in one unusual experiment, Oregon collaborated with the mighty Elvin Jones on a departure recording. Drummers Walker and Tunçboyacıyan take turns meeting the challenge with authority and sensitivity, while taking care to preserve the band's delicate balance. It's a tall order with hand drums, but even trickier with a kit. Alternating brushes with sticks or combining the two, the newcomers manage to generate fire through a light, understated touch. The cymbal work is key here; both orchestrate with lithe, nimble cymbal rhythms and a keen sense



SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Rhino Records' box-set department strikes gold again, this time with *Passions Of A Man*, a six-CD collection featuring Charles



Mingus's complete Atlantic Records sides. These dates, recorded between 1956 and 1961, mainly feature the great **DANNIE RICHMOND** supporting some of the most adventurous modern jazz music of any era, including important cuts like "Haitian Fight Song," "E's Flat, Ah's Flat Too," and "Moanin'."

The Klezmatics are simply the best neo-klezmer band out there today, and on their latest long-player, *Possessed* (Xenophile), **DAVID LICHT** infuses every mood and groove change (and there are many) with heaps of soul and intelligence.

WALLY SCHNALLE (it rhymes) unleashes fierce modern jazz chops with his driving quintet on *Why Do They Call You That?*, Featuring nine of the drummer/leader's lively originals. (*Retlaw Records*, PO Box 112323, Campbell, CA 95011, (510)440-8644)

Death To The Pixies (4AD/Elektra), a combination best-of/live double CD, goes far in proving how influential on the "modern-rock" generation this shamefully underappreciated Boston band was. Drummer **DAVID LOVERING** was right there with all the Pixies' stops & starts, twists & turns, and bigger-than-life choruses that set the stage for a thousand wanna-be's.

Rating Scale

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

of coloration. Walker and Tun9boyaciyan both deserve the greatest accolade for any drummer playing with a long-history band: They have added something new while sounding as if they've always been a part of it.

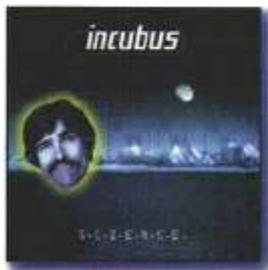
Jeff Potter

Incubus

S.C.I.E.N.C.E. (Immortal/Epic EK 67972)

drummer: Jose "Badmammajamma" Pasillas
with Brandon Boyd (vcl, djembe, didjeridu),

Michael Einziger (gtr), DJ Lyfe (turntable), Alex Katunich (bs), Jeremy Wasser (sx), Charles Waltz (vln) Slappin', scratchin', funk'n', rockin', white-boy ska and a bit of house—Incubus covers it all on *S.C.I.E.N.C.E.*, the band's second album within nine months. Incubus is either too prolific for their own good or possibly trying to put their first disc behind them. No matter, they've put together some fun music here.



There's a lot more to like about drummer Jose Pasillas than his nickname. Flexible as a yoga instructor, Pasillas can bend whichever way the Incubus wind takes him. He's at his best, though, in the tight, upbeat rhythms that underscore the band's brief forays into ska. Pasillas also uses different kits to match the musical

style—a high-pitched, tightly wound snare on the neck-waggin' sprinter's songs, and a bottom-heavy kit for the more straight-ahead drives.

Incubus plays with listeners' minds in Faith No More-ish fashion. At times it's hard to tell whether the band is attempting to dish out some serious music or simply kicking out kitsch. Take "Summer Romance," a song featuring the crackle and pop of vinyl and the kind of '70s groove that's so popular now on the soundtrack circuit.

While you have to admire the players' agility, Incubus certainly isn't the only band trying to distinguish itself by hitting the ball to all fields. In short, being quirky isn't enough these days, and it would be nice to hear what Incubus could do with a little focus. But for now let's not quibble over details. Incubus certainly have the talent and dexterity to go wherever they choose—if they so choose.

Matt Peiken

Laurence Hobgood, Brian Torff, Paul Wertico

Union (Naim Audio)

drummer: Paul Wertico

with Laurence Hobgood (pno), Brian Torff (bs)

Maybe this is what we should be considering "contemporary jazz." No, not some instrumental pop/R&B pablum...not at all. The selections presented here have a fresh, spontaneous approach both to jazz standards and group originals, all of which are filled with colorful sounds, individual improvisation, and magical group chemistry that would be welcome (and needed) on more records. Paul Wertico flat out *nails* every tune's mood and groove, and he also provides a wonderful personality to his territory in the musical landscape.

There's quite a variety to choose from here: swinging, driving, and straight-ahead tunes (with some bombastic "fours") like "Not Enough Of Too Much"; delicate, touching brush work on classic ballads like "My One And Only Love" and "Blue In Green"; and even some unique Latin flavorings on "The Very Thought Of You" and "I'm Glad There Is You."

There are completely improvised gems here as well. "Laurel House" has Mr. Wertico almost exclusively playing dark, earthy, thick

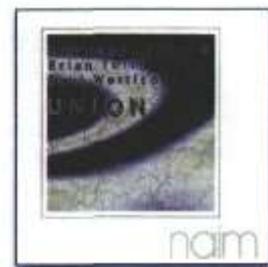
cymbals (a whisper of a brushed snare is the only exception), while "Free Lunch" sees him creating "sheets of sound" on more surfaces than you would expect from a drumset.

"Inflections" is an improvised drum solo featuring hands, brushes, voice, Krupa-esque swing, out-of-time tom flourishes—and one heck of a great, witty ending.

Union closes with Duke Ellington's "What Am I Here For," which at first has you thinking the trio has suddenly gone "lounge" on us. But the tongue is firmly in cheek, for by the end they once again provide playful interplay through their harmony, solos, and—quite wonderfully—some rhythmic manipulations that are just plain fun.

At its best, traditional jazz is smart, improvisational, and full of group chemistry. *Union* proves contemporary jazz can have those qualities, too. (Naim Audio, Southampton Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 2LN, England, 44 (0) 1722 332266, www.naim-audio.com)

Ted Bonar



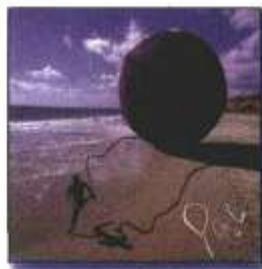
Phish

Slip Stitch And Pass (Elektra)

drummer: Jon Fishman

with Trey Anastasio (gtr), Mike Gordon (bs), Page McConnell (kybd)

Reflecting the synergy and loose, offhanded improvisational power that can spring only from the constant pursuit of tight group interplay, Phish on stage often leave fans wondering, "How'd they do that?" In recent interviews bandmembers have been talking about wanting to get funkier, and it shows on their second live album, recorded March 1, 1997 in a small German nightclub. *Slip Stitch And Pass* is apparently the first of many "live and experimental" offerings that will be released alongside studio LPs—not a bad idea considering the band's inability thus far to match their in-concert euphoria in the studio.



Though honing their funky-bones has indeed brought a groovy new dimension to their ever-evolving sound, this is still Phish, and *Slip Stitch And Pass* contains a satisfying sampling of all things Phishian: patented band goofiness, cleverly chosen cover tunes (I won't spoil the

classic rock surprise hidden within), and long, searching jams paired with tightly composed sections.

As always, Jon Fishman has his priorities in order: He's technically adept but feel-oriented—and, above all, group-minded. Jon constantly pushes himself to compose interesting new beats, like his mutant Afro-Cuban groove on "Taste," while simultaneously getting some fresh ideas cooking within the confines of more traditional rock drumming. Long-time fans will be happy to hear the drummer update the classic live staple "Mike's Song / Weekapaug Groove," creating a deeper pocket in the former, and adding some pizzazz to his off-beat ride pattern in the latter. And he sings, too! Yup, that's Fishman taking the lead during the bridge in "Taste" and lending his slithery baritone to the obligatory barbershop quartet number "Hello My Baby."

Serious musicians with a potent sense of humor, on *Slip Stitch And Pass* the members of Phish demonstrate that rare ability to transcend considerable individual talents and fuse into one mind.

Michael Parillo

Salvador Niebla

Azul (Nuevos Medios S.A.)



drummer: Salvador Niebla

with Mojamed Mabrouk (tar), Nan Mercader (bongo), Mone Teruel, Txell Sust, Carmen Cuesta (coro), J. Manuel Canizares, Jordi Bonell, Juan Sanmarti (gtr), Deborah Carter (vcl), Carles Benavent, Ignacio Zamora, Acelino de Paula (bs), and others

When Salvador Niebla's "Eyes" shifts from a foundation of ancient percussion sounds into a programmed supergroove, it shows the length and breadth of music delivered on the satisfying *Azul*. Niebla gathers great combinations of instruments and keeps the emphasis moving between old world wailing and digital sequencers, between a fat snare backbeat on the Miles-ish "The

Last Good Guys" and the outback sounds of "Azul." No less than twenty-six musicians are employed on this rich undertaking.

Here Niebla shines as a composer and programmer, arranger and drummer. He turns the beat inside out on the opening "Rumba Forever," and delivers a collage of programmed sequences, vocals, and constant drum soloing on "Espejismos." This is

haunting, beautiful, and very musical instrumentation. The vocals are challenging too: Deborah Carter's voice is an important melodic tool rather than a mere splash of ear candy. This is endearing and all-encompassing world beat fusion from a drummer/composer to watch. (*Nuevos Medios S.A., Marques Del Duero, 8, Madrid 28001, Spain*)

Robin Tolleson

Paracumbe

Tambo (Ashe/Rounder)



percussionists: Emanuel Drufranse Gonzalez, Nelia Lebron Robles, Hector Calderon

with Ramon Gomez, Angel Luis Reyes, Sara Rosado, Rhenna Lee Santiago, Ivonne Torres, and others

Puerto Rican roots abound on what is probably the best record yet to come from the new Ashe label. Paracumbe may be one of those "national folkloric" groups that often inspire dread, but this is something else indeed—lively, gritty, and just as spicy as can be.

There is much emphasis on the music of Cuba these days, and the African-derived rumba and *son* of that nation can be found everywhere. Paracumbe, however, play the *bomba* and *plena* of Puerto Rico. Bomba is traditionally played on percussion instruments only: two drums called *baril* (primo and secundo), maracas, and a pair of hardwood sticks called *cuas*. These instruments are used to play what has evolved into five very specific rhythms for accompanying vocalists and a pair of dancers. Plena is more of a song-oriented style, with both African and European influences. Here you will find the unique drums, but also the addition of *marimbola* (a thumb piano), accordion, cuatro, and other more European instruments.

