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The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

November 1998

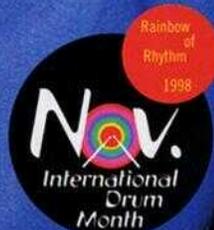
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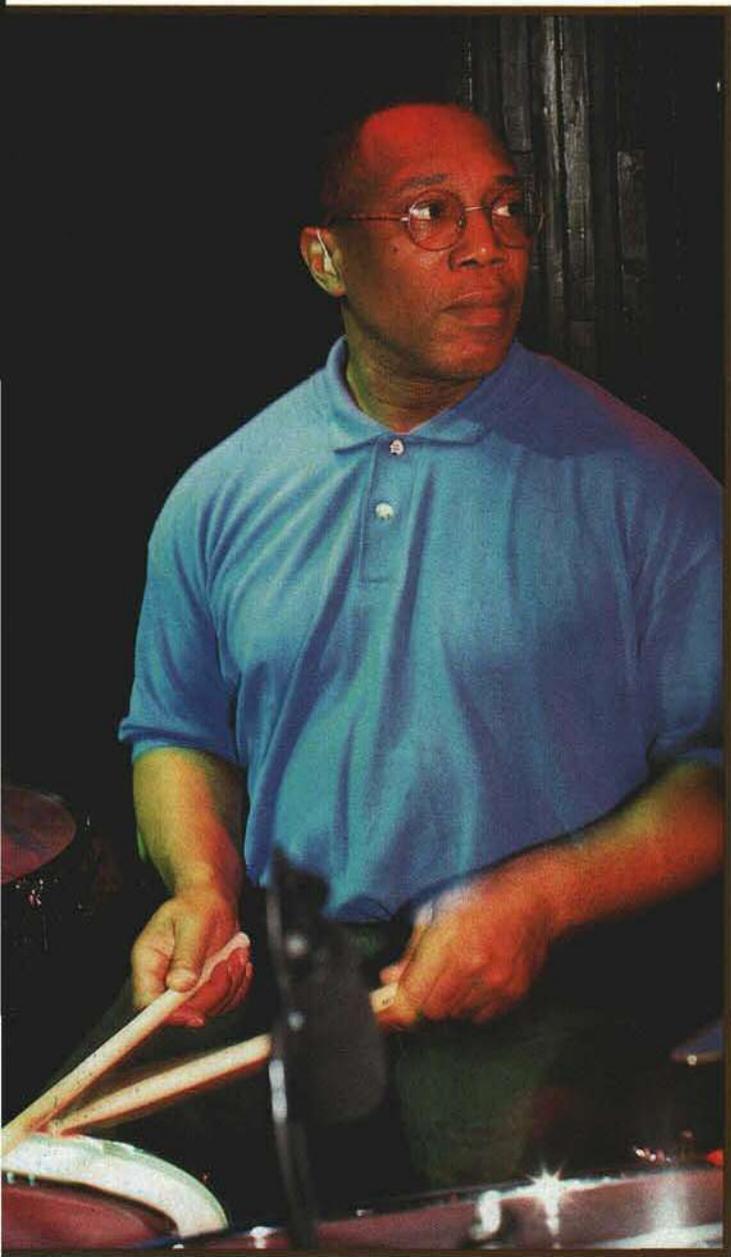


photo by Paul La Raia

## BILLY COBHAM

Return of the Miles/Mahavishnu maestro.

Billy Cobham, undisputed king of 70s fusion drummers, reenters the limelight with *Jazz Is Dead*, a burning unit exploring new interpretations of classic Grateful Dead tunes.

by William F. Miller

**56**

## GIOVANNI HIDALGO

After exhaustive scientific research, scholars in every major discipline—and drummers in every genre—have come to one inarguable conclusion: Of the five billion people on planet Earth, *none* plays congas better than Giovanni Hidalgo.

by Rick Mattingly

**82**

## MATT WILSON

Deep respect for the past, sublime creativity in the now, intuitive grasp of the future. To Matt Wilson, time is relative, and he freely chooses reference points as the inspiration hits. Meet one of the most fascinating jazz drummers of modern times.

by Bill Milkowski

**98**

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# Silly Responses To Silly Questions

If you've been part of the drumming community for any length of time, you've surely run into that non-musical, non-drumming individual who assumes you know *all* there is to know about drums and drummers, and who likes to pose those silly questions that are so very difficult to answer.

For instance, how many times have you been asked, "What drums are the best?" In an attempt to offer a somewhat intelligent response, I'll try to explain, "There really isn't a *best*, per se. Every company has its own methods and materials, and the musical style of the individual drummer plays a big role in what's actually *best* for him or her." Sound reasonable enough? Unfortunately, I've found that this kind of honest response rarely satisfies someone who wants to hear the *name* of a company they'll recognize. And naming one—even if you don't truly believe it—for some odd reason seems to please people more than going into the above, long-winded spiel.

I get asked this question so often, occasionally a bit of silliness sets in, and I find myself wanting to resort to the art of the subtle yet polite put-on—a technique I learned from former *MD* senior editor Rick Mattingly, a virtual master of the straight-faced put-on. Try a response along the lines of, "Wally's Drums from East Shongotzville, Wyoming—without a doubt the very best drums on the market!" I guarantee that your non-musical pal would prefer to hear a definitive though somewhat befuddling answer like that one, delivered with authority, than a more rational one.

The other question I really love is, "Who's the best drummer in

the world?" I wish I had a nickel for every time I've been asked *that* one. Interestingly, most non-drummers only know two or three names to begin with, usually Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, or Ringo Starr. Somewhere along the line those names have been branded into their consciousness, and any attempts to enlighten them on the talents of people like Gadd, Weckl, Chambers, or Colaiuta are very likely to garner that inevitable puzzled look in return: *Who?!*

Again, I've often explained how difficult it is to answer that question. "With so many great players excelling in so many different styles, it's really impossible to select a one 'best' drummer." But, oh how tempting to once, just *once*, pull a Mattingly by responding with something like, "Elmer Putzinger from Kalamazoo, Michigan—he's a little-known guy, but he's *definitely* the best in the world." Sure it's a total goof, but if delivered with sincerity, I'm willing to bet it will satisfy more than the legit response. Plus, you have again verified that you are truly an authority on the subject of drums and drummers.

Someday I'm actually gonna get up the nerve to try it. Of course, I just have to hope and pray the guy doesn't get serious about drumming one day, and goes out in search of Putzinger's latest CD or Wally's color catalog! For sure, there'll go my credibility.

*Ron Spagnardi*

## MODERN DRUMMER

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine



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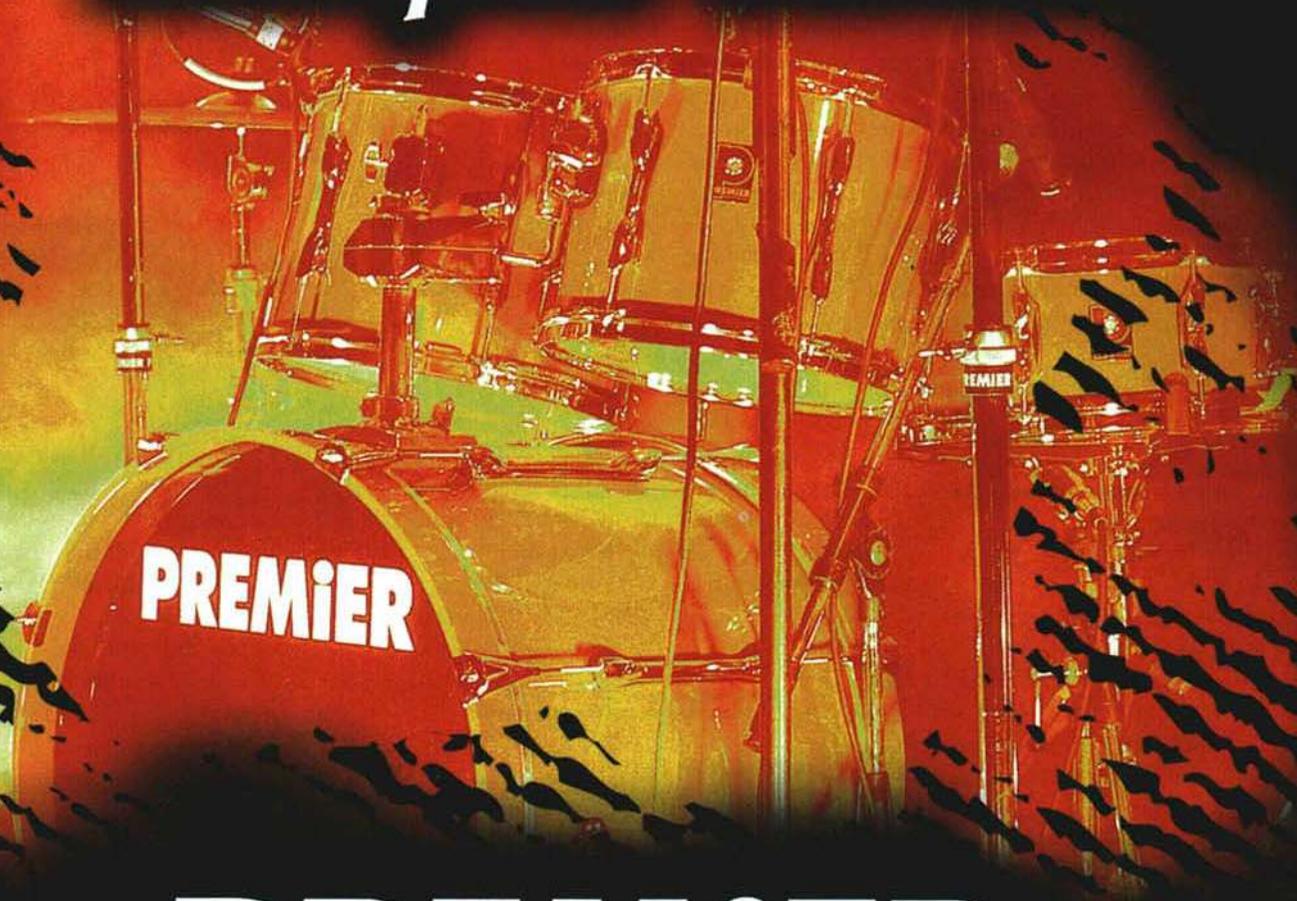
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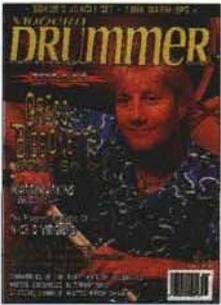
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## GREGG BISSONETTE



Your August '98 cover story on Gregg Bissonette was a breath of fresh air. It's a pleasure to find that someone as successful as Gregg still maintains such a humble demeanor. I have always respected Gregg's ability as a versatile drummer, but I now respect him even more as a human being. His excitement for the instrument is infectious, and his honesty about his own limitations makes it easier for us mere mortals to relate to him. In a music world in which so many egos and bad attitudes prevail, it's nice to see that sometimes nice guys finish first.

Pat Finnegan  
Westwood, NJ

## MARTIN ATKINS

When I saw that *Modern Drummer* was doing an interview with Martin Atkins in the August issue, I couldn't wait to get my hands on it! I've been a subscriber to *MD* for close to twenty years, and I applaud your recent efforts to acknowledge artists on the fringes of popular music. I've been a huge fan of Martin Atkins for many years; I respect both his music and his ideas. There are few people who put as much heart and energy into their music as he does. I am glad he finally received the attention his music has always deserved.

I'm also aware of the "flack" *MD* has taken over the years for featuring artists that some readers don't feel are "worthy" of the praise you give them. Music is not a sporting event! It is not about competition and "who is better." Music is about com-

munication—saying what you wish to say by whatever means necessary. There have been plenty of artists featured in *MD* over the years that I had never heard of before, but I approach each article with an open mind.

Thank you, *Modern Drummer*, for keeping *your* mind—and your ears—open. Please continue to showcase underground music, as you already do so well!

Robert Hyman  
Chicago, IL

## NICK D'VIRGILIO

Over the years I've appreciated the coverage that *Modern Drummer* has given to progressive rock drummers, especially since Bruford, Peart, and Portnoy (to name a few) have had such a profound impact on my drumming. Nick D'Virgilio is no exception. His drumming in Spock's Beard has not only encouraged me to keep woodshedding, but also to become more involved in the music. We've read time and time again how drummers learn to "play for the song" later in their career. Nick adapts himself to each song so well that each Spock's Beard track is a 100% cohesive effort from the band. Yet his drumming is very exciting, without stealing the thunder from the others in the band. I hope to see more of Nick D'Virgilio in *Modern Drummer*, and I encourage all drummers to check out Spock's Beard.

Jon Gerber  
via Internet

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MUSIC BIZ

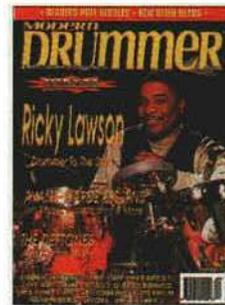
Robin Tolleson's article on alternative employment opportunities in the music business [*Taking Care Of Business*, August '98 *MD*] was great. However, I feel you left out a pretty cool job opportunity for readers in New York, LA, and Nashville: cartage! All three cities have several different cartage companies. I work for S.I.R. in Nashville, mixing rehearsals and doing some cartage. What a great opportunity for someone who is into the music business!

Tommy Wells, Jerry Kroon, Brian Barnett, and Dan Needham are our drum clients, and all of these guys are great. They take time out of their busy schedules to talk shop with those of us who are also drummers. Plus we get to go into all the studios in town and meet and talk with all kinds of people, networking and making connections.

In Nashville, cartage is big business. Sessions would simply not happen if it weren't for cartage companies and their employees. I was surprised to see Gregg Bissonette mention cartage in his article in the same issue. That is the first time I have seen such a mention. If this interests any of you *MD* readers, I urge you to check into it. It's a great opportunity and a fun job!

Chris Dowis  
via Internet

## JIM BLACK & SUSIE IBARRA



Thanks so much for the article on Jim Black and Susie Ibarra [July '98 *MD*]. I haven't read a better interview in a long time. Jim Black, in particular, had some great things to say to musicians in general, not just drummers. He made me remember, "Oh yeah, *that's* what it's all about!"

These two drummers are obviously talented and devoted musicians who deserve the recognition they have received. They are an inspiration to all us little guys out here just trying to do what we love and still get by.

Mike Reilly  
King of Prussia, PA

## ENDORSEMENTS: THE REAL DEAL

Your feature on drumming endorsements [July '98 *MD*] was illuminating. It's easy to see the "big-name guys" in drum ads and figure that they must be raking in equally big money for lending their name

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to that drum brand. It's also easy to get the idea that any drummer who has a record deal—or even who might *get* a record deal soon—is somehow *entitled* to an endorsement. I think we can all benefit from having the company spokesmen tell us just what it is they're looking for from an endorser, and what a typical endorsement agreement is all about.

With this dose of reality, it makes me feel that the endorsers in the ads I see might have a bit more credibility than I had given them credit for. It also makes me a little more ambitious, realizing that I'll have to take a few more steps up the ladder in my career before I'll be ready to approach a company for an endorsement agreement of my own. Thanks for the valuable information.

Bill Woodward  
Houston, TX

Award [July '98 MD]. It is a great honor to be included with the other artists who were also recognized.

It is somewhat ironic to be included with the late, great Cozy Cole. My first jazz gig in New York City was subbing for Cozy for two weeks while he was on vacation from his gig at the Metropole. I worked at the Metropole for many years after that, and often it was opposite Cozy. He was a great drummer and a real gentleman. He was also the ultimate professional, and his personality was always the same—even after his hit recording of "Topsy."

Cozy was also always warm and helpful to young drummers. Being included with him in this award brought back many fond memories. My thoughts and love go out to Cozy's family. Thanks again.

Roy Burns  
Anaheim, CA



to sit down and read the magazine. In the text, each player shares insight into the inspiration and process of their music-making—very informative, invaluable stuff.

Upon learning about each player's objectives, the music became even more alive and enlightening. Thanks!

John Riley  
Cornwall-On-Hudson, NY

## THANKS FROM ROY

I'd like to thank the editors of *Modern Drummer* very much for selecting me as a recipient of the MD Editors' Achievement

## MD HOT TRAX

Congratulations on the release of *MD Hot Trax*. At first I just dug the virtuosic drumming on the CD. But finally I had a chance

## CRUISE SHIP DRUMMING

The way Rich Watson described the working and living conditions for cruise-ship drummers [*Show Drummers' Seminar*, February and March '98] was 100% exact! Forgive me for responding this late, but I've been at sea myself.

I've been drumming in a so-called "dance band" for about two years now. I started with Princess Cruises—the compa-

### NEW AIR-RIDE SNARE SYSTEM

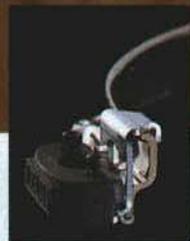
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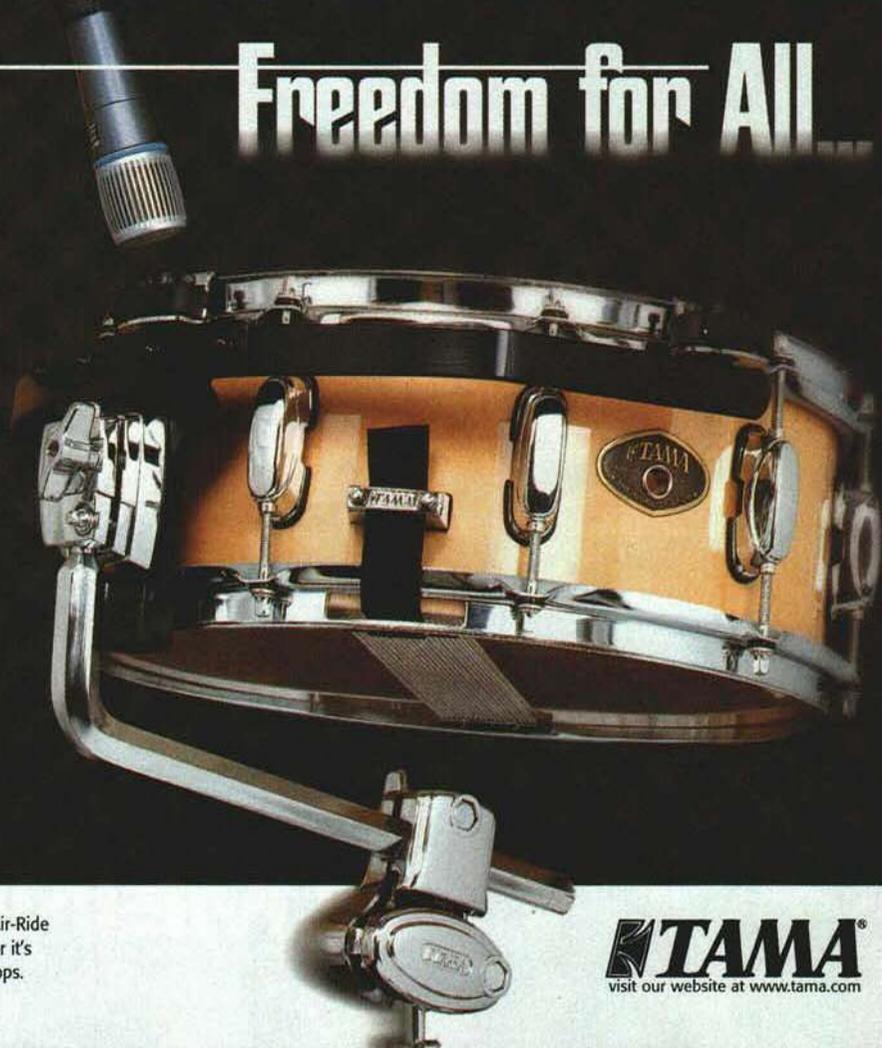
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-Kenneth Aronoff



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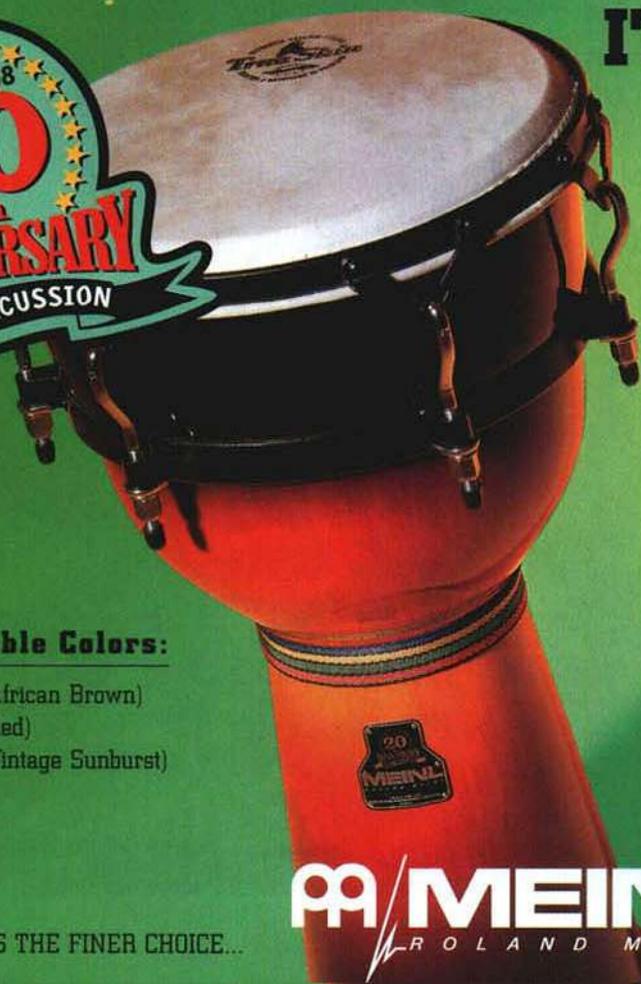
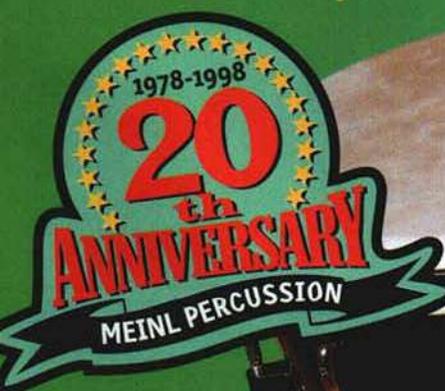
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ny with the dreaded in-port manning policy (or as we like to call it, "in-port tanning"). Overall, that gig is not about music, it's about *being there*. And as far as the Alaskan runs are concerned, the passengers are old and miserable.

While with Princess (on the *Island* and the *Star*), not once was I able to get through a set with a pair of sticks. (And I'm talkin' Vie Firth 7As.) We would play a "cocktail set" for the "Satin Doll" crowd, and they would invariably complain that we were too loud. Our group would finish playing our "brushes" version of "In The Mood," and Grandpa would walk up to us (with his fingers in his ears, hearing aid on max) and request the song *we just finished playing*. And we couldn't get through a night without playing Patsy Cline's "Crazy" at least three or four times. The only saving grace for the whole Alaskan season would be the jam session at the Red Onion Saloon in Skagway: a chance to play some real tunes, and to actually play with sticks, dynamics, and feel!

I'm currently with Carnival Cruise Lines. Things are better here: a better schedule, better food, nicer (and younger)

passengers, and no in-port manning!

Thanks for pointing out to the rest of the drumming community that cruise ship drumming is not glamour, fame, and fortune. It is, however, a great way to work at something that we love and dedicate our lives to—and not a bad way to see the world and get paid to do it! Over the past year, we have been to Hawaii, Tahiti, Christmas Island, Italy, Turkey, Israel, Greece, Egypt, the small African republic of Djibouti, Oman, India (Bombay, Goa, Madras), the Maldives, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Not too bad! Keep up the good work. I look forward to reading every word in every issue of my only source of education and entertainment, *Modern Drummer*.

Eric Allen Kurtz  
The Blue Rose Band  
on the MS Jubilee, somewhere between  
Seward, AK and Vancouver, BC



## GREETINGS FROM ASIA

Greetings! I am a drummer from the Philippines. I am twenty years old, and I

have been reading *Modern Drummer* for seven years. I would just like to say thank you for all the wonderful insights and information I have gathered from your magazine. This goes to show that even people across the globe, like me, appreciate the wonderful job *MD* has been doing at giving the whole world one language to speak: music.

Pepoy Songco  
Philippines

## Correction

Mark Parsons' review of the K&K Sound Systems *Dyna B 07* bass drum microphone in the August '98 *Electronic Review* indicated that the shock mount for the mic' is a "2x2 plastic frame through which is woven an elastic band." The mount is actually made of steel, with a blackpowder-coated finish.



# Set Yourself Up Like Mike Clark



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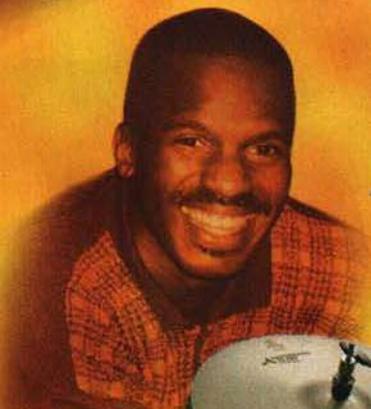
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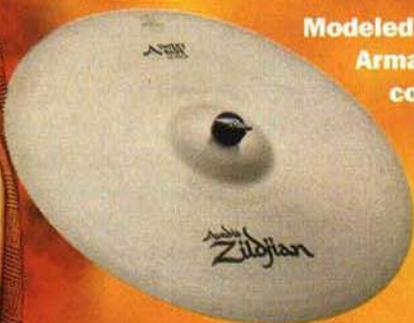


# Armand just found an old one...



## A Zildjian Sweet Ride, 21"

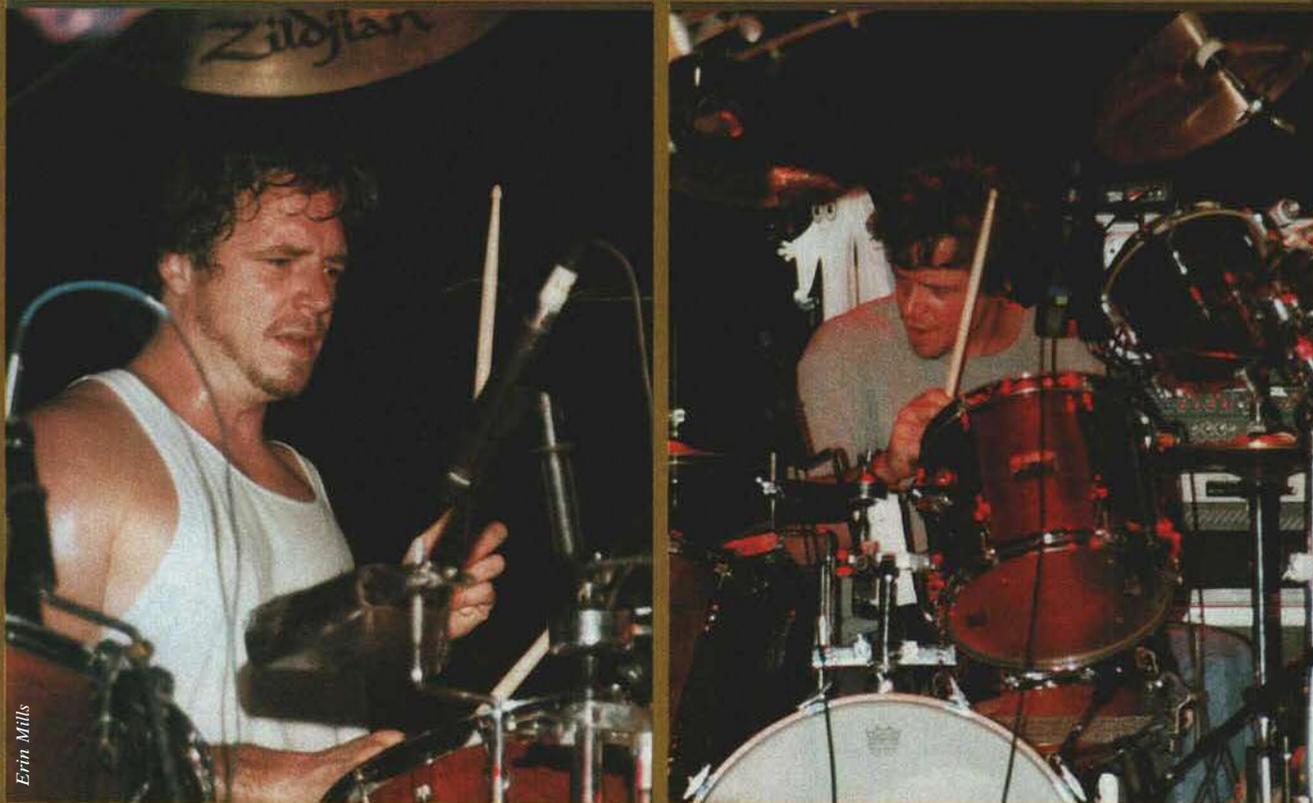
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# PATRICK FITZSIMMONS

## "HOME" GROWN DRUMMING



Erin Mills

**T**he band From Good Homes has sold out New York's venerable Irving Plaza a record fifteen consecutive times. Still, the core of the group, guitarist/vocalist Todd Sheaffer, bassist/vocalist Brady Rymer, and drummer/vocalist Patrick Fitzsimmons, can clearly remember their more humble beginnings, playing dances at their high school in Sparta, New Jersey. "We all learned to play our instruments together," Fitzsimmons fondly recalls.

After high school, the guys would get together on college breaks, and it was then that they began writing material together. Their newest, self-titled RCA release features the original core group along with woodwind man Dan Myers and string expert Jamie Coan. The band now has more

sounds to choose from and more stylistic forays to take, similar in ways to one of the groups they have toured with, The Dave Matthews Band. "One of the reasons the band sounds like it does is because we're five people who come from different musical places," says the self-taught drummer. "I love real good groove playing. Some of my favorite drummers are people whose names I don't even know—people on R&B hits, Motown stuff... stuff that *just feels* good."

Fitzsimmons plays a four-piece Yamaha kit, with four crash cymbals, one ride, and a set of bongos. "I like playing on a small kit and getting as many colors out of it as I can," he says. "When I first got my Yamahas, I had a huge kit. One-by-one I would leave drums home from gigs, until I

was left with what I have now."

From Good Homes recorded their latest album in the hundred-year-old New Jersey barn in which they'd been rehearsing and building demos for their new material. "We did everything better on this album," Fitzsimmons says proudly. "We worked with our producers better, we were more comfortable in the studio, and we did our homework a bit better.

"As we advance musically," Patrick adds, "we advance around the music that we're doing. Something that I've been working on takes the band to a different place, or something someone else brings in challenges me, makes me grow. It's always been that way."

**Robin Tolleson**

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## TALKING TRADITION

# CAROLINE CORR

**T**alk On Corners, the Corrs' second album, is full of pop-friendly tunes led by Andrea Corr's lead vocal and the harmonizing of her three sibling bandmates. "We try to write pop and rock songs," explains twenty-five-year-old drummer Caroline Corr, "but always have traditional Irish music incorporated into the songs so that they have that flavor." Indeed, while the Corrs start with typical pop instrumentation, their incorporation of tin whistle, bodhran, violin, and other traditional instruments gives the songs a unique texture.

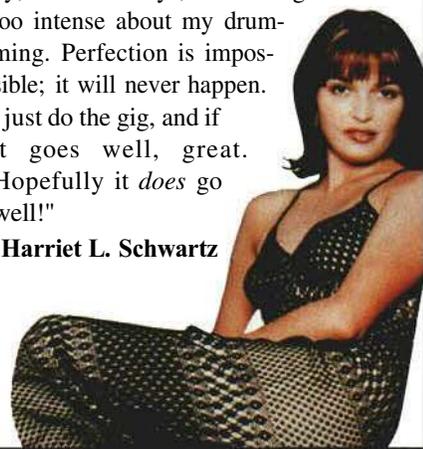
Corr began her music career behind the piano, and didn't take up drumming until much later. "We didn't have a drummer in the band," she explains, "but my boyfriend had a kit, and I started fooling around on it. He showed me a few things, and then I went for lessons."

Though she's only been drumming for six years, Corr has already had several memorable moments. She played along with Steve Gadd at a Luciano Pavarotti performance in Japan, and, a little closer to home, with Mick Fleetwood at the Albert Hall in London. (Corr originally met Fleetwood when her band

covered "Dreams" for a recent Fleetwood Mac tribute album.)

Despite such high falutin company, Caroline says, "I never get too intense about my drumming. Perfection is impossible; it will never happen. I just do the gig, and if it goes well, great. Hopefully it *does* go well!"

Harriet L. Schwartz



# ROGER EARL

STILL GOING...& GOING...  
& GOING...WITH FOGHAT

**D**espite the old cliché, sometimes the grass *is* greener on the other side. As Foghat drummer Roger Earl puts it, "Growing up in England in the late 1950s, any *real* music came from the States. What did we have, 'Greensleeves'?"

Reverent recyclers of American blues and rock 'n' roll (you probably know their version of "I Just Want To

Make Love To You" better than Willie Dixon's), Foghat is celebrating twenty-five years of doing what they're always done best—touring hard on the booze. Amazingly, they show very few signs of the ravages of time. Vocalist Lonesome Dave Peverett's pitch and intonation are spot-on, and Roger Earl still plays with youthful enthusiasm. Foghat's recent live album, *Road Cases*, commemorates their tenacity.

One of Roger's first drumming influences was Muddy Waters' Francis Clay, whose playing on 1960's *Live At The Newport Jazz Festival* he studied. Earl also cops the occasional slick move from big band drummers, catching and muting a cymbal imme-

diately after crashing. "That dates way back to early big band days. I love Buddy Rich, God rest his soul. I wore out his *Live At The Philharmonic* album."

Like Buddy, Roger plans to be thundering until he drops, as he explains: "I live in a houseboat off Long Island. When I practice in the living room I don't annoy the neighbors, just the fish and the birds!"

Foghat is in this for the long haul, according to Roger. "I've seen Dave coughing up snot and blood and still give 110%. Everybody plays as well as or better than they did in the '70s. We get paid for something we used to do for free, and we feel fortunate to get a chance to do something we enjoy—whereas some people have to sit behind a desk, push pens, and talk to idiots like me all day."

T. Bruce Wittet

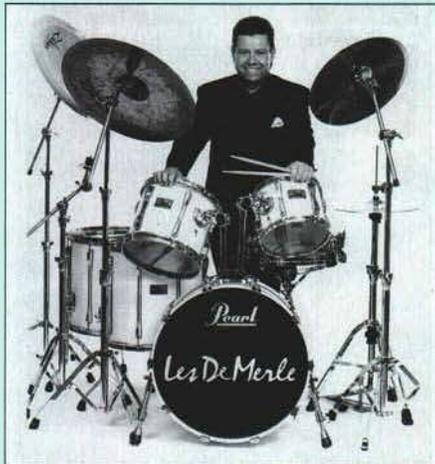


# Les DeMerle: The Business Of Big Band

When we last caught up with Les DeMerle, he was living and playing in Chicago with The Dynamic Les DeMerle Band, featuring his wife, Bonnie Eisele. After the band completed a successful three-year winter-season stint at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Naples, Florida, the hotel chain's hookers were so pleased that they offered DeMerle's band the house gig at the Ritz Carlton on the Sunshine State's Amelia Island.