Paracumbe brings to their music strict traditional versions of each style, but more importantly, new visions and mixtures that bring the two forms together. Ensemble founder Emanuel Drufranse Gonzalez is a musicologist who has researched the old music, not just to recreate an art form but to help create a new one. *Tambo* vividly reflects this vision of an overshadowed but still burning-hot percussive culture.

Cliff Furnald

VIDEOS

Carter Beauford

Under The Table And Drumming (DCI)



level: beginner to advanced

\$59.95 (two tapes), 60 minutes each with booklets

Winning the "Up & Coming" drummer award in 1996 and recently voted "Best Pop/Mainstream Rock" drummer by the readers of *Modern Drummer* speaks volumes of the popularity and acceptance of the talents of Dave Matthews Band drummer

Carter Beauford. Carter's aggressive drumming on the commercially successful tune "Ants Marching" propelled him into the national spotlight and made drummers stand up and take notice. This two-video box set is not so much an instructional tool as an insightful look at the technique and influences that have shaped Carter's concept on building the right grooves for the expressive material of the Matthews Band.

On each video, Beauford performs and explains various Dave Matthews tracks in detail. He speaks in humble

praise of the players who have influenced his technique, the two most obvious being Billy Cobham—whom he credits for his "four-stroke" fills—and Dennis Chambers, who could possibly pass for Beauford's twin. He also credits Steve Gadd's performance on Paul Simon's "50 Ways To Leave Your Lover" as the inspiration for his groove ideas on Matthews' "Lover Lay Down." There are also lots of previously unreleased video clips of live Dave Matthews performances, including their performance for President Clinton.

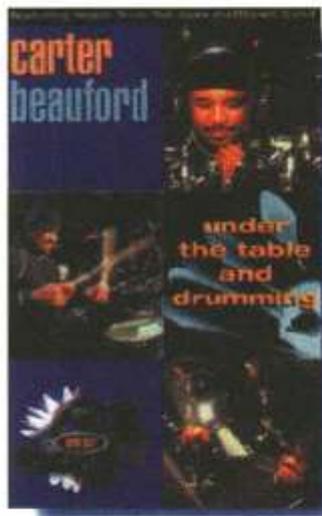
Most interesting here is Beauford's left-handed technique and open-handed approach to the drumkit. Carter explains the development and practical usage of this technique, though he never really goes into detail about his practice techniques. The video box set also contains a full-color poster of Carter, and two booklets of transcribed musical examples taken from each video. The DCI camera angles are excellent as usual, and the two volumes of footage give the viewer a chance to really get to know Beauford and his association with the musical development and personnel of the Dave Matthews Band.

Mike Haid

Beginning Drum Videos

Three new instructional videos aimed at the beginning drum student all underscore a problem: The burgeoning video market encourages quantity, not quality, and the word to the wise is, "Buyer beware."

Discover Drumming (☆☆, American Drum School) addresses itself to the novice who wonders how to assemble a first drumkit, and how to produce a basic sound. The tape costs only \$4.95, and for a parent or student faced with the daunting task of connecting pedal "A" to drum "B," this purchase may prove valuable. This humble video is the first in a series, but my guess



is that most shoppers would choose to wait for volume 2.

The 30-minute *Anyone Can Play Drum Rudiments* (☆, Mel Bay) is about 29 minutes too long. Listless presentation, outdated visual effects, and the complete absence of any explanation as to why one should learn drum rudiments make for a quick lesson in how not to inspire learners. At \$19.95, you get a lot less than you pay for.

Tim Wimer's *60-Minute Guide To Snare Drum Rudiments* (☆☆☆☆, Cassette & Video Learning Systems) is exactly what it claims to be, a comprehensive introduction to the technique of playing a snare drum. The mechanics of setting up and tuning the drum, the proper approach to grip and to body control, along with a good demonstration of the twenty-six standard rudiments—all combine to make this video a valuable learning tool. Wimer's is the only video of the three to include a brochure that provides the written notation for rudiments. The cost is \$9.95, a true bargain in the hit-and-miss world of instructional videos.

Bill Kiely

BOOKS

Afro-Caribbean Practical Playalongs For Drumset

by Chuck Silverman
(Palito Publishing Company)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕
level: beginner to intermediate
\$17.98, cassette and booklet

This package features a 74-minute audiocassette and 26-page booklet that allows students to investigate some Afro-Caribbean

grooves in a real playing situation through the use of "music minus one" tracks. The nine tunes are recorded with and without drum tracks; this allows the reader to first check out how the tunes can be played, and then provides the opportunity to put on the headphones and give it a try without the drum track.

Seven Afro-Cuban grooves are included in the style of son, son montuno, Mozambique (New York style), 6/8, cha cha cha, and mambo. Two Brazilian grooves, the bossa nova and the jazz samba, are also included. Chuck gives some brief background information on each groove, which helps in conceptualizing where these rhythms come from and how to play them. The bossa nova chart is particularly good for the beginning reader, being straight-ahead and focusing on keeping good time with no major kicks. It provides good practice at following charts, making all repeats, and taking the D.S. al coda.

The cha cha cha, "La Orquesta," is much more involved, bringing to mind Ray Barretto's band from the 1970s with its hard drive and clever "cierres" (breaks). The son montuno track, which is a basic repetitive groove (it does not include a chart), is also an excellent way to practice solos on timbales, congas, bongos, and drumset. The same holds true for the mambo and cha cha cha loops.

Overall, this cassette/book package provides a good source of groove practice and reading chart material for drummers, and can also be used by timbale players, congueros, and bongo players as well.

Victor Rendon

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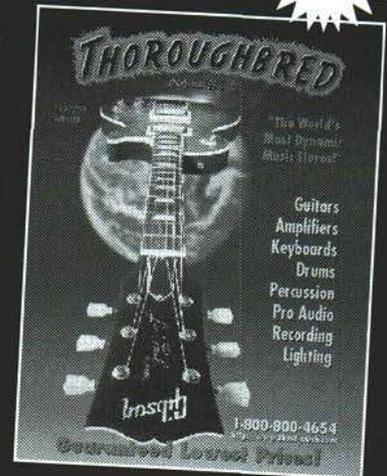
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Making Waves

A Drummer's Life On Cruise Ships, Part Two

by Rich Watson

In part one of "Making Waves" we looked at the positive and negative aspects of a drummer's life on a cruise ship. Let's dive back in to some of the basic musical requirements of the gig.

Passing Musical Muster

Still reading after all the jaded warnings in part one? Then by now you must be wondering if you have the right stuff to cut the gig. This is one of those aforementioned areas that depend on whether you're in the dance band or the show band, so let's examine them separately, starting with dance bands.

Beyond such drumming basics as solid time and dynamic sensitivity, a cruise ship dance band drummer should be comfortable with standard dance styles, including swing, rock, disco (yep), ballads, and standard and Viennese waltzes. You will also need to be able to play Latin beats such as sambas, boleros, merengues, tangos, cha chas, mambo, and bossa novas—all with authenticity according to ballroom dance norms (versus what you may have heard on hot Latin jazz and salsa albums). The reason for this seeming anomaly is that many people come on cruises specifically to practice or show off the dances they've learned in their local dance schools, and some of their dance steps (and accompaniment) incorporate no "hip" at all.

Another strong tool to bring aboard is a broad knowledge of popular music, past and present. Keeping the passengers happy (and dancing) often requires playing requests, so the more tunes you're familiar with, the better.

One of the greatest challenges for any cruise ship dance band drummer is to keep very familiar material fresh for yourself, your bandmates—and therefore ultimately

for the audience—without going hog wild with chops-y workouts or angular stylistic juxtapositions (such as superimposing your favorite greazy Cajun grind on "Tie A Yellow Ribbon" or bulldozing triple-time bop over "Tenderly"). Looking at the upside of these stylistic constraints, this can be an ideal gig for working on your taste, time, and groove.

For show band drummers, *reading well is an absolute must*. Show music is often less regular and predictable than pop and dance forms, so it's the charts, not reliance on standard phrases and rhythms, that keep you in line with the act and the rest of the band. Unfortunately for drummers, though, most drum charts aren't written by drummers, which necessitates the corollary skill of interpreting charts that sometimes, as veteran cruising drummer John Walsh puts it, "don't tell you what you need to know." Badly written charts, he points out, range from merely vague to quite misleading. And standard notation?—Hah! Example 1 (facing page) is an excerpt from a cruise ship production show drum chart that obviously requires some reinterpretation, but it is much clearer and more complete than many.

It's because of this inconsistency of drum part writing that show band drummers, like their dance band counterparts, benefit from experience with and knowledge of a broad range of material. "You have to know tunes," John insists. "If the charts are incomplete, or misleading, or don't tell you the right things to capture the feel, knowing tunes—standards and all kinds of tunes in all styles—will help you anticipate what's coming."

Even some charts that are decently written can be a challenge to navigate because they are littered with cues and changes hastily scrawled by many different drummers (sometimes in different languages) over the years. Example 2 (page 146)

belongs in this category, but isn't nearly as bad as they come.

Other critical drumming skills include proficiency in all musical styles and the ability to switch meters and to play *all* tempos. Also important is the ability and willingness to play at all dynamic levels, from barely audible cocktail lounge dance sets to bashing shows that make your ears ring right through tomorrow.

In recent years, the major cruise lines have focused more and more on elaborate, Vegas-type production shows involving four to twelve singer/dancers. Because of the cost and complexity of these kinds of productions, they usually remain on board and virtually unchanged for at least an entire season, and not infrequently for two or three years. Typically these shows entail many musical styles, meter and tempo changes, and direct segues. Over the past decade, more of these shows have also involved taped musical augmentation, which requires the drummer to be comfortable and competent with a click.

John points out that, frustratingly, the shows' recorded music doesn't always synchronize precisely with the click. The dilemma here, of course, is being able to follow one time reference while temporarily ignoring another. Additional challenges arise when the click was programmed with seeming disregard for the music, such as count-offs that suggest cut time when the music is in four, and vice versa. Tougher still, all the musicians' parts, including drums, are on these production show tapes. "Some of the soundmen know how to eliminate tracks if you want them to, and some don't," John says. "This means sometimes you have to play along with a drummer whose interpretation of the music you don't necessarily agree with."

In addition to the revues, many lines still employ what I call "neo-vaudeville" enter-

tainers, who can board the ship for a single cruise, or for up to several months. These acts include comedians, jugglers, magicians, ventriloquists, and "novelty instrumentalists," such as violinists, xylophonists, accordionists, or harmonica players whose repertoires invariably highlight lightning-fast renditions of "Sabre Dance," "Czardas," "Cumanchero," or "Flight Of The Bumblebee." Not all of even these kinds of acts are badly written and/or totally cheesy—but the cheese factor for most is pretty high.

On the other end of the spectrum, occasionally entertainers (usually vocalists) have classy, intelligent charts, and they present them accordingly. And the larger cruise lines sometimes bring on "name" acts who normally play in Las Vegas or Branson, such as Ben Vereen, Jack Jones, and Nell Carter. Some of these performers bring their own drummers, but most don't. In either case their charts are usually top-notch and a joy to play and hear.

As the drummer, you and the pianist will interact more closely with the cruise director and entertainers than any other sideman. You will also be expected to consult with the aforementioned comedians, jugglers, and magicians to catch jokes and sight cues with rimshots, fills, etc. Maintaining a positive, cooperative attitude even for this kind of *shtick* goes with the territory; at sea, enthusiastic musical support to the entire range of entertainers is what defines "professional." If you're looking for artistic redemption on a nightly basis, you'd best walk briskly away from the dock. Musical elitists are miserable at sea, and they usually make everyone around them miserable, too.

Gear

Some cruise lines provide drumsets, and some even discourage or disallow drummers to bring their own. This can be a blessing, sparing you the hassle and risk of shipping your drums, and of course the wear-and-tear of heavy use and the sometimes grueling conditions at sea. But it is a mixed blessing. Regrettably (but not surprisingly) drummers don't take care of a borrowed set as well as they take care of their own. "Some of the drummers torque the stands and tom mounts so hard, the metal breaks," John Walsh explains disgustedly. "And some of the stands are actu-

ally held together with duct tape. I've fixed or replaced parts on every cruise ship kit I've played on." For this reason, he strongly advises bringing your own pedals and maybe a couple of spares of the stand parts most commonly broken.

Depending on your ship's itinerary, drumming supplies and replacement parts may be unavailable in most of the ports. Take plenty of spare sticks and heads, and an extra bass drum pedal. If your home port doesn't have a well-equipped music store, it's a good idea to know how to contact mail order musical supply companies or a reliable store that will ship goods to your home port.

If you are allowed or required to bring your own kit, remember that cruise ship stages vary in size. Try to find out ahead about available stage space before you bring

a large kit, and always err on the side of conservatism. I never once saw a drum part that called for two bass drums, and although I preferred and used five toms, I could easily have gotten by with three.

With the *possible* exception of cold weather itineraries like Alaska, you'll be required to play outside at least once per cruise for a sail-away celebration, luau, on-deck barbecue, or pool games party. Otherwise you'll be playing inside a climate-controlled lounge or show room. Nevertheless, because the sea air can still rust susceptible stand parts, and, again, respecting the ship's motion, heartier wrap finishes might cause less worry than more delicate stains or lacquers. Good, stable stands are recommended, since the "motion of the ocean" tends to tip over flimsy ones.

Additional percussion instruments such

Example 1

as cowbells, woodblocks, shakers, and chimes are often called for in show material, and are generally appreciated for the sonic variety they provide.

Nice Work If You Can Get It

Okay, so if all this sounds good, how do you get on board? Initially, you'll have to audition for a musician contractor, who may or may not be an employee of the cruise line. Many contractors expect you to come to the line's office; others hold periodic regional tryouts in several countries. One I worked with was known to occasionally "audition" players over the phone! (Not surprisingly, this method had mixed results.)

My audition at the Musicians Union building in Hollywood was of the "cattle call" variety, wherein many musicians, including several drummers, were assembled in a rehearsal room and instructed to sight-read several charts as an ensemble (one rhythm section player at a time, of course), play several styles, and solo. At that particular audition, the veteran MD/pianist was asked to choose the drummer and bassist he preferred. In other situations, you may be alone except for the contractor or MD. Keep in mind that none of these people are interested in blind-ing chops or your ability to play seven over thirteen. First and foremost they want solid timekeeping. Next they want reading skills,

versatility, dynamic sensitivity, and "ears"—awareness of what the other musicians are playing. In the area of "intangibles," they are looking for an agreeable vibe. Next to a diesel oil fire, the most dangerous things on a ship is a blatantly egotistical, irritable, or otherwise abrasive personality. The only "splash" musicians of this ilk are likely to make will occur late in the night.

Once you've successfully auditioned and completed a contract, you won't be required to audition again for future stints with the same line. With the proper recommendations, you will likely be able to "cross over" to other lines without re-auditioning. John Walsh believes that by drumming for numerous lines, he has expanded his range of travel and afforded himself a greater freedom to decline jobs with unfavorable conditions or contract requirements. Be aware, though, that some contractors consider you to have been an investment they were willing to risk and train, and may equate your working with other contractors with treason (even though they work with as many qualified musicians as they can). In retaliation they may avoid or delay rehiring you for future contracts. To avoid ruffling feathers unnecessarily, *after* you've proven yourself a valuable member of a contractor's "stable," ask him what his policy is on "working around." Whatever his response, it will be better if he hears about your defection directly from you than through someone else, after the fact. And as small a world as cruise ship musician booking is, eventually he *will* hear about it.

anchors Aweigh

As you can see, the qualifications, both musical and personal, for succeeding at sea are many. You'll have to be a solid, versatile player with sharp reading skills. And you'll need a positive, easygoing attitude, yet a professional, conscientious approach to the music. In a word, this boils down to *attitude*. My first shipboard MD often intoned, "It's only a boat ride," meaning don't take things too seriously, and don't get a twist in yer boxers because the gig isn't always artistically rewarding. Wise words. If you fit this profile, cruising can be a great way to get your drumming together and have travel experiences you'll remember for the rest of your life. A cruise ship gig is both a job *and* an adventure.

Example 2

The image shows a handwritten musical score for drums, consisting of approximately 12 staves. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, rests, and dynamic markings. Key annotations include "DRUMS" at the top left, "IMILE CYM" (likely a typo for "MILE CYM") on the second staff, and "Solo" written above the sixth staff. The score is heavily annotated with handwritten notes and symbols, including "Beres. 61" and "NEW" on the tenth staff, and "Slower" in a box on the eleventh staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the word "FIN" on the twelfth staff. The notation is dense and appears to be a working draft or a personal score.





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Adam Cruz

by Ken Ross and Victor Rendon

During the early 1990s a young drummer by the name of Adam Cruz emerged on the New York Latin and jazz scene, gaining a reputation for a unique style rooted in the tradition of jazz and Afro-Cuban music. At the age of twenty-three, Cruz sounded like a seasoned veteran, with all the earmarks of a great drummer. Flawless technique, melodic drumming, and uncanny versatility are all part of his eclectic nature. Adam Cruz is an artist with his own voice.

Since landing steady gigs with the prestigious Charles Mingus Dynasty Big Band and Sony recording artist David Sanchez, Cruz is enjoying a successful career as a first-call musician for many name artists, including Steve Turre, Herbie Mann, Hilton Ruiz, Ronnie Cuber, Edward Simon, Giovanni Hidalgo, Airtio Moriera, Danilo Perez, Paquito D'Rivera, Leon Parker, Conrad Herwig, and Tom Harrell.

Inspired by the teachings of his father, Ray Cruz (himself a well-known Latin percussionist), Adam naturally became exposed to music early in his life. "I guess you could say my earliest musical influence came from my father," says Cruz. "He exposed me to jazz at a very early age. I remember listening to Miles, Coltrane, Blakey, and others like that. At the same time I listened to a lot of Latin music, because my father was involved in that scene as a percussionist. I used to listen to him play with his band at a place called Cousins in Brooklyn. I was about eight years old, and I remember feeling the energy coming from that band. It was almost spiritual, and it was a heavy inspiration! My father played with many great people, such as Mongo Santamaria and the salsa band of Bobby Cruz and Richie Ray. He also taught me the basics of the drumset and the function of clave in Latin music."

Adam grew up in Old Bridge, New Jersey, and considers it a blessing that he always had a drumset in his house. When he entered high school, he began taking formal drum lessons with some local teach-

"The one concern I have is that I don't want to be pigeonholed."

ers, focusing on technique and reading. "One teacher—Rich Chandler—caught me up in the whole fusion thing," says Adam. "He turned me on to musicians such as Steve Gadd, Omar Hakim, and Chick Corea. At that time I became obsessed with mastering the technical aspects of the instrument. Another teacher who influenced me greatly was Larry Crocket. Larry played drums for a Motown group. I have a closet full of books that I worked on with him."

On occasion, Adam would take a bus into New York to study with Freddie Waits. "He had me go through many creative exercises," he recalls. "He would also play records for me that he felt were important. And Freddie taught me how to play brushes with their own unique voice, rather than as an extension of the drumsticks."

After landing a few local gigs, Adam enrolled at Rutgers University. "By the time I entered Rutgers I was studying with

Keith Copeland, and I really opened up to jazz," he says. "Keith had a whole method of teaching, based on Alan Dawson's system. He used to tease me because I completed his four-year program in two years." [laughs]

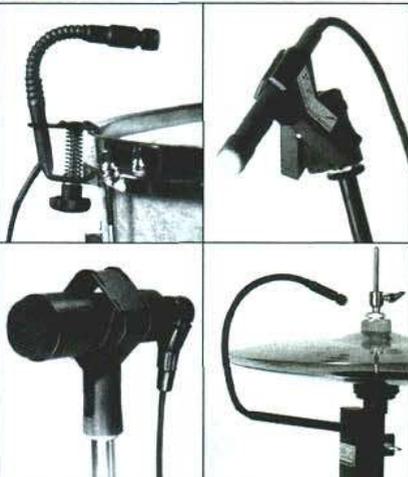
For Adam, getting into jazz took him back to his early days and the great jazz albums his dad always played at home. But it wasn't until he entered Rutgers that he started to fully appreciate the art form and develop a passion for the music. At the same time he also studied orchestral percussion at the school with William Moersh, concentrating mainly on technique and phrasing.