Les describes the gig as "very commercial and high energy. I get to play some drum solos, and the repertoire includes some cross-over tunes, slick arrangements of pop tunes, and Miles and Monk material. Bonnie brings in some Brazilian tunes as well."

Working with his wife is never a problem for DeMerle—quite the contrary, he insists. "Not only is she a wonderful artist, but she's my soulmate and she helps me with all the business, too. I'm really lucky because it works. She's always inspiring me, and I inspire her, so it's a healthy sit-



uation. And when it works on stage, it's really like one of the great teams."

DeMerle's seventeen-piece orchestra employs some of the professors from the local University of North Florida—as well as some of the students, who have a lot to learn from a seasoned pro like him. The past three decades have seen DeMerle add his own personal fire to greats like Harry

James, Lionel Hampton, and Wayne Newton. "Being a drummer in a big band—like I was for years with Harry James—is almost as physically demanding as being a rock drummer," DeMerle offers. "It's not like playing jazz in a little joint where you're using brushes all night. You can really kick some booty in a big band. What they need from me is energy and drive. And when it's your own band—and especially when it's sounding good—you feel like you're up there driving a Ferrari all night."

Now that he's planted in one place, DeMerle hopes to conduct a jazz workshop on Amelia Island. Anyone interested can be added to the drummer's mailing list by writing to Music Unlimited Productions, PO Box 348, Fernandina Beach, FL 32035-0348. You can also inquire about recent DeMerle recordings, like 1993's *Jazz Party*, and a live big band record from a performance at the Ritz Carlton.

**Robyn Flans**

## DENNY FONGHEISER TURNING JAPANESE

If it seems like you haven't come across Denny Fongheiser's name a great deal in the past two years, it's because he's been spending quite a bit of time in Japan playing huge arenas with one of that country's most successful rock bands, B'Z. And keeping with the Japanese connection, Denny recently produced a record for Nobuteru Maeda, the lead singer of another big Japanese band, Tube.

"The name of Maeda's CD is *Hard Pressed*, but it's only available on Sony in Japan," Fongheiser says. "It's kind of a rock all-star CD, with Simon Phillips, Matt Sorum, and me on drums, Mike Porcaro, Billy Sheehan, and Duff McKagen on bass, and Peter Frampton, Craig Chaquico, Neil Giraldo, and Steve Hunter on guitar. I put together a band of Japanese and American musicians, and we started a tour the same day the record was released."

Last summer, Denny also did ten shows on the *Lillith Fair* tour with Tracy Chapman, citing it as one of the best musical experiences he has ever had. He also recorded with God Street Wine, playing percussion and doing some kit work along with the band's drummer, Tomo. In addition, he recorded with Box Set (two songs), Dan Bern, The Surfers, and Steven Poltz, and more recently with John Paul Jones, Meredith Brooks, FuzzBubble, Eric Martin, Christian Gibbs, and Julia Darling. Not bad for a drummer who's been "off the scene" for a couple of years.

**Robyn Flans**

## news

- **Terry Bozzio** is on *Zoom*, the new release by 80s popsters The Knack.
- In addition to continued touring with Richard Marx, **Billy Ward** has finished his album of live duets, *Two Hands Clapping*. It features Billy performing with Bill Champlin, Glen Phillips, Jim Beard, Joy Aske, and several others.
- **John Robinson** has been recording with several artists this year, including Ray Charles, Lionel Richie, Bette Midler, Randy Travis, and Clint Black. John is also working on a solo album.
- **Gregg Stocki** is currently touring with Marty Stuart.
- Former Pearl Jam drummer **Dave Krusen** has joined Candlebox, and is on their recent release, *Happy Pills*.
- **Herman Matthews** has been busy touring with Rebekah, recording *Friskies* cat food jingles, and doing studio dates with John Herron & Rockpyc, Larren Ellis, and Phil Settle.
- **Tony Coleman** has just returned from a European festival tour with B.B. King.
- **Steve Fidyk** is on the new release by Chris Vadalla, *Out Of The Shadows*. Steve also recently finished doing all of the transcription work for Peter Erskine's new book, *The Drum Perspective*.
- **Boh Harsen** has been doing dates with Tim Weisberg, Melissa Manchester, Mitch Forman, and Frank Gambale & Otmaro Ruiz, and has been recording with Taro & The Grange.
- **Paul Kimbarow** is currently on tour with A.J. Croce in support of his *Fit To Serve* release, on which Paul played all of the drum parts.
- **Ron Wikso** is on the new release by The Storm. He's also been on tour with Richie Sambora. And congrats to Ron and wife, Debbie, on their recent marriage.
- And congratulations are indeed in order for *Modern Drummer* associate editor **Adam Budofsky** and his new bride (former *MD* marketing manager) Susann Losquadro on their recent wedding. (They actually met at MD!)



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Jaime Jamover

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# AT HOME

## WITH APT. Q-258

### (A.K.A. JEFF SIPE)

by Robin Tolleson

**T**he drummer known as Apt. Q-258 has played with some remarkable bands in the past five years, including Col. Bruce Hampton & The Aquarium Rescue Unit, Jonas Hellborg & Shawn Lane, The Zanroiland Orchestra, and now the Boulder-based renegade bluegrass band Leftover Salmon. "They've coined the phrase 'poly-ethnic Cajun slam-grass,'" the drummer explains. "It's a bluegrass band, but they play it real loud and fast, so it's more like slam-grass. They do some Cajun, some zydeco, some calypso, and I've been injecting some half-time funk stuff underneath their double-time phrasing, and it seems to work pretty well. Adding the slower grooves underneath the fast, burning melodies and comping seems to be a yin-yang approach that fits the music."

All of the situations that Apt. Q-258 ends up in have certain things in common: a strong creative element, a sense of adventure, and a tendency to jam for long chunks of time with (as in the case of Leftover Salmon) sometimes amazing results. "We play specific tunes, but we like to milk them. The soloists stretch out and take 50,000 choruses if they want to. It's very open. We have structured tunes, but we're willing to change the arrangements nightly. It's nice that way; it keeps it fresh." (Drew Emmitt is the principal songwriter in Leftover Salmon. He also plays flute, mandolin, guitar, and fiddle, and sings. Vince Herman is the lead vocalist and plays acoustic guitar, Mark Vann plays banjo, and Tye North is on bass.)

Maybe it's fitting that a drummer who has moved around the world his whole life would now go by the name Apt. Q-258—but that's another story. He was born in Berlin, Germany in 1959, with the name Jeff Sipe. His father worked for the US government. His family moved to Saigon, Vietnam in 1961, "until things

got a little too hairy," then to Bangkok, Thailand in 1964.

"My earliest memory is sitting on the front lawn of our house in Saigon at three years old, watching the geckos run across the lawn. I remember climbing trees in Bangkok, eating Thai food from the street vendors there, and passing the Buddhist monks dressed in orange, with their rice bowls out. We used to go down to the temple and ring the bells."

The drummer can't remember much about Asian music, but the culture was fascinating to him. "I remember seeing dancers, but I don't remember the sounds behind the dances," he says. "The first thing I can remember being totally knocked out by musically was seeing Lionel Hampton on *The Tonight Show* when I was a little boy. He was playing vibes, and I wanted to do that. It was one of my first awakenings."

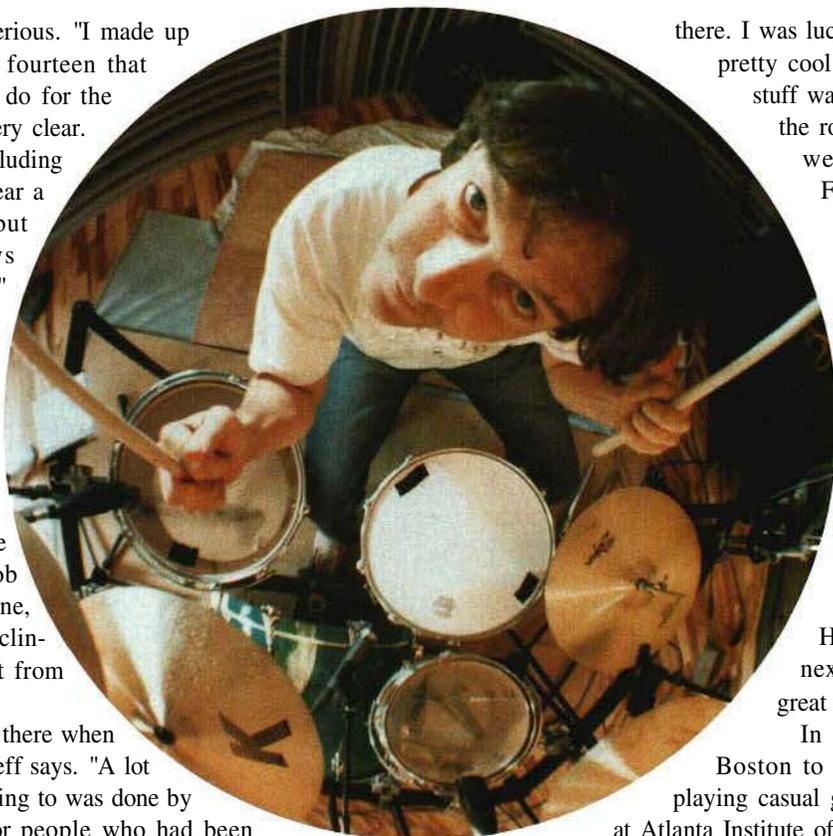
Sipe learned to play the drums in junior high school in Frankfurt, Germany. "There was a kid a year above me in school who played drums, and I thought he was really cool. His name was Tommy Belt, and I owe him for getting me started. I was playing traditional grip and he said, 'No man, go to matched grip; that's where the power is.'"

English music was easy to find in Germany, and Sipe was mesmerized by Emerson, Lake & Palmer. "My first real heavy musical experience was ELP," he says. "I dug Carl Palmer because he had so many drums and he could play so fast. Then I came to the States and heard the Mahavishnu Orchestra—and from then on it was Billy Cobham. That was when *Inner Mounting Flame* first came out. That was the stepping stone to Miles, which opened the doors to Tony Williams and Jack DeJohnette. *Bitches Brew* was the beginning of the rest of my life."

By the time Sipe moved back to the States for high

school, he was pretty serious. "I made up my mind at the age of fourteen that music was the thing to do for the rest of my life. It was very clear. I know that nobody, including a drummer, wants to hear a drummer practicing, but my folks have always been very supportive." Jeff began attending Chantilly High School in Fairfax, Virginia in 1973, and got serious enough about drums to attend Berklee College of Music in 1977. There he studied with Bob Kaufman and Bill Norine, attended Alan Dawson clinics, and picked up a lot from mentor Lee Venters.

"I dreamt about going there when I was in high school," Jeff says. "A lot of the music I was listening to was done by graduates of Berklee, or people who had been there a year and dropped out. So I very much wanted to go there, absorb that information, and be able to play like the cats I was listening to. I'm *still* working on stuff that they showed me

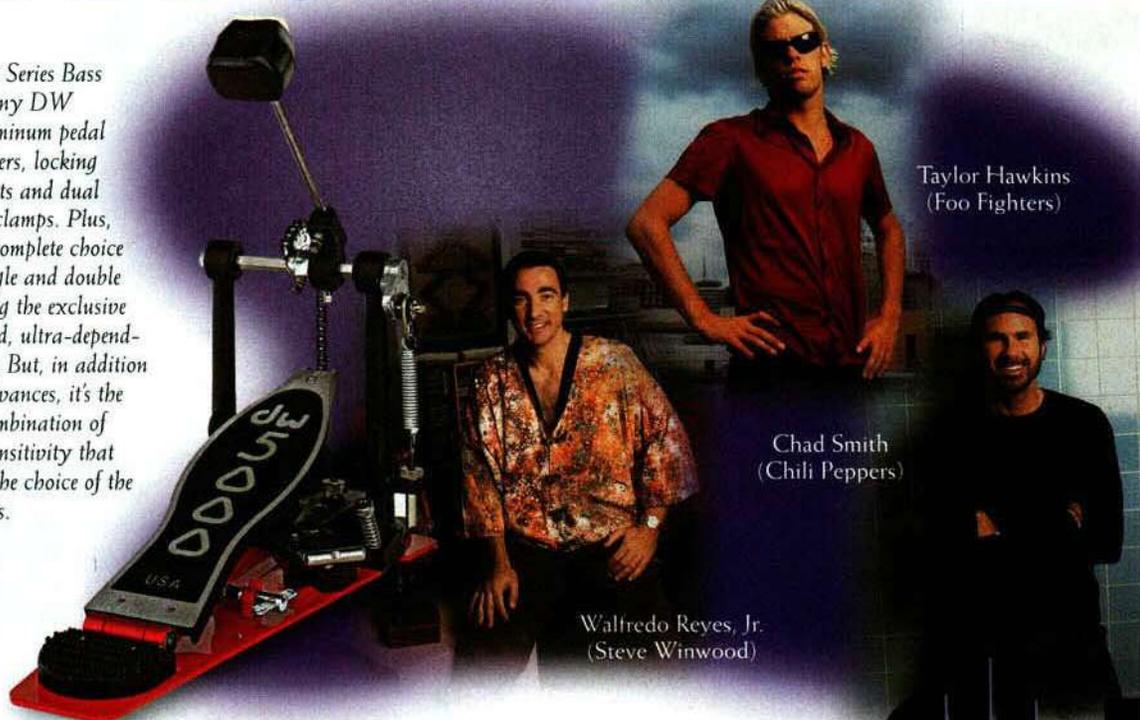


there. I was lucky enough to go there at a pretty cool time, just after the bebop stuff was moving out and some of the rock stuff was moving in. I went to school with Bill Frisell, Mike Stern, and Tommy Campbell. Jeff Watts and Branford Marsalis were there. I played in a wedding band with Victor Bailey just before he got his gig with Hugh Masekela. I played in a band with Steve Vai and Barry Brown. Steve was seventeen, and represented the first wave of that type of guitar playing. He opened the doors for the next generation. So it was a great time to go to Berklee."

In 1983 Jeff moved from Boston to Atlanta, where he began playing casual gigs and teaching part-time at Atlanta Institute of Music and Atlanta Drums & Percussion. There he met Vance Taylor, who was a keyboard player working in a church. "Vance is probably the strongest rhythmic performer I've ever seen to this day," says

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Jeff. "He helped me out a lot." Jeff also started subbing for Sonny Emory, who was still in high school at the time but who "had his chops together and had all the jazz gigs in town." Subbing for Sonny led Jeff to keyboard player Dan Wall. "Dan really opened my eyes to a lot of stuff," Jeff says. "And I met Bruce Hampton through Dan."

That fateful meeting was at a wedding in 1985, and Jeff soon helped recruit two of his musical friends into Hampton's band, which became The Aquarium Rescue Unit. "The Colonel called me shortly after that wedding to do some of his private gigs. Oteil Burbridge and Jimmy Herring were playing in cover bands and teaching school. They were tired of all the structure; they wanted to be freed up to play something more adventurous. So I said, 'Well come down and sit in with the Colonel and me. We just have a ball, we don't care about anything.' They loved it, and the band started to grow into something that was totally free-form. At first it was more performance-art-oriented—like an American musical Monty Python—and the music was to back up the skits and visual performances. Slowly the musicianship in the band got so good that the music became more important than the visual silliness, until finally it became critically acclaimed—and that was the death of it. [laughs] I think once a band or person gets an image of themselves, it's very soon after that they become a caricature of themselves."

While the Rescue Unit was opening shows for the Allman Brothers, Jeff got to sit in with that band. "Jaimoe sat me down on his Gretsch kit in the middle of a couple performances. It's funny, because at first Butch Trucks didn't notice that anything was different. At one point he looked over and noticed there was another

drummer sitting next to him, and he was a little bit shocked. I don't think Gregg Allman ever knew."

The Aquarium Rescue Unit's self-titled first album remains Q-258's favorite of their three. "The spirit was so strong," he says. "The band was really at its peak. On the album after that, *Mirrors Of Embarrassment*, I really like 'Alan.' It was written for Alan Dawson, and Oteil plays a bass solo and sings scat over it. On the third album, Kofi Burbridge wrote a great tune, 'Splash.' All those tracks were done in one day, and that was a lot to get done."

Some of Apt. Q-258's most impressive recorded work is on *Temporal Analogues Of Paradise*, a near-miraculous series of long jams with Jonas Hellborg and Shawn Lane, on Day Eight Music. There are perhaps seven edits on the CD, according to the drummer. "Most of it was just as fluid as it came across," he says. "I was able to return to Berlin for the first time as a professional, and it got recorded. I was really psyched to be there. It was momentous in my life."

"Jonas and Shawn didn't ever want to rehearse," Jeff recalls. "The first gig I had with them was in Memphis at a real hole-in-the-wall dive that only held about fifty people. I shedded the material on the previous Shawn Lane album and some of Jonas's albums. I learned all their stuff. I got there a day early, ready to do some rehearsing. But they said, 'No, forget it. We'll just see you on stage and see what happens fresh.' From then on we never had a rehearsal, not even once. The music just evolved by itself. A lot of people's complaints about that group was that it was not compositionally interesting enough, that it was just a bunch of jams. But on certain nights there was a magic that no composition or premeditation could have come close to. That was the magic

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for me, to create spontaneous compositions that worked—that had emotion and passion in them, and a certain structure."

Apt. Q-258 claims that keeping eye contact is very helpful in improvisational settings. "There are times to close your eyes and go introspective," he says. "But there are so many things you can pick up on when you're *looking*. It gives you that extra sense, to be able to anticipate what people will do. I tend to watch everybody like a hawk when I'm playing. Last night Leftover Salmon played with Sam Bush, the mandolin and fiddle player from New Grass Revival. He's tremendous to play with. He watched me just as strong as I watched him, and our rhythmic question-and-answering was really interesting, loving, and giving.

"When the volume in the band gets so loud that I experience rhythm vertigo, sometimes I'll have to key in on somebody's foot. I'll notice from across the stage if it's different, if one guy's playing ahead of the other. The right side of the stage may rush and the left side of the stage might tend to drag. As the drummer, I've got to mediate, to make sure they don't go too far in any one direction—but still allow them enough movement to complete their idea. It's tricky walking that road."

When not on the road with Leftover Salmon, Apt. Q-258 does studio work in Nashville and Atlanta. In 1994 he recorded *The Best Of Cedell Davis* with the Pine Bluff, Arkansas bluesman, for Capricorn. "Cedell has had polio all his life and is confined to a wheelchair, so his technique of playing guitar is totally unique," the drummer says. "He plays with a butter knife in his left hand, and his fingers are all drawn in so he kind of claws with his right hand. His singing is amazing, but his guitar playing obviously is a little behind. So it's some of the weirdest stuff you'll ever hear in your life. It's probably one of the worst albums out there, but I'd love everybody to hear it."

Q-258 just completed work on an album by saxman Bryan Lopes. "Bryan's a monster," he claims. "That's got Neil Fountain on bass. I did another recording with Neil Fountain called *Glossalalia*. It also featured Jonnathan Townes and John Medeski [of Medeski, Martin & Wood]. Half of that is tunes, and half is just 'Go for it.' It was a blast to play with John Medeski. I've loved watching MM&W live. John understands rhythm so well."

Whenever he's home in Atlanta on a Monday night, Apt. Q-258 leads a jam at the Little Five Points Pub. He has also been instrumental in putting together The Zambiland Orchestra, an experimental big band made up of many of Atlanta's best musicians, including members of Phish, Widespread Panic, Michael Ray & The Cosmic Crew, Fiji Mariners, Derek Trucks Band, Count Mbutu, and others. The congregation played seven concerts last year and hope to release a live CD this year. "We had seventy musicians at the last gig," Q howls. "The idea was to get together under a conductor, and use signs and posters. It was incredibly chaotic, but at times just unbelievably magical. Honestly, only about 10% of each gig sounded incredible. So we've compiled some of the best moments onto a CD."

Leftover Salmon has also compiled a CD of live tapes that will be released in the near future. "We allow people to come in and tape," says Q. "They trade tapes; it's a big underground circuit. So we've asked them to submit some of their favorite performances to us to put an album out. It's sort of paying tribute to the tapers. They help us out tremendously; it's grassroots support. They have a spot right in front of the sound board, and they get to hear what

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the sound engineers hear."

Q-258 is using a new electric drumstick for certain effects in Leftover Salmon. Boston inventor Lane Poor hollowed the shaft of a stick, then put a guitar pickup up inside of it and sealed it with rubber so the pickup wouldn't bounce around. Says Q, "The cable comes out the end of the stick and goes through a wah-wah pedal into a direct box patched into the PA. I cut notches in the sticks so I can do slides and scrapes or knock them together. If I put a little delay on the signal, I can question-and-answer myself. With a two-second delay I have a lot of time to develop what I play. And with the wah-wah I can get different tones, not just 'click' and 'clack.' We're using the sticks live now. And I have an idea to develop them into a wireless setup, and to maybe get a series of pedals, an envelope filter, and two different loops so I can layer things. I've always stayed away from electronics and focused on the drumkit...until the electric stick came along."

Now, about that name: Apt. Q-258. "In Nashville, Sam Bush started recording radio broadcasts of this preacher named Prophet Omega," the drummer laughs. "Prophet Omega broadcast his Sunday sermons out of his home: apartment Q-258, in the Kentmount Apartments in Nashville. He was a character: In between his sermons he would advertise his moving company. Sam's tapes of the Prophet got spread out from the Nashville area. We could never track down the Prophet to get him to go out on the road with us, but Colonel Bruce Hampton started calling me Apt. Q-258 on stage, and after a while he asked me, 'You don't mind, do you?' I said, 'Not really.' So it stuck. The more mystery the better."



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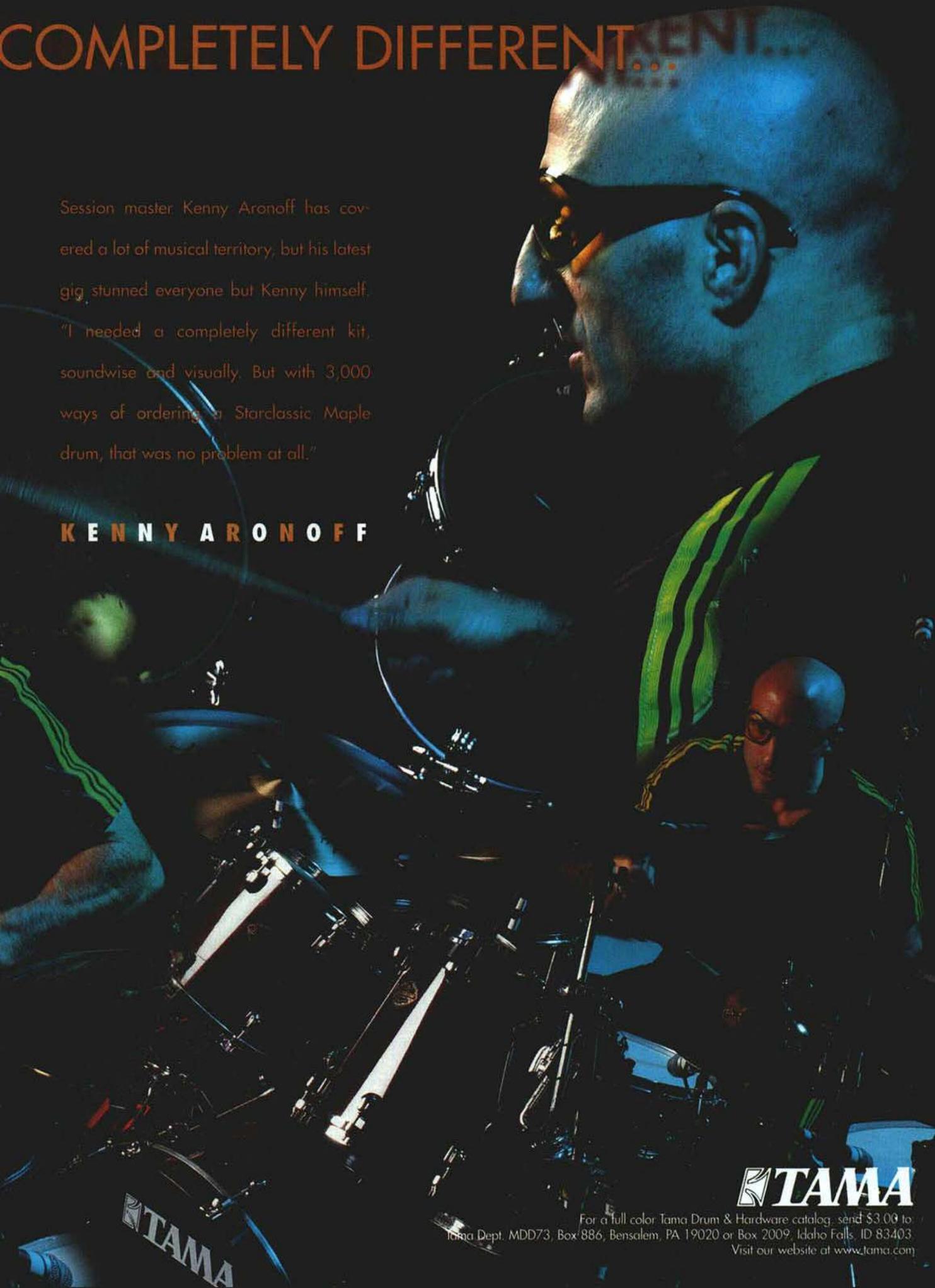
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## Kenny Aronoff

**Q** You've chosen to place your larger rack tom on the left of your bass drum, and the smaller one on the right. This is certainly contrary to the "norm." Can you explain your reason for this placement?

Steven R  
via Internet

**A** Thanks for your question. I started putting my small tom to the right side of my bass drum (from the player's perspective) in 1982, while I was on tour with John Cougar Mellencamp. John wanted me to have a simple drum setup—something like what Ringo Starr used with the Beatles, which was one rack tom and one floor tom. So I used a 12" rack tom and 16" and 18" floor toms. I tucked the 18" floor tom behind the 16" floor tom so that from the audience's perspective it still looked like I had one floor tom. I wanted the extra tom, because I had just recorded the *American Fool* record with John Mellencamp and I had used four toms in the studio. So now at least I had three toms for the tour.

We were opening up for Heart in big arenas, and after a few shows the engineer said to me, "Do you have any smaller toms, or can you tune the bigger floor toms up higher?" The problem was that a lot of my fills were being played on the floor toms, and because they were so low in frequencies, the definition of those fills wasn't being heard clearly in the big arenas. I realized I couldn't tune the 16" and 18" floor toms high enough for what the engineer was looking for, so I mentioned that I had a 10" tom. If John Mellencamp said it was cool to add that drum to my kit, then I'd rather do that.

The thing was, I liked the 12" tom where it was, and I didn't want to move my hi-hat over to the left to accommodate the 10" tom. The most important toms in my kit are the first rack tom and my first floor tom. The other toms are extra. I use them all the time, but I could get by without them if I had to. So I put the 10" tom on the right side of the

bass drum. It was a little weird at first, but I found that I really liked the variety of fills I get from having the smaller tom on my right side. It makes me think about what I want my fill to sound like, pitch-wise.

I've placed my small tom-tom to the right side of my bass drum ever since. I usually use a 12" tom on the left side of my bass drum and the 10" tom on the right. However, on the current Smashing Pumpkins tour I have a 14" tom in place of the 12" tom, and a 12" or 13" tom in place of the 10" tom—just to get a more massive sound.

Good luck to you with your drumming and music.

## Danny Gottlieb

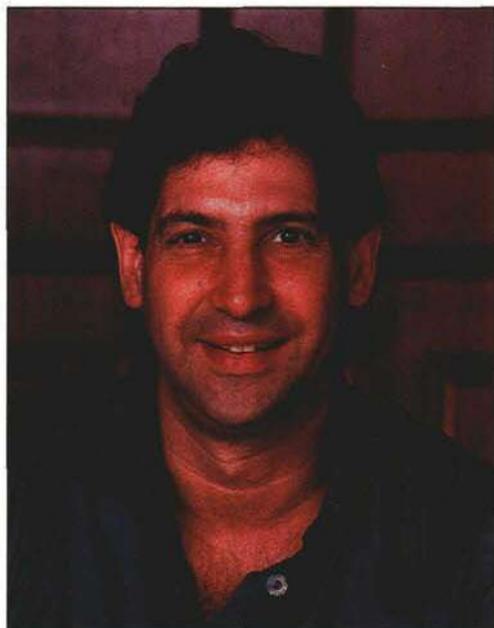
**Q** It was great to read your *Update* item in the June '98 *MD*. I've been a fan of yours since the Metheny days, and I recently saw your clinic here at Rollins College. I know you play a variety of styles, from jazz to rock, and from funk to big band. How do you make the transition from soft acoustic music to large R&B groups like the Blues Brothers? Also, what was it like to study with Joe Morello?

Jamey Tate  
Longwood, FL

**A** Thanks for your questions and your kind words of support. My approach to playing various styles stems from a couple of different sources. First of all, I grew up in the late '60s and early '70s, and I really listened to a wide variety of music. Playing with the Blues Brothers is a dream come true, because the rhythm section consists of Steve Cropper and Duck Dunn, who were the guitar and bass players (respectively) in Booker T. & the MG's. One of the first records I ever bought, when I was in high school, was a Booker T. album.

My other major source of stylistic versatility is my twenty years of study with Joe Morello. His teaching approach, based on his own study with George Lawrence Stone and Billy Gladstone, allows a drummer to play with such a wide range of dynamics, musical textures, and control, that he or she can function in any musical style. Studying with Joe is the best thing that can happen to any serious student of the drums. I wish everyone could have the opportunity to do so.

Thanks again for your comments. Since you live in the Orlando area, I hope I'll see you at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) in November. I'm scheduled to appear on Thursday night at 8:00 P.M.



# Special Effects

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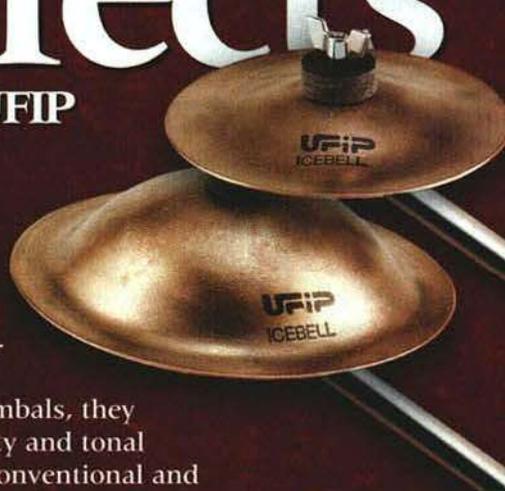
*Shown are a selection of UFIP Percussion Effects (clockwise from upper left): "Six Tree", "Tibetan" Bells, "Burma" Bells, Bronze Bells, Bronze Discs, 7 and 8" "Icebells", "Tingle Cups" and 18, 16 and 14" "Hands" Cymbals. Inset: piccolo, medio and grande "Ximbau".*

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## Lifters For Small Bass Drums

**Q** While discussing JC's Custom Drums in the March '98 *Product Close-Up*, Rick Van Horn stated that the 18" bass drum on that kit could benefit from "some sort of factory-installed elevation device (such as are available from some other manufacturers who offer 18" drums)." I'm checking with Sonor now, per William F. Miller's mention of such a device in his review of the Sonor *Jungle Set* in the August '98 *MD*. But could you share the names of the manufacturers to which Rick was referring in the earlier review?

Bill Tillery  
via Internet

**A** The bass drum "lifters" Rick was referring to were featured in the *New And Notable* department in the April '98 *MD*. They are the D'Amico *Adjustable Bass Drum Cradle*, and the RSA Music Enterprises *Kickit Bass Drum Lift*. Here is

contact information for those companies:

D'Amico Drums, 44170 Old Warm Springs Blvd., Fremont, CA 94539, tel: (510) 226-8700, fax: (510) 226-7345.

RSA Music Enterprises, PO Box 300, New Almaden, CA 95042, (650) 961-9346, e-mail: rsamusic@jps.net.

## Rotating Drumsticks

**Q** I recently noticed that, while playing matched grip, the stick in my riding hand (left or right) rotates completely around about once every nine or ten seconds. I've been playing for almost eighteen years, but I've never noticed this before! I happened to glance down at the good old Vic Firth logo—only to see it disappear, then reappear seconds later. I can prevent this from happening if I want, by tightening my grip. But that seems uncomfortable and restrictive. I was wondering if this happens to anyone else, and if it's the natural order of things. It's not a *problem*, because

it works for me. But I would like to know if anybody else has this going on while playing.

L. Norman  
via Internet

**A** Rotation of a stick in one's hand is, as you say, something that happens within "the natural order of things." In fact, it happens most of the time. Unless your grip is very stiff, the stick revolves in your hand as a result of "bouncing off the ride cymbal or drumhead surfaces. This is a natural phenomenon, and it has the side benefit of preventing the stick from "wearing" in any one particular spot.

## Fabric Drum Covering

**Q** I'm interested in re-covering my drums. A while back you printed advertisements from Geddit? Drumwear, who made slip-on fabric drum coverings. Could you give me information on how to get in con-

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tact with Geddit? or any other companies that manufacture fabric drum coverings like these?

Keith Evans  
via Internet

**A** Geddit? drumwear is no longer manufactured, and we know of no company that offers a similar product. Apparently, drummers discovered that it was just as easy for them to make their own fabric covers as it was to buy ready-made covers of the same material from a manufacturer. And it was a lot cheaper.

All you need to do is measure the circumference of your drums, and obtain pieces of *Spandex* fabric a little longer than that measurement. Each piece should also be wide enough to fit from bearing edge to bearing edge on each drum (with a bit extra there, as well). It's a good idea to first experiment with pieces of paper, in order to verify your measurements and create a "sewing pattern."

Once you've established the size of the piece of material you need for each drum, sew the two ends of each piece together to create a cylindrical "sleeve," which you'll eventually slip over your drumshell. Don't make the pieces too long; the fabric should have to stretch a bit to fit snugly over each shell. This will provide you with a smooth covering that won't wrinkle or sag later on.

Next, turn over and hem the edges of the sleeve. This will provide a smooth edge for the cover at the top and bottom of each drum. It's a good idea to figure this dimension so that the cover comes just to the bottom of the hoop of an installed drumhead. Trying to fit the covering material *under* a drumhead hoop can make fitting and tuning that drumhead very difficult.