During his last semester at Rutgers, Adam began to focus on the direction he wanted his career to take. "I had all these musical influences," he recalls. "But I wasn't sure where I fit into all of it. I mean, you can practice to attain almost anything you want. For me it was a matter of asking myself, 'What do I really want to play?' That question really gave me a focus. There was nothing I wanted more than to play with high-quality bands like I am now. That meant a lot of sacrifice and even turning down some gigs."

While at Rutgers Adam became close friends with saxophonist David Sanchez. Sanchez in turn hooked Adam up with a young-Latin jazz trumpet player named Charlie Sepulveda. "It was great playing with these guys," Adam enthuses. "I got to play on Charlie's first album, which opened a lot of doors for me. I was a little nervous, but I really liked the way the energy came out on that recording. There were some great players on that album, such as Peter Washington on bass, Danilo Perez on piano, and Ralph Moore on sax. It was just a great experience for me!"

Following his recording debut, Adam began carving a name for himself in the Latin jazz scene. "The drummer that I identified with most in Latin jazz was Steve Berrios," says Adam. "He has a raw, soulful style of playing that really touched me." Eventually Adam landed gigs with many of the top names in Afro-Caribbean music, from great percussionists like Milton Cardona, Airtó Moriera, and Giovanni Hidalgo to piano masters like Hilton Ruiz and Eddie Palmieri, as well as the contemporary Latin jazz giants Paquito

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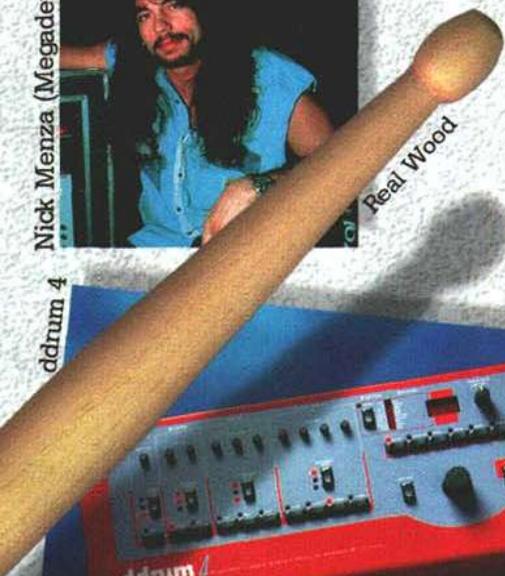
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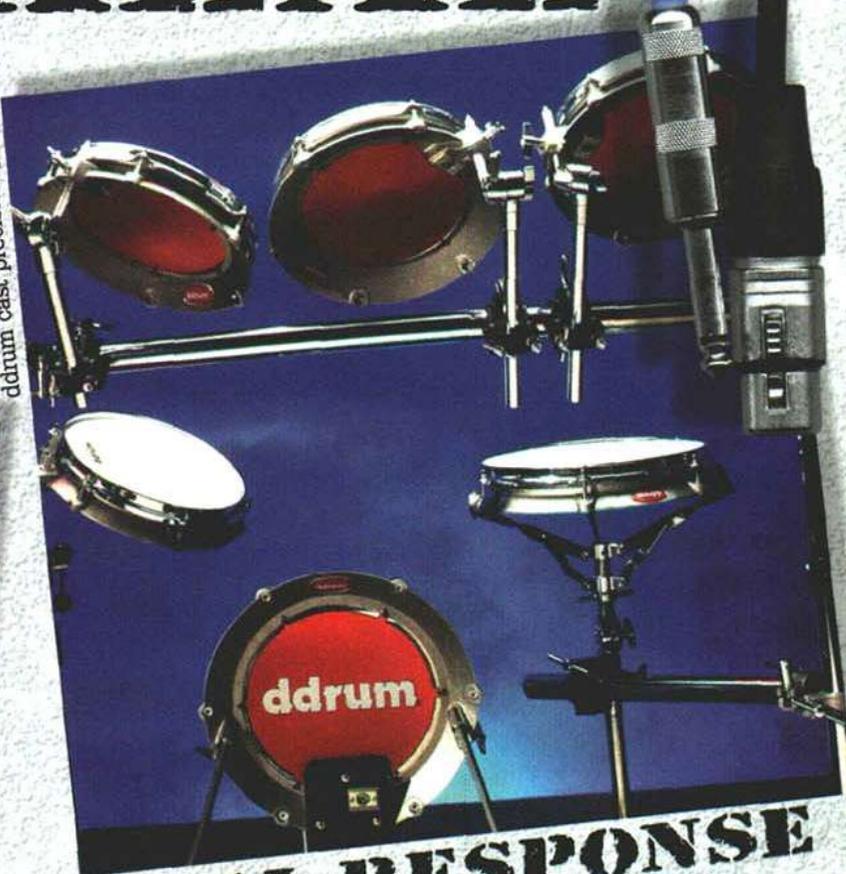
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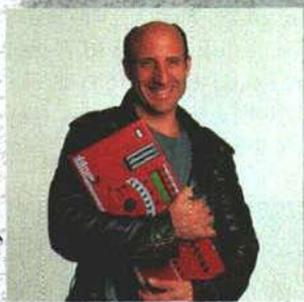


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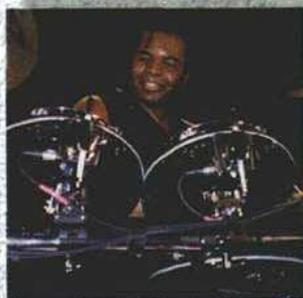
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D'Rivera and Danilo Perez. Adam not only handled the traditional aspects of Latin music, but also added a jazz touch. His skillful playing blended with each ensemble and contributed significantly to every performance.

After moving to New York City, Adam continued to study jazz with hard-core bopper Kenny Washington at the New School for Social Research. "I had read about Kenny, and I really wanted a strong foundation in jazz, so I decided to study with him. Those lessons were intense," recalls Cruz. "At that time I was heavily into Philly Joe, Art Blakey, Art Taylor, Louis Hayes, Max Roach, and Roy Haynes. Roy has got to be at the top of the list. He's been a huge inspiration to me! Other drummers who inspired me are Al Foster and Billy Hart. I was doing everything I could to perfect my art."

Jazz drummer Victor Lewis was another person who played a significant role in Adam's career. "I've always loved Victor's playing," says Cruz. "He's an incredible musician and composer. I used to go to a lot of his gigs when he played with Bobby Watson. One day I convinced Victor to give me a lesson. He had me doing things like trading "eights" with myself and pretending to play along with a tune. I just tried to play as melodically as possible. Victor really seemed to like my concepts. One week later I received a call to sit in with the Mingus Dynasty big band. I found out later the recommendation came from

Victor. I was thrilled!"

The all-star band featured some of New York's finest musicians, including names like Randy Brecker, Ronnie Cuber, Frank Lacey, and Robin Eubanks. "Smitty" Smith was on drums that night. Recalling the night, Cruz confesses he was a little disappointed in his own performance. "I went down to sit in with the band, and Smitty called me up to the bandstand," he recalls. "It's hard to go on a gig cold and sit in—especially with Smitty in the wings. Let's just say I didn't exactly kick ass."

Still, the experience served Adam well. About a year later he got another call to sub for the band. "This time," he says, "I got there early, looked at the charts, got comfortable, and told myself that I needed to play aggressively. Next thing I knew, they asked me to tour with them and I got the gig! That was over three years ago."

Since that time, Adam's name has popped up all over New York, on Latin gigs, jazz gigs, and jingles, with an increasing variety of artists. "The one concern I have," states Adam, "is that I don't like to be pigeonholed. When I look at the reality of my situation, I have a pretty big association with people on the Latin side, and the same with the jazz side. I'm not totally a Latin or jazz player. I'm kind of doing my own thing. That's a big part of the way I play. Look at David Sanchez, Danilo Perez, and Ed Simon. These guys aren't 'Latin' musicians. Sure, they know their stuff, but they are also great jazz musi-

cians. As a matter of fact, at the moment the main thing I'm doing is working with David. His band is really a jazz group with a Latin influence. It's a great situation, because I'm working with some wonderful musicians and we do some straight-ahead jazz and some Latin things. The current members of the band are John Benitez on bass, Edsel Gomez on piano, Pernell Saturnino on congas and miscellaneous percussion, and of course David."

Besides playing drums and various other percussion instruments (from congas and timbales to the steel drums of Trinidad), Adam still finds time to pursue piano studies with Bruce Barth, an extraordinary musician who worked with Terence Blanchard for a number of years. "The lessons are pretty intense," says Adam. "I'm basically learning composition, theory, technique, and some standards. It's where I'm having the most fun, developing myself harmonically and melodically."

Adam says all of these musical excursions enhance his musical vocabulary and add to his creative nature. He enjoys the challenges of music, from the highly complex rhythms of African folkloric drumming to a myriad of textural chords and jazz harmonies. He can sit back and appreciate the genius of a Bach fugue invention, or rock with the latest funk band. This is the essence and spirit of a truly gifted musician.



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The Great Drummers Of Jazz

A Timeline

by Mark Griffith

As brilliant as many of today's drummers are, it's important to remember that contemporary drumming is a direct outgrowth of styles and techniques that were developed many years ago. Whether you play rock, funk, Latin, or some other style, you owe a good part of what you do to the early giants of the drumset—all of whom performed within a musical style we loosely designate as "jazz."

With that in mind, we thought it would be a good idea to offer a quick look at sixteen of the most influential jazz drummers of all time. While you may be familiar with some of the names, there's a good chance you're not aware of all of them. These gentlemen represent the founding fathers of drum history, and as such you should at least have a

passing knowledge of their contribution to *your* art.

Each entry included here contains a brief summation of the drummer's major achievements and his influence on drumming. Also included is a recommended recording, to help you research the unique sound and style that each drummer created.

Of course, there are arguably dozens more drummers who have made important individual contributions to the history of jazz drumming. However, the sixteen presented here are those who *established* styles, *created* techniques, or literally *changed the direction* of jazz itself. They were the originators who laid the groundwork for the stellar achievements of generations of drummers to come.



Baby Dodds (1898-1959)

Baby Dodds brought the original New Orleans style of drumming to the drumset. He occasionally kept time on a top (ride) cymbal, and was one of the first drummers to use a sock cymbal (but reluctantly, and only for a short time). The recording *Baby Dodds* (American Music AMCD-17) presents some of his best work with the Bunk Johnson Group, and also includes Baby talking about playing the drums.

Chick Webb (1907-1939)

The first unanimously acknowledged drum hero and stylist, Webb was a stellar time-keeper who could also bring the house down with a drum solo. Chick is the drummer who defined "swing." The recording *Chick Webb 1929-1934* (Classics 502) captures Chick and his amazing big band at their peak, and includes many of the songs that Webb was best known for.



Dave Tough (1907-1948)

The original "band" drummer, always tasteful, musical, and strong yet subtle. Davey was the first drummer to master the art of playing the brushes. He also had a great sound. Tough didn't play the drums, he played *music*. Anything that Woody Herman recorded with his First Herd displays Davey Tough at his best. Artie Shaw's *My Concerto* (RCA Victor LPT-1020) also features some of Tough's best playing.

Sid Catlett (1910-1951)

The first drummer to make the transition from swing to bebop, and to play with a sense of melody. Big Sid predated Kenny Clarke and Max Roach with the idea of playing accents with his left hand and his bass drum (later called "dropping bombs"). His performances of the songs "Shaw Nuff," "Salt Peanuts," "Lover Man," and "Hot House," recorded on May 11, 1945 with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, are included on *Shaw Nuff* (Musicraft MVSCD 53), and are stupendous.



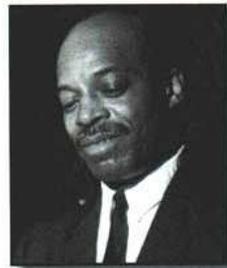


Gene Krupa (1909-1973)

The first drum star. The man who perfected the drum solo, and the greatest drum showman ever. Krupa was a real student of the drums, always taking lessons, even very late in life. An excellent small group *and* big band drummer, his playing on Benny Goodman's *Live At Carnegie Hall* (Columbia G2K 40244), recorded in 1938, is legendary.

Papa Jo Jones (1911-1985)

The father of modern drumming. A virtuoso at playing the hi-hats, and the epitome of "swing." While Davey Tough mastered the art of the brushes, Papa Jo added the vocabulary to that art. He also wrote the book on playing the drums in—and being part of—a rhythm section. *The Essential Jo Jones* (Vanguard 101/2-2) captures everything that made Jo Jones into "Papa" Jo Jones.



Buddy Rich (1917-1987)

The greatest drum soloist *ever*. Buddy did things on the drumset that will never be re-created. His technique, speed, and intensity left everyone who witnessed his playing in awe. His "West Side Story" medley, with its featured drum solo, goes beyond description. *This One's For Basie* (Verve 8177882) was the perfect example of how Rich could push, drive, and swing a band.

Kenny Clarke (1914-1985)

What Papa Jo Jones did for the hi-hat, Kenny did for the ride cymbal. "Klook" took all of the advances made by everyone before him (brushes, swing, drive, hi-hats, dropping bombs, etc.), combined them, and added a strong ride-cymbal beat. While he was the house drummer at Mintons (the club where serious jazz experimentation was happening in the early '40s), he created bebop drumming. His playing on Miles Davis's *Walkin'* (Prestige OJCCD-213-2) makes it an invaluable recording.



Art Blakey (1919-1990)

Blakey was the first drummer to lead a small jazz group, and he did so for more than thirty years. An unrelenting 2 and 4 on the hi-hat and a thunderous press roll became Art's trademarks. Blakey introduced polyrhythms to the drumset, and infused an added sense of urgency to the ride-cymbal pattern. While there were many great recordings, his LP *Free For All* (Blue Note CDP 7 84170 2) particularly captures the swinging excitement and urgency that was Art Blakey.

Max Roach (1924-)

Where Buddy's virtuosity came out in his solos, Max's technical prowess was displayed in his timekeeping and the ease with which he played unbelievably fast tempos. Roach's melodicism also greatly expanded the horizons of the drumset. With the group he co-led with Clifford Brown he recorded *Study In Brown* (Emarcy 814 646-2), in which all of the above skills are displayed at their best.



Shelly Manne (1920-1984)

Shelly Manne was the most popular "West Coast" jazz drummer. Manne's drumming was very smooth and even-keeled, and he was a master of the brushes. Shelly's relaxed feel and light tone helped define a genre of music called "cool jazz." His sound and time feel was never more pronounced than on Sonny Rollins' *Way Out West* (Contemporary OJCCD 337 2), which paired Shelly with the bassist with whom he played the best, Ray Brown.

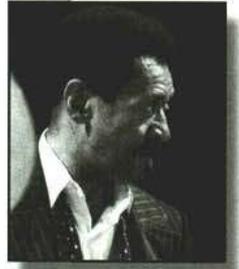


Roy Haynes (1926-)

While Haynes' drumming style is *still* evolving, he can be credited with taking the swing and bebop languages and elongating the time flow. He did this by successfully "breaking up" the time between his limbs and around the drumset. Haynes was also one of the first drummers to free the hi-hat from only playing 2 and 4. Roy's modern approach and his unique drum and cymbal sound make him one of the most recognizable drum voices and stylists ever. His groundbreaking contribution to Chick Corea's *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs* (Blue Note CDP 790055 2) is legendary.

Philly Joe Jones (1923-1985)

Philly Joe Jones advanced the idea that Papa Jo Jones initiated. Philly was the quintessential modern rhythm-section drummer. His resourceful drumming (and brush playing) could unite any rhythm section. His organized and musical way of using the military rudiments added another sound to the drumset vocabulary. Philly Joe's fire, grace, and sense of drama made him the most popular drummer of the mid-'50s to mid-'60s "hard bop" era. His timekeeping and soloing skills are displayed perfectly on Miles Davis's *Milestones* (Columbia CK 40837).



Mel Lewis (1929-1990)

Mel Lewis is credited with bringing the small-group, interactive style of drumming to the big band. He was also one of the first drummers to begin to break up the traditional jazz ride-cymbal pattern. Mel's warm drum and cymbal sound was the perfect complement to his musical warmth, and to the way in which he accompanied other musicians. His drumming was never too aggressive or timid, and his ability to play arrangements makes *Monday Night Recorded Live At The Village Vanguard* (Solid State SS 18048) by the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra one of his best.

Elvin Jones (1927-)

Elvin changed the history of drumming by raising the polyrhythmic approach of Blakey to new levels. His rolling triplet feel influenced jazz and rock drummers to approach the drumset in a totally new way. Elvin's fusing of the "swing style" with a "Latin beat" created a new feel, now referred to simply as "Elvin Latin." Jones' thunderous drumming on John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* (Impulse MCAD-5660) is simply unforgettable.



Tony Williams (1945-1997)

Tony Williams united all the drumming that came before him—Haynes' broken time feel, Roach's melodicism, Blakey's drive, Philly's ability to unite a rhythm section, Buddy's technique, Papa Jo's attitude, and Elvin's polyrhythmic thunder—and added an unrelenting drive to push music forward. In so doing, he bridged the gap between jazz and rock, ultimately creating a totally new style, later dubbed "fusion." Williams kept his time, solos, and music consistently new, fresh, and on the edge. On *Miles Smiles* (Columbia CK48849), he did exactly that.



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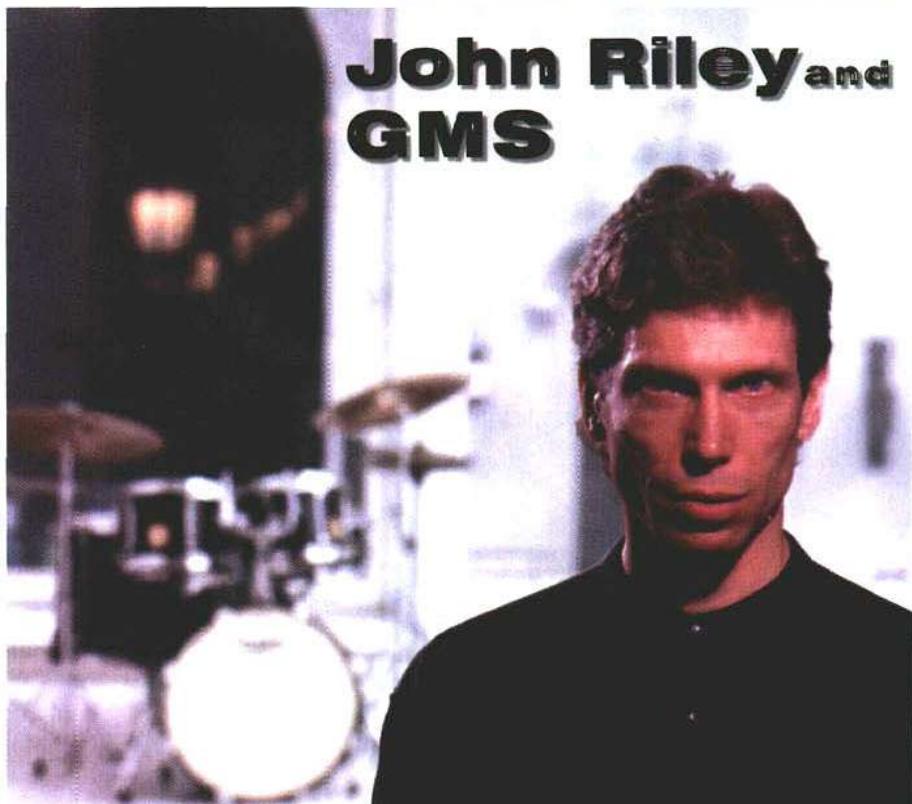
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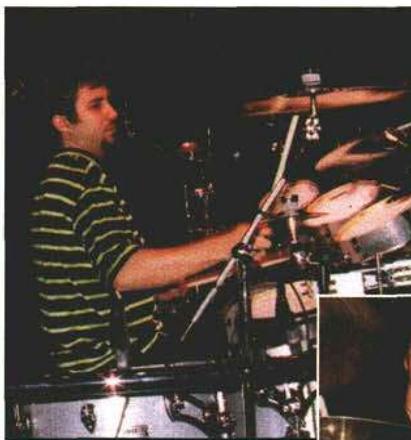
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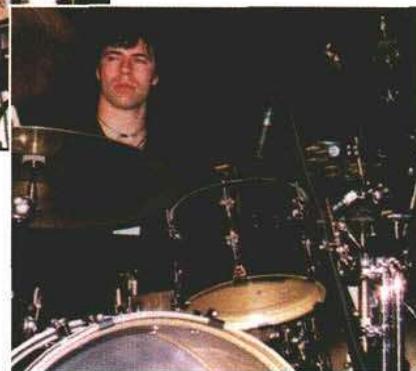
Canada's premier drumming event, the Montreal Drumfest, celebrated its fifth anniversary this past November 8 and 9. The two-day percussion extravaganza featured performers from Canada, the US, and Japan. Each day's presentation began at 10:30 A.M. and ran until past 10:00 each night, but the audience's enthusiasm never dimmed. Here are some highlights of the show.