After you've created your finished fabric sleeves, remove all lugs and other hardware from your drums, and slip the sleeves over the drumshells. Carefully punch or cut holes in the fabric to accommodate the bolts or screws that attach all the hardware. Re-install that hardware, put the heads back on and tune them, and you're ready to go—with a striking new look to your kit.

## Who Wiped Out?

**Q** I hope you can settle a bet I have with a friend of mine. I say that the famous drum beat in the surf-era classic "Wipeout"

was played by '60s drum star Sandy Nelson. My friend says it was studio legend Hal Blaine, in one of his anonymous "ghost drummer" roles. Which of us wins the bet?

Fred Johnson  
Alamogordo, NM

**A** Neither of you wins. Sandy Nelson and Hal Blaine were certainly major drumming figures in the '60s, but let's give credit where it's due. The drum beat to "Wipeout"—perhaps the most universally recognized drum pattern of all time—was created and performed by the drummer in the band that originally recorded the song. The group was the Surfariis, and the drummer—who was nineteen years old at the time—was Ron Wilson. Ron passed away a few years ago, secure in the knowledge that he was probably the single most-emulated drummer of all time.

## Zildjian Complaints

I've been looking for a way to get a custom-made cymbal of an unusual size, and I was told that the big cymbal companies would often take requests. Zildjian is my manufacturer of choice, so I called them first. I was distressed to learn that they will not accept custom orders. Did they *ever* do so, and if so, why won't they do so now?

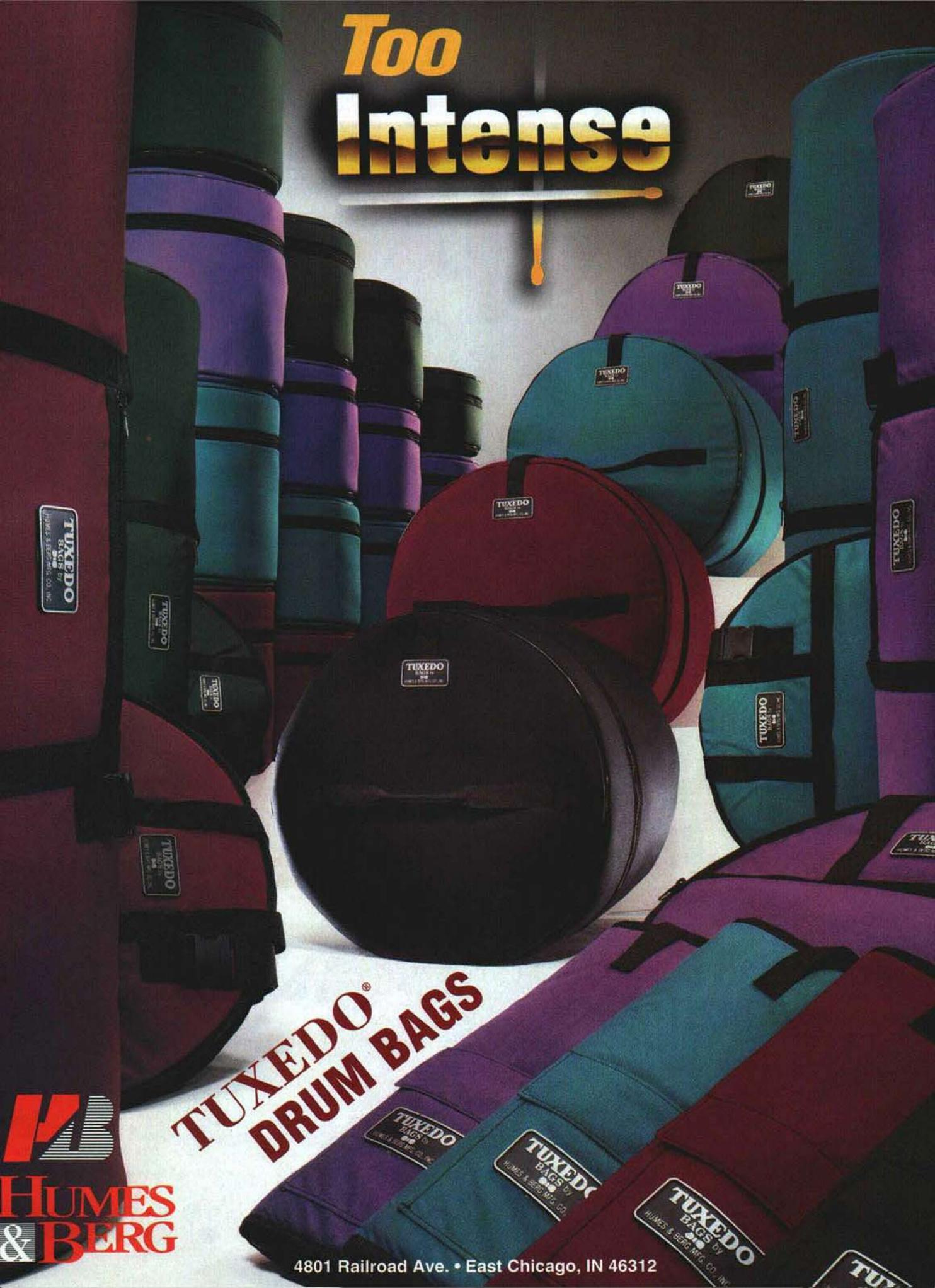
Also, I have heard that *K* Zildjian cymbals are no longer hand-hammered, as they once were. How does Zildjian explain this seeming decline in personal attention, and do they ever intend to resume the practices that made them an institution among cymbal makers for 375 years?

Jes Linares  
Franklin, TN

**A** You raise some pretty strong attentions, so we thought it best to let Zildjian respond to them directly. Colin Schofield, Zildjian's vice president of marketing, replies: "Obviously, your questions seriously caught our attention. Our goal has always been and shall always be to make the finest cymbals in the world. Making drummers happy is what we are all about.

"As the company has grown over the years, every change in manufacturing policy has been driven by our commitment to ensure that every cymbal that goes out the

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door is worthy of the Zildjian name. We believe that whether you are a drummer in Japan, Europe, Australia, or Franklin, Tennessee, you deserve cymbals of the best quality available—exactly the same instruments that today's great drummers have access to when they visit our factory to make their selections.

"As far as custom-ordered cymbals go, Zildjian did offer this service back when we were making only one line of cymbals: the *Avedis (A)* range. However, since the early '80s the variety of sounds that became possible due to new technologies exploded, and today we have several unique ranges of cymbals. This has resulted in a series of highly complex Grafting processes that keep us extremely busy just trying to meet the world-wide demand for our existing models. Unfortunately, to put one custom-ordered cymbal through our system would create enormous problems that would affect our overall production capabilities. Sure, we could do it once, but if we offered that service to one person we would have to offer it to everyone—and this could obviously get out of hand. So, in order to be fair to everyone, we have not offered this service for a while. It might be something we are able to do again in the future. (We'd like to be able to do *everything*, but sometimes it just isn't possible.)

"With regard to hand-hammering, the fact is that during the modern history of the Zildjian company (from the time Avedis Zildjian III moved the factory to the USA in 1929 as the modern drumset was evolving), very little hand-hammering has ever been used. In the days before shaping technology was available, hammering was done solely to put the shape into the cymbal. Today, that shaping is done by pneumatic presses in order to consistently get the right shape, so the role of *K-style* hammering changed. It became a method to 'darken' and 'dry out' the sound of the cymbals.

"By the mid-'30s, Avedis Zildjian had already moved to a reciprocating mechanical hammering process that improved consistency and sound quality. This hammering was also used to produce the generally brighter, higher-pitched sounds that were preferred by the great drummers of the swing era. Thus, the cymbals that Gene Krupa, Papa Jo Jones, Dave Tough, Buddy Rich, etc. used to play on were not hand-

hammered.

"It was only when the bebop era began in the '40s that drummers like Max Roach, Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones, and Elvin Jones found that the generally darker, trashier sound of the *K* Zildjians (which were still being made in Turkey at that time by an offshoot of the Zildjian family) were more suitable to this new style of music. The sound of the 'old *Ks*' became irrevocably associated with the sound of bebop, hard bop, and post bop.

"But before we get too dewy-eyed over those old *Ks*, let's remember that they were infamously inconsistent. And most of them were terrible: sunken cups, flat spots, holes off-center, warped—you name it. Both Elvin Jones and the late Tony Williams have related to me how sometimes they would have to go through as many as a hundred cymbals in order to find one that was halfway decent. This inconsistency was the direct result of the primitive hammering processes employed.

"When the American Zildjian company first began to manufacture *K* Zildjians in the US in 1982, new technologies were

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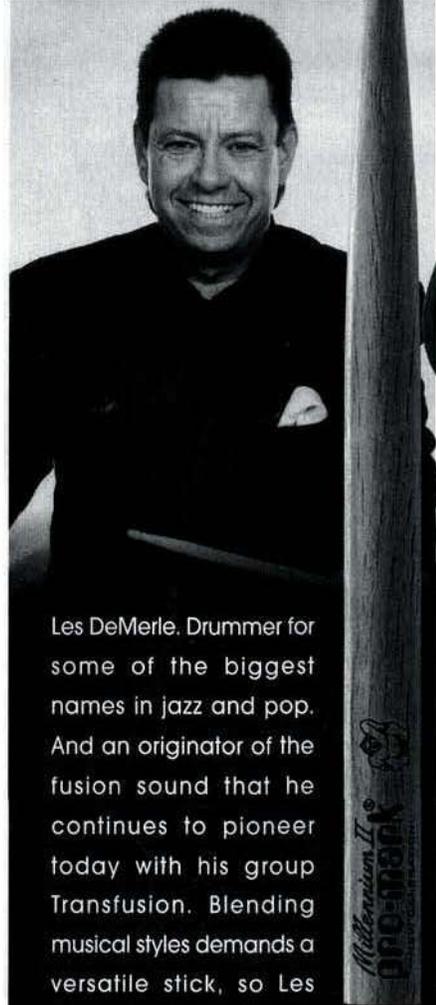
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employed to create a hammering process that would recreate the *K* sound, but with far greater consistency. So the US-made *K* Zildjians have *never* been hand-hammered in the traditional sense. We have continually improved our processes since that time, resulting in the development of our latest computer-driven hammering technology, which gave birth to the brand new *K Constantinople* series. This process allows us to extensively hammer the cymbal across its entire surface, and even to direct specific hammer pressure anywhere on the cymbal. We believe it's a major breakthrough that makes the *K Constantinople*s the first cymbals in recent history to be able to recreate the classic 'old *K*' sound so consistently.

"Some manufacturers use the *image* of hand-hammering to create the romantic myth that a cymbal is somehow tuned and perfected in this way. This is purely a marketing ploy that is deeply misleading. The hammering is done prior to lathing, so the sound of the cymbal cannot be tested or determined at this point. Therefore it is impossible to 'tune' the cymbal at the hammering stage. However, our process automatically re-randomizes itself for every cymbal, so although consistently superior sound is our goal, no two cymbals sound the same.

"To close, let me say that all we ask of you is to let your own ears be the final judge. Don't be influenced by manufacturers' propaganda and advertising claims. (You can even ignore everything I've just written.) Does it really matter what processes were used in a cymbal's creation? What does the cymbal *sound* like? If you found a cymbal that you loved, would you *not* buy it if you found out it wasn't made the way you thought it was? Listen, experiment, get the opinions of those whose ears you trust, and, finally, *enjoy*. Cymbals are magical musical instruments that can last a lifetime. The right one can have a dramatic effect on 'your sound'—and even on your playing."



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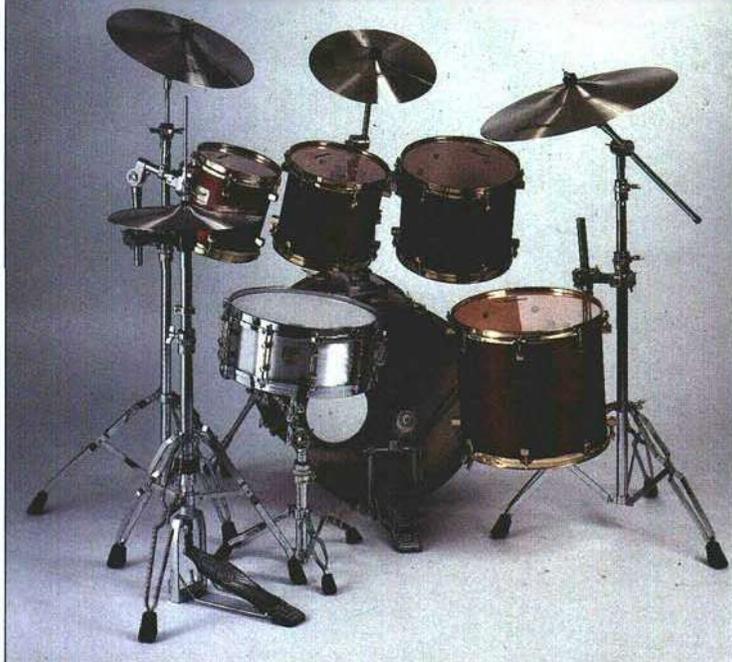
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## The Chinese Connection Cadeson Drums

From out of the Far East comes a new drum brand that merits some attention: Cadeson. Introduced at the January NAMM show in Los Angeles, this Taiwanese company is offering a full line of drums, from budget kits to professional outfits. Their flagship R-9862 six-piece kit includes all-maple shells with a variety of wood-stain finishes, brass lugs and rims, a seamless aluminum-shell snare drum with tube lugs, and other high-quality, contemporary design features. And, as a new entry on the international market, their price structure is extremely attractive. They're not in many stores yet; contact their US distributor for further information.



## Start 'Em Young... Teach 'Em How... Pack 'Em Up Ludwig Junior Drums, Set-Up Video, Bags, and Cases



You can't be too young to play a Ludwig kit—at least, not according to Ludwig. So they're offering the LJRI05 Junior Kit, scaled for the very young drummer. The kit (available in black covered finish) includes a 10x16 bass drum (with pedal, spurs, and a cymbal arm), 6x8 and 6x10 rack toms, an 11x13 floor tom (with legs), and a 5x12 snare (with stand). A 10" cymbal and real tunable drumheads are also included, and the whole package



## Sweet And Sticky

### Zildjian 21" A Sweet Ride, Mastersound Hi-Hats, and Manu Katché Drumsticks



Dipping into the past to feed the present, Zildjian has come up with something sweet: the 21" A Sweet Ride, to be exact. Modeled after the design of a decades-old cymbal from Armand Zildjian's private collection, the Sweet Ride is said to offer an unusual size and sound not found elsewhere in the A range. It's a medium to medium-thin cymbal, claimed to feature "great stick definition" and "beautiful crash qualities," making it "ideal for studio and jazz work."

Mastersound hi-hats are available in the A series, in 13" and 14" sizes. They utilize "innovative hammering techniques" on the outer rim of the bottom cymbal, resulting in alternating raised and lowered contact points that facilitate rapid air release. According to Zildjian, this creates "a noticeably faster and cleaner 'chick' sound, without sacrific-

ing body in the overall sound of the cymbals."

From Zildjian's drumstick division comes the Manu Katché Artist Model drumstick, named for the influential French drummer with Peter Gabriel, Robbie Robertson, Joni Mitchell, and Sting. The hickory stick is 15 15/16" long and .550" in diameter, with a round bead said to produce full tones on drums and cymbals, and a tapered butt end for excellent snare-drum articulation. The stick features Manu's signature in two-tone blue.



lists for \$350.

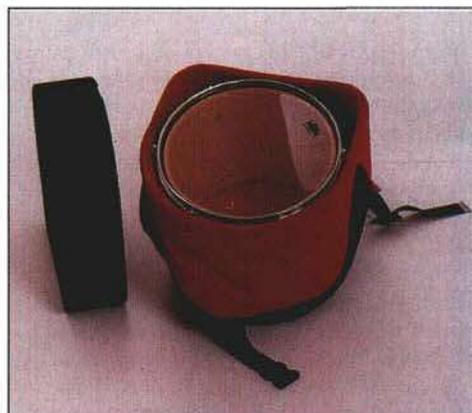
For those who are buying full-size kits, Ludwig now offers drummer/author Sandy Feldstein's *How To Setup Your Drum Kit* video with each outfit purchased. The 27-minute video (also available separately for \$9.95) takes the new owner from opening the boxes to the final positioning and tuning of the drums.

And once those drums are tuned and ready for the gig, Ludwig now offers a choice of bags or molded cases to protect them. The new *Drum Gig Bags* are made of a rugged, dark gray nylon material, with 1/2" foam padding, a vinyl plush fleece inner lining, 1" black nylon binding tape at all seams, and heavy-duty black nylon YKK #7 zippers. A 4" spine on each bag helps it keep its shape when empty and allows the lid to fold back and out of the way for easy drum installation. Bags are available to fit most drum sizes. Hardware bags are also offered.

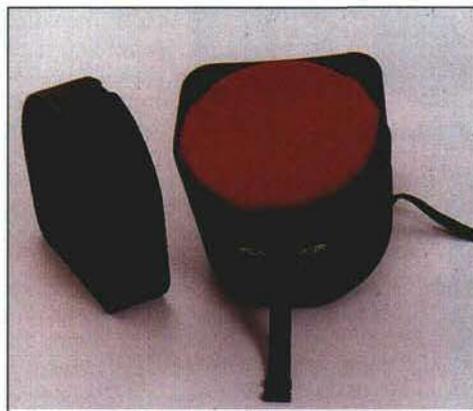
For even greater protection, Ludwig now offers roto-molded hard plastic drum cases, fitted with webbed nylon straps with *Delrin* buckles, and sturdy reinforced carrying handles. Each flat-bottom-style case is sized for drums to accept RIMS mounting systems, floor-leg brackets, and bass drum spurs. Cases are dark gray with the Ludwig logo in red. Drumset, marching drum, and trap and hardware models are all available.



## Tuck Those Babies In Fleeceforce Drumsox



If you've ever experienced the love-hate relationship drummers often have with foam-lined cases (love the protection, hate the snagging and ripping), check out *Drumsox* by Fleeceforce. The *Drumsox* is a fleece liner that fits all standard-size hardshell drum



cases, but is not permanently attached. Since it's removable, the *Drumsox* can be washed to remove smoke odors, grease, and other pollutants found in club environments. *Drumsox* liners are available in red, blue, green, purple, burgundy, gray, and black, are currently sized from 8x8 to 18x22, and are priced from \$18 to \$44.

## Swamp Thing Black Swamp Percussion SoundArt Snare Drums



Yet another entry into the custom snare drum arena is Black Swamp Percussion, who weigh in with their *SoundArt* series.

With shells of either 10-ply maple or 1/8"-thick brass, the drums feature Black Swamp's *Precision-Glide Duo* or *Trio* snare strainer. This unit enables independent tension adjustment of multiple snare systems by way of tension knobs engineered directly into the strainer body. The *Duo* (standard) has two independent systems; the *Trio* (upgrade) has three. Each is outfitted with the player's choice of seven snare configurations, which use Black Swamp's *Classic Gold*, blue coated, or stainless-steel uncoated cable, as well as curly wire snare units. Independent tensioning is said to allow each type of cable or wire to respond in its best dynamic range, creating a large dynamic spectrum.

Other standard drum features include solid-brass tube lugs, die-cast or steel counterhoops, and a variety of finish choices. Calfskin heads are also available. Maple drums are priced from \$659 to \$759; brass drums are priced from \$889 to \$949.

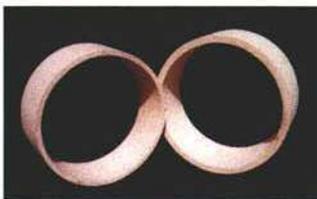
## Are You Experienced? UFIP Experience Series Vintage Rides

According to UFIP, the concept of their *Experience* series is usually to bring forth all-new ideas. But the new *Vintage* ride collection is "highly retrospective"—an attempt to re-create the classic sounds of the '40s, '50s, and '60s. The company actually uses some of the same tools, techniques, and molds that were used thirty to forty years ago, coupled with some of their more modern processes, to create five models that are visually similar to their current *Class*, *Natural*, and *Bionic* lines, but have "the articulation and spread of ride cymbals that are much, much older."

The limited-edition *Vintage* collection includes 19" and 20" *Natural-finish* rides (thin and dark, suggested for traditional jazz), a 21" *Bionic-finish* ride (clear ping, balanced overtones, large bell, for various styles including Latin music), and 20" and 22" *Class-finish* rides (light and bright, but with deep body and clean articulation, for big-band and all-purpose playing).



## And What's More



**SPAUN DRUM COMPANY** is now offering 16-ply and 24-ply 100% maple snare drums. According to the company, as shell thickness is increased, the drum becomes louder, with a higher pitch and a more focused sound (less ring

and overtones). Each drum features Spaun's solid brass lugs, 2.3 mm counterhoops, and a choice of fourteen different colors. Drums are available in 10"-14" diameters and 4"-7" depths.

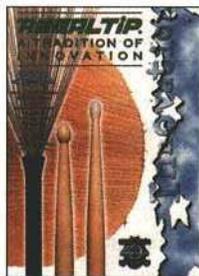
A new *Stephen Perkins Autograph* drumstick is available from **PRO-MARK**. Designed in conjunction with the Jane's Addiction/Porno For Pyros drummer, the stick is 17/32" in diameter (like a Pro-Mark 727) and 16 1/4" long, with a medium-size round bead. It's available only in Pro-Mark's oak line, at a retail price of \$12.80 per pair.



**SONOR'S Force 2001** budget line includes new hardware improvements, including a double tom holder featuring fine-toothed gear-angled adjustment. Each individual tom can be memory locked into a separate height setting. All *Force 2001* hardware has high-quality chrome plating on all parts, with the Sonor logo present on the wing screws.

A new fortieth-anniversary color catalog is available from **REGAL TIP**. The twelve-page booklet includes all of the company's sticks, brushes, and accessories, along with information on their history.

Another catalog of interest is **REMO'S** new drumhead mini-catalog. The free booklet includes information on all of Remo's extensive drumhead lines, along with dozens of photos of endorsers.



## Making Contact

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**Fleeceforce**  
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Vibonation@aol.com  
www.ludwig-drums.com

**Pro-Mark**  
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**Regal Tip**  
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Niagara Falls, NY 14305  
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fax: (716) 285-2710  
www.regaltip.com

**Remo**  
28101 Industrial Dr.  
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tel: (805) 294-5600  
fax: (805) 294-5700  
www.remousa.com

**Sonor**  
c/o HSS Inc.  
PO Box 9167  
Richmond, VA 23227  
tel: (804) 550-2700  
fax: (804) 550-2670  
www.sonor.de

**Spaun Drum Co.**  
711 E. Myrtle Ave.  
Glendora, GA 91741  
tel: (626) 914-9699  
fax: (626) 963-6848

**UFIP**  
c/o Drum Workshop  
101 Bernoulli Circle  
Oxnard, CA 93030  
tel: (805) 485-6999  
fax: (805) 485-1334  
www.dwdrums.com  
www.ufip.com

**Zildjian**  
22 Longwater Dr.  
Norwell, MA 02061  
tel: (617) 871-2200  
fax: (617) 871-3984  
www.Zildjian.com



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Our MasterEdge 316, 516 and Special Edition Snare Drums feature advanced Acousticon R<sup>®</sup> one-piece shells in 3/16", 5/16" and new H/D (high-density) formulations with patented Molded Bearing Edges<sup>®</sup>—a combination of classic craftsmanship and modern technology that gives progressive drummers a wide selection of "tonally defined" snare drum choices (see below).

Offered in a full range of sizes with VenWood, Quadura or Custom Graphics finishes and custom-quality details that include rubber lug insulators, nylon tension rod washers and Renaissance Drumheads, Remo MasterEdge Snare Drums are now available in three great yet distinctly different sounding models. Hear them today at an authorized Remo drum dealer and you may just discover a new way to define your sound.

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shell	Acousticon H/D	Acousticon 316	Acousticon 516
edge		Molded Bearing Edge	
hoops	Die-Cast	Steel	Steel



Lonnie Bellson  
(drumming legend)



Ricky Lawson  
(Eric Clapton)



Jeff Hamilton  
(independent)



Mike Mangini  
(Steve Vai)



Russ McKinnon  
(independent)



Prescott Ellison  
(Brian McKnight)



Dean Butterworth  
(Ben Harper)



Shatney Baby  
(Keenan Wrayans)

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28101 Industry Dr. • Valencia, CA 91355  
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**REMO** USA

# Grand Master Cymbals

by Rick Van Horn

Mysteries of the East are once again available in the West.

Almost all of today's major cymbal manufacturers began promoting their products by touting the secret formulas and traditional manufacturing methods that gave their cymbals historic acoustic properties. A certain romantic mystery was thus built up around cymbals, creating a descriptive vocabulary much like that used for fine wines. ("Piquant, with just a hint of pretentiousness....")

However, as time has gone on and modern technology has become more prevalent in cymbal manufacturing, those same companies have tended to downplay the "historic" angle when discussing their production methods. Although they may offer models designed to re-create "traditional" sounds, those models are now made by the latest in state-of-the-art machinery—often under the control of computers. The image of the master cymbalmaker sweating over a forge and an anvil is a thing of the past.

Except in Turkey. In the past two years there has been a minor explosion of small Turkish companies offering hand-made cymbals. The latest of these is Grand Master Cymbals, a company dedicated to all of the ancient mystery and romance of cymbalmaking. Here's a brief excerpt from their debut catalog/flyer: "Too many times...we dismiss everything that is not hooked up to a computerized machine as 'primitive voodoo.' [But] when we compare 'ancient sciences' to modern technology, we see that the human race has *forgotten* more than it will ever realize.



This is especially evident in the case of cymbals."

Grand Master describes their manufacturing process this way: "The oldest original 'Grand Master Cymbal Craftsmen' in Turkey (gentlemen in their seventies and eighties) supervise an array of mind-boggling ancient cymbal construction techniques, which include the use of '24 karat gold bar batter whipping,' 'biological alloy fermentation,' a special ten-step furnace-to-boiling-acid-bath tempering process, and painstaking double hammering, to achieve a musical voice that is so rich and complex it is said to 'breathe as if it were alive.'"

Sound a little far-fetched? Well, consider these points: Although the "gold bar batter whipping" of the molten cymbal alloy (performed with a gold bar encased in clay and steel) seems like something out of a Tolkien novel, according to Grand Master's literature it actually has scientifically based effects on the metal at the molecular level. The negative charge of the gold's electrons is said to affect how the copper and tin bond within the alloy, by charging their atoms during adhesion to each other. This, the company says, makes for a "sweeter, more musical, 'special sounding' cymbal alloy."

Then there are the "biological ingredients" put into the molten alloy in order to "add life and breath" to the cymbals. Well, there's nothing like a magic potion to create a little mystery. But again, there's a method to Grand Master's madness. As they describe, "Biologists [say] that the principle that causes great violins to get better with age [is] the drying out of moisture within the wood, and microscopic bacteria processing the wood internally to cause more aeration between the cells for better resonance and tone. This same principle goes in effect when you...introduce specialized bacteria into the alloy (which 'will eat away at the copper and moisture') along with other 'secret ingredients' inside the cymbal. The cymbal will only get better as time passes, because it will internally 'cure,' due to the favorable conditions and cultures which develop when we introduce one of the most complex chains of amino acids and bacteria in the world."

So Grand Master's contention is that their ancient manufacturing methods are rooted in valid scientific fact. And everything is supervised by elder craftsmen who are passing on their skills and knowledge to a dozen eager apprentices as you read this. Construction time and effort are high, so production output is low. But the result—again, according to the folks at Grand Master—is the reintroduction onto the market of "the authentic 'breathing' Turkish cymbal," such has not been seen for over sixty years.

### The Line

Grand Master offers seven separate series: *Desert Glow*, *Desert Gem*, *Desert Cured*, *Control Ring*, *Control Ring Cured*, *Custom Cured*, and *Master Tuned*. (I'll describe each in more detail a bit later.) Ride cymbals in all series are offered from 18" through 24" sizes in *Original Light*, *Original*, *Jazz*, medium-thin, medium, *Traditional*, *Rock*, heavy, *Custom Dry*, *Ping*, *Mini-Cup*, *Sizzle*, crash/ride, and *Flat* models. Crashes in all series run from 12" through 20", in paper-thin, thin, crash, medium-thin, medium, rock, and *Dark* models. (Size availability of rides and crashes varies per model.) Splashes are available in all series except *Master Tuned*, from 8" to 12" sizes in *Original* and *Rock* models. Bell cymbals from 8" to 12" sizes are available in *Desert Glow*

and *Desert Gem* series. *Desert Glow* swish cymbals are available from 16" to 18", 20", and 22". Grand Master also offers symphonic, Janissary marching band, and orchestral models.

Although Grand Master's catalog only lists China cymbals in the *Desert Glow* and *Desert Gem* series, we had a *Custom Cured* China in our test group, so the company is already expanding on their lines. But no matter how limited their range of China models may be, they offer the widest selection of China sizes I've ever seen. Although I only tested 18" models for this review, the company offers Chinas starting at 8" and running in one-inch increments all the way up to 24" (skipping 23").

### Our Review Cymbals

We were sent a representative set of cymbals from each of Grand Master's series. Each set included 16" thin and paper-thin crashes, 18" medium-thin and paper-thin crashes, and a 22" medium ride. Asim Can Gündüz, the director of the Grand Master Cymbal Company, told me that he particularly wanted us to try the paper-thin crashes, since they represent the most difficult type of cymbal to manufacture by means of Grand Master's hand-crafting methods.

A 10" splash was also included in all but the *Master Tuned* set; an 18" China was included in the *Desert Glow* and *Custom Cured* sets. We also received a supplemental set of various 20" rides (a bit too late to be included in our photos).

Asim Can Gündüz told me something else that made our review process interesting, which is that the "living alloy" within the cymbals takes an average of ninety days to "cure." This means that the cymbals will initially sound a bit harder than normal, with more high mids and volume. Every Grand Master cymbal is "snapped" (broken in by manually bending the cymbal until the hard inner veins [Asim's term] crack, much like cracking your knuckles). This starts the curing process; in ninety days the cymbals become softer and more bendable. "What happens," says Asim, "is that what buyers perceive to be the finest-sounding cymbals they've ever heard are actually at their *worst* when they take them home. As the curing process continues, that intriguing sweetness comes to light, and people freak out." I tried to make a point to listen to the cymbals as soon as we got them, and then again a few weeks later, to gain an accurate impression of their true tonal characteristics.

Another aspect of these cymbals—one that I've never encountered in forty years of playing and fifteen years of product testing—is that due to the "biological ingredients" within the "living alloy," the cymbals have a strong, leathery odor for about thirty days after completion. To offset this "organic aroma," the cymbals are washed in the factory in a solution containing rose water, and their special packing bags are scented with jasmine to give the cymbals a pleasant fragrance. Not your average packaging method, to say the least.

### Sound

All the romance, mystery, and magic in the world doesn't mean a thing to a cymbal if it doesn't produce a distinctive and desirable sound. So here's an overview of the sounds produced by our test group, arranged by series.

**Desert Glow:** These are Grand Master's "general purpose"

cymbals. Lathed top and bottom, they are the most familiar-looking models in the line. The 10" splash in this series was a delight. Exceptionally thin, it produced a classic splash sound: fairly high-pitched and "hissy."

The crashes produced a sweet sound: bright, shimmering, and very musical. The paper-thin models especially had a sort of "sigh" when struck. (Ah yes, the "breathing" cymbal....) There was a distinct softness to their sound, yet with no lack of volume or projection. Generally they had a medium to medium-high pitch. Ditto for the 14" hi-hats, which just felt like butter under my sticks, but had plenty of chick sound and a nice projection.

We received three *Desert Glow* rides: a 20" Jazz ride, a 20" crash/ride, and a 22" medium ride. The *Jazz* struck all of the editors as sounding like a cymbal from the '60s: warm and washy, with a fairly soft stick impact and a medium-to-low pitch. The bell was smallish and flat, so it wasn't great for riding, but otherwise this cymbal had a lot of character.

The crash/ride was even lower in pitch than the *Jazz* ride, owing to its thinner design for crash applications. It had even more wash, too; stick impact produced more of a "clang" than a "ping." On the other hand, it had a nicer bell for riding.

The 22" ride set the standard for all other similar models: big, fairly thick, and with a broad, flat bell. A 22" is not a subtle cymbal; it takes a certain amount of power to produce stick response on a cymbal this big. In the case of the *Desert Glow*, that response was crisp and shimmering, with a basic medium-high pitch and



*Desert Glow* cymbals, clockwise from top left: 18" paper-thin, 16" paper-thin, 16" thin, and 18" medium-thin crashes, a 10" splash, 14" regular hi-hats, and a 22" medium ride. At center is an 18" China.

Jim Esposito

plenty of overtones and sustain.

For this review I only tested two China cymbals, from the extremes of Grand Master's series range: one *Desert Glow* and one *Custom Cured*. The 18" *Desert Glow* model was relatively thin, and was lathed top and bottom. As a result, it had lots of vibrations, and was low-pitched and "splashy." It also had a fairly long sustain. This would be an excellent China for crashing, but not necessarily for playing ride patterns.

**Desert Gem:** At first glance these look identical to the *Desert Glow* models, but they feature additional hammering on the bells. This is done to add "shimmering highs" to the cymbals' tone.

The *Desert Gem* splash and crashes all had qualities similar to those of the *Desert Glow* models, but generally with a higher pitch, and always with a little more edge, cut, and sustain. The splash especially had all the lightness and musicality of its *Desert Glow* sibling, but with just a hint more power and life.

The crashes in this series were never thick or heavy-sounding, but they would be my choice for a high-volume situation where projection and cut were as desirable as musicality. (Happily, you'd get both.) Since I tried only paper-thin to medium-thin models, I can only imagine the power that heavier models in this series would offer.

The 14" *Desert Gem* hi-hats were also very similar to the *Desert Glow* versions in tonality and response. But they offered a higher pitch and more penetrating power.

We also received three rides in the *Desert*



*Desert Gem* cymbals, clockwise from top left: 18" paper-thin, 16" paper-thin, 16" thin, and 18" medium-thin crashes, 14" hi-hats, a 22" medium ride, and a 10" splash.

Jim Esposito

*Gem* line: a 20" medium ride, a 20" crash/ride, and a 22" medium ride. I liked the 20" medium ride for its combination of crisp, clean highs, moderate wash, great bell, and abundant sustain. (A nylon-tipped stick really brought out the highs.) The crash/ride appealed more to other editors who liked its lower pitch and darker, washier ride qualities (more "clangy" than "ringy"), combined with its super bell and explosive crashing potential.

The 22" ride sounded like a big brother to the *Desert Glow*: same sibilance and sweetness, but more highs, more volume, and more cut. This would be my choice for a power-rock ride that could give both volume and musicality.

**Desert Cured:** This is a half-and-half model. The top is a *Desert Glow*-style lathed finish; the bottom is a very raw-looking unlathed surface pocked with intense hammer marks.