Saturday's show opened with a blistering set from Canadian fusion drummer Michel April and an all-star band.



Angelo Curcio (of Cory Hart's band) and Alexis Martin (Web) played individually and together, combining tasty compositional work and dynamics with chops and power.



John Riley delivered a highly educational lesson on the essence of jazz feel and time playing. He explained the concepts of "comping" within the structure and melody of a tune, and encouraged drummers to experiment within the form.



Accompanied by Steve Gorn (flute, clarinet, and soprano sax) and Tony Levin (Chapman Stick and bass), studio and touring veteran Jerry Marotta changed the pace with a performance on a Native American-style drumkit and a variety of other ethnic percussion. Jerry and Tony stopped the show when they combined their talents on an instrument that gives new meaning to the term "bass drum."



One of Canada's top contemporary jazz drummers, Magella Cormier, wowed the crowd with an aggressive soloing style that displayed speed, independence, and power.

Chad Wackerman brought a cerebral approach to the day, offering inspiring performances (solo and with tracks from his own CDs) and clear, concise explanations of how to conceptualize odd-time groupings.

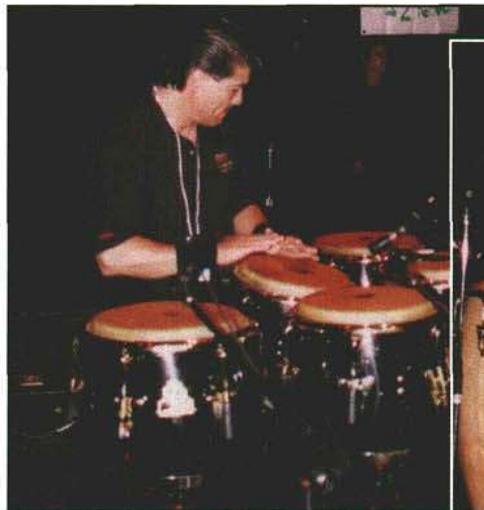


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The irrepressible Chad Smith opened his set with several minutes of stand-up comedy before moving to the kit. He played with Red Hot Chili Peppers tracks to demonstrate the importance of good time and grooving for the benefit of the band. But he also kicked into a solo that displayed some serious hand technique.



The fiery Latin percussion triumvirate of Raul Rekow (congas), Karl Perazzo (timbales), and Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez (drumset) brought Saturday's show to an explosive conclusion, with solo and combined performances that left the audience on its feet and cheering.

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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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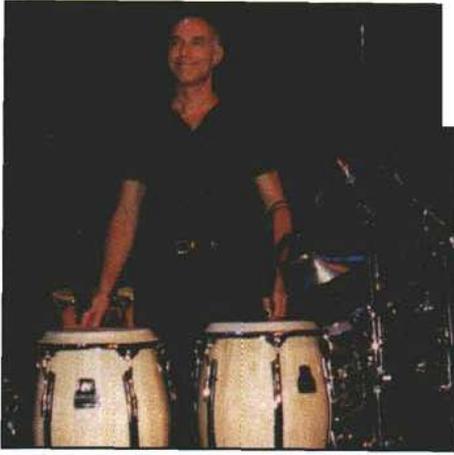
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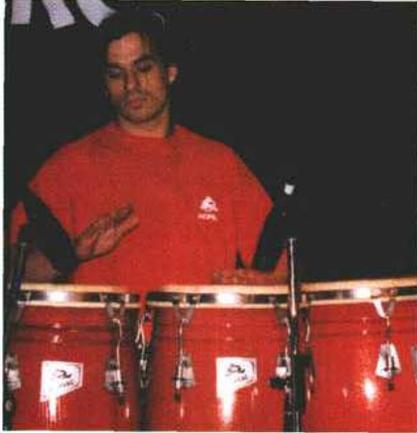
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With a unique approach to rhythm and an absolutely uncanny sense of independence, Efrain Toro had Sunday's crowd scratching their heads. The LA studio veteran and author played on a kit that combined traditional drums with a variety of Latin instruments.

Boston-born progressive rocker Mike Mangini displayed awesome polyrhythmic chops on an unusual "symmetrical" drumkit. His explanation of how to "feel" odd meters was underscored by his playing to Extreme and Steve Vai tracks, and a solo that demonstrated four-way independence and incredible double-bass technique.



Montreal percussionist Michel Seguin combined African and Caribbean stylings in a dynamic set.

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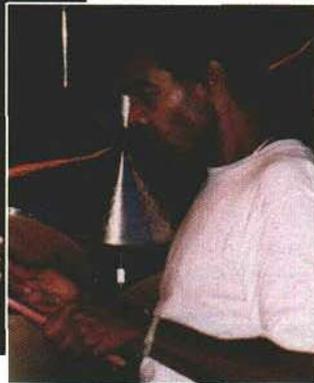
The legendary Joe Moreello entertained the crowd with his light-hearted banter, while simultaneously educating them about various styles of hand technique. Accompanied by a Montreal jazz group, he concluded with a rendition of "Take Five" that brought the crowd to its feet in respect and admiration.



The motivational force of Dom Famularo's words about the "empowerment" offered by drumming was matched only by his dynamic drumkit performances, both solo and to an original track.



Japanese drum star Koza Suganuma and US pop and fusion veteran Gerry Brown teamed up for a highly theatrical performance. After opening with a duet of "Sing, Sing, Sing" on cocktail drums, they traded phrases and played to tracks on their respective drumkits. A highlight of their set came when Koza left his kit, wearing a "trigger suit" that allowed him to play "air drums" while seated alone on a stool at center stage.



Roy "Future Man" Wooten upped the technology ante with a performance that combined several Zendrum electronic percussion instruments with a battery of acoustic drums and cymbals.



Will Calhoun played plenty of the power grooves for which he is famous. But he also showed a more esoteric side, soloing with brushes and bare hand on his kit, using a high-pitched melodic bass drum (played with his left foot) to create a "bass line" for funk patterns, and eventually leaving the kit altogether to explore melodic and rhythmic themes on a Korg Wavedrum and an Udu drum. Will's display of percussive versatility and musicality brought the weekend to a rousing conclusion.

Saturday's show also featured an exciting percussion quartet called Quad, who demonstrated precision unison drumming and choreography on snare drums and on oil drums topped with unsecured drumheads. Also on Saturday was a demo of the Roland *V-Drums* system by Darren Schoepp.

Sunday's show opened with the Yamaha

"Rising Star" Showcase, featuring four talented young drum students performing in a variety of styles with a band of top Montreal-area musicians. The group included Martin Belisle, Chris Leroux, Alexandre D'Amours, and Berti Ekanazi.

Montreal Drumfest '97 was produced by Musicien Quebecois, Inc., with the collaboration

of Musitechnic. Sponsors for the artists included Ayotte drums and drumsticks, Drum Workshop, Evans, GMS, Groove Drums, La Drummerie, LP, Moperc Percussion, Neumann, Paiste, Pearl, Premier, Pro-Mark, Regal Tip, Remo, Roland, Sabian, Sennheiser, Sonor, Taos Drums, Vater, Vic Firth, Yamaha, Zendrum, and Zildjian cymbals and drumsticks.



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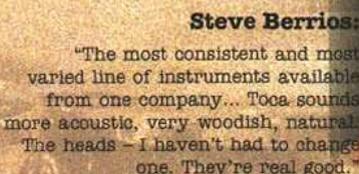
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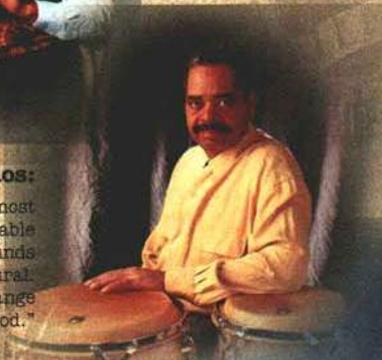
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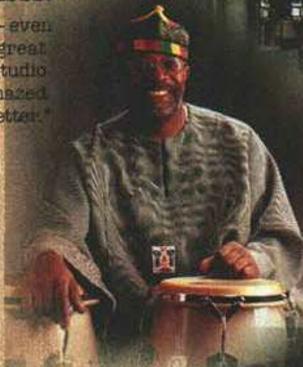
Orestes Vilato:

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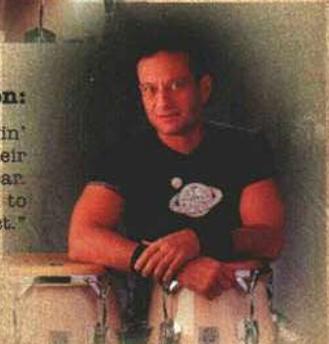
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Joe Fusco

Joe Fusco is a veteran of the New York City/Long Island music scene. Now thirty-eight, he began playing at thirteen, and almost immediately became involved in both school music and local rock bands. He majored in music in college, and has studied privately with Charlie Perry and Tony "Thunder" Smith.

Joe became a teacher himself in 1978, while still pursuing a varied playing career. He's played with progressive rock bands, country bands, Top-40/disco bands, and wedding & show bands—at home and on the road. In 1995 he joined Young & Fabulous, a successful Greenwich Village-based glam/rock band that released its own CD to great acclaim in Europe, Japan, and Canada.

The group was praised by all the NYC newspapers, and has been compared favorably to the legendary New York Dolls.

Joe describes his playing style as favoring "progressive to 'sophisticated' rock, R&B, funk, and new age."

His demo tape illustrates his versatility and creativity in these and other styles, along with an impressive ability to solo with both outstanding technique and tasteful musicality.