The splash in this series was a big surprise. It didn't splash. Even though it had a totally lathed top, it had virtually no sibilance or shimmer. It was much more "gongy" than I would have expected. But even that gonginess wasn't as musical as that of the *Custom Cured* splash. I just don't think this design lends itself to an ultra-thin, splash-sized model.

Ditto for the 14" hi-hats. I would have expected more shimmer from a cymbal with a lathed top. But I think I've learned from this review that the *bottom* of the cymbal seems to have more effect. The unlathed bottoms of the hi-hat cymbals made the *Desert*



*Desert Cured* cymbals, clockwise from top left: 18" medium-thin, 16" thin, 16" paper-thin, and 18" paper-thin crashes, 14" hi-hats, a 22" medium ride, and a 10" splash. Some of the cymbals have been reversed to show the unlathed lower surface.

*Cured* hi-hats neither dark nor dry—just downright "clangy," whether played open or closed. I can say that the sound was distinct and unique—something that would appeal to esoteric tastes, but certainly not for everyone.

Ah, but the crashes. Again, it wasn't the sound I would have expected from a cymbal of this design, but it was a very *interesting* sound. All of the crashes tended to produce a very short, bright, and powerful explosion on impact. Then they died away quickly to a mellow undertone—a hum, rather than a ring. This

could be very useful in a studio or live situation where a big impact was good, but a lengthy over-ring was not.

I tried only a 22" *Desert Cured* medium ride, and found that it fell right in line with its siblings, with one exception: The lathed top allowed it to produce a crisp, sibilant stick impact sound. But after that it immediately switched to a dark, gongy undertone with no sibilance and only a moderate sustain. Again, the *control* factor was interesting: I could really wallop this ride without it roaring out of control. But the overall sound was extremely dry and one-dimensional.

**Control Ring:** The bell of this cymbal, along with a circular section on the "shoulder," is unlathed; the rest of the top and all of the bottom surface has a *Desert Glow* finish. On the splash cymbal this treatment took a little bit off of the sibilance, but left enough to still be "splashy." Thus it created a slightly mellow splash effect. That same effect applied to the crash cymbals: They produced a nice explosion, but with not as much "shimmer" or aftertone as the *Desert Glow* or *Desert Gem* mod-



*Control Ring* cymbals, clockwise from top left: 18" paper-thin, 16" paper-thin, 16" thin, and 18" medium-thin crashes, 14" hi-hats, a 22" medium ride, and a 10" splash.

els. They were also a little darker in tone, but not at all dull or clanky.

I enjoyed the *Control Ring* hi-hats very much. They were a little darker than the *Desert Gem* or *Desert Glow* models, but still nice and lively. Their sound was a little "raw" and very cutting, with a nice "growl" when played half-open. They made me think of New Orleans swamp-funk and second-line patterns.

I was also impressed with the unique quality of the *Control Ring 22"* medium ride. Its lathed underside gave it good sibilance and musicality, while the unlathed bell and ring area on the top mellowed out the stick impact and helped produce a slightly dryer, mellower sound than that of completely lathed models. It, too, had that N'awlins sort of quality: just a little unpolished and nasty.

**Control Ring Cured:** This model features the same top treatment as the *Control Ring*, but has the unlathed *Desert Cured* lower surface. The resulting effect on the splash and crash cymbals was to create a dark, mellow explosion, with limited sustain and very little shimmer. There was a dry, dark overall sound to the crash that would rumble through music rather than cut through it.

The 14" hi-hats in this series followed suit with the crashes. The top cymbal was dark and mellow when played with a stick in jazz-ride fashion. But hi-hat "barks" were quick and clean, and the "chick" sound was strong and clear.

The 22" medium ride led the way into "dry" territory. It had just the slightest amount of sibilance upon stick impact, but very little



**Control Ring Cured** cymbals, clockwise from top left: 18" paper-thin, 16" thin, 16" paper-thin, and 18" medium-thin crashes, 14" hi-hats, a 22" medium ride, and a 10" splash.

Jim Esposito

in the sustain. Instead, it produced a long, clean, pure tone when ridden.

**Custom Cured:** This model is completely unlathed (save for a fraction of an inch at the outside edge). The splash in this series produced virtually no sibilance, but had lots of good tone and sustain. As such it was more of a mini-crash than a traditional splash. But it was in no way "clanky," and it was still quick enough to be choked off for punctuation purposes. Crash cymbals were equally dark and dry, with a full-bodied explosion that quickly changed to a dry ring and a deep, dark tone. Their overall sound was mellow, but not lacking in power.

I was pleasantly surprised by the 14" *Custom Cured* hi-hats. They were absolutely dry, but their pitch was high, their explosion was sweet, and their chick sound was outstanding. As such, they were great for heavy riding when closed (as in hard rock playing), quick barks (as in funk), or dry, controlled "spang-a-lang" sticking (as in jazz riding).

The *Custom Cured 22"* medium ride could as easily have been named the *Desert Dry*, because its sound is absolutely parched. What you hear is pure stick impact, with no sibilance—just a gongy sustain. Its pitch was dark and low, and it produced a big roar with sustained high-speed riding. Dry, yes—but very powerful. This model could fit the bill as easily in a power rock band as an electric jazz group.

The 18" *Custom Cured* China cymbal I tried was as far away from its *Desert Glow* cousin as you could imagine. Heavier overall, and completely unlathed, it had more of a "clangy"



**Custom Cured** cymbals, clockwise from top left: 18" paper-thin, 16" thin, 16" paper-thin, and 18" medium-thin crashes, 14" hi-hats, a 22" medium ride, and a 10" splash. At center is an 18" China. Note the wide, flat bell of the ride, which is characteristic of all Grand Master 22" rides.

Jim Esposito

sound than a splashy one. It produced a hard, almost abrasive explosion, with a quick decay. The cymbal had very little "give" under heavy stick impact, so as a crash its response was loud and aggressive. However, it could be played on more gently to create ride patterns, since it didn't build up a tremendous wash.

I should mention that on *any* of the Grand Master cymbals with unlathed surfaces, there were often splashes of color amid the hammer marks: bright red, blue, white, and orange. I have no idea how these colored areas were created, but they distinguish the cymbals and prevent them from looking "industrial," as unlathed cymbals often can.

**Master Tuned:** While at first glance this model looks like a *Desert Glow* or *Desert Gem*, Grand Master's catalog states that it's made from a "special custom version" of their already "secret living alloy." In addition, it features two separate hammering treatments: one during construction and one *after* the cymbal has been lathed. (They claim that this makes it the only double-hammered cymbal in the world.)

Since the lathing on this series is similar to that on the *Desert Glow*, these cymbals start out with many similar characteristics. But the added hammering contributes more tonality. The best way I can describe these cymbals is "robust." They had as much shimmer and musicality as the *Desert Glow* series, but with more penetrating power. They had highs approaching those of the *Desert Gem* models, but with additional body and undertones. They weren't as esoteric-sounding as any of the *Control Ring*, *Desert Cured*, or *Custom Cured* models, yet they had their own distinctive musical character.

Cymbal for cymbal, the *Master Tuned* models had a wider pitch range, greater projection, and more sustain than any other Grand Master series. In particular, the 14" hi-hats were hands-down the sweetest-sounding and most musical of all the models we tested, and the 22" medium ride had the most versatility and tonal range of any of the rides. Grand Master considers this their flagship series, and for good reason.

### Conclusions And Pricing

I don't want to fall prey to the very romanticism I was lampooning earlier in this article. But I will say that whatever "ancient sciences" or "historic techniques" are being utilized to create Grand Master cymbals, the result is a success. They are significantly different from other cymbals I've experienced. Whether or not that difference will appeal to your tastes is, of course, up to you. But it's nice to know that you have another avenue to explore.

Almost all Grand Master cymbal series are priced the same, by size and type. The exceptions are *Desert Gem* models, which are priced at \$12 per cymbal higher, and *Master Tuned* models, which are priced at \$24 per cymbal higher. Their prices are apparently due to the additional hammering required for those models.



**Master Tuned cymbals, clockwise from top left: 18" medium-thin, 16" thin, 16" paper-thin, and 18" paper-thin crashes, 14" regular hi-hats, and a 22" medium ride.**

Jim Exposito

Otherwise, the price structure for our review cymbals is as follows: 12" splashes — \$197; 14" hi-hats (per pair) — \$470; 16" crashes — \$280; 18" crashes — \$341; 18" Chinas — \$376; 20" rides — \$452; 22" rides — \$534.

Grand Master cymbals are just coming into the American market, and will be sold in selected music stores. At press time, they're available through Manny's Music in New York City, and American Music in Seattle. Overseas drummers can contact the international distributor, Kaman Music Corporation, at (860) 509-8806, for the location of the nearest dealer. Or you can call Asim Can Gündüz at Grand Master's Turkish headquarters: 011-90-212-251-35-98.

*Editor's note: As we went to press with this review we learned of the passing of Bismillah Koyuncu, the elder of the two "grand master" cymbalsmiths for whom the Grand Master Cymbal Company was named. He was eighty-six, and had worked at the plant as the exclusive supervisor of the creation of the cymbal alloy, until his final days.*

*Bismillah's signature appeared on virtually all of the cymbals tested in this review, indicating his personal approval of their quality. It's possible that such cymbals—representing only the first year of Grand Master's production—may attain collectible status at some point in the future.*

*Bismillah is survived by his cousin Abdullah Koyuncu, the company's other "grand master." His signature will appear on all future models. The company states, "We will do our best to pay homage to our original grand master builder's efforts by continuing his legacy as he would have wanted: striving to continue to build the highest-quality handmade cymbals possible."*

# Mapex 950 Series Hi-Hat And Bass Drum Pedals

by Chap Ostrander

Innovative design features distinguish this new pro hardware line.

According to Mapex, their new 950 *Performing Artist Series* hardware line is designed to allow drummers to raise the level of their playing without emptying their pockets at the same time. For this review we were sent the *H950* hi-hat, the *P950* bass drum pedal, and the *P980* double bass pedal.

## Shared Features

The footboard design is shared by the hi-hat and bass pedals. The Mapex name is cut into the steel, surrounded by a honeycomb pattern that provides a good gripping surface. The look is clean and simple.

The footboard has a solid feel, and the heel plate is hinged with nylon bushings that make it smooth and quiet. Included is a toe stop that can be set in either of two positions or removed altogether. A chain connects the footboard to the pedal linkage.

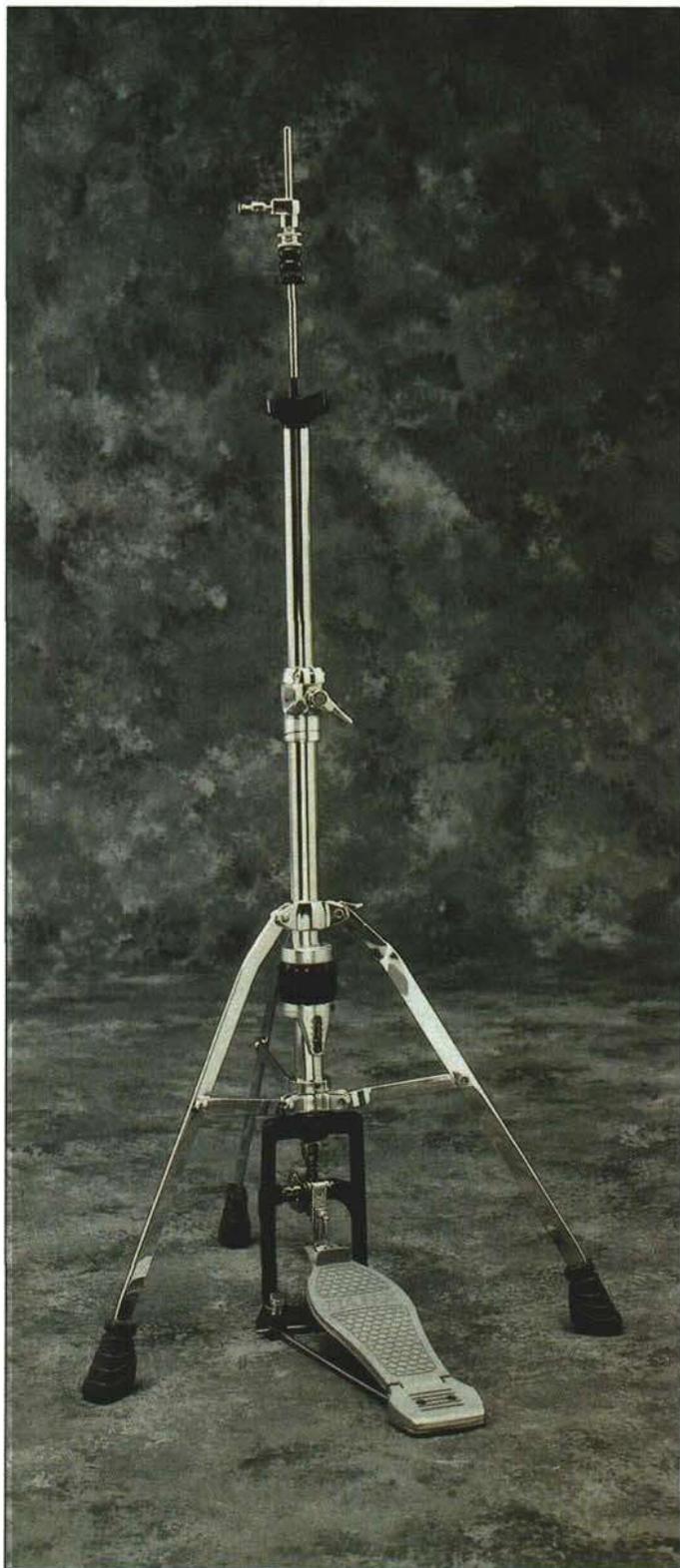
Another feature common to all the pedals is the use of drumkey screws throughout. This is a very thoughtful system. A drumkey can handle all the main adjustments, unless you're looking to perform major surgery. (And the way these pedals are built, that shouldn't be necessary for a long time.) Allen wrenches are supplied with the bass pedals for those other adjustments that you don't need to do too often.

## H950 Hi-Hat

The *H950* hi-hat is a study in style, form, and function. It has clean lines and curves that set it apart from most other stands. One of the most striking design features of this stand (and the Mapex line in general) is the memory lock that connects the upper and lower tubes, which is curved like the top half of a shell. The lower half of the stand is shaped so that the combination of the two complete a rounded shape. The unique design reminds me of the days when you could look at a drumkit from a distance and tell the manufacturer from the shape and design of their hardware.

All the stands in the 950 hardware line feature the same design concept—an admirable extra step beyond pure function. The wing screw used to tighten the height adjustment is "L" shaped, rather than the traditional T-shaped screw—again, functional *and* attractive. The legs of the hi-hat are single-braced (making your trap case lighter) and slightly curved.

The clutch on the *H950* has a number of interesting features. When the clutch is tightened onto the rod, the adjustment is held



snugly in place due to a notch right behind the rod, opposite the wing screw. This notch allows the rod to flex slightly when you tighten the clutch. In addition, a single locking nylon nut secures the assembly from the bottom. There are two nuts on top to fine-tune the tension adjustment of the top cymbal and lock it in place. Soft rubber washers replace the standard felt washers. Their rounded shape gives minimal contact with the cymbal, which reduces any muffling effect they might have; at the same time, their softness allows you to get the feel of a felt washer.

The bottom cymbal sits on Mapex's *Tri-Nodal Cymbal Seat*, which is made up of one piece of soft rubber with three wedge-shaped pads. The bell of the cymbal rests on these pads, thus minimizing contact. The pad unit is allowed to "float" because it's not locked down, but rather secured by a nylon fitting that snaps in place from above. I have to think that this also increases the ability of the bottom cymbal to resonate. One of the pads has a spring-loaded height-adjustment screw underneath to tilt the bottom cymbal. That pad has a metal strip under it so that the adjustment screw doesn't go through it.

Another thoughtful feature of the 950 hi-hat is the connection between the two halves of the pull rod: The bottom half of the rod extends above the lower half of the stand, making it easier to see. There are many times when a drummer must set up in semi-darkness, and having this connection in plain sight makes the job easier.

A steel collar holds the lower portion of the leg assembly and allows it to rotate. The height adjustment on the top half also sets the rotation of the legs. There is a nylon sleeve inside the height adjustment so that the setting you choose stays in place securely and won't harm the tubing of the lower section. I like the fact that you don't feel metal scraping on metal when setting up the 950 hi-hat, and there's no chance of it rattling. In terms of spring-tension adjustability, a large, ribbed plastic knob in the middle of the lower section moves a vertical indicator showing the ten-point adjustment of the spring. Twisting the knob moves the unit from points one to ten, and this represents a wide range of tension.

The linkage connecting the footboard to the pull rod is another unusual feature. As the pedal descends, it moves a cam that pulls down on a chain connected to the rod. The chain rides on a felt bed, resulting in action that is smooth and quiet. Mapex calls this their *True Direct-Pull System*. Even though the natural arc of the pedal moves forward as you push down with your foot, the cam linkage maintains a straight up-and-down motion of the rod. Every major manufacturer of hi-hats has their own theory of physics, motion, and linkage. This design represents yet another twist. It also gives a unique feel to the action of the pedal. When you push down with your foot, you never really feel like you're hitting bottom, because the linkage has "turned the corner."

Yet another nice feature of the hi-hat linkage is that an adjustment can be made where the footboard connects to the cam system, allowing its height to vary by an inch. Just loosen the connection with a drumkey (Yea!) and set the resting position of the footboard higher or lower as you please.

There are adjustable spurs built into the base of the pedal to help keep it from creeping, and the footboard connects to the base of the hi-hat using radius rods, so you can fold it up for packing.

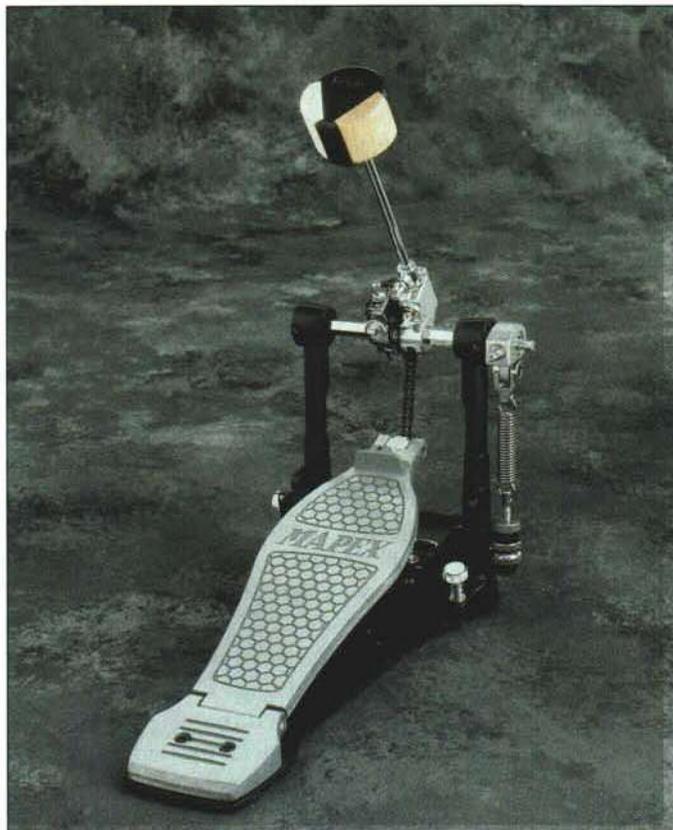
Take all these features and you've got a hi-hat that feels great—responsive and solid. I used the 950 on several gigs, and it took me no time to get used to it. The list price of the *H950* hi-hat is \$195.

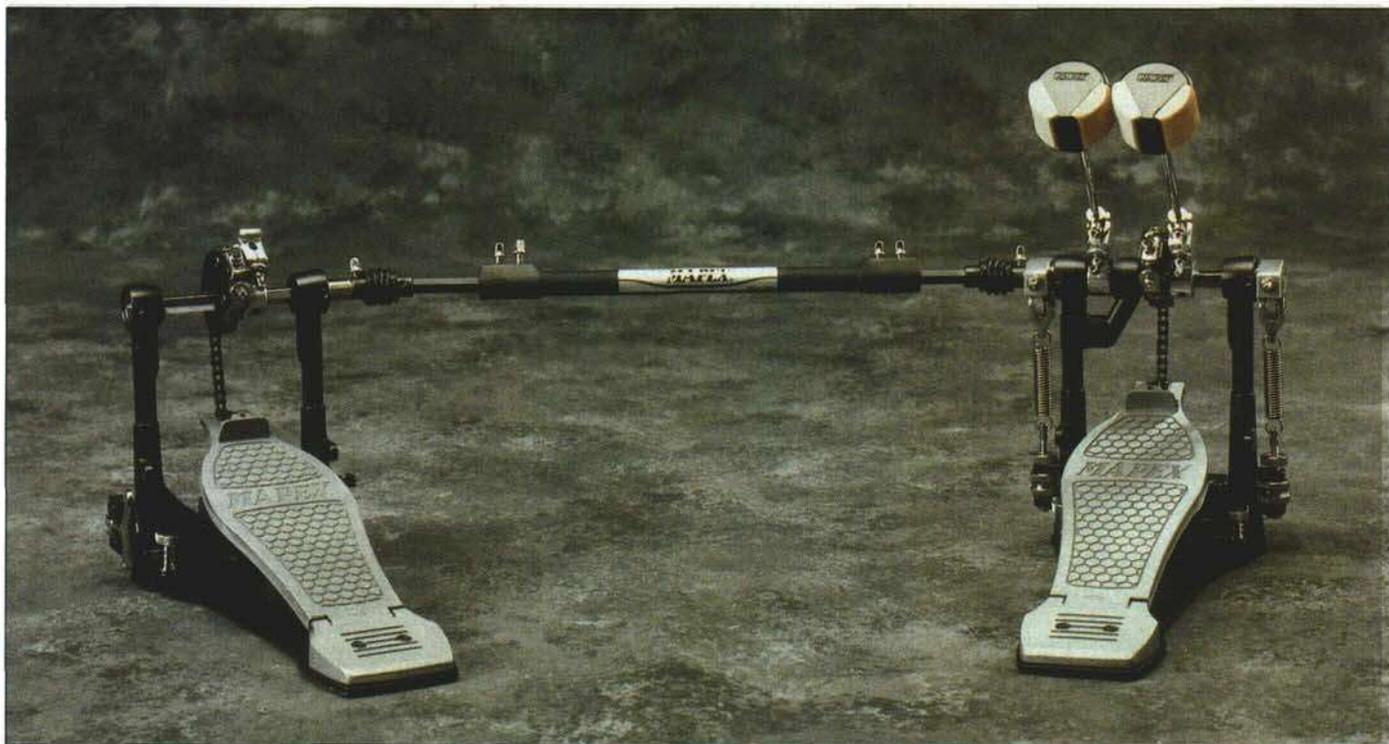
## P950 Bass Drum Pedal

The *P950* bass drum pedal is, quite simply, a joy to play. Right out of the box, this pedal is impressive. Set it down and push it with your finger, and it just keeps going, indicating a smooth, quick action. Further examination reveals a *serious* piece of hardware that feels solid and strong, but not heavy while playing.

The *P950* represents advantages on many levels. Its *Tri-Tonal* beater gives you a choice of felt, hardwood, or polymer plastic beater surfaces on a hardened steel shaft. The position of each of these playing surfaces can be locked in (using a drumkey) by a memory lock that's notched to hold the beater in place in one of the three settings. The nice part of this system is that once you find the playing surface you like, the memory lock doubles as a built-in counterweight. As you slide it up the shaft it will change the center of gravity, thereby customizing the response of the beater.

The pedal's hoop clamp has floating plastic inserts that self-adjust to the shape of the bass drum hoop, providing a secure connection. In addition, its hinge is spring-loaded so that it stays in the open position when not clamped down. I thought at first that it would be awkward to reach under the footboard to fasten the hoop clamp to the bass drum (the reason that many pedals today have side-mounted hoop-tensioning mechanisms). However, because the footboard connects to the linkage with a chain, it moves out of the way easily. Other nifty features include a soft plastic insert on the left side that serves as a drumkey holder, and a pair of spring-





loaded spurs to prevent the pedal from moving forward.

Adjustments of the *P950's* spring tension are made by turning a knurled knob that has built-in locking points. Small dents in the knob match up with a ball bearing, giving the feeling of a "bump" while tightening the spring. Rotating the primary knob gives you a wide range of spring tensions and "feels." There is also a matching lock nut to tighten down and secure the tension setting, but if for some reason the lock nut is not set, the self-locking feature of the primary knob will maintain the setting.

There is a block of felt inside the spring to prevent noise during play. The top of the spring connects to a stabilizer bearing, which is itself hinged to the stroke adjustment. That stroke adjustment (another drumkey connection) is independent of the spring tension, so once the tension of the spring is set, the stroke adjustment can be loosened and the beater set at whatever distance from the head is preferred. The adjustment rides on the axle and can be tightened at any point along the stroke.

Many pedals offer only three points of stroke length, or a very limited range of motion. Mapex's system is infinitely variable, allowing the beater to be right near the head, laying on your ankle, or anywhere in between. The connecting chain rides on a felt bed, resulting in quiet performance. Even though this is a chain-drive pedal, it is a cam design, resulting in more of a whip action when you move your foot. (In general, a circular sprocket drive gives you the feel of a direct or lateral transfer of power.) Combine this with three beater faces, the counterweight on the beater, and the spring/stroke adjustment, and you've got a powerful ally under your foot. The *P950* single bass drum pedal lists for \$180.

### **P980 Double Pedal**

The *P980* double bass pedal is built with the same features as the *P950*. The primary pedal supports the two beaters, with a double-universal drive shaft connecting it to the slave pedal. The

length of the drive shaft is adjustable from both ends, and extends from 15¼" to 22½". The extension rods are hex-shaped, with two drumkey screws on each end securing the adjustment. There are "stops" inside the housing to prevent the rods from being pulled out of the drive shaft. The universal joints are housed in rubber "boots," which keep out dust and dirt. The joints themselves are high-quality; I felt very little play or "give" when I twisted them. (The less give, the greater transfer of power to the beater.)

To my mind, the best feature of the *P980* is that you can really "custom fit" the pedals to your preference. If your left foot needs more or less resistance than your right (don't forget the counterweight), or you want the stroke to be different between your feet, you can make it so. All the adjustments available on the single pedal are independently available on the double pedal. You can even use the included Allen wrench to adjust the spacing between the two beaters, allowing you to fine-tune the sound of your bass drum. The *P980* double pedal lists for \$490.

Mapex includes a hardware mini-catalog with all of their 950 *Pro* hardware. It illustrates and gives information on the different types of cymbal, snare, and tom stands in the 950 and 550 lines, and it gives detailed pictures and instructions on adjusting the pedals. It's clearly written and helpful.

When Mapex introduced their *Black Panther* line of snare drums a couple of years ago, they hit the market with something unique and immediately identifiable. The 950 hardware line, especially the pedals, accomplishes the same goal, with unusual design features and high quality. The products are thoughtfully designed and well-made, at more than reasonable prices. By drum industry standards, Mapex is still a young company. But through the maturity of their production values and design standards they have shown that they mean to be taken seriously.



# Style

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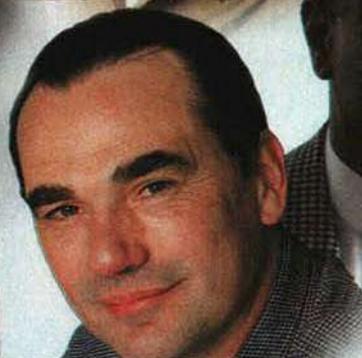
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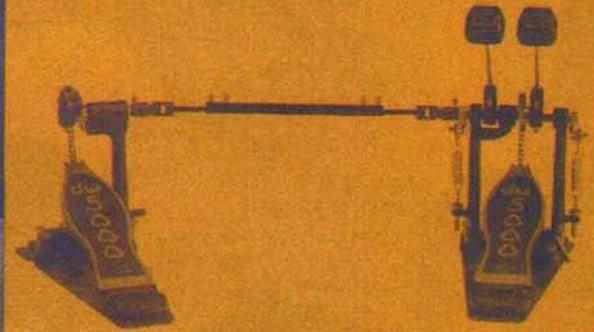
# DW



CARL ALLEN (independent) • DENNY FONGHEISER (independent) • DW 9000 SERIES HARDWARE  
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DW DRUMS • HERMAN MATTHEWS III (Rebekah) • DW CRAVIOTTO EXOTIC SERIES  
DW DRUMS • SHEILA E. (independent) • DW DRUMS • BILLY MASON (Tim McGraw) • C

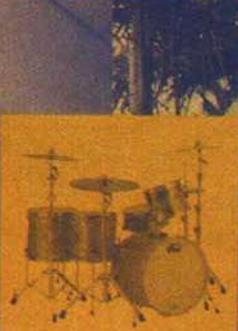


GARY NOVAK (Alanis Morissette) • VINNIE COLAIUTA\* (independent) • STEVE WHITE  
CHAD SMITH\* (Red Hot Chili Peppers) • DW 5000TH DELTA SINGLE BASS DRUM PEDAL •



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\*DW Pedal Artist, only

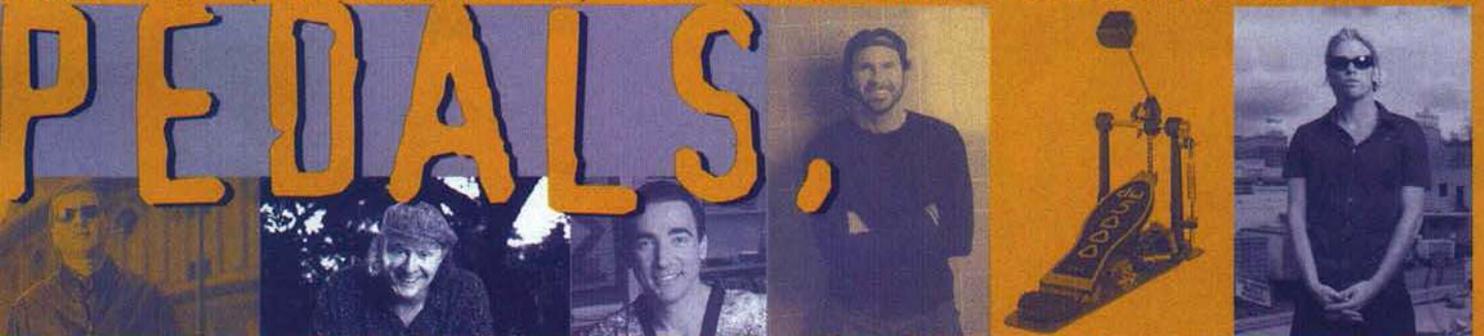


RE • STEPHEN PERKINS (Jane's Addiction) • DW DRUMS • JOSH FREESE (The Vandals)  
(legend) • SHAWN PELTON (Saturday Night Live Band) • PAUL WERTICO (Pat Metheny)



HELL SNARE DRUMS • MITCH MITCHELL (legend) • CURT BISQUERA (independent)  
R BEAUFORD\* (Dave Matthews Band) • DW 5002AH DELTA DOUBLE BASS DRUM PEDAL

# PEDALS,



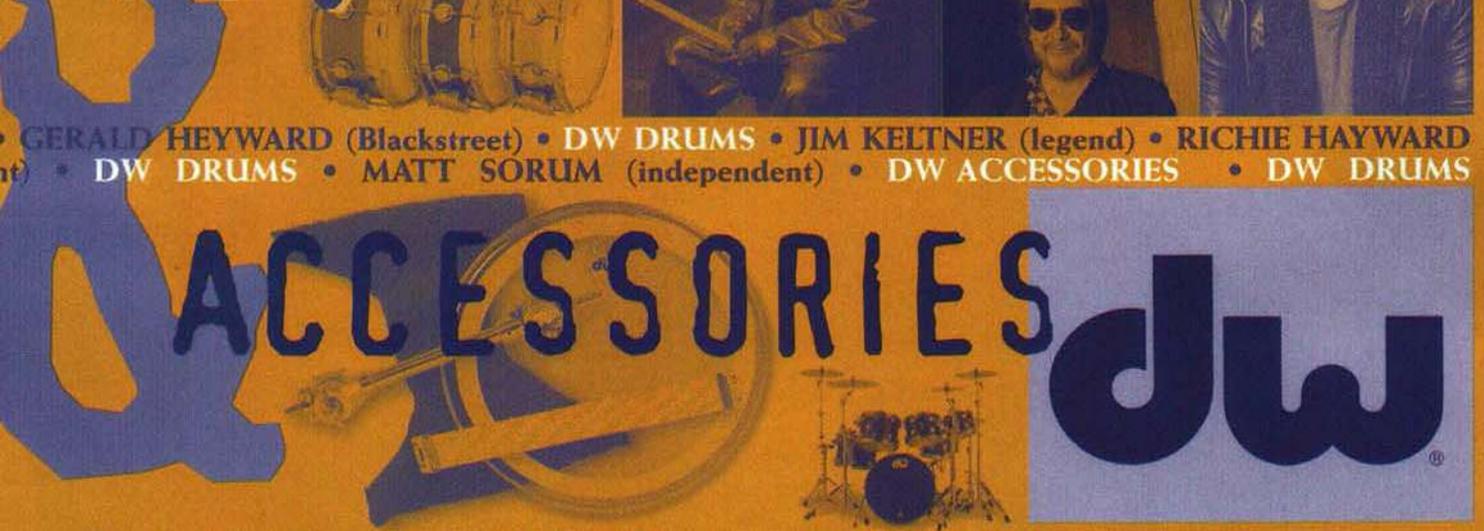
Paul Weller) • DOANE PERRY\* (Jethro Tull) • WALFREDO REYES, JR. (independent)  
OR HAWKINS\* (Foo Fighters) • JIMMY DEGRASSO (Megadeth) • DW SHORT STACK DRUMS

# MS



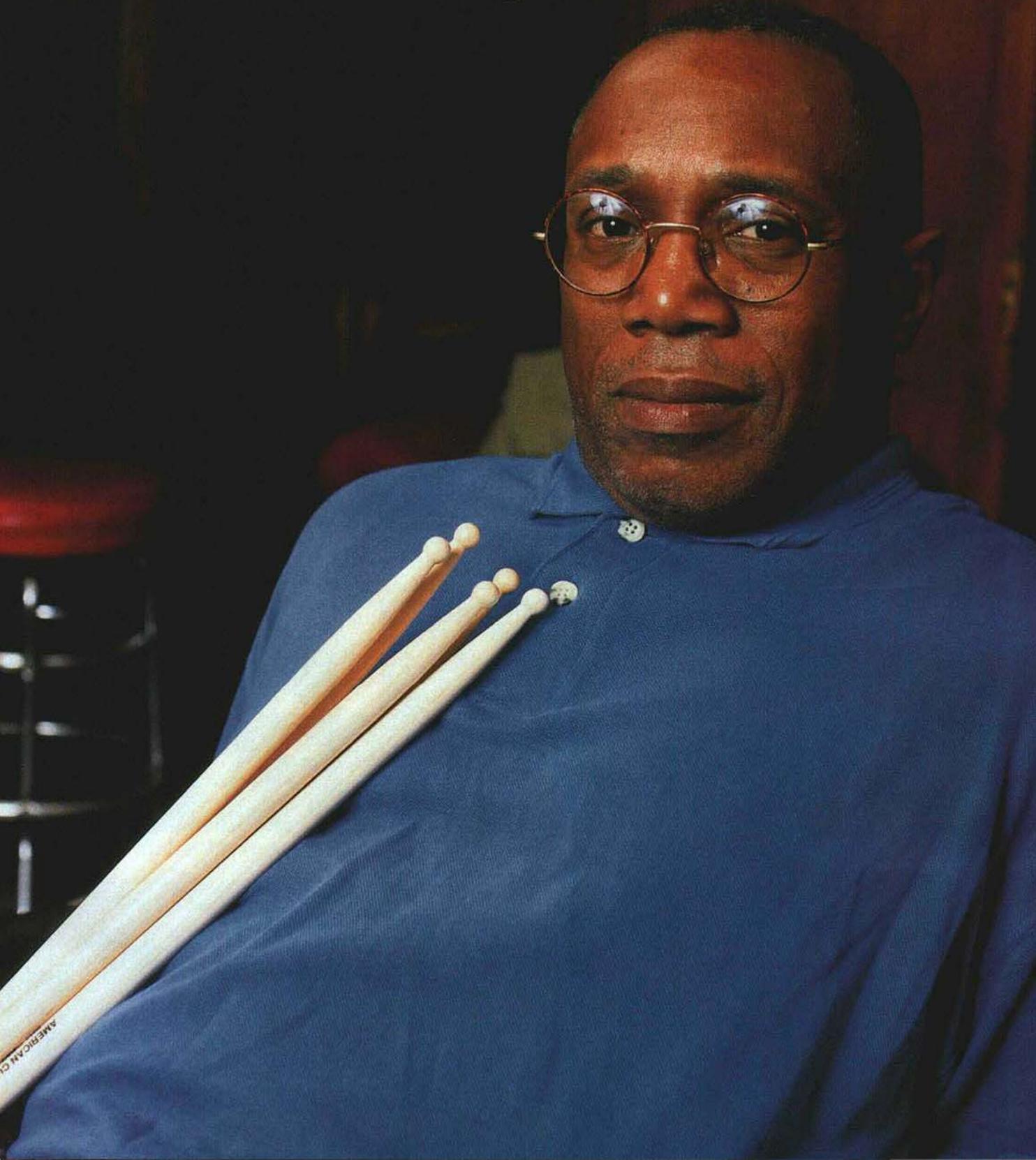
GERALD HEYWARD (Blackstreet) • DW DRUMS • JIM KELTNER (legend) • RICHIE HAYWARD  
(legend) • DW DRUMS • MATT SORUM (independent) • DW ACCESSORIES • DW DRUMS

# ACCESSORIES



dw

# BILLY COBHAM



AMERICAN CL

# ALIVE & KICKING

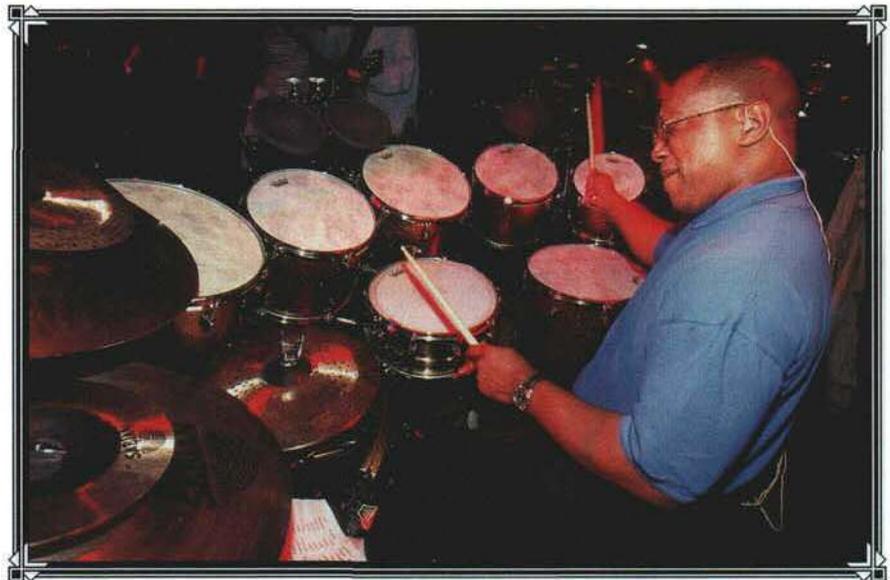
**"H**ey, jazz isn't dead! It's how I make my living!" Billy Cobham's initial reaction wasn't very positive. When the idea of a "super-group" that plays jazz-tinged arrangements of Grateful Dead tunes was first suggested, the name alone—Jazz Is Dead—turned Cobham off, big time. But the musical possibilities... hmmm...*that* could be interesting.