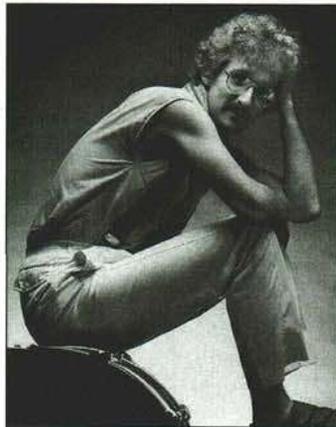
As for goals, Joe would like to find a band with "minimum compromises, where the music is somewhat spiritually motivated. I've been influenced by every drummer and musician I've ever heard," he says. "I'd like to give back some of the inspiration that I've received throughout my career."

Joe is now freelancing actively in the New York City area, often subbing for Tony "Thunder" Smith when that drummer is away on tour with Lou Reed. He plays a Pearl *MLX* kit with Paiste cymbals.

David Johannesson

"The drums were my first love, and I remain very passionate about them," says David Johannesson. But the forty-year-old Torontan is a multi-threat musician who now divides his time equally between the drums, guitar, and singing. "Covering several bases gives me certain advantages," adds David. "I get to appreciate the role each instrument plays, from different perspectives."

David played drums, percussion, guitar, and harmonica on his new CD, *Hard Times*—a straight-ahead blues/rock album currently getting airplay in eastern Canada. He also handled lead vocals and wrote eight of the eleven tracks. In keeping with the style of the music, his drumming exhibits little flash, but it's always solid, tasteful, supportive, and grooving. That's



not surprising, perhaps, in light of some of David's drumming influences: Steve Gadd, Jim Keltner, and Ringo. (He must have suppressed the influences of other drummers he cites, including Buddy Rich, Tony Williams, and Elvin Jones.)

When it comes to equipment, "I have a roomful of drums," says David. "My favorite kits are an all-maple Gretsch and an old black-pearl-finish Premier. I use Zildjian and Sabian cymbals, and I have several snare drums to choose from, depending on the project—although I have a definite fondness for '60s Ludwig *Supraphonics*."

According to David, his main goal is currently "to promote my record, which will involve mostly playing guitar and singing. But I'm also very committed to keeping up my drum chops. Perhaps I'll be able to follow the approach of Don Henley and Phil Collins, by switching back and forth!"

Patrick Handlovsky

At the age of twenty-four, Canada's Patrick Handlovsky has thirteen years of drumming and thousands of miles of traveling under his belt. He started taking lessons in Vancouver, British Columbia, spent his "developmental years" in Calgary, Alberta, and two years ago moved to Kitchener, Ontario, where he immediately became immersed in that city's music scene.

Patrick's first "big influence" was Peter Criss of KISS, followed by Nicko McBrain, Alex Van Halen, Neil Peart, Steve Smith, Eric Carr, and Mike Portnoy. He considers himself a rock drummer, but in the recent past has spent time playing a variety of

musical styles. "I had to adjust to all the different playing situations," says Patrick. "It really improved my playing."

Most recently, Patrick has been a member of Negative Kelvin, a creative pop/rock band that just released their first CD to good regional response. His playing with that group displays a sense of drive and a solid feel—along with no small amount of tasty percussive contributions. Patrick's playing on the CD sessions has also led to some studio work—ironically on jingles and country tunes. "Hey," he says, "anything for music, I do."



Patrick "does" on a Pearl kit, with RotoToms, a Yamaha steel snare drum, and Paiste cymbals. His goal is to make a living playing drums—with Negative Kelvin, or doing sessions, or whatever. "Gigging, playing, and having fun—that's what it's about for me," he says. "Hopefully, one day some drummer will say I was an inspiration to him!"

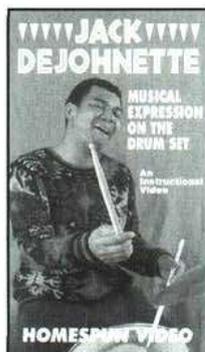
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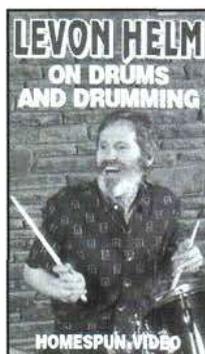
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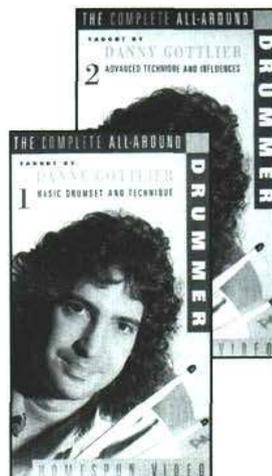
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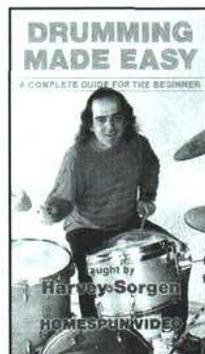
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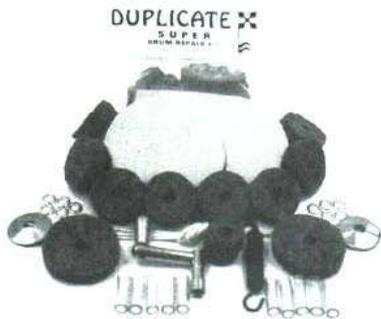
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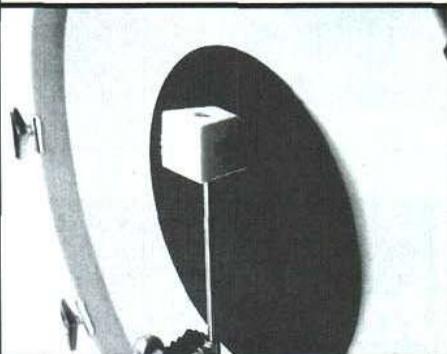
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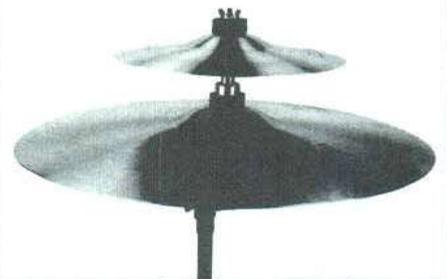
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Seating is limited, and ticket orders must be handled on a first-come, first-served basis—so *send your order today!* Please use the form below (or a photocopy) to order your tickets, and note that your order must be postmarked *no later than April 17, 1998*. Tickets will be accompanied by local directions and transportation information.

ENJOY THE FULL WEEKEND AT A DISCOUNT!

Order a two-day ticket package and receive a discount of \$4 off the price of two daily tickets.

ATTENTION LONG-DISTANCE TRAVELERS!

For the best available airline fares, along with hotel accommodations at discount rates, call *MD's* exclusive Festival Weekend '98 travel agency, Eagle Rock Travel, at (800) 777-0070 ([973] 226-5400 in New Jersey), between 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. (EST). Identify yourself as a Festival-goer upon calling. Please call **ONLY** for travel arrangements. **DO NOT** call Eagle Rock Travel to order Festival tickets.

MD FESTIVAL WEEKEND '98 TICKET ORDER

Sat, May 16: _____ Tkts @ \$25.00 each = \$ _____
 Sun, May 17: _____ Tkts @ \$25.00 each = \$ _____
 Sat/Sun Tkt Pkg: _____ Pkgs @ \$46.00 each = \$ _____

All prices include New Jersey sales tax.

Payment Enclosed MasterCard Visa

Credit Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

I understand that tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and that my order must be received by *MD* postmarked no later than **April 17, 1998**. I also understand that if tickets are no longer available upon *MD's* receipt of my order, my money will be refunded. (PERSONAL CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY; CASH CANNOT BE ACCEPTED. Artists scheduled to appear are subject to change without notice.)

Mail order form to: **MD FESTIVAL WEEKEND '98, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009**

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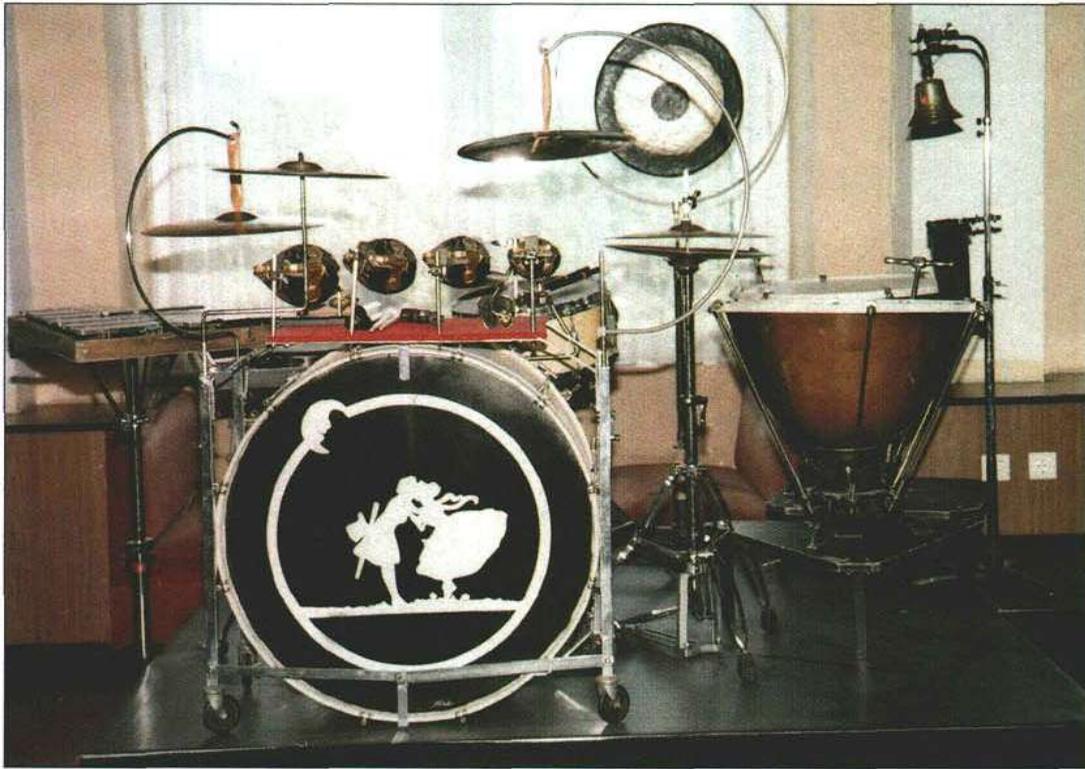
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Percussionist Martin Breinschmid performs in Vienna, Austria's famous Kursalon—a hall in which Johann Strauss conducted concerts over a hundred years ago. It's now a tourist attraction that offers (not surprisingly) concerts of Strauss music. In order to perform the Strauss repertoire authentically, Martin has assembled this collection of classic percussion instruments.

The "kit" includes a 28" Lefima bass drum mounted in a Carlton trap console, which also supports three Zildjian cymbals. One trap table holds four temple blocks, a triangle, a 5" Chinese Fu-sheng cymbal, a Danmar finger-cymbal machine, a conductor's horn, a three-tone train whistle, and a six-shot blank-shoot-

ing pistol! A second table holds a tambourine, a pop gun, and several combination drumstick/mallets. The snare drum is a Premier *Mayfair* model, the hi-hat stand is by Tama, and the glockenspiel is an Austrian-made aluminum instrument. Suspended over the timpani are a tuned handbell and a small gong.

The most historic part of the "kit" are the timps: two Schnellar travel timpani with a hand-tuning mechanism by which the kettle is lifted and pressed against the head. (Schnellar was a timpani player and designer at the beginning of this century. He performed with the Vienna symphony under Gustav Mahler.) The timps have been in use at the Kursalon since 1895!

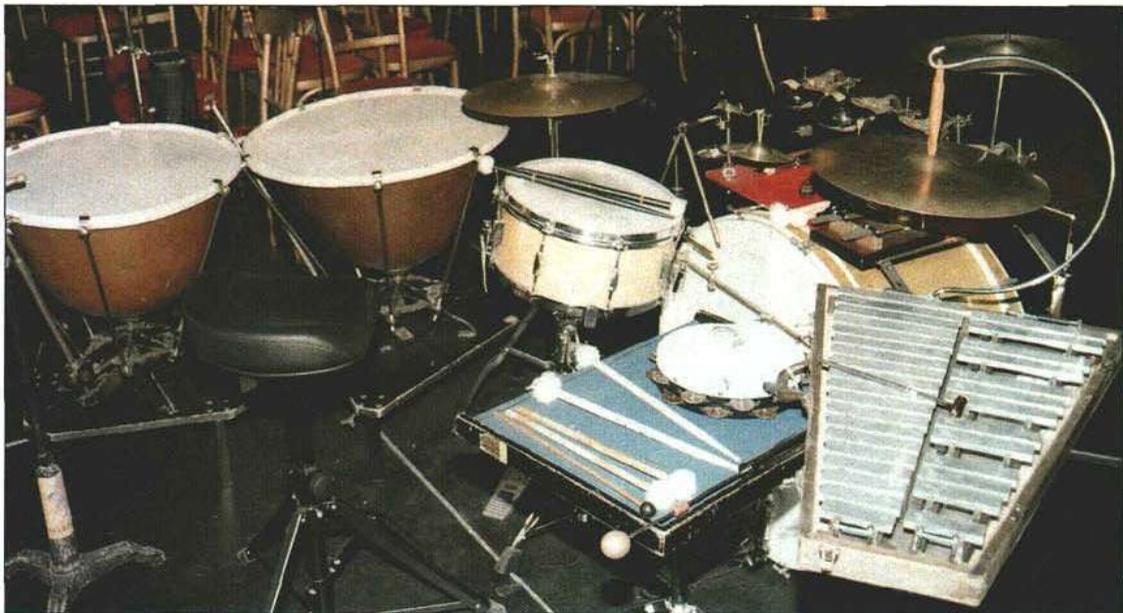


PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted.
2. You may send more than one view of the kit.
3. Only show drums, no people.
4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds.
5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.



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Introducing the finishing touch... our 4 new Burnish colors available on both Masters Custom and our new Prestige Session Select series drums. These stunning hand stained satin finishes offer the look and feel of the finest furniture, and allow the natural wood grain beauty of the Maple shell to show through. In fact, the only thing better than the way they look, is the way these drums sound.

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#180 Orange Burnish



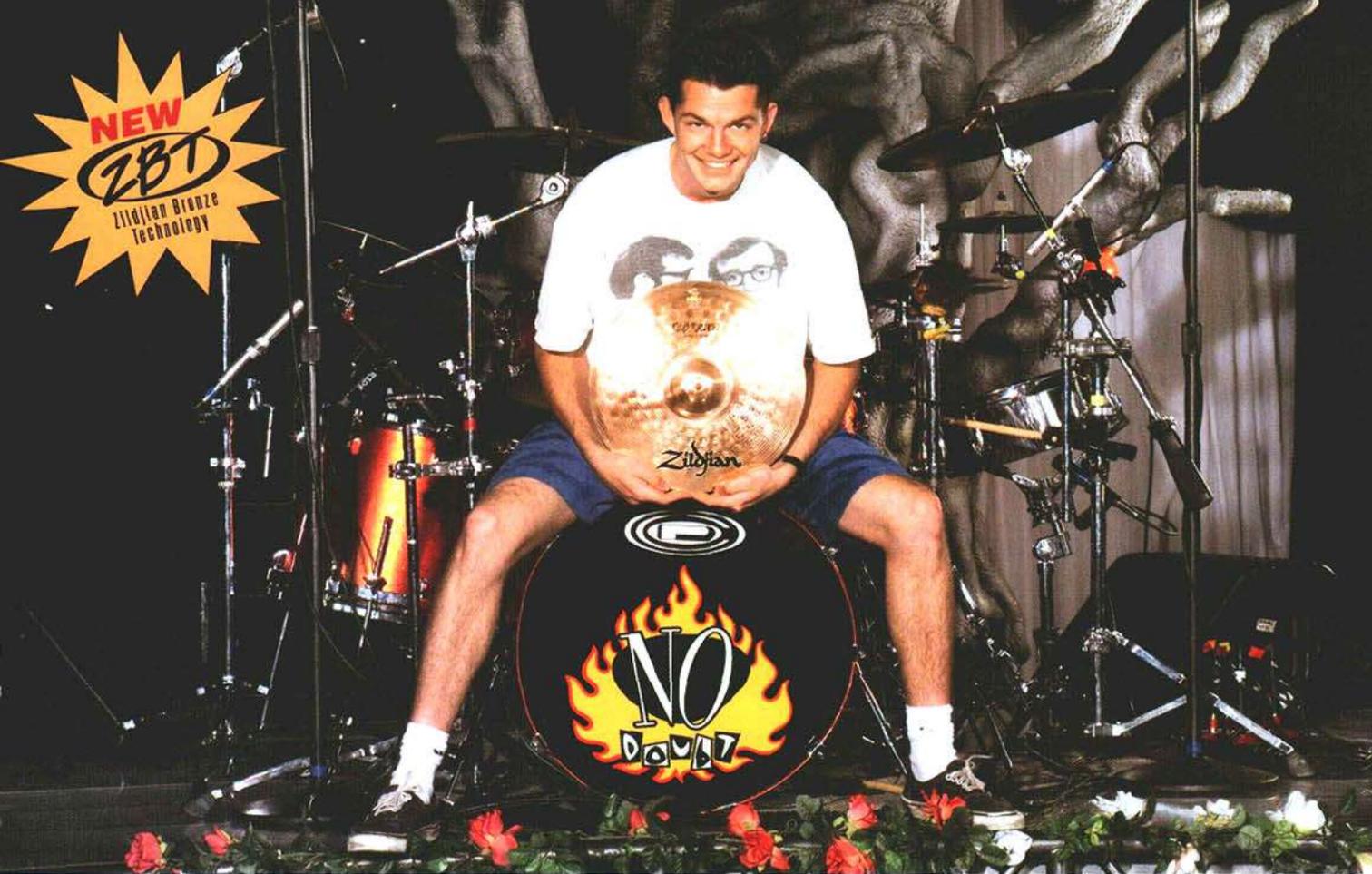
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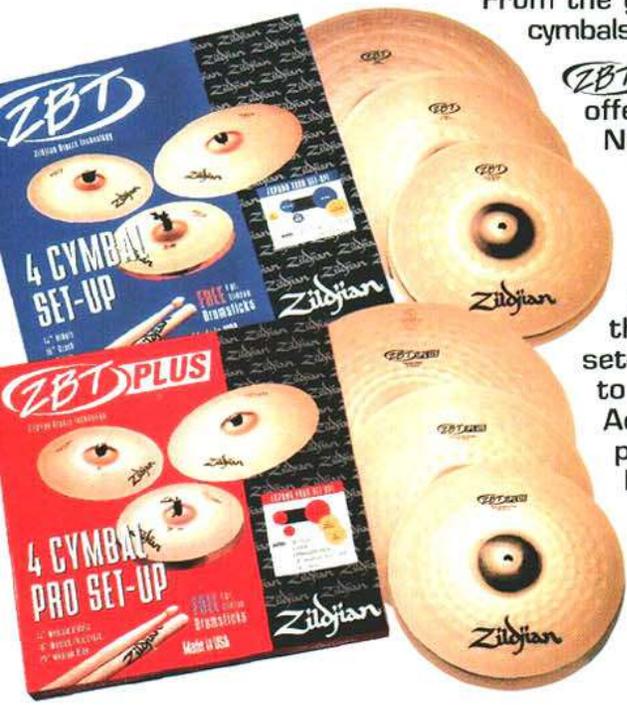
ZBT stands for Zildjian Bronze Technology. These cymbals are created with advanced new manufacturing techniques that result in greatly enhanced character and versatility – all at budget prices.

From the garage to the big stage, Zildjian's ZBT and ZBT-PLUS cymbals offer superior sound quality without breaking your bank account.

ZBT-PLUS Bold, bright, fast and cutting, ZBT-PLUS cymbals offer the ultimate in performance, affordability and durability. Now the very best value available.

ZBT Perfect for the beginning drummer looking for great sounds at a great price. ZBT cymbals are bright and full with focused overtones.

And to make starting out playing Zildjian even easier both these ranges are available in a variety of pre-selected cymbal set-ups for every style and budget. So now there's no need to wait to play Zildjian, the name that Adrian and other great players like Taylor Hawkins, Chad Sexton and Carter Beauford rely on for their distinctive sounds.



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