Now, almost a year into the project, the veteran drummer is glad he signed on. Jazz Is Dead is very much alive. As expected, fusion fans have welcomed the band with open arms. And why not? With former Weather Report bassist Alphonso Johnson, Dregs keyboardist T Lavitz, Aquarium Rescue Unit young-gun guitarist Jimmy Herring, and Cobham, the man who practically laid the foundation for "progressive" drumming, the firepower in JID is, well, life-threatening.

What *has* surprised a few people is the reaction of deadheads: Yep, they're high on the band. "And they're *everywhere*," Cobham says. "We're performing all over the States, places I've never been to—like Ketchum, Idaho and Lincoln, Nebraska—places where you wouldn't think anybody would know, but 1,500 people show up!" And watching the "twirlers" absorb the music at a JID show is fascinating, to say the least. They happily float along, while Cobham and crew dig into some

heavy, odd-meter riffing the likes of which haven't been heard since fusion's heyday. Jammin', *dude*.

The beauty of all this for Cobham is that Jazz Is Dead is introducing the drummer to a whole new generation of listeners, people who were barely out of diapers when he decided to focus his career in Europe in the early '80s. Many of the kids turning out to see the band



don't know of Billy's tremendous career: his work with the biggest names in jazz, including Miles Davis; the groundbreaking Mahavishnu Orchestra, where his advanced technique and unique playing style shook the drum world; his varied pop and rock projects, including work with artists such as Peter Gabriel, Jack Bruce, Bob Weir, and even James Brown; and his recording of over three hundred albums as a sideman—*twenty-five* as a leader, including the classic, *Spectrum*.

By William F. Miller

Photos by Paul La Raia

All of this buzz about himself and *Jazz Is Dead* strikes Cobham as a bit funny. New, wide-eyed fans come up to him after shows, a bit stunned at what they've just witnessed, and wanting his autograph on the band's new release, *Blue Light Rain* (Zebra Records). "Some of the comments from the kids have been a little surprising," Billy laughs. He's actually been asked if drummers with names like Chambers, Phillips, and Beauford—players Cobham has so obviously inspired—are big influences of *his*. "I get that all the time," he says. "Guys like Dennis and Simon have kept a higher profile in the States, so I can't blame the kids coming up today for not knowing about me. Maybe I should be flattered; here I am, fifty-four years old, and people think I'm younger than those guys!"

Cobham certainly keeps the schedule of a younger man. Besides all of the time

spent with *Jazz Is Dead*, Billy continues his solo and sideman activities. The last couple of years have seen him tour and record with the *Jazz Superband*, featuring Stanley Clarke and Larry Carlton. Billy accompanied guitarist Larry Coryell's "revisiting" of his *Spaces* material. And a record and tour is in the works with McCoy Tyner.

Billy's own band—or we should say bands—have him constantly globetrotting. The Norwegian contingent, the more acoustic-based Nordic, released one of the finest albums of the drummer's career two years back. Then there's *Paradox*, Cobham's German fusion trio that he works with regularly. And Billy's currently putting the finishing touches on a new album with another of his groups, one that features trumpet-great Randy Brecker and keyboardist/drummer Gary Husband, with a tour to follow in early '99. Plus he's quite active in far-reaching projects for UNICEF that are designed to help introduce jazz to kids the world over. *Jazz is dead* for Billy Cobham? Not hardly,



**WFM:** Some people might be surprised that you'd be interested in a project that features the music of the Dead, but didn't you actually play a few gigs with them?

**BC:** I did one show with those guys at Radio City Music Hall back in the early '80s, around the time of Bobby & The Midnighters [the band featuring Cobham along with the Dead's Bob Weir]. So while I was aware of the scene, I wasn't all that familiar with the Dead's music.

**WFM:** So how did Jazz Is Dead come about?

**BC:** Michael Gaiman and Ron Rainey *are* Jazz Is Dead; they manage the band, and Michael had the original idea. He was an agent working for Monarch Entertainment [East Coast concert promoters] back in the '80s when I was with the Midnighters—he booked some dates for us.

Michael called last year with the idea, but at first I didn't want to have anything to do with the Dead. My experiences with the Midnighters were such that I didn't want to go in that direction again—been there, done that. But when Michael said, "We'll pick some of the Dead's best music, and you can arrange it any way you want; the music will be a great platform for you," well, I was interested.

**WFM:** Who decided on the personnel?

**BC:** Michael was already tied into T Lavitz, whom I had worked with before. T was tied into Alphonso Johnson, whom I had also worked with. And T knew

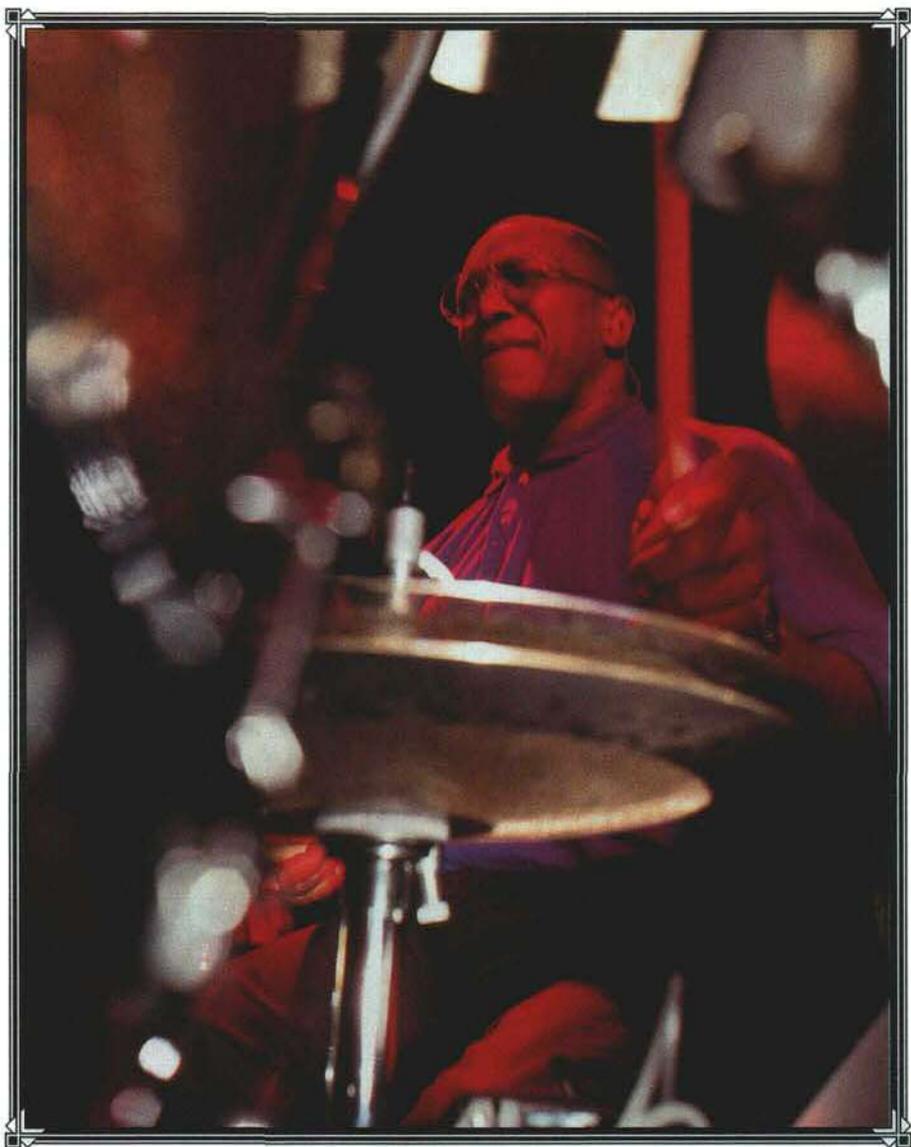
Jimmy Herring. Michael had originally asked me to recommend a guitar player, and we kicked around the idea of Larry Coryell. John Scofield's name also came up—he had worked with both Alphonso and me before. And Scofield actually did play with the band at a Festival in Baltimore, but his playing took the band in a totally different direction. Jimmy Herring was the right guy.

**WFM:** Of the three, Herring comes the closest to that Dead vibe.

**BC:** He's got that sound, man. This band *needs* that sound. Both Coryell and Scofield probably would have played through a couple of small Fender amps—everything would have been designed around a more reserved approach. It would have made the band a bit too eclectic. Jazz Is Dead is a rock 'n' roll band. You need the two 800-watt Marshalls pumpin' out that sound. Of course everyone involved is an important part of the band, but Jimmy's sound and style *is* Jazz Is Dead.

Like I mentioned, I had worked with Al and T before, but I had never heard of Jimmy. I thought maybe he'd only play one way, but it turns out he's a good jazz guitarist. It's funny, because we've been talking about slipping a few standards into the set—he can do it, and obviously the other guys can too. How about that? Expose the deadheads to some jazz.

**WFM:** Jazz really *wouldn't* be dead.



**BC:** Absolutely! [laughs] Drop some in the middle of a set—maybe in the middle of an extended improv section. The audiences we've been playing to have been great, very open to what we're doing. I think we could explore some different areas, as long as we eventually got back to the harder-grooving, louder material.

**WFM:** Speaking of that, the band does crank, a lot of which seems inspired by the guitar.

**BC:** The volume isn't just coming from Jimmy. Al plays a very powerful setup too. Between Jimmy and Al the level gets pretty heavy. It's in your face all night and it gives me a good workout.

**WFM:** I was surprised to hear that you were doing this, because the direction your career had been headed seemed to be more acoustic-based. The Coryell *Spaces Revisited* record—and especially your *Nordic* release—showed a lighter approach, with more concern given to how the acoustic sound of the drums and cymbals married to the music.

**BC:** That's right. Those projects called for that approach. But I'm always changing things up and trying to place myself in different settings. That's exciting for me and keeps it challenging. I wouldn't want to play the same style the same way. Mix it up, man.

**WFM:** So you're enjoying laying into it a bit with *Jazz Is Dead*?

**BC:** Oh yeah. Once the four of us started playing together, we knew it was going to work. The music was strong. And once I knew that, I felt that people would be interested—but I didn't think it was going to take off like this. We're up there expressing ourselves and audiences are turning out, really enjoying the improvisational nature of the music. It's fantastic.

For me, personally, it's done wonders.

I think people were starting to forget about me in the States. But now there's a whole new crop of people coming up who are digging this thing and finding out about me. Like I was telling you earlier, it's funny to have people come up after they see me play and ask if I've been influenced by Dennis or Simon.

**WFM:** You've led your own bands for so many years. Were there certain things you had to know up front *before joining* a band?

**BC:** I had to know who was playing and what type of people they are. I had to be sure that I would be able to contribute as a writer/arranger, because I've had bad experiences with that in the past.

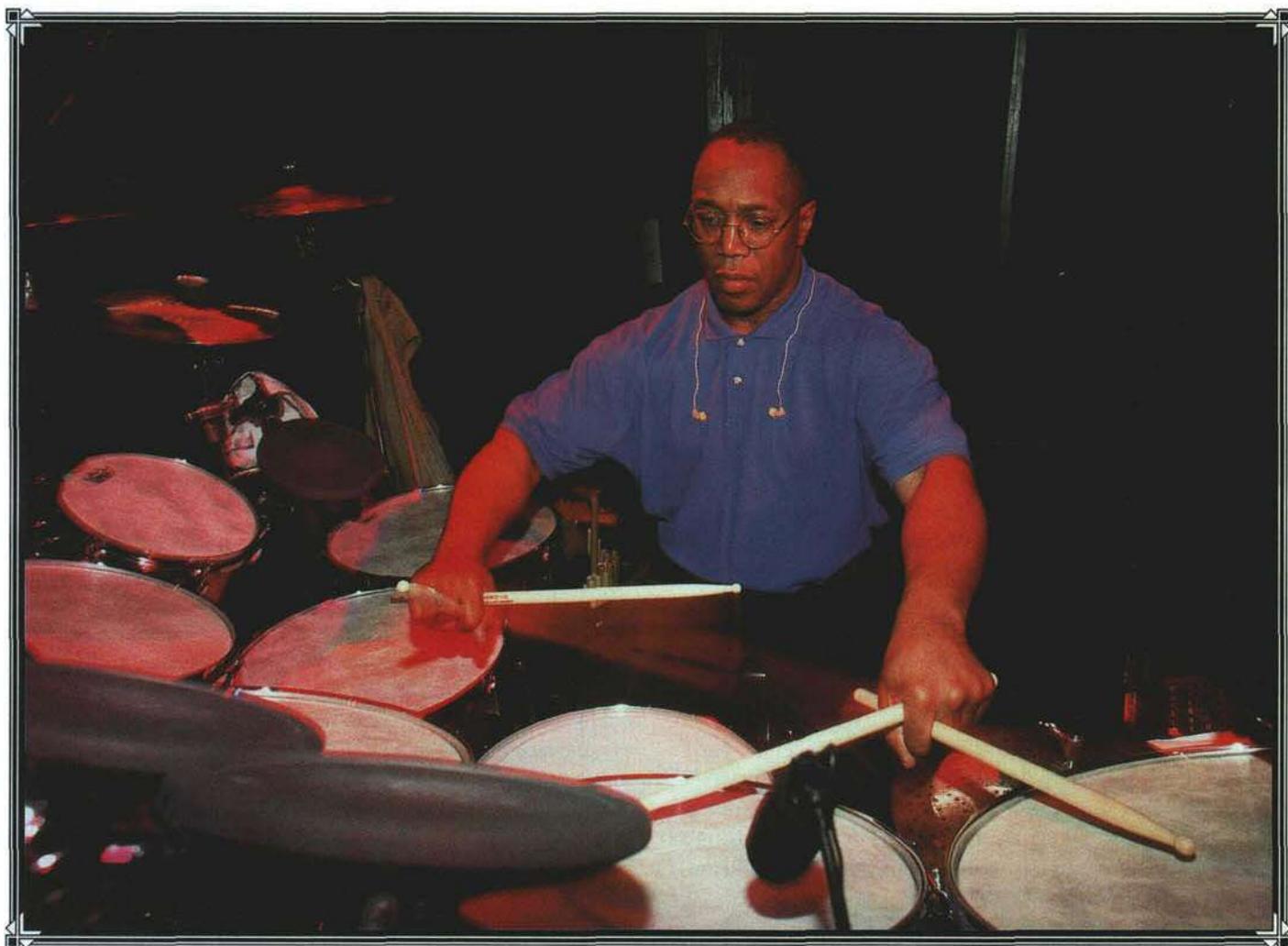
**WFM:** You're talking about Mahavishnu and John McLaughlin.

**BC:** Well, I learned my lesson from him many years ago. It's very difficult to work with someone who doesn't want to accept your opinion, a person who is happy to accept what you play on your instrument to enhance *his* concept. To me, that's disrespectful. So, talking about *Jazz Is Dead*, we have musicians who are interested in having everyone contribute.

Ironically, the one tune on *Blue Light Rain* that isn't a Grateful

“I think the main thing for me is that I've always been interested in finding a different sound or approach—going in a different direction—just to see what's there.”

Dead tune is one I wrote. But it wasn't because I suggested it. The other guys just started playing "Red Baron." I was like, "Let's play something else. I don't need to play that again." But they all liked the tune and wanted to do it. Then I thought we should change the arrangement a bit, but Al balked at the idea. He was like, "Let's just play." That's cool.



**WFM** It's funny, but there are times when this band sounds so much like the fusion you were playing in the '70s—particularly the Cobham/Duke Band era. How do you feel about playing that kind of material and using that kind of approach again?

**BC:** Some of the material may sound a bit like that, but a lot of it doesn't. The stuff that does, well, I have no choice—that's the way I hear it. Of course, I want to vary it up. But that way of playing is my base. When the band goes into that type of thing, these things come out.

**WFM:** You wrote the book on the style.

**BC:** Hey, that's nice to hear, but you know, that's how I play. I mean, it's like I'm playing where I've been, playing my history. But I don't want to just stay there. I want to take it further, pull the listener somewhere else. And maybe that's when you'll hear me make a mistake, when something I'm trying to do isn't fully formulated. But to me, *that's* music.

**WFM:** Are there things about this gig that you are finding challenging in regard to your drumming?

**BC:** There's one thing in particular: For me—and I think this is true for most drummers—there's a certain tempo region between fast and slow that is tremendously difficult to control. It's a region of tempos that doesn't feel natural and makes you want to slow down or speed up. A lot of the material that *Jazz Is Dead* plays falls right in that region, and I have to really focus on it when we're playing. It's all a matter of sustaining the notes and spaces between the notes, *and* having an understanding of what it will take for me to keep it going. Key element: posture. If I don't sit well, nothing works. Nothing.

**WFM** Posture affects your tempo?

**BC:** Absolutely, because if I'm not sitting properly my body won't be comfortable and the groove will not be grounded.

**WFM** Yet some drummers will change their position on the drums to adapt to the mood of the tune—like method actors. For a ballad they'll crouch a bit....

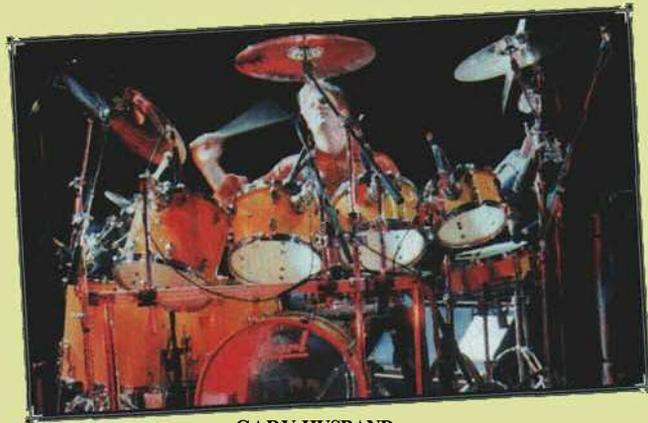
**BC:** No, that's not it! I guarantee it. Tempo, groove, attitude—it's how you're thinking, not how your body is positioned. There's an optimum way for your body to be positioned, and that's what has to be maintained. Related to that is how your feet are positioned. If I can't have them fully on the floor, to me, I'm not grounded. I can't play the patterns I want to play and get a consistent sound on one drum or from bass drum to bass drum.

I sit high. I have found that sitting at that level reduces the stress and pressure on my entire body. It's easier for me to sit up straight that way. It's easier to see and be seen, and everything on the kit is easier to reach—even with a large setup, which I like to use.

Your method actor analogy is interesting: Maintaining a "pose" and taking on a character when you play, to me, is false. Making music is about truth. I present myself through the drums and they reflect what I'm about, who I am, how I feel. What is an actor but someone who's playing a part? As a musician, you have to *be* the part.

So there I am, sitting correctly at the drums. I'm able to see what everybody is doing, I'm giving and getting cues from the rest of the band. I'm not in this alone; I've got to see everybody. I have to watch. I have to be alert, and that means no drugs. I don't have time for that stuff, man—there's too much I want to

## WORKING FOR COBHAM: A Drummer's Perspective



GARY HUSBAND

**H**e has the ferocity of a Mike Tyson, in terms of how hard he'll fight to play creative music." Gary Husband's words are full of respect for a man he feels has devoted his life to adventurous music-making, Billy Cobham,

In fact, Husband is in a unique position: He's witnessed Cobham's artistic dedication firsthand. Known to *Modern Drummer* readers as the British phenom drummer with such artists as Allan Holdsworth and Jack Bruce, Gary is also an accomplished keyboardist—so much so that, in 1994, Billy Cobham asked Gary to join his band. "I was thrilled—and maybe a bit intimidated," Husband admits. But the feelings of admiration go both ways: According to Cobham, "You should hear the tunes Gary writes, plus the way he plays, The guy's a genius,"

Husband's musical marriage to Cobham has been on-and-off over the past four years, with both men keeping incredibly active schedules. Most of '98 has found Billy on the road with *Jazz Is Dead*, as well as working on a few solo projects, Gary has had several efforts going, including his recently completed first educational video, *Interplay And Improvisation On The Drums* (Rittor Music, Warner Bros. Distribution). But the two will be back together again in February to begin a tour that will include South America, Africa, and hopefully the US, and feature Randy Brecker on trumpet,

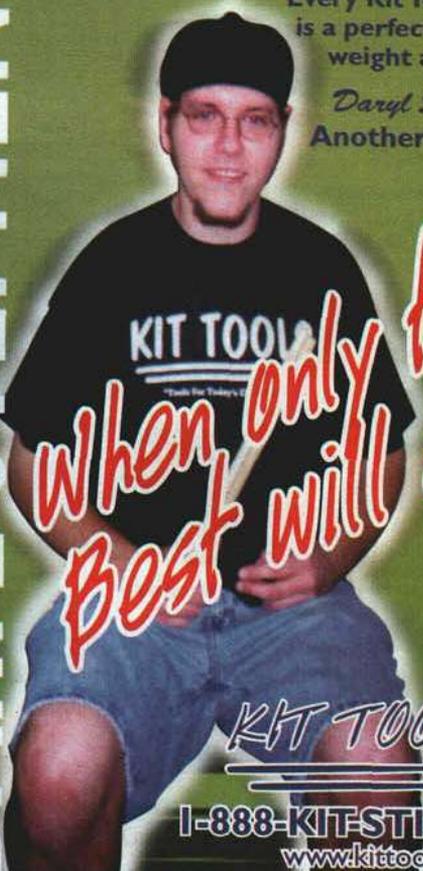
To get a different perspective on Billy Cobham, we tracked down Gary Husband in England (while he was at work on his own solo record, hopefully due out shortly). So what is it like working next to the veteran drummer? Just what have you learned about Cobham's playing from seeing it at such close range? Hey, what's it like playing double drums with the guy? Thankfully, Gary gave us the goods.



HUSBAND, BRECKER, COBHAM

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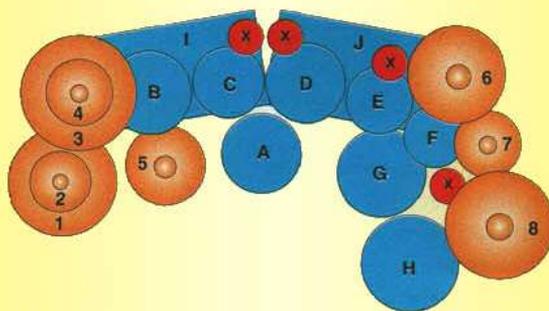


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- I. 16x24 kick
- J. 16x24 kick

**Hardware:** Yamaha

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- 3. 21" *Will Calhoun ride*
- 4. 12" *Terry Bozzio Radia*
- 5. 14" *Terry Bozzio Radia* used as hi-hats
- 6. 18" *HH medium-thin crash*
- 7. 12" *Terry Bozzio Radia*
- 8. 20" *HH crash*

**Microphones:** Shure *Beta 52* on kicks, *SM-98* on top of snare with *SM-94* on bottom, *SM-94* on hi-hat, *SM-98* on toms, *SM-81* for overheads

**Monitors:** Shure *PSM 600* wireless in-ear model

**Electronics:** Yamaha *DTX, Zendrum*

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do. And I know it's a part of the deadhead culture—I'm offered it all the time...I mean, *a lot*—but I don't need or want an external crutch. It's just me being me and contributing to the musical situation.

**WFM:** Let's switch gears a bit and talk about the record, *Blue Light Rain*. It sounds as if it's live, but there's no mention of where it was recorded.

**BC:** It pretty much is a live record. We did it at the Bottom Line in New York over the course of two days. We played through the

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Ringo Starr visits West L.A. Music, here he is pictured with Soles Manager Mark Spiwak.



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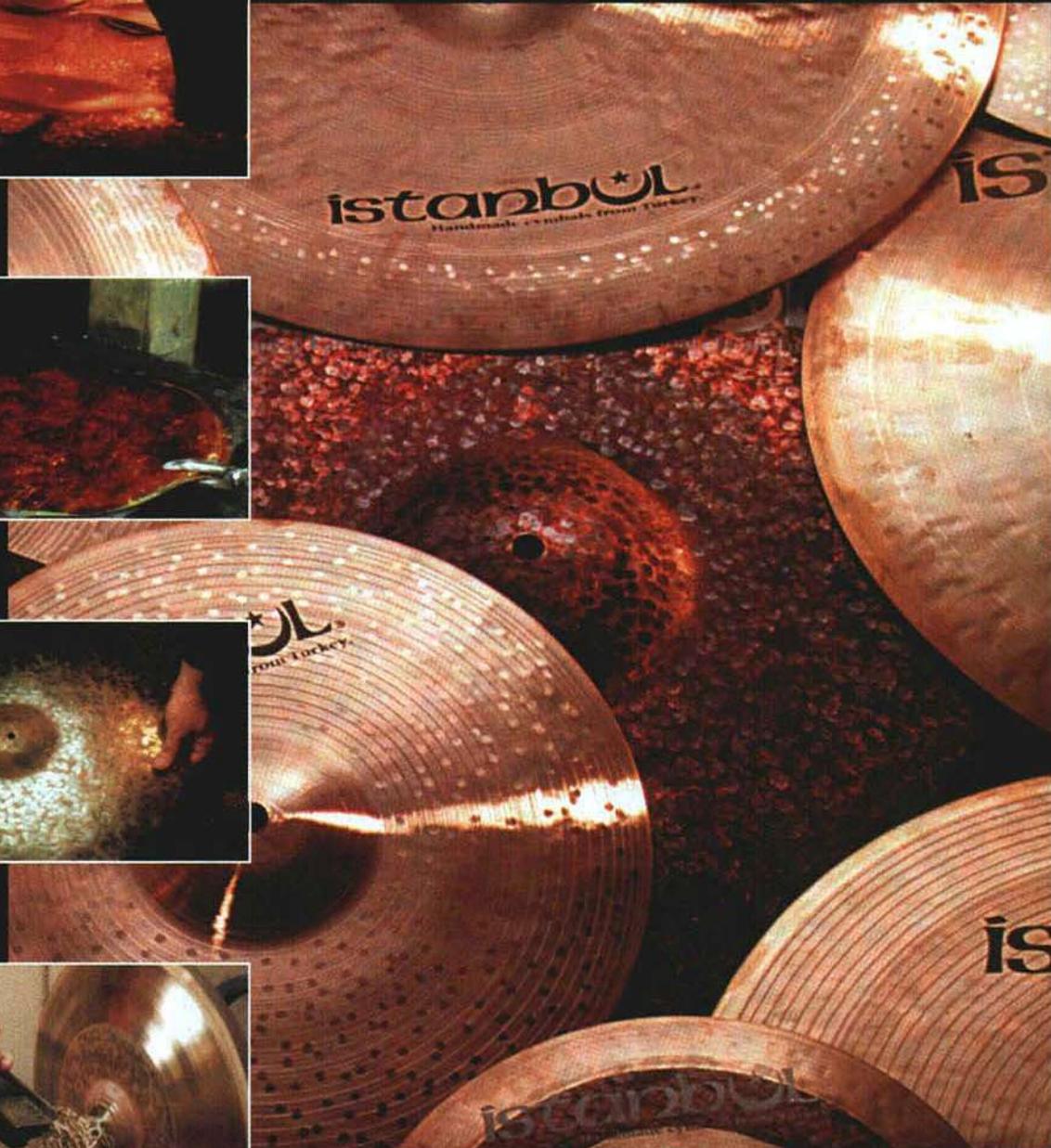
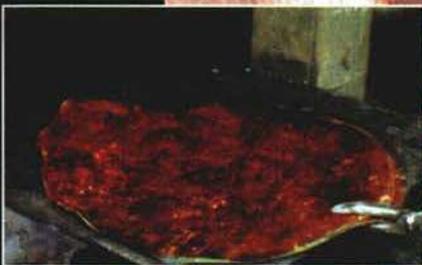
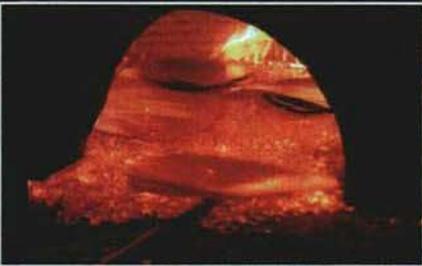
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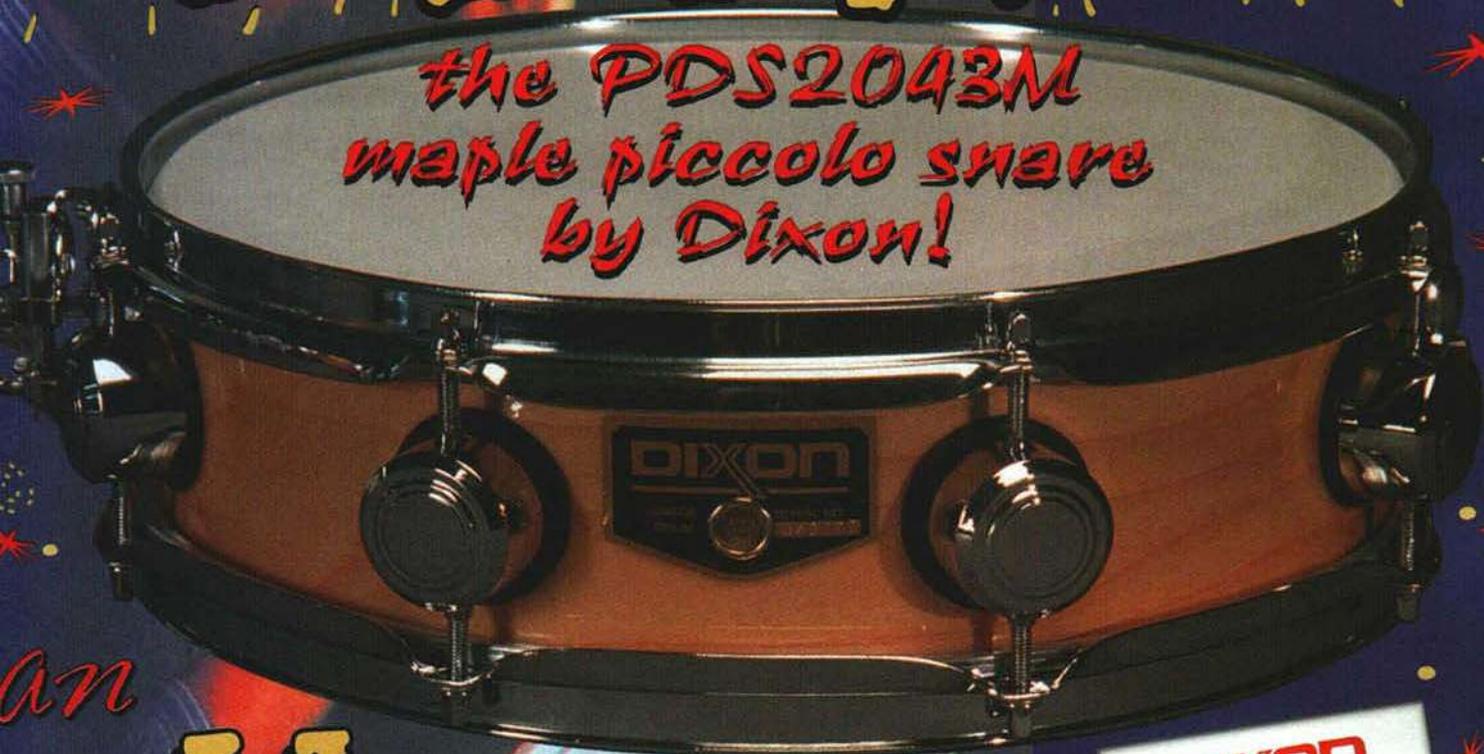
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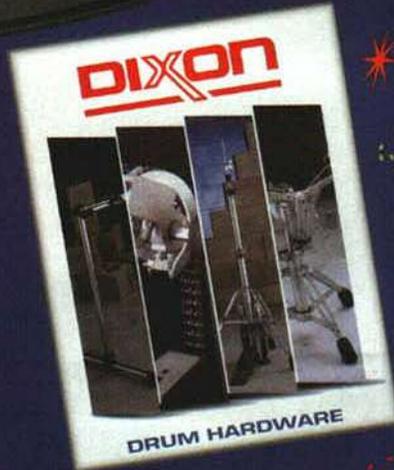
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Here are the albums that Billy says best represent his drumming...

Artist	Album Title
Dreams	Dreams
Billy Cobham	Spectrum
Billy Cobham	Crosswinds
Billy Cobham	The Traveller
Nordic w/Billy Cobham	Nordic
Mahavishnu Orchestra	Birds Of Fire
Miles Davis	A Tribute To Jack Johnson
Billy Cobham	By Design (Video)

...and these are the ones he's been listening to lately for inspiration:

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
John Coltrane	A Love Supreme	Elvin Jones
Milton Nascimento	Miltons	Milton Nascimento
The Grateful Dead	Terrapin Station	Bill Kreutzmann & Mickey Hart
Miles Davis	Sketches Of Spain	Jimmy Cobb
Peter Gabriel	Passion	various
Herbie Hancock	Speak Like A Child	Mickey Roker

### ATTENTION FUSE-HEADS!

Columbia/Legacy has just released a 20-bit SBM remastered version of Mahavishnu Orchestra's seminal 1971 recording, *Inner Mounting Flame*, featuring a young Billy Cobham. This new edition includes "sound corrections" and newly commissioned liner notes—highly recommended.

songs in the afternoon before the show, and recorded the shows as well, and then the performances that made it onto the album were selected from that. And I don't think there were any edits on it at all.

**WFM:** That's rare. Most records—even live ones—are polished, with parts being "corrected." Being that it is the band, warts and all, how do you feel about your performance on it?

**BC:** I feel pretty good about it. I come from the Miles Davis school, where what's done is done. You're hearing what we were feeling at the time, good or bad, right or wrong. Take it with the mistakes, because that's part of the music.

**WFM:** That recording took place early on for the band. Was the material pretty solid at that point?

**BC:** Oh yeah. I pride myself on the fact that it takes me very little time to learn material—I wish I had that kind of ability in other areas, like mathematics! [laughs] But I can learn the material for an entire show in two days, max. And that means without charts. I've found over the years that's just something I do well.

Having this ability helps me so much, especially when coming into a situation like *Jazz Is Dead*. This material is pretty

involved, especially the way we've arranged it. The compositions don't just have your ordinary everyday grooves. There are a lot of odd meters and a few changing meters—a lot to remember.

**WFM:** Besides being able to internalize material, you're also a good reader. I remember the story Neil Peart told me about you when you came in to record his *Burning For Buddy* album. All of the other drummers needed to know what songs they were playing in advance so they could prepare. You showed up, got a horn part, and read the tunes down while you were recording them.

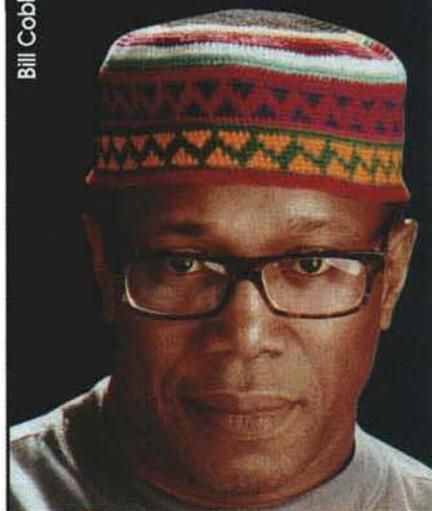
**BC:** Being able to read well is imperative for me. Sometimes it's not required, but many times it is. If you work with me, it's a must. Musicians have asked about auditioning for my band. They've given me great-sounding tapes, but many of them haven't been able to read well. Sorry, call me when you learn how. Time goes by too fast, and reading music is the fastest way to convey ideas to other musicians.

**WFM:** Does *Jazz Is Dead* work from charts to learn material?

**BC:** In some cases. You'd be amazed what we've done to learn material; everybody on the band reads, and those guys have written

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## BILLY ON THE WEB

Surfers interested in more Billy Cobham info have a few different sites to explore. We can recommend three:

1. The official Billy Cobham Web site's address is [www.billycobham.com](http://www.billycobham.com). Here you'll find up-to-the-minute info on Cobham's newest projects, including his clinic and tour schedule. The site also contains some good photos of Billy.
2. Cobham's recent project, Jazz Is Dead, has a site at [www.jazzisdead.com](http://www.jazzisdead.com). The site has info about the quartet and their touring schedule, plus lots of cool photos of Billy and the band.
3. In the September edition of *Classic Excerpt*, from *Modern Drummer's* own Web site ([www.moderndrummer.com](http://www.moderndrummer.com)), you'll find an in-depth educational article on Cobham from 1986. This piece focuses specifically on many of the great grooves Billy's played throughout his career, including descriptions and transcriptions of the beats.

parts on everything—even the backs of milk cartons!

**WFM:** In November the band will be playing a record-setting number of dates at the Bottom Line—twenty shows. But what do you see happening with the band in the future?

**BC:** We're hoping to add a vocalist to the band in the fall, and we've been talking to

Alex Ligertwood from Santana. He also plays guitar, which would broaden the sound a bit too. We also need to make a full-fledged studio album, and I hope we can get to it before the end of this year, because the early part of next year will have me tied up with my own projects.

**WFM:** You're working so much. Did you think you'd be doing so many dates at this

point in your career?

**BC:** Absolutely not. I can remember back in the early '80s thinking that by the time I'm in my fifties I would want to be settled, perhaps with a tenured teaching position at a university, performing only part of the time. Now I'm just hoping that will be the case when I'm in my sixties! [laughs]

I've been full to the brim. My own projects keep me busy, especially in Europe, and things like Jazz Is Dead keep popping up. That's what happened with the tour I did with Peter Gabriel a few years back. It was like, "boom," he called, and there I was playing to huge audiences.

**WFM:** That must have been a fun experience. How did it come about?

**BC:** Manu Katché couldn't do one of the tours that had been booked, and so I got the call. Man, it was a scream. I had a ball, and the audiences were the biggest I'd ever played to. I think the smallest one was forty-five thousand people. We played an outdoor festival that had eighty-five thousand—the stage was three and a half miles away from the dressing room! And the audience response to the music at some of

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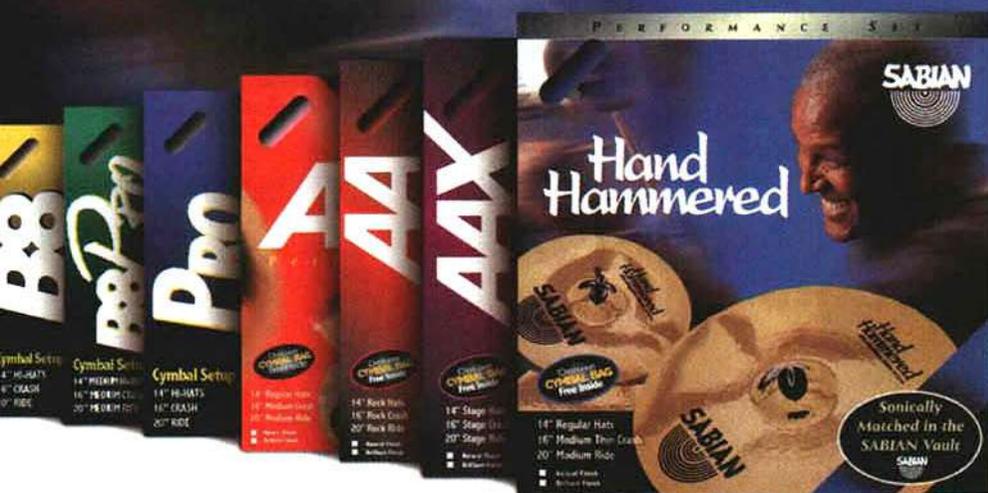
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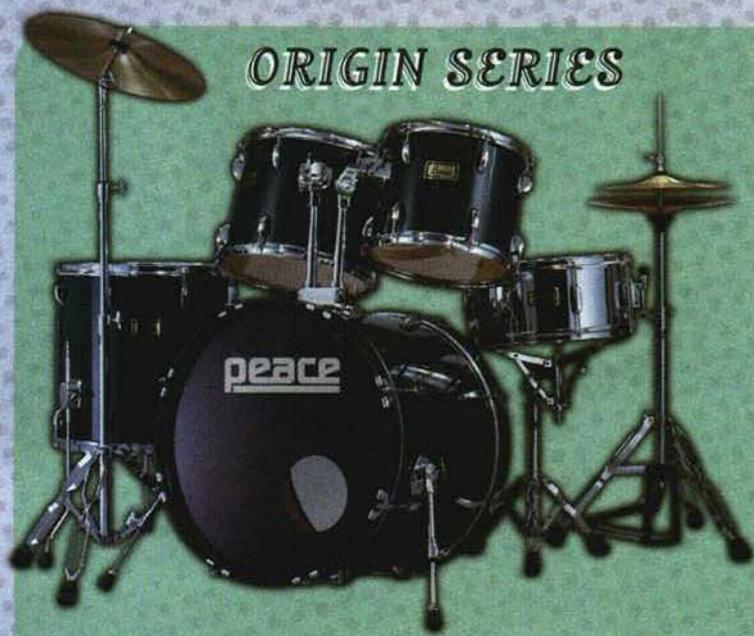


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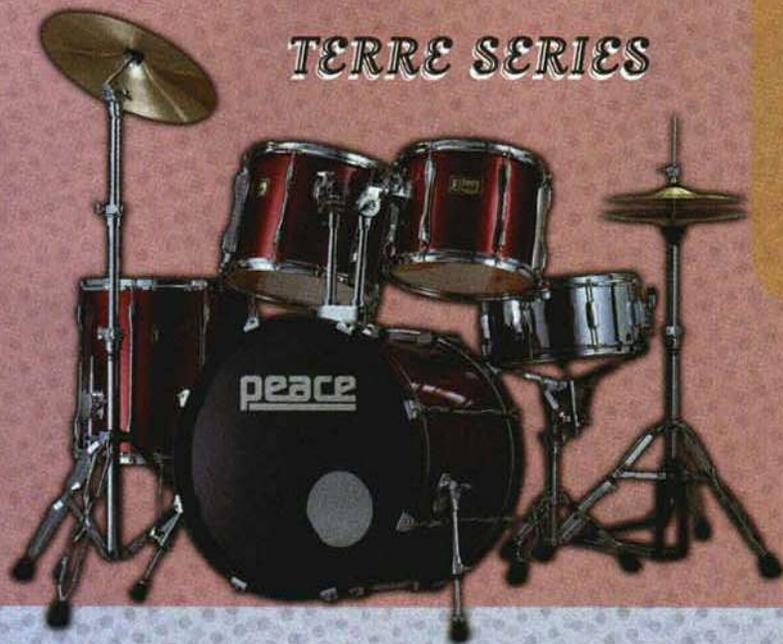


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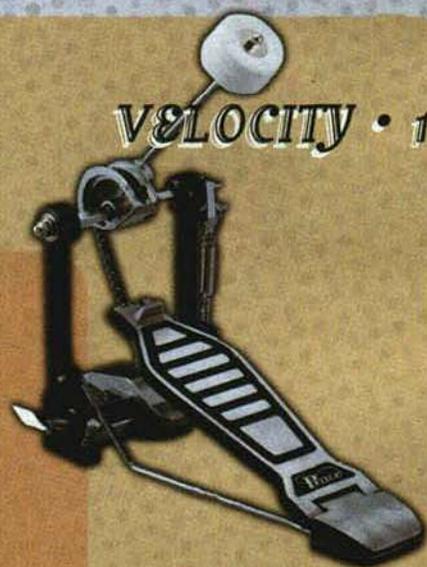


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those shows was unlike anything I had experienced. So yeah, I feel fortunate.

**WFM:** Let me get your thoughts on some drum topics. Every time we've spoken in the past, you've mentioned some interesting drumming concept or idea you're developing. What have you been working on lately?

**BC:** I've really been focused on finding the right way to support the material in *Jazz Is Dead*. In some ways it's a unique situation for me, exploring what it takes to make this music happen and make the rest of the band comfortable—and at the same time inspire the other guys, too.

The first concern for me on this gig is to just lay it down, making the band feel as if we're one. We've started using a different stage setup—I'm positioned sideways to the audience, looking across the stage at the rest of the band. It sounds like a minor point, but it takes getting used to, so projecting a solid sense of security is important. We're also using in-ear monitors, which I'm really starting to enjoy, but they've taken a bit of getting used to. So that's what I've been thinking about lately.

**WFM:** You mentioned "laying it down." In recent issues of *MD* two bass players, Will Lee and Stanley Clarke, talked about how you lay down the time with undeniable authority. Can you offer any suggestions to drummers on how to develop that?

**BC:** First of all, you have to keep your upper body loose, and that looseness should extend all the way down to your wrists and fingers. While most of your power should come from your center, when playing time you should be primarily moving only your wrists and fingers.

Once everything is relaxed, playing with conviction becomes merely a mental process. And by the way, playing time with authority has nothing to do with volume. You should be able to strongly express the groove at any volume level. It's just a mental process of knowing what you want to do and being in control of what you're playing. That gives you the confidence to lay it down.

**WFM:** Another area of your playing that people talk about is your highly developed single-stroke roll. I interviewed Simon Phillips a couple of years back and he mentioned that nobody gets the sound that you do with that roll. What's your secret?

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**BC:** There are a lot of factors involved, but the bottom-line point you have to keep in mind is the sound you're trying to produce. What makes a roll sound good—and this goes for singles, doubles, or triples—is that all of the strokes *must* be played evenly. It takes a lot of work to develop both hands equally. Even to this day one of my hands is a bit stronger than the other.

You also have to think about where you hit the drum. The best, most consistent sound comes from hitting the drum in the

same spot with both sticks as precisely as possible. Playing in the center of the drum gives you the biggest sound. Other factors include having matched sticks and what drum you're rolling on. A tighter head requires a faster roll, as does a smaller-diameter drum. You have to get used to the varied responses from different drums.

Another important factor is playing off the drum. I never play *into* a drum—that uses too much energy. I bring the sticks up immediately. To help me do that, I position

the snare drum almost flat and the toms are only slightly angled.

The main point about developing chops is simple: practice. People ask me for lessons, and if I can work it out with my schedule I'll fit one in here and there. Some guys come and just want to test their chops against mine, which is really a waste of time and money—especially with what I charge for a lesson. [laughs] If someone has a technical problem, though, I'm happy to help. But once I point a person in the right direction, it still gets down to their putting in the time.

**WFM:** Let's talk about grips for a second. You were one of the first drummers to develop the matched, thumbs-up, French-style timpani grip on drumset.

**BC:** I found that the French grip is an easier way to gain response from the head of a drum. I picked that up from watching great timpanists, like Vic Firth. It works particularly well on smaller, more tightly tuned drums in that it incorporates the smaller muscles of the fingers. I've found that I can play singles for a longer period of time with the French grip. But it's not the only grip I use. When you're playing larger drums, where the head response isn't as good, the palms-down, German grip works better. So I may alter the grip I'm using as I'm moving around the drums, depending on the size of the drum.

This brings to mind something I've been thinking a lot about lately, and it's something I've talked with Vic and Louie Bellson about in the past: using the stick as an instrument unto itself. Where you hold the stick plays such a major role in the sound you get. So I've been experimenting with holding sticks at different spots—unorthodox points—just to see what types of sounds I can come up with. For instance, if you shimmy up or down on the stick, you can get very different sounds on the snare drum. At some points in a solo I've even tried holding the sticks way down near the tips, just to see what sounds would be created. Occasionally I'll drop a stick because I'm using it in an unorthodox way, but that's okay. The point of all this is to make music. And there are a lot of different ways to play...

**WFM:** ...as you demonstrate when you use four sticks or when you ride on the bottoms of cymbals.

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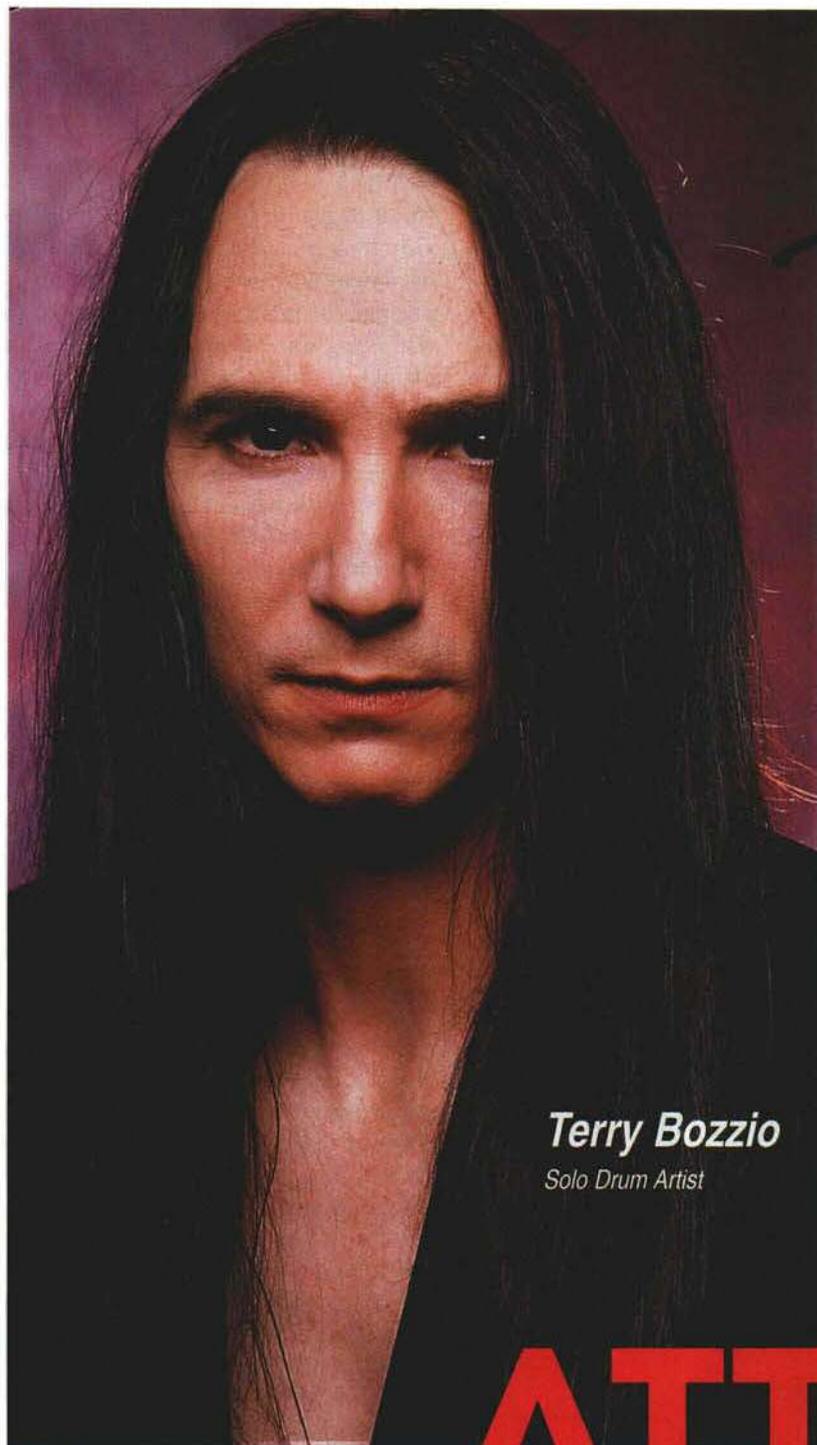
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**BC:** That's it. I'm looking for new sounds and combinations of sounds.

**WFM:** Which explains your triple bass drum setup!

**BC:** At the moment I'm only using two bass drums with Jazz Is Dead, but I'm planning on using the triple bass drum setup soon. In fact, I'm hoping to go to Japan this fall to work with Yamaha on designing a collapsible rack system for it, so the kit can be set up quickly.

As for the setup itself, for this band I

would not use three different-size bass drums—24", 22", and 20"—I'd use one 24" and two 22"s, simply because of the volume level. Also, my triple bass setup includes three snare drums—one above each bass drum. I really enjoy all of the options it gives me.

**WFM:** It's always inspiring talking to you because you have so many ideas you're pursuing. But besides being creative, there must have been a time in your life when you practiced an awful lot to develop all of

the technique.

**BC:** Absolutely. I was actually put in jail for practicing, [laughs]

**WFM:** What?

**BC:** Back in the '60s I was studying at the Naval School of Music—I was in the service. I was practicing a lot back then. Well, one Friday afternoon I holed myself up in a practice room and started working. I was also doing some transcribing. As a matter of fact, I wrote out charts to the Buddy Rich album *West Side Story*. I got so into it that I was there overnight. Unfortunately, although I didn't know this at the time, they closed the building for the weekend, so I was locked in. I was happy to keep practicing. The problem was they thought I was AWOL. Well, on Monday morning the MPs came and got me. So, yeah, I had to pay the price for practicing!

**WFM:** That's a great story. I don't want to embarrass you, but you've made some major contributions to the instrument. People like Steve Smith have said in *MD* that you legitimized the matched grip. You raised the ante in terms of technique, you play with a sense of style, you've come up with several product innovations over the years. Do you ever think back on all you've accomplished?

**BC:** Actually, no. For me, it's all been just a part of what I do. When somebody points this stuff out to me, I'm always kind of surprised by everything that has happened.

I think the main thing for me is that I've always been interested in finding a different sound or approach—going in a different direction—just to see what's there. Some things worked, others didn't. But that's all just a part of being a musician. It seemed like the logical route to take.

**WFM:** You've inspired a lot of players.

**BC:** I feel good about that. If I assisted somebody to go in a direction that they wanted to go in, great. And if there have been some concepts they've used that helped them along, even better. But hey, it's not over. If you dig some of that stuff, I've got this *other* stuff over here I'm working on. As soon as I figure it out, you can have that too!



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## WORKING FOR COBHAM

continued from page 61

**WFM** While watching your video, it was pretty clear that Cobham's been a big influence on you.

**GH:** Absolutely. How could I hide something like that? He's been a *phenomenal* influence on me. I would say that Billy, along with Tony Williams—and really just a few others—have been the main sources of inspiration for my drumming.

**WFM:** When did you first meet Billy?

**GH:** It was in 1976, when he was playing with the CBS All-Stars. A friend of mine introduced me to him. I was sixteen at the time. I was lucky enough to be able to watch the performance standing almost right next to Billy—just to the back and left of him. I got to experience all of that going on right before my very eyes. Of course, life was never quite the same after that, [laughs]

**WFM:** When did you hook up with him on

a professional level?

**GH:** I attended one of his clinics at Guitar Center in LA in 1983. Afterwards I went up and introduced myself and thanked him for the inspiration he's given me over the years. And he said, "Oh yeah, Gary Husband. Yeah man, the *IOU* album," and I remember just reeling back and thinking, "Christ!" Billy actually knew my playing. That was a proud moment.

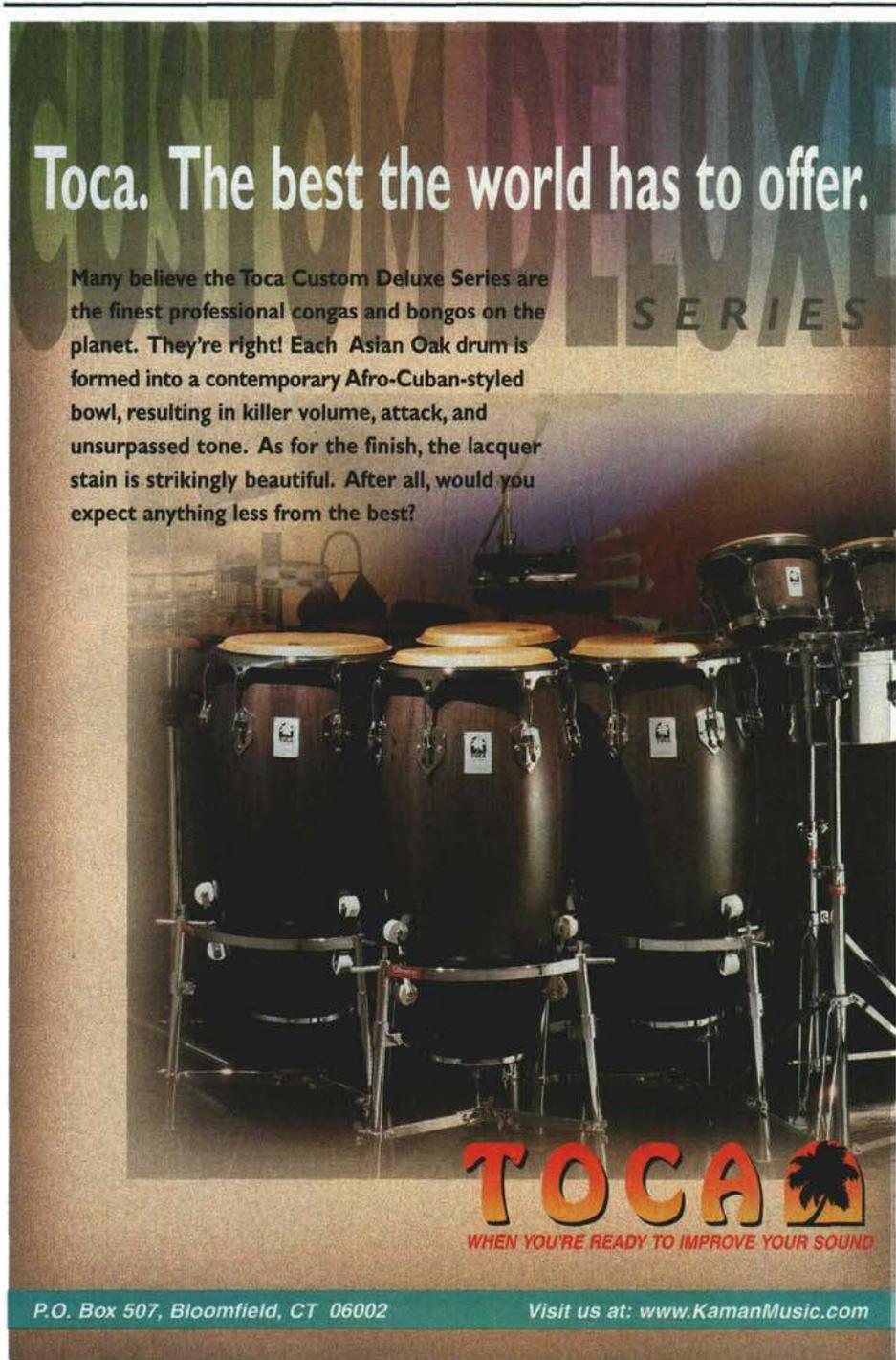
Some years after that—maybe 1990—he and I were on the same bill at a German drum festival, and that gave me a chance to hook up with him quite closely. He asked me about my keyboard background, because I think he'd heard something that I'd done somewhere—maybe one of those keyboard solos on a Holdsworth record. I said, "Well, keyboards are a parallel instrument for me with drums. They're just another side of my musical output." And he asked, "Do you play live?" I told him that I don't play that much with other people, that I do most of it at home on my own. "You should come out and play. It would be really cool if we got together, because we could do some drum things, too." Of course I was thinking, "Whoa!"

**WFM:** You sound as if you were hesitant.

**GH:** I had played a lot of keyboards, especially with Level 42—probably more than anybody else during the time I was with that band. And I was kind of anxious to get recognition for that side of my career. But I just hadn't done it live onstage. Billy was the first artist to invite me to play with a band and have me actually start dealing with it on that level. He just came out and said, "It's time you did it." He wouldn't take no for an answer, so here I am. [laughs]

**WFM:** When I think of Billy's music, I think of the louder, more fusion-esque style. But he also has delved into acoustic music from time to time. What type of material did you perform with him?

**GH:** Let me tell you, I've done about four or five different tours with Billy, and every time he's come to the table with a completely new repertoire of stuff. He's by nature a very forward-thinking writer, the same as he is a player. It was to a point on the last tour where we didn't even perform any of his "hits"—you know, your "Red Baron" or "Taurian Matador," the things people are forever shouting out for him to play. But that's very much in Billy's



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nature. He's not really interested in the past.

**WFM:** Does he only do *his* material?

**GH:** Not at all. He gives me a lot of creative space, in terms of bringing compositions to the band. We've done about five or six of mine so far. In fact, we recorded one of them—"Avatar"—for his next record, which includes Randy Brecker.

**WFM:** I'm interested in your perspective on performing music with Billy. For instance, he's known for having a very

authoritative way of playing the time.

**GH:** It is authoritative to a maximum level—definitely. However, the main point I'd like to make about Billy is that he is continuously challenging himself to play in different ways. Night after night I've seen him advance the cause of creative music. He'll pull a drum solo out of nowhere, or suddenly give a direction that causes the band to alter its approach or allows him to play in a completely different way.

We've done many drum duets in the

context of these shows, and we have general patterns that we've prepared—a rough outline of what we'll be doing. But there were so many times that he went beyond that, trying to take the music to a new place—it's just a delightful way of making music. A few times he'd just stop, turn to me, and say, "Go on, take it out." And I'd be left there to my own devices. But that's invigorating to me.

Billy is a very creative person, and when people level these kind of cliché criticisms at him, I feel it's really not fair, not in my book. It's not justified and I honestly think they're speaking out of a lack of knowledge of what he's all about.

**WFM:** What criticisms are you speaking of?

**GH:** I've seen them in the press—particularly over here in England, where they just like to eat people up. They'll come out with things like, "Oh, yes, Billy Cobham plays as fast as he can and his hands simply outrun his head." You know, all these terribly degrading and patronizing comments. But I couldn't disagree more. Billy is an incredibly passionate musician who simply

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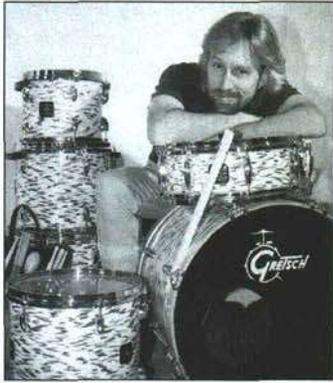
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works on another level.

**WFM** Back to your keyboard work with him: What's it like making music with him in terms of interplay?

**GH:** Well, of course, he's known for his split-second precision—he's a tremendously fit man, and his consciousness is very fit too. He comes from the jazz tradition of playing "in the moment," so there is a lot of interplay. But he's totally supportive as well. He pulls a lot out of you.

**WFM:** What have you learned from him as a drummer, especially being able to view him from such close proximity night after night?

**GH:** This situation has definitely helped me solve a lot of rudimentary curiosities I had about certain configurations he plays. But then again, Billy is always modifying everything he does. It's forever changing, to the point where he takes enormous risks. Sometimes he'll go for something that won't come off, but to me that's even more inspiring. Here's a man with such a repertoire of expression under his belt, and yet he's still taking incredible chances.

**WFM** What about the more "practical" things, as far as how he prepares for gigs and such?

**GH** I've literally seen him have to run to the stage out of a previous state of complete pandemonium and chaos, stemming from things like people's personal lives within the band. And instead of having that interfere with the music, it almost always inspired his creative drive even more. But this is a totally natural process that I feel a tremendous affinity with, the way that the amount of life and "in the moment" living should be reflected in playing music.

**WFM** How demanding is he as a boss?

**GH:** He writes some tough music, although he does send the printed music to us ahead of time so we can prepare. And he's made it his duty to understand what the requirements are of, for example, the trumpet player, as far as what register he's going to feel comfortable in. He takes all of that into account before he presents a composition to the band.

**WFM** From everything you've said, it sounds as if you have more admiration now after having worked with him than before.

**GH:** I do, because he's a fighter; he's a survivor. God knows we all go through a lot of tough times to work in the arena that is creative music. In a lot of ways it's been getting harder and harder to do, but Billy

just continues to fight.

I affectionately call him the Mike Tyson of creative music—not in a negative or muscular way, but in terms of how hard he's willing to fight for the cause. He has that kind of ferocity. I mean, his energy is just unbelievable. His commitment to get on stage and give people a good concert, night after night, is incredible. And that's still the most important thing to him despite all of the nonsense that's involved in running a band.

**WFM** Let's get away from Cobham for a moment and talk about your new video.

**GH:** Well, it didn't turn out exactly as I planned—there's less discussion of my thoughts on music and why I wanted to do a video in the first place—but there's a lot of playing. Maybe I was a bit too ambitious in the way I set the stage for it as well, in that I put a lot of different groups of people together, musicians who were literally waiting in line to play on the same afternoon, one after another.

**WFM** That was all taped in one afternoon? Wow, I assumed it was spread out over at least a few days. It certainly is inspiring to see you dropped into so many different styles, playing with artists ranging from Jack Bruce and Gary Moore to Allan Holdsworth and Mark King.

**GH:** That was definitely one of the messages that I wanted to send out—to encourage an openness to all music and to break down stylistic barriers. Those types of mental barriers have never really existed for me. I regard each musical situation as involving pretty much the same process.

**WFM** What other projects do you have in the works besides the upcoming album and tour with Billy?

**GH:** I've just completed a solo keyboard album called *Diary Of A Plastic Box*, which will be coming out shortly. I'm calling it *Diary* because the compositions are almost like little movies or diary inserts that are all strung together. It's pretty moody stuff, quite evocative.

I'm also working on what I call a "real" solo album, which I intend to finish before the end of this year. It will have me playing keyboards and drums. And it will feature a few different guests, new compositions, and some conceptual ideas that are very relevant to me. It'll be great to have a chance to say some of these things in the music.

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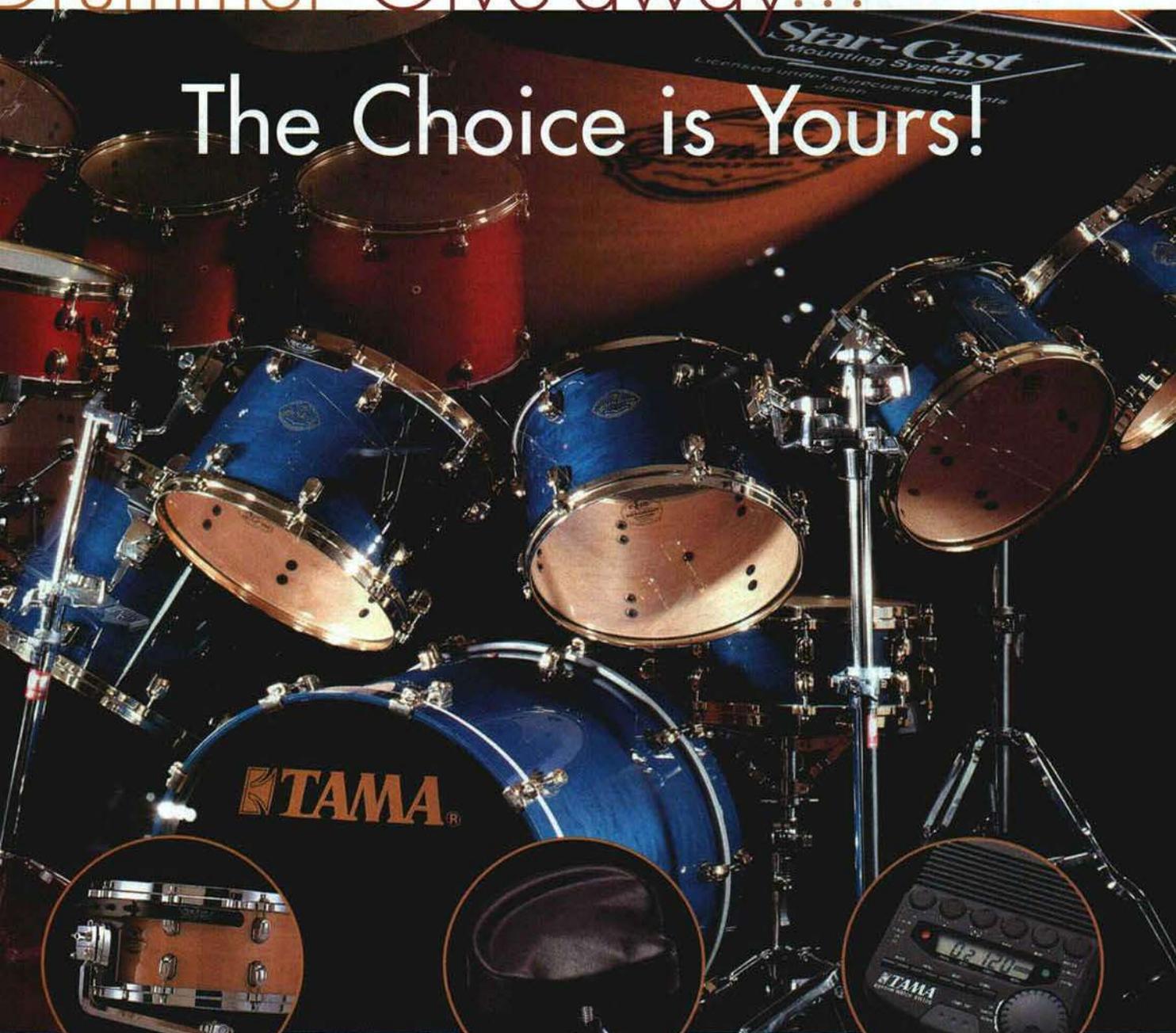
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Giovanni

*Hidalgo*



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They sat near the front of the stage on folding chairs, slapping rhythms on their thighs and stomping out counter-rhythms and accents with their feet. The groove was undeniable, and the audience at the Modern Drummer Festival Weekend '97 was clearly awed as well as stimulated by this very pure and inherently simple form of musical expression. On the stage, Steve Gadd's drumset and Giovanni Hidalgo's congas and assorted percussion instruments bore silent witness to the fact that music comes from *within* a person, and the ability to express it does not depend on state-of-the-art equipment.

"Whatever you touch can be a musical instrument, if that's the intent and if the person you are sharing the experience with is in agreement," said Gadd. And Hidalgo certainly agrees. "You can use stones and sticks as percussion instruments," he says. "Percussion is part of nature. It is the sound of the rivers, the ocean waves, a rainstorm, the seashore."

There is, indeed, something very natural and organic in the way Giovanni Hidalgo plays percussion instruments—especially congas. Part of it is the advantage that all hand drummers share of having direct contact with their instruments. No matter how well one may succeed at feeling as though a drumstick is an extension of the hand, using a stick or mallet is a very different experience from that of making tactile contact with the instrument. As the skin of Giovanni's hands connects with the skin of the drumhead, the two interact to produce a sound together. It's as if

Giovanni's internal energy and spirit are transferred into the instrument, and the drum itself seems to come alive as it receives Giovanni's rhythm.

by Rick Mattingly

*Virtuoso*

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# W

hat is even more remarkable about the naturalness with which Hidalgo plays is that he is an obvious virtuoso with formidable technical abilities. But whereas many technically proficient players are often dismissed as "note-mongers" whose playing is all chops with no soul, Giovanni's playing exudes warmth and musicality even as it dazzles with pyrotechnics.

To top it off, "Gio" is known for being one of the nicest guys in the music business. He is filled with energy and enthusiasm, and sparks concerts and recording sessions as much with his friendly, positive attitude as with his musicianship. He doesn't particularly look like a hip musician-type, either. He's likely to turn up in a white shirt and tie, looking like a young business executive. But once he starts to play, a very real hipness that transcends mere image and attitude becomes apparent.

The prevailing mythical image of the *conguero* is one who plays totally by "feel." These players would never condescend to read music or notate rhythms, maintaining that such endeavors would be beneath them and would interfere with the "soul" of the instrument. Likewise, although conga playing involves a high degree of physical facility in order to produce the many variations and subtleties of tone, many self-proclaimed "authentic" *congueros* scoff at the idea of practicing technical exercises, claiming that such practice would result in a mechanical style of playing contrary to everything conga drumming represents. Conga techniques and rhythms must remain an oral tradition, they say, and only a select few are allowed to be part of this very exclusive club. There is also a lot of machismo

involved, and some players rate themselves according to how much hand and wrist pain they endure or how much blood they urinate after performing.

Like most myths, there are elements of truth contained within the exaggerations. For starters, good conga playing is very much about feel, and written notation

cannot possibly reflect all of the nuances. But that's true in any style, from jazz to symphonic music, and Giovanni says that conga players are missing out on a lot if they can't read music.

"If you don't read and you try to do everything by ear, forget it," he says. "To be more wise, you have to study and practice, and reading is important. That



Alex Solca

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*"Percussion is part of nature. It is the sound of the rivers, the ocean waves, a rainstorm, the seashore."*

whole language is fascinating—the dynamics, the time signatures, the symbols, the different note values. It's another world, and a lot of situations will be more comfortable if you can read music. You have to be like a Boy Scout: Be prepared."

In terms of technique, Hidalgo first learned by imitating the players who were around him, and he credits his father with helping him develop his technical skills. But by the time he was fourteen, Giovanni had started applying snare drum techniques such as the standard rudiments to the conga drums. Many of the exercises he developed involving various double-stroke rolls, flams, and paradiddles are comparable to the rudimental and *Stick Control* studies that many apply to drumset for technical development. Just as drumset players must go beyond simply practicing sticking patterns on a pad and find ways to apply the patterns to actual beats and fills on the kit, so Giovanni finds

Alex Solca



Gadd and Gio at MD Fest '97

musical applications for the rudimental patterns so that they become part of his vocabulary of rhythmic phrases rather than just serving as chops builders.

"I innovated putting the snare drum techniques on congas, which I've been doing since 1977," Giovanni explains. "By 1980, 1981, a lot of players in Puerto Rico were doing that. Everyone was asking me to show them what I was doing. It's difficult to use the hands the way you would use the sticks, but if you

practice it, you can develop it to another level."

In fact, many drummers could benefit by learning to use their *sticks* more like Giovanni uses his *hands*. Even when his playing is at its loudest and most intense, one never gets the sense that Hidalgo's hands are merely colliding with the instrument. Often he appears to be caressing or kneading the drumheads, pulling the tone out of them rather than pounding it in. When he pops a loud

## Drummers' Perspective

Many of our greatest drumset artists have performed with Giovanni Hidalgo. Here are the thoughts of a few of the players who have worked with the conga master.

### Airto

Giovanni is like an intergalactic bird that flies all over the universe spreading the great feeling of freedom and creative energy. The only way to catch him is to be there when he lands—or to be lucky enough to have his home phone number!

### Peter Erskine

When Giovanni sat in with my trio at PASIC '97, I felt like I was playing handball with God. It was truly mind-expanding. Any time you play with a great conga player, there can be a tremendous amount of rhythmic excitement, but Giovanni plays with such an incredible combination of sophisticated rhythmic ideas and the authentic Afro-Cuban

language that it seems like he has the doorway to a whole other universe of rhythmic possibilities. I've never heard another conga drummer do those kinds of three-dimensional rhythmic layers and cross-references. He's obviously a virtuoso. And at the same time, the stuff all sounds really hip.

### Steve Gadd

Giovanni is fantastic—a great player and a great musician. I had a great time playing with him and would love to make music with him again and explore a lot more things with drums and percussion.

### David Garibaldi

I have been a bandmate of Giovanni's in Planet Drum for the last two years. Aside from his talent, which everyone knows about, he's a very gracious person with a ridiculously cool sense of humor—many laughs. We've had many great times together

hanging out away from the drums.

The drums were never far away, though. He works very hard at his craft and practices quite a bit. He has a deep knowledge of many types of music and works at combining those things in many ways. He's truly a master drummer and excellent musician. Not only can he play wonderful solos, but he also can play with an incredible simplicity and sensitivity. He hears rhythm in a unique way; his playing style is very spontaneous and creative.

Giovanni also hears drumset grooves that are as deep as anything I've ever experienced. Thank God he doesn't own a drumset! I think he's much, much deeper than what people know of him, and the best is yet to come.

This sounds like I'm writing in Giovanni's high school yearbook. I should add something he would understand, then: "Bani-We."



Alex Soler

accent with a slap, it's like he's giving the drumhead a friendly, triumphant "high five," and whereas some conga players seem to be beating their drums in a violent,

abusive manner, with Hidalgo it's as though he's massaging his drum's back—a stimulating massage to be sure, but one delivered with affection and sensuality.

Watching Giovanni's hands interact with the skin heads of his congas is a definitive lesson in what "touch" is all about.

Although Hidalgo often looks as though he's putting out very little energy compared to the fury of sound that is emanating from his drums, much of his relaxed demeanor can be attributed to his virtuosity. That's not to suggest that his seeming relaxation is an illusion, but rather that it's a reflection of Giovanni's absolute control of his instrument.

"The conga is not an easy instrument," he admits. "Sometimes you have to play hard with a lot of movement and energy. But I practice with the purpose of being relaxed and in control. When you play conga, it's like you are in complete, deep meditation. Sometimes, when the music is very exciting, you can lose some of the control of your emotions. That's cool too, because we are humans. But the more you control the emotions, the better. You have to know how to breathe, how to concentrate, how to control the movements."

But watching Giovanni play, it's obviously not an uptight, anal-retentive kind of control. This cat is having fun. "Oh yes!" he agrees. "It's like a combination of fury and passion, and it is always flowing."

Hidalgo was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico on November 22, 1963—"The same day that John F. Kennedy was killed," he notes. "I started playing when I was three years old. My grandfather, my father, and my uncle all played with professional bands. My real mother died when I was one year old, but my stepmother's family were all musicians too. Her sons were playing with my daddy and grandfather. So there were always congas and bongos around the house. My main instrument has been the conga, but I started on the bongos.

"I grew up listening to all styles of music—jazz, classical, and even ballads by people like Dean Martin, Perry Como, Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., and Tom Jones. Of course I also heard people like Tito Puente, Ray Barretto, and Tito Rodriguez. I still listen to music from different cultures. I was recently playing for the opening of Animal Kingdom, and there was a Caribbean group, a Japanese taiko group, a group from Africa, and a group from Polynesia. They were all amazing and I enjoyed all of that."

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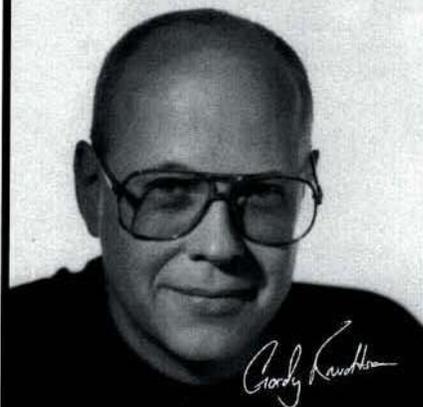
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Giovanni began playing professionally with a big band in Puerto Rico when he was twelve. Over the next few years he worked with a number of traditional Afro-Cuban bands in Puerto Rico, including Charlie Palmieri's group. Eventually he landed a gig with an internationally known band from Puerto Rico called Batacumbele.

"Batacumbele was an innovative group," Giovanni says. "We changed the traditional rhythms. Eventually I went with Eddie Palmieri, Charlie's brother. We did the Latin-jazz thing, which Eddie had done a long time ago with Cal Tjader. Thanks to Eddie I played with great musicians like Paquito D'Rivera and Dave Valentin."

In those bands, Giovanni was primarily a conga player. "Sometimes I would play bongos, timbales, bata, or shekere," he says. "Now I like to play a lot of instruments at the same time, like congas, timbales, tom-toms, cymbals, and cowbells. I wish I had eight arms," he says, laughing, "but I do the best I can with two."

"In those early years, my major was conga, but my challenge was to play other

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instruments so that if someone called me for a different instrument, I could do it. So apart from the congas and bongos, I love the timbales and marimba, and I love the drumset. It's not easy to play the drums, but I respect that. The drumset is like the piano of percussion."

In 1988 Hidalgo worked with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, and then began a four-year stint with Dizzy Gillespie's United Nation Orchestra, after being recommended to Gillespie by D'Rivera. Giovanni also played with Airtio Moreira and Flora Purim.

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ing a complete tour of the universe," Giovanni says. "It's so beautiful, and he's always right there on the right spot. All drummers know how amazing he is. You're not going to see anyone else play all those different styles like him."

Except, perhaps, for Giovanni himself, whose resume includes performances and recordings with a wide array of artists including Tito Puente, Jack Bruce, Carlos Santana, Paul Simon, McCoy Tyner, Ravi Shankar, Ruben Blades, Mickey Hart's Planet Drum, Bruce Hornsby, Sammy Hagar, and Joan Osborne. He has also released several solo albums, including *Villa Hidalgo*, *Worldwide*, and *Time Shifter*. A recent album, *Hands Of Rhythm*, was a duet project with pianist Michel Camilo and was nominated for a Grammy award in 1998 for Best Latin Jazz Album. It's an album of which Giovanni is especially proud. "It was just the two of us, playing congas and piano," he says. "Playing with Michel is like a transition to another level. With someone like that you can put ideas out, and the connection is beautiful and amazing."

"Working with other people in a group is part of my life. When somebody calls me to be part of something, I try to put in five hundred percent with love and humility. It's like being part of a circle, because it's not about playing whatever you want. It's about trying to follow the minds of the other musicians, following the structure of the tunes, following the cycles of the keys and the changes. It is like a test."

"I don't play with other people so I can be in the spotlight and everybody can see me. No. When I go to play with other people, I try to connect with everybody and follow the music so I can put beautiful colors in the right spot. An important thing is to help the other musicians feel good. You want to do an excellent job yourself, but you also want to help with the harmony and chemistry. If you help the other musicians look good when they do their solos, they will help you a lot when your solo comes, and then you feel so happy. But if you just show up to play without putting all five of your senses into the music, forget about it. You can play by ear without looking, but if you have visual contact too, it's

much better and the musicians know each other better. So you have to be in complete connection and communication.

"Having interaction and experiences with different people is like going to the university. You go to the classroom, open your book, and be ready to learn. I like to learn. I'm like a little boy, always learning something. If I go until I'm seventy or eighty years old, I want my spirit to still be like a baby's. I never want to wake up and think, 'Now I know everything and I'm the best.' I am not the best, and I never stop learning. To know everything, we would have to be born at least seven more times—and we would still be learning."

"People say I'm a teacher, and I'm honored. I am doing my best to show other people how to play and to explain my point of view. But we learn to be a teacher the same way we learn to be a player: from life, from experiences in the street, because the street is the real university—the real academic level. The schools are a good thing and help you to be prepared. But the streets are the real life, where we learn to be good students and good teachers. So I

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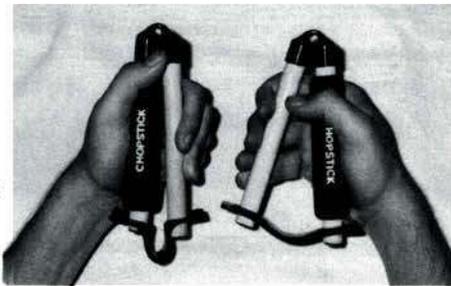
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feel very honored when people call me a teacher, but in my heart I'm still a student."

In his role as a teacher, Hidalgo has produced three instructional videos for DCI/Warner Bros., *One On One*, *In the Tradition*, and *Conga Virtuoso*. Giovanni also taught at the Berklee College of Music in Boston for several years in the early '90s, shortly after moving to the US.

Although Hidalgo's personal setup typically includes five congas along with other instruments, he insists that it is important for students to begin with a single drum. "The conga drums really developed in the 1940s," he explains. "There were a lot of great conga players, and they played only with one conga, because that is the main thing. I love it when you see a lot of drums now along with other instruments, because that's the course of evolution. As we go toward the new millennium, everything is changing."

"But we can't forget the pioneers, and we have to deal with the past, present, and future. So I start my students with one drum only, the tumbao. When they master that, they move to two congas. I try to give

good, clear exercises for my students, but I also give them things that are a little hard for them too, because it's super important to have a challenge. You learn how to make your own personal skills grow.

"Playing with just one conga is a difficult challenge. You have to work to make it sound like three drums in one. But if you can do it, oh my Lord! That's amazing. It's like when you play with a simple set of drums: one snare, one bass drum, two tomtoms, two cymbals, and a hi-hat. That's more difficult too, but if you can do that, you've got it!"

One characteristic of Giovanni's style that becomes obvious when he performs on multiple instruments is his ability to produce several layers of time. Just as a drumset groove can be composed of independent rhythmic lines that combine into a cohesive whole, so Hidalgo's grooves can often be broken into different parts that are each complete within themselves.

"A pattern can be made up of three parts that you put together into one," he explains. "The way of the percussionist is to find the connections, the unity, the har-

mony. You find the harmony between the parts you are playing, and also between your pattern and what the other musicians are playing."

Peter Erskine sensed that attitude when Giovanni sat in with Erskine's trio, the Lounge Art Ensemble, at last year's Percussive Arts Society convention (PASIC '97) in Anaheim. "My instinct was not to go head-on with him in terms of rhythmic texture and complexity," Erskine said. "We were kind of meeting in the middle. I was consciously trying to lay a bed for him to do his thing, and he was responding to the way I play, too. People told me later that they could hear both of us differently than if it had been an all-out jam and everybody was just trying to burn. Drumming is all about counterpoint and balance, as opposed to always being about making statements."

As befitting someone who comes from a tradition in which a band has several percussionists as opposed to a single drummer, Giovanni enjoys working with other drummers and percussionists. He appears on two DCI performance videos playing

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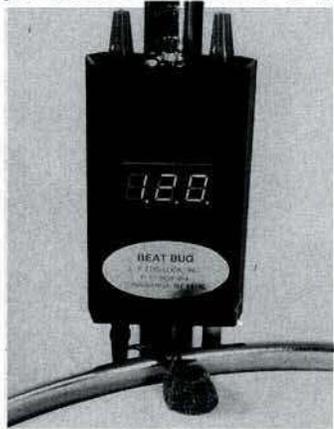
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duets with Changuito, and on a video with Steve Gadd that includes their 1997 Modern Drummer Festival appearance along with footage shot during their rehearsals for the event.

"I would love to play in a trio with Steve Gadd and Peter Erskine," Giovanni says. "The first time I played with Steve, it was like I was playing with my uncle again. He has the same energy. The same with Peter Erskine. We had no rehearsal, just BOOM, right there. Oh my Lord, that was an amazing experience!

"I am hoping with all my faith to get to work with Elvin Jones. In fact, I would love to play in a trio with Elvin and Airto. There are so many great drummers: Louie Bellson, Max Roach, Roy Haynes, Terry Bozzio, Simon Phillips, Gregg Bissonette, Ignacio Berroa, Billy Cobham, David Garibaldi, Horacio Hernandez, Marvin 'Smitty' Smith, Leon Parker, Jack DeJohnette...the list goes on to infinity. There are also a lot of great women percussionists, like Sheila E, Terri Lyne Carrington, and Cindy Blackman. Some people say that women can't play drums

and percussion, but they're wrong. We're all humans, and God gives us gifts that we have to share like real brothers and sisters.

"We are on a mission on this earth," Giovanni says. "My mission is through the music, so I do it with humility, a lot of love, and a lot of harmony and peace. The point is to grow spiritually and do everything the best you can.

"That's why, when I go to the stage, I say a prayer and thank God for letting me have this opportunity, and then I do my thing. I am only sharing with the people, and music is the direct way to make the spiritual connection with the soul. There has to be a reason why God put music here, because music is as old as life. The 'big bang' was a sound, you know?

"What we do is our legacy that we are going to leave for the next generation. It is our blood, our essence, our soul, our feelings, and so we want to put love into our work. So I put all of that in my music and my life."



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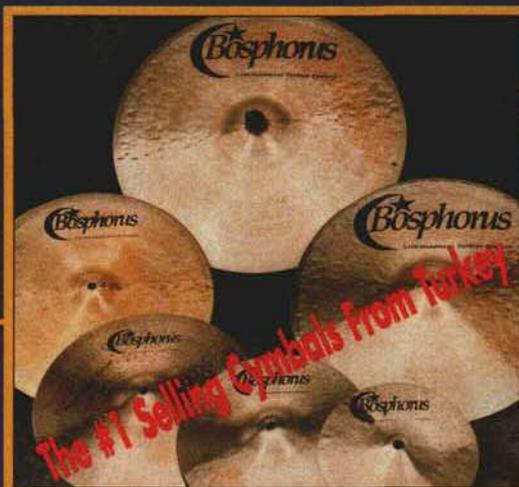
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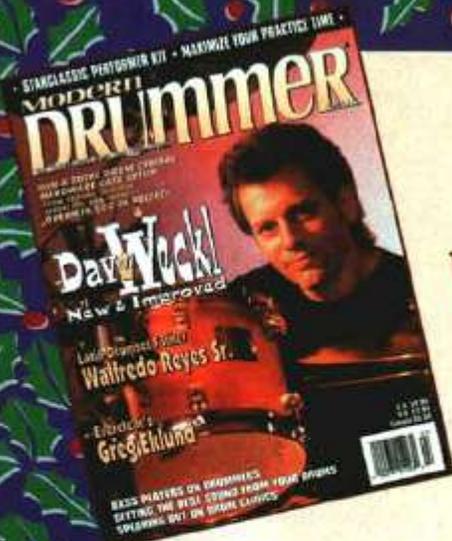
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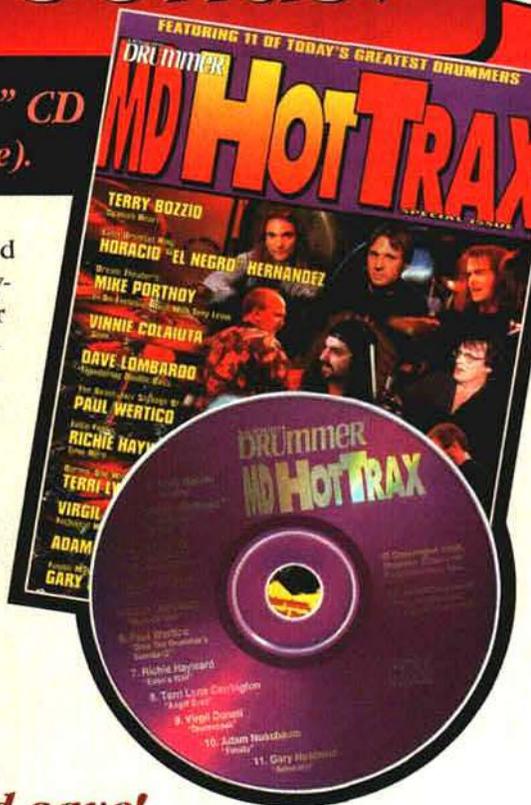
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# MATT WILSON

by Bill Milkowski

photos by Paul La Raia

"As wave follows wave,  
so new men take old men's places"

—Matt Wilson, *As Wave Follows Wave*

**D**rummer Matt Wilson is one of those new men. Since hitting the New York scene in 1992, he has made a growing impression upon elders, peers, and scribes alike with his refreshing enthusiasm, along with an inherent sense of daring behind the kit. An uncommonly musical drummer, Wilson practices what mentor Cecil McBee preaches about "going on the bandstand and looking for the unexpected." Whether it's in the company of bassist/composer McBee, alto-sax legend Lee Konitz, avant-garde icon Dewey Redman (a huge tenor sax presence in bands led by Ornette Coleman and Keith Jarrett, as well as with Old And New Dreams), or fronting his own adventurous quartet, Matt is constantly monitoring the pulse of the music in the moment and taking chances. And invariably, when it comes time for his solo, regardless of the context, he never fails to surprise.

On one memorable gig at Detour, the hip-cozy East Village club where Wilson and his current cutting-edge crew hold forth on a fairly regular basis, Wilson took out his eighteen-month-old daughter's plastic squeaky hammers and began playing the shell of his bass drum. With McBee at the International Association Of Jazz Educators Convention in Manhattan last January, he held a crowd of fellow musicians and teachers in awe with a solo that spoke volumes. With Michael Blake's Free Association at the Knitting Factory's intimate Old Office space, he brandished knitting needles and spatulas on the kit. Like another mentor figure, Andrew Cyrille, he's not above playing with his hands, playing the



# THE NEXT WAVE

floor, playing the shells...whatever works. And like yet another important influence, Joey Baron, he's ready, willing, and able to incorporate humor into the proceedings at the drop of a...knitting needle.

Some of Wilson's most dramatic playing can be heard on his acclaimed 1996 debut on Palmetto Records, *As Wave Follows Wave*. It's obvious from just a cursory listen that Matt has assimilated a wide range of influences as a drummer while developing his own fresh vocabulary on the instrument. Some of those influences come to bear throughout this bold project. There's his darkly melodic solo composition, "Old Porch Swing," a showcase of his nuance of touch and inherent musicality that speaks of Ed Blackwell's influence. There's the melancholy trio piece with McBee and Redman, "Tiny Prairie Landscape," which shows a decided Paul Motian influence in Mart's highly interactive, coloristic brushwork. His light, ebullient swing feel on "I Remember Lona" is reminiscent of a Roy Haynes bounce, while his brisk, conversational approach on an Ornette-ish reworking of the children's song "Bingo" is clearly coming out of Billy Higgins.

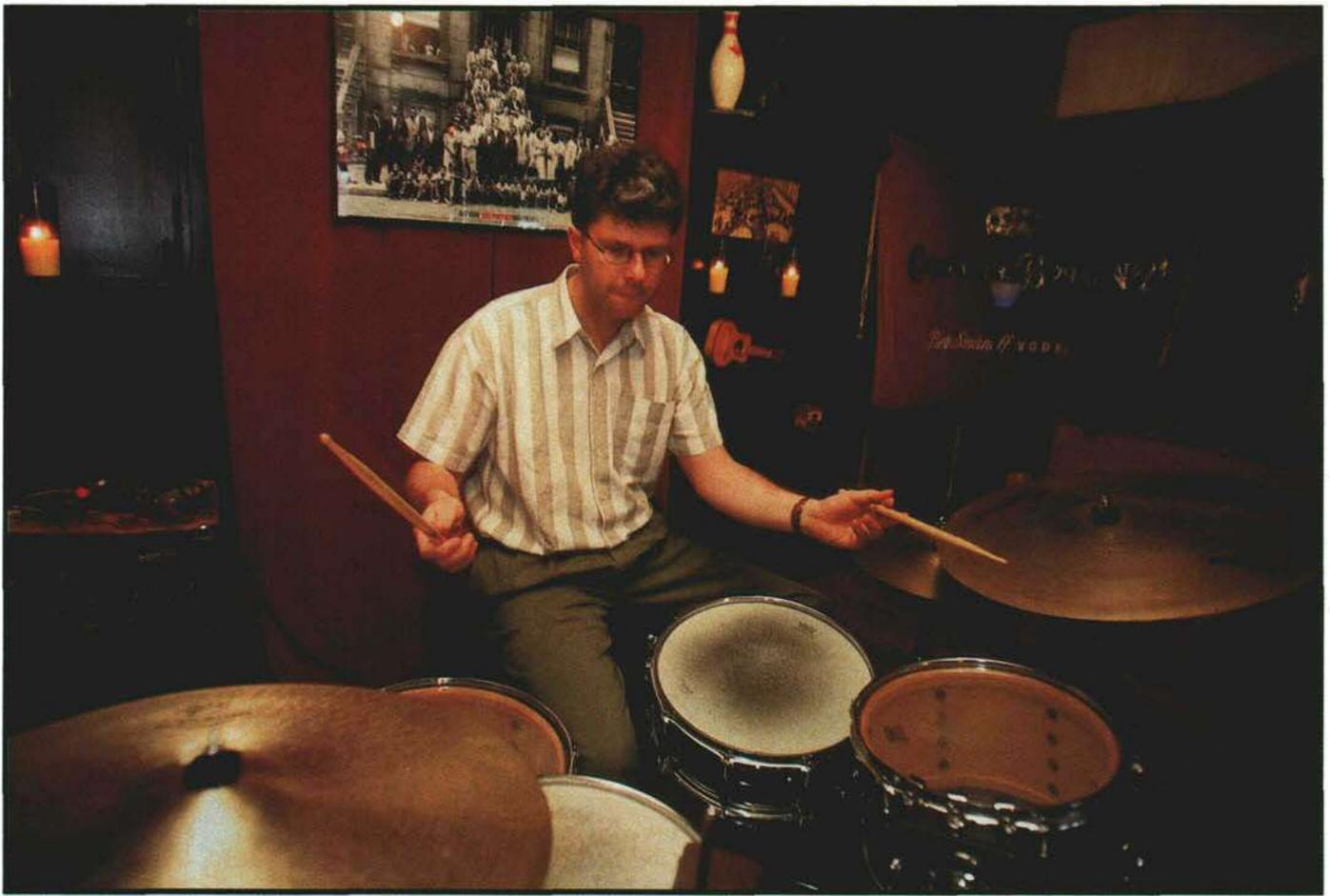
Mart's loose approach to backbeat and syncopation on an earthy B-3-fueled rendition of Duke Ellington's "Blue Pepper" has Idris Muhammad's funky stamp on it. His lyrical conception on "Body And Soul" echoes Joey Baron's uncanny solo drum rendition of "Alfie" from a recent Burt Bacharach tribute album curated by John Zorn for his Tzadik label. And his elegant use of rebound on a loose, freewheeling interpretation of the public-domain piece "Sweet Betsy From Pike" is no doubt a by-product of his apprenticeship some years back with master teacher Ed Soph.

The title track from *As Wave Follows Wave*, which features a dramatic recitation by Wilson himself, carries traces of Elvin Jones' thunder in the rolling, polyrhythmic undercurrent, while his other unaccompanied showcase on the album, "Nice Colors," has him scratching the snare head with brushes for textural effect while holding a shaker and simultaneously underlaying a churning samba pulse in the bass drum and toms. Nice colors indeed.

That auspicious debut album, in which he thoroughly established his creative aesthetic along with his playful imagination and joyous spirit for the music, earned Wilson the New York Jazz Critics Circle Award for Best New Artist Of 1997. The critics also weighed in on his gifts. Gene Santoro of *The Nation* called Matt "one of jazz's most hopeful emerging voices," while Ken Franckling of *DPI* dubbed him "a wizard of sounds, pulling from his bag of tricks a spectrum of musical colors and accents to fit whatever jazz moment he is in at the time."

Wilson's followup for the Palmetto label, *Going Once, Going Twice*, is a doc-





ument of his current working band (Andrew D'Angelo on alto sax and bass clarinet, Joel Frahm on tenor and soprano sax, Yosuke Inoue on bass), with special guest Lee Konitz on two tracks. "Dewey once told me, 'Find musicians you love to play with and play the music that you love,'" says Wilson, "and I'm definitely doing that with this band."

Along with spirited, swinging covers of Herbie Nichols' "Chit-Chatting" and Pete Seeger's "Turn, Turn, Turn," Wilson once again distinguishes himself as a daring player and original composer who is not afraid to go out on a limb in the service of the muse.

The wacky title track, for instance, is his salute to the auctioneers he remembers hearing as a kid growing up in the Midwest. His improvised duet with Konitz, "Brattleboro," once again highlights the drummer's conversational instincts on the kit. He wallows in impressionism on a wide open group exploration of the Rosemary Clooney pop classic "Hey There," another example of his relaxed, coloristic brushwork. "Land Of Lincoln" again speaks of his fondness for Ed Blackwell's melodic, African-influenced approach with Ornette Coleman, while his brash

backbeat on the rockin' "Schoolboy Thug" is garage-band raw and in-your-face.

On "Request Potato," an irreverent ode to Johnny Otten, a chief purveyor of the northern Iowa avant-garde drumming movement, Matt bangs on an arsenal of what sounds like kitchen utensils. And on the other side of the dynamic coin is a melancholy "The Blossoms," a fragile ode to the late multi-reed virtuoso and composer Thomas Chapin that features dramatic use of silence and zen-like restraint on cymbals and percussion. "Find musicians you love to play with and play the music that you love."

Aside from these two strong outings as a leader, Wilson has appeared on over forty albums as a sideman, including Cecil McBee's *Unspoken* (Palmetto), Dewey Redman's live at Ronnie Scott's session *In London* (Palmetto), and Lee Konitz's *Strings For Holiday* (Enja), as well as recordings by former Boston colleagues Charlie Kohlhase, singer Dominique Eade, and the Either/Orchestra. Somehow, between all of his sideman gigs and recordings and his work as a leader, Matt has found time to also keep his hand in the New York jingle scene. Thus far, he has graced jingles

for the likes of *Burger King*, *Tostitos*, *M&Ms*, and *Fruit Roll-Ups*. Apparently, he's just a guy who can't say no.

Born on September 27, 1964 in Knoxville, Illinois, Wilson began playing professional engagements by the eighth grade. While studying at Wichita State University with Dr. J.C. Combs, he got a National Endowment Jazz Apprenticeship grant to study with Ed Soph in 1984. He eventually migrated to Boston in 1987 and hooked up with a network of like-minded renegades like the Charlie Kohlhase Quintet, the Either/Orchestra, and the Bevan Mason Trio, all of whom recorded for the upstart Accurate label. At the urging of several elders, he finally made the move to New York in 1992 and has been turning heads ever since.

In the course of hanging with Wilson to prepare this story for *MD*, I found his enthusiasm for the music, both on and off the bandstand, to be genuine and positively infectious. After nearly twenty years of being here, I was reminded of why I came to New York in the first place. His presence has had that same effect on the people he's shared the bandstand with, both elders and peers.

“If you only listen to the kinds of music that you're playing, then you're not going to bring anything new to it.”

**BM:** We were talking about how inspiration comes from the strangest places.

**MW:** Yeah, there are great drummers everywhere, guys who are strictly low-profile but great nonetheless. Cats in Cleveland, Roger Humphries in Pittsburgh, G.T. Hogan in Houston...all burning local cats. There's a guy in Salina, Kansas named Chuck Wacham. He owns a music store now, but he was a really good drummer in the '50s and '60s. I once played with this band in Wichita led by a jazz violinist named Steve Story, and we would play in all these little towns, one of which was Salina, Kansas. I remember going into this music store there to put up a poster for our gig, and I started talking to this guy, Chuck. He actually played a little bit for me that day and you could tell just by the way he looked, the way he sat and held the sticks and everything...man. he had a real vibe. He was a drummer! We went over to his house for dinner and he had stacks of 10" Blue Note records that he had from when he was a kid. I always love sitting around and talking to those kinds of guys.

**BM:** There's always someone to discover when you're coming up...somebody who can impart some wisdom to you along the way.

**MW:** Oh yeah, you have to look for that all the time. And you find that you keep running into it in weird ways. That's what I always think is so enlightening. That's why I've been trying to go out and hear things that I don't really know much about or haven't heard before—to hear something I normally wouldn't hear in the hopes that it might inspire me

**BM:** And what have you heard lately that has inspired you?

**MW:** I saw Pete Seeger at the Knitting Factory. I thought he was amazing.

**BM:** So it's not necessarily drummers that you're seeking out for inspiration.

**MW:** No, I get inspiration from a million different sources. I remember being on the road in

Newfoundland, and it was the first time I saw someone play the bodhran, the Irish drum. I was totally blown away by that. So I have one, it's upstairs. It's still in the box, basically. I have good intentions, but time sometimes just makes it difficult. For the most part, when I experience something live it always makes much more of an impact on me than hearing it from a record. I always become more entranced by it that way.

**BM:** That's a real problem for students in remote places. They may have access to the information, via records and instructional books, but they don't get to

see the living masters performing live. They can't pick up on that intangible quality that you get from being in the same room with an Elvin Jones when he's really dealing, and it reflects in their own playing.

**MW:** Yeah, I mean, you can listen and do things like transcriptions. But that's not the same thing as seeing someone live. I remember somebody did a transcription of one of Elvin's solos and I thought, well, that's cool, but you should probably hear the



There are so many interesting things happening in so many types of music; I want to check that shit out.”

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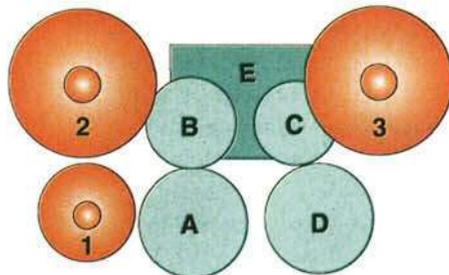
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According to Matt, he may use other cymbals in addition to the ones listed, depending on the situation. These include an old 16" A crash (taped up for dryness), a 20" *Oriental Trash* with five rivets, and a 17" *Re-Mix* ride.



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recording of that to hear what happened just before the solo to see what might've influenced what he played. But more importantly, you gotta *see* Elvin Jones play. There's just no way you could even begin to think of getting to the essence of his concept without seeing him do it live.

I'll never forget the first time I saw Elvin play. It was 1984. I was doing this study grant with Ed Soph in Connecticut and got a ride to New York. It was my first time ever in New York, and these guys just dropped me off at the Village Vanguard and said, "See you later." And Elvin was playing there. I walked in there and was just like, "Wow!" I couldn't believe it! So I

went back the next night and saw him again, and I still couldn't believe it. I actually saw Elvin and Philly Joe Jones on that same night in 1984. Philly Joe was playing with Dameronia at Lush Life and Elvin was at the Vanguard.

**BM:** Sounds like an eye-opening introduction to New York.

**MW:** Totally. I got more education right there than any time in my life up to that point—especially the second night of seeing Elvin, because I sat right next to the drums. I just remember the power he generated from behind the kit. It was awesome. And I remember looking at him— even when he was playing brushes you

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could just feel the incredible vibrations, like when you look at a hot road and can see the heat waves rising. I could almost see that coming off of him. It was so amazing to witness.

**BM:** Carl Allen has talked about fixating on Mel Lewis's foot feathering the bass drum at a Vanguard gig. Those are the kinds of things that you just can't experience on record. You really gotta be there.

**MW:** Exactly. I tell people you gotta do whatever you gotta do to see this music.

When I was in high school growing up in Knoxville, this friend and I would drive everywhere we could to see stuff. One week we saw Clark Terry in one town, Dizzy Gillespie in another town, and Oscar Peterson somewhere else. We just kept driving. Seeing those master musicians play was an important part of my musical development.

**BM:** So that summer of 1984 must've been a turning point for you.

**MW:** Absolutely. I'd study with Ed Soph,

practice all day on what he would give me, and then go out and hear music in the clubs. I just soaked it up. I heard everybody that summer. I saw Billy Higgins for the first time. That'll change ya right there. I saw Airto that summer, Mel Lewis, Louis Hayes, Ed Thigpen. It was definitely a turning-point year.

**BM:** You seem to have cultivated a very casual, organic aesthetic in the studio on your own projects as a leader.

**MW:** Exactly. I mean, both my records were each done in a day. The first one was done in five hours, the second one was done in about that. You just go in and do 'em—no big deal.

**BM:** How does one get to such a liberated point about recording? For some, recording is a very anxiety-ridden ordeal.

**MW:** I think when you're in an environment where you get to play all the time, it all just comes more naturally. I was working pretty much from eighth grade. In high school I was working quite a bit. I didn't know what was supposed to be right or wrong or hip or whatever, I just wanted to play. I was just thinking, "Oh, this is cool, this is fun." My advice is to play in as many situations as you can. Play in a blues band, play in a big band, play in a quartet. In one week in Wichita I'd just do all these different kinds of things. And I still do that here in New York, because I can play a lot of different styles and I don't want to be pigeonholed as just a downtown drummer or whatever.

Somebody recently heard me play a more straight-ahead gig and they told me, "Wow, I didn't know you could do that." Well, of course, it's definitely a part of what I've done all along. I don't want to play just one thing. I think people specialize too early. I mean, at fourteen, if you wanna sound like Philly Joe Jones.... I don't know, that seems kind of limiting to me. Don't get me wrong, Philly Joe is definitely great and worth checking out, but you need to explore all kinds of different things to get a good foundation in music. Philly Joe is definitely a big part of me too, but I was always encouraged to be myself.

**BM:** Who were some of the people who encouraged you early on?

**MW:** My parents, of course. And I had a great high school teacher who I studied with privately, and he encouraged me to be myself. His name was John Larson, and he

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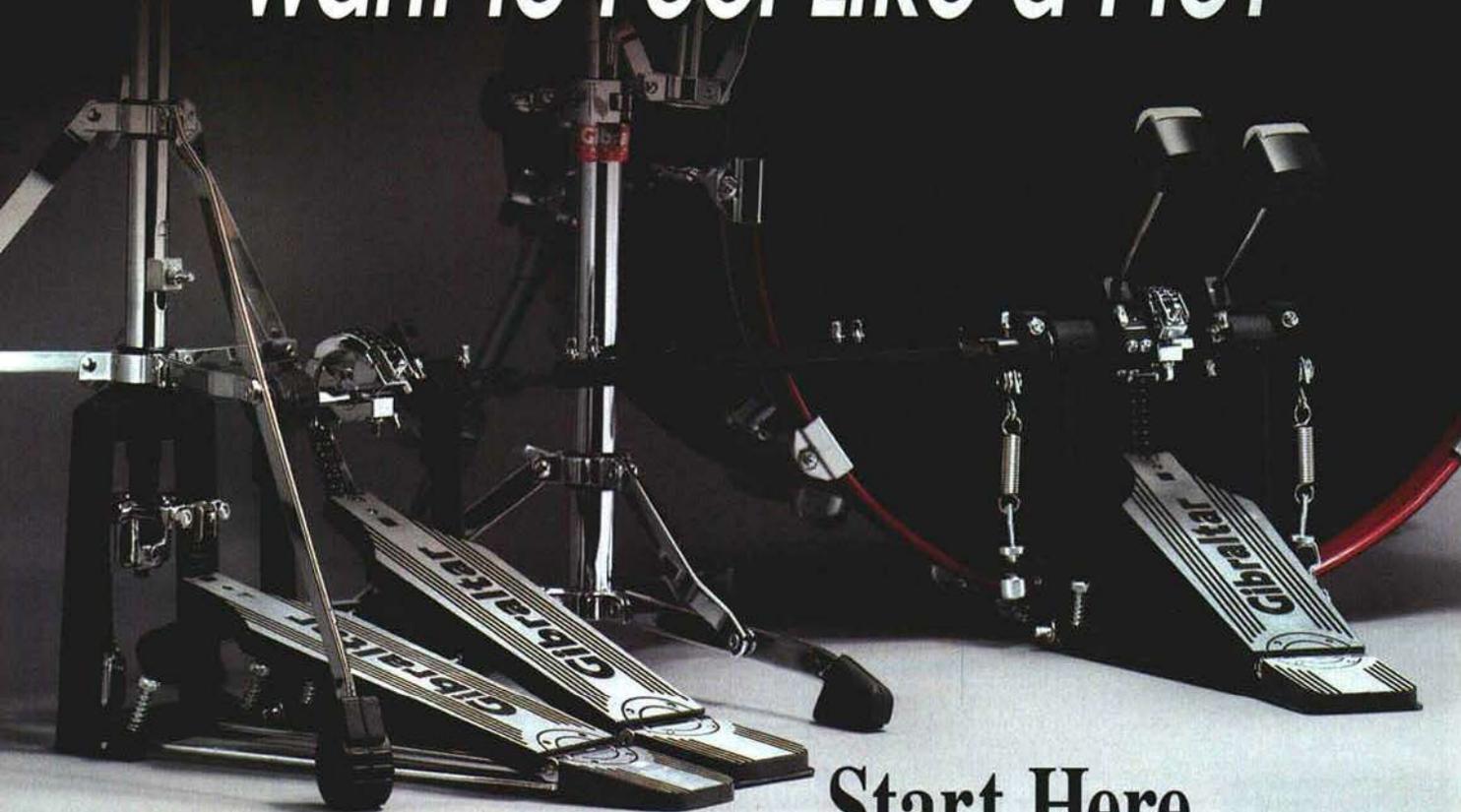
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was great because rather than teaching me a bossa nova from a book, he would play the bass lines with me so I could feel it and take it in. So I learned music that way. It was more like learning by doing. I just remember hearing his bass lines in my head when I would practice. Or I'd tape him and play along with the tape, always putting it in the context of music rather than just practicing a bunch of drum patterns. We worked on mechanics too, but it was always music first, which has been

sort of my motto ever since.

**BM:** What was your experience at Wichita State University?

**MW:** I got my degree there. I had a great teacher there named Dr. J.C. Combs. He was one of the most creative people I've ever been around. He was not only able to come up with creative pieces and projects, but he also had a great entrepreneurial spirit to help him pull it off. His concerts were always sold out because they were such spectacles. I remember we once did a piece

called "Wrestlers And Percussion Ensemble." That was amazing. I mean, we actually performed it with pro wrestlers at the PAS Convention in 1983 in Knoxville.

**BM:** So your idea of using an auctioneer on "Going Once, Going Twice" might be traced back to those experimental times at Wichita?

**MW:** Oh yeah, definitely. I learned a lot from Combs about presentation. He would always make a concert an event. Not only were you blown away musically by it, but you would walk away from it thinking, "God, that was really cool." So I guess that has definitely rubbed off on me.

**BM:** It's helped you maintain an open-minded stance toward music.

**MW:** Yeah, because I feel that the minute you close something off—well, you have to have some limits, I suppose. I don't think any person likes *everything*. There are things that I don't really enjoy. There's not much, but certain things. I mean, I'd rather listen to Ozzy Osbourne than CD-101 [smooth jazz radio]. I just feel like when people are really giving it up, if somebody's really trying, whatever the musical context, I can appreciate that. But I hear so many bands where there's not much rhythm section interaction at all. They don't think about that beauty of the music, they just think about these charts that they're playing. There's not very much unexpected there, I guess. That's what Cecil McBee always says: "We're out here looking for the unexpected." He calls rehearsals "preparation for the unexpected," because if you know what's gonna happen, it's not that much fun.

**BM:** That's probably a great word to describe your own solos—unexpected. Whether it's in the context of Dewey's band, Cecil's band, Michael Blake's Free Association, or your own band, when it comes to your soloing, it's always that kind of unexpected event. It's not merely a display of chops.

**MW:** Yeah, I guess that goes way back. I remember hearing this record when I was a kid called *Rich vs. Roach* on Mercury. Gigi Gryce did the arrangements and it was pretty cool. And Buddy had his thing. I had seen him on television and was impressed and everything, but with Max I could really hear something singing to me in his playing. He was saying something to me that I didn't hear elsewhere, and that fascinated

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me. I definitely got a jolt from it. But then I remember getting a jolt in a different way from hearing people play very few notes and making a profound statement. I remember seeing Dennis Charles play for the first time, or Ed Blackwell or Billy Higgins, and just really hearing them singing to me. And I think it all started to coalesce over time. It was always in the back of my mind since high school. Maybe I was gathering all this stuff, kind of like a scavenger hunt. But when I heard those

guys, man, it was a revelation. Just the touch and the simplicity and how clear it was. It was so transparent. There was no clutter at all.

**BM:** To where it transcends technique.

**MW:** Yeah, like the first time I saw Paul Motian. Amazing! Or hearing more of Max Roach, playing over the changes better than anybody. Somebody else who I think is really great at that is Frankie Dunlop, a brilliant improviser—just so clear. I saw him on this video with Monk and I remem-

ber seeing it a couple of different times, once with the sound and once without. And just seeing him play, you could *hear* it. I think Al Foster is the same way. Watching him, you can just hear the music. He speaks so well on the instrument. Ed Blackwell sang on the set, too. The first time I saw Blackwell was with Dewey and Mark Helias in Boston, January 1988. I'll never forget it. It was snowing like crazy, and the band was late because of the weather. Blackwell had the crappiest set of drums I've ever seen provided for somebody, and he still sounded great. I mean, he sounded just like he did on all the records I've ever heard him on before that. He was just singing on this crappy kit.

**BM:** Is there a danger in emulating distinctive drummers too closely?

**MW:** Yeah, that happens to young drummers a lot. When I first got to college in 1982, Steve Gadd was the big thing. I think Steve Gadd is great, but everybody was trying to sound exactly like him back then. And as much as I loved hearing him—and I got a lot of emotion from hearing the records—I just thought, "Man, that really doesn't seem like something that I want to do with my life, pursuing sounding like somebody else." Now, I probably imitated him and a lot of other players along the way, but it wasn't my big goal to sound exactly like them.

**BM:** So it's about straddling a fine line between technique and musicality and hopefully bringing it all together in some kind of organic package.

**MW:** You have to have the ability to say what you're hearing or what you're feeling, and to that end technique really does matter. But technique, to me, is subjective. Paul Motian has a lot of technique to me, but it's a different kind of technique from someone like Will Kennedy. Dennis Charles probably didn't have the chops of Dennis Chambers, let's say. But they each get their sound with what they have. Everybody has a different idea of how much technique they need.

Some guys don't ever play with technique, but they practice a lot. That's what freaked me out about Andrew Cyrille the time I took a lesson with him. Andrew has a lot of great technique, he gets a great sound, he's amazing. I took this great lesson with him in Boston, and I remember at the beginning of the lesson he was practic-

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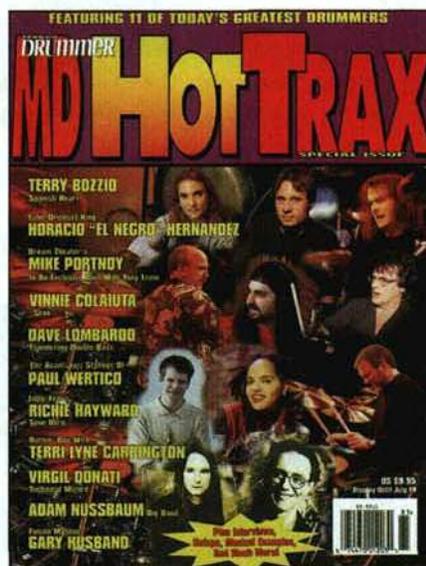
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ing his bass drum with a metronome, and he was so into talking about older cats like Sonny Greer and Louie Bellson. He was a big Philly Joe protege. I mean, he has those abilities, but he decided long ago to go on and do something different from the way Philly Joe did it. And I think those older guys would be more respectful of somebody going on and doing what they do than trying to be an imitator of some sort.

**BM:** You were talking about achieving different levels of proficiency in drumming.

**MW:** Yeah, it's what I tell students when I'm doing workshops. I think there are different levels. The first level is that you're functional, you can play. You can play different beats, you can read, you're going to be able to go out and get a gig. The next level is being creative, where you actually take something in a different direction. People who I consider to be there right now would be Jim Black, Leon Parker, Kenny Wolleson, and Billy Drummond. They obviously can function, but they're also creative in a completely different way. Then the next level are guys who are inspirational, where if you have them on the gig, even before they play, it's obvious that they're just going to provide that inspiration. In this select group I would include guys like Billy Hart, Al Foster, and Paul Motian. If I was a saxophone player, man, I'd love to hire any one of those guys. Then you'd know it was going to be great.

Roy Haynes is a real inspiration because he never sounds the same to me. His sound is the same, but he's always trying some different things. He may have timpani one night or a gong the next night. He's always going for it. And I was always blown away by

how he'd rest his foot up on the hi-hat stand and not play it, just to open that end up a little bit.

**BM:** And there's one more level that you alluded to.

**MW:** Yes, it's where the player is like a sheer force of nature, somebody like Elvin Jones. I mean, there's the rain, there's the wind, there's snow, and there's Elvin Jones. He's just such a forceful player, and not necessarily even in a muscular sense. The thing that always got me the most about Elvin is how light he plays! Everybody always talks about how loud it is, but I'm always blown away by how light he can play the ride cymbal and with brushes. He also has the power, but it's a different kind of power. It's a great "loud," I think.

I would include Tony Williams in this same level of being beyond amazing. I remember seeing Tony play and I was thinking, "Wow, it just can't get any louder than this," then it would just go up to this other level. He had such a dynamic range. Man, I was in shock for two days after hearing the news about his passing—such a loss.

**BM:** You seem to have a special affection for Dewey Redman.

**MW:** Well, he's just so amazing. There's never a moment with Dewey where I think I'll walk on the bandstand with him and not be as excited as the first time I ever did. I would drop just about anything to play with Dewey. He has such a zest for playing, and he's really borderless. I could book two weeks of different bands every night for Dewey Redman to play with and he would sound great with every damn one of 'em. Lee Konitz is the same way. He does so many different things, and the guy works so much, it's

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amazing. These guys, to me, are true improvisors. There are no patterns with Lee and Dewey, they're just truly for that moment, playing what is intended to be played. Man, it's amazing, the spirit those guys have.

**BM:** You seem to enjoy putting yourself in different musical situations and then reacting.

**MW:** To me that's the whole point. I like variety. I love going out on a tour and doing one thing for a long time too, because then you get to find out the variety within that context. And I love my own band. I just like trying out different things. I like interesting instrument combinations. But I just feel like it's all great music. Somebody asked me recently if I change the way I play for each of these people, but I don't think that I do. You pretty much are yourself in all these different contexts.

**BM:** Do you change the kit for these different contexts?

**MW:** Yeah, maybe I'll change the cymbals for different people. There are certain cymbals that work or don't get in the way. Like a flat ride is really nice for a lot of different gigs and not right for others. If I get a chance to play funk, I like playing funk on a pretty wide-open kit. I like that sound a lot. With my band I use the little snare drum in addition to my main one, although the tuning stays pretty much the same. I tune the drums differently for different sounds.

I like the bass drum to ring, but on certain songs I've been detuning it a little bit for a different sound. Also, I've been really trying to make the most use out of the least hardware. That's why I use only two cymbal stands, because I'd rather switch cymbals



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## GOOD DRUMMING DEEDS

As Matt Wilson's name gets around, more and more great jazzers want to tap his talents. Here are the albums Matt lists as most representative of his drumming—so far.

Artist	Album
Matt Wilson	Going Once, Going Twice
Matt Wilson	As Wave Follows Wave
Dewey Redman	In London
Cecil McBee	Unspoken
Lee Konitz	Strings For Holiday
Charlie Kohlase	Good Deeds
Allan Chase	Dark Clouds With Silver Linings
Vic Juris	Pastels
Either/Orchestra	The Brunt

And here are the ones he listens to most for inspiration.

Artist	Album	Drummer
Roy Haynes	Out Of The Afternoon	Roy Haynes
Miles Davis	Steamin'	Philly Joe Jones
Don Cherry	Complete Communion	Ed Blackwell
Albert Ayler	Love Cry	Milford Graves
Ahmad Jamal	But Not For Me	Vernell Fournier
Jack DeJohnette	Album Album	Jack DeJohnette
Frank Sinatra/Count Basie	It Might As Well Be Swing	Sonny Payne
Eric Dolphy	Out To Lunch	Tony Williams
John Coltrane	Coltrane	Elvin Jones
Duke Ellington	Hot Summer Dance	Sam Woodyard
Roger Miller	Greatest Hits	unknown
Art Blakey	Caravan	Art Blakey
Bill Frisell	Have A Little Faith	Joey Baron
Shelly Manne	The Three And The Two	Shelly Manne

plus Max Roach, Billy Higgins, Ben Riley, Papa Jo Jones, Paul Motian, Billy Hart, Al Foster, Mel Lewis, Andrew Cyrille, Sid Catlett, Baby Dodds, Peter Erskine, Sunny Murray, Eddie Moore, Bernard Purdie, Ornette Coleman, Thelonious Monk, Steve Lacy, James Brown, Parliament, The Beatles, Jimmy Smith, Sousa, Talking Heads, George Jones, Chopin, Beck, Neil Young, Bartok, Emmlyou Harris, John Zorn, Pete Seeger, Aretha Franklin, The Police, Bob Marley

than have a bunch of stuff up there, which always scares me. I mean, if I have too many options then I don't really feel like I'm as focused. If I have just a little bit of stuff there, I have to make the most of it. Do with what you have there. Sometimes I make it a challenge, going to a gig with whatever is there or whatever is in the bag.

**BM:** Does your cymbal setup vary much?

**MW:** It varies quite a bit. I always tend to use a flat ride, and the ride cymbal may make a difference. Sometimes if I'm in town I'll use a lot of old *Ks*. I've been with Zildjian for five and a half years, and I got a new cymbal from them that's really great, one of the new *K Constantinoples*. But I'm getting away a little bit from the *K* sound, and I'm not really into the total dry sound. I'm into a kind of in between ping-y and rivet-y kind of sound. But I got these old hi-hats in November—these old *Ks* that I found out in Wisconsin—that I've been using pretty much on everything. But basically, I have a close relationship with my cymbals. I really know their personality and how they feel.

**BM:** I noticed that you keep your cymbals fairly low.

**MW:** Yeah, Mel Lewis once told me that you wanna be able to hear above the instrument. There's no other instrument where your

ears are as *in* the instrument as the drums. Trumpet is pretty close to your ears, but with every other instrument the sound comes from a different place. So if everything is set up way up by your ears, not only can it be damaging, but you're not hearing the rest of the music; you're hearing your instrument with the music rather than the music with your instrument. So I just felt like being above it all.

**BM:** Can you catalog some of the unconventional or unorthodox ways in which you get colors and textures on the kit?

**MW:** Playing with my hands, putting a cymbal on the snare, sticks on shells, things like that. Probably by playing free I've come up with stuff just by accident. But it breaks down into two things for me: putting something on top of something or hitting it with something else. That's why I have the spatulas and the knitting needles and the baby's hammer. There's also a lot of different sounds that you can get from the hand. There's the fingers, there's the palm, there's nails.

Sometimes you just want to break the rules and bring stuff that you don't think will work in that context at all, just to see what will happen. That's what I try to urge people to do, and I think that's what great musicians have always done—they start breaking rules after a while, going against the grain or the way it's supposed to be done.

**BM:** Milford Graves talks about there being no such thing as "correct" time, that everybody has their own unique inherent pulse. And if they're true to themselves and truly improvising, they're playing that pulse, and it's not necessarily metronomic.

**MW:** Yeah, or just the way somebody puts an edge on something. Max...man, he always has that cool edge to his time. Tony would always adjust so much. I remember hearing that band Tony had, that great quintet. One of the most intriguing things about it was how he would adjust the tempos a little bit in each of the different sections of the songs. I remember hearing that band one time in Saratoga years ago. Jeff Hirshfield was there with George Gruntz's band, and we were listening to Tony together and noting, "Wow, isn't that amazing how he pulled this back at a certain spot?" He did that in Miles' band too: He put that edge on stuff to make it happen.

I think good pop drummers do that too, when they get to the chorus of a tune. I remember Jeff Porcaro talking about that in an old interview in *Modern Drummer* I read when I was a kid: "Yeah, when we get to the chorus, I might put a little bit more edge on the time to create a little bit more excitement." Metronomic time just goes by, but that's not the human part of music.

**BM:** What are some common misconceptions that people have about jazz drummers?

**MW:** Sometimes rock people have this feeling of, "Oh, you play jazz, so you're probably a little more technically advanced on your instrument than I am." I always felt that was so absurd. I mean, it's just the music that I'm playing on this instrument at the time. It doesn't mean that I'm any *better*. I mean, that music is not any better than any other music. That's why I like listening to a lot of different things. When we go on a trip I bring so many different tapes to listen to it's amazing. In the last couple of days I've been listening to the new Madonna record, George Jones stuff—man, nobody sings melody like him! I've also been listening to old Janet Jackson stuff, as well as Bird. And I always listen to a lot

of Duke.

As a composer, I draw influences from all the stuff that is around me. If you only listen to the kinds of music that you're playing, then you're not going to bring anything new to it. There are so many interesting things happening in so many types of music—I want to check that stuff out.

**BM:** Who are some other important drummers for you that you haven't named?

**MW:** Shelly Manne. His playing, to me, is great. I really related to him a lot too, because he liked to do a lot of different kinds of music. He played television things, but he played freer music as well. He was one of the first guys to play on the free side. Check out the album *The Three And The Two*, a trio with Shorty Rogers and Jimmy Giuffre—trumpet, saxophone, and drums. It's great. When I hear music I wanna hear someone's personality. And that's what Shelly Manne gives you.

Bob Moses is another huge influence. He opened me up to all kinds of stuff, which I'm very grateful for. Moses loves to play for dancers. He was always talking about, "Man, I'm just trying to get them to shake their booty." Personally, I would love it if people would dance at my gigs. I say, "Sure, get on up! That's cool." Some jazz musicians, I think, are offended if people start dancing. But I think that's the highest compliment.

**BM:** Do you have any upcoming projects in mind?

**MW:** I'd like to do an album of drum and vocal duets, the two original instruments.

**BM:** Any fantasy projects?

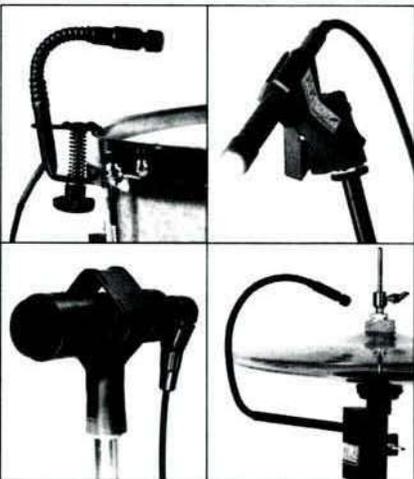
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**MW:** Yeah, an album with George Jones and Elvin Jones. That would be a great combination. I mean, I actually think of these things. Paul Motian and Willie Nelson—*that* would be a great record. There again, you're putting together people who are at that highest level of expression.  
**BM:** After spending time in Knoxville, Wichita, and Boston, you seem eternally

excited about living in New York.  
**MW:** I am! I remember shortly after moving here in '92. It was the first night I was playing with Dewey at Sweet Basil's, and Joe Lovano was playing down the street at the Village Vanguard with Al Foster and Cecil McBee. So we'd go down there during the breaks. I remember walking over to the Vanguard with Cameron Brown saying, "You know, this was a dream of mine as a kid, to be playing in these clubs and walking down the street to see the other cats during the break and then going back to play another set. This is great!"

What's great about New York for me today is those chances to see low-key events. I remember seeing (pianist) Dave Kikoski and (bassist) Ed Howard with Al Foster at the Zinc Bar a couple years ago. I don't know how small that joint is—it was completely packed with twenty people in the room—but the spirit in the room was amazing. And I thought, "Man, this is why we're here." It's pretty special. Musicians are good people. It's a cool thing to get to do.



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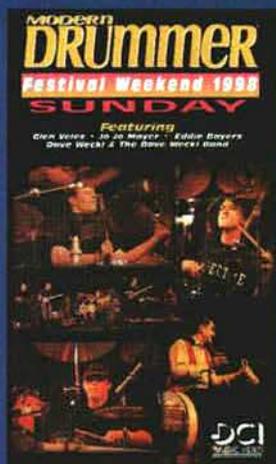
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# Cross-Sticking Studies: Part 2

by Ron Spagnardi

**T**his month we'll experiment with cross-sticking patterns using 16th notes, first with double sticking and then with paradiddle sticking.

The four basic cross-sticking maneuvers (snare to floor tom, floor tom to snare, small tom to floor tom, and floor tom to small tom), combined with the two varied sticking patterns (double and paradiddle), offer literally hundreds of possibilities. Practicing them will greatly improve your cross-sticking technique, as well as your ability to move around the drumset with greater facility.

Remember to practice each exercise slowly at first, and increase the tempo only after you can play it smoothly and accurately. Also, be sure to repeat each pattern fifteen to twenty times before progressing to the next one.

Note: All notes requiring a cross-sticking move (right over left, or left over right) are notated with a circled X.

## 16th-Note Patterns Using Double Sticking Snare Drum To Floor Tom

ST  
SD  
FT

RRLLRRLLRRLLRRL

RRLLRRLLRRLLRRL

RRLLRRLLRRLLRRL

RRLLRRLLRRLLRRL

RRLLRRLLRRLLRRL

## Floor Tom To Snare Drum

RRLLRRLLRRLLRRL

RRLLRRLLRRLLRRL

RRLLRRLLRRLLRRL

RRLLRRLLRRLLRRL

## Small Tom To Floor Tom

RRLLRRLLRRLLRRL

RRLLRRLLRRLLRRL

RRLRRLLRRLLRLL

RRLRRLLRRLLRLL

Floor Tom To Small Tom

RRLRRLLRRLLRLL

RRLRRLLRRLLRLL

RRLRRLLRRLLRLL

RRLRRLLRRLLRLL

16th-Note Patterns Using Paradiddle Sticking  
Snare Drum To Floor Tom

RLRRLRLLRLRRLRLL

RLRRLRLLRLRRLRLL

RLRRLRLLRLRRLRLL

RLRRLRLLRLRRLRLL

Floor Tom To Snare Drum

RLRRLRLLRLRRLRLL

RLRRLRLLRLRRLRLL

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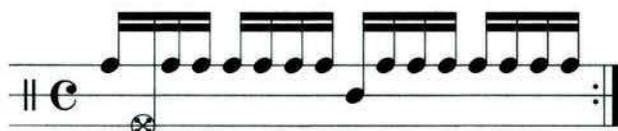
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RLRRLRLLRLRRLRLL



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Next month we'll examine cross-sticking around the drums using triplets with varied stickings.

Material in this series is excerpted from *Cross-Sticking Studies* by Ron Spagnardi, published by Modern Drummer Publications.



# Alternating Strokes On The Hi-Hat

by Ken Vogel

**MUSIC KEY**

Open H.H.

H.H.

B.D.

Through my years as a drum instructor, I have discovered that many students, while playing 16th-note, alternating strokes on the hi-hat, have difficulty in emphasizing an open hi-hat sound on "e" and "ah." Even more difficult for the student is playing the bass drum along with the open hi-hat sounds on "e" and "ah," since the bass drum hits fall at the same time as the left hand (for a right-handed player leading with the right stick).

The following exercises and practice suggestions are designed to strengthen this weakness. Begin slowly and be sure to count out loud as you play the examples (1 e & ah 2 e & ah 3 e & ah 4 e & ah). Work through the exercises using the following step-by-step approach:

1. Play the exercises keeping the hi-hat closed.
2. Keep the hi-hat closed and strike the snare drum on beats 2 and 4 with the right stick.
3. Play the exercises as written. Do not play the snare drum on beats 2 and 4.
4. Play the exercises as written and add the snare drum with the right stick on beats 2 and 4.

R L R L etc.

**BRIAN SHANLEY'S FUTURE IS IN HIS HANDS**

Congratulations to Brian Shanley, recipient of the 1998 Pro-Mark/Modern Drummer Magazine Scholarship. Brian will use the \$1,500 cash award and Pro-Mark products valued at \$1,000 as he continues his music studies at James Madison University. And congratulations also to all the other percussionists who made submissions. While we only had one scholarship to award, you all proved yourselves to be winners.

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# Max Roach: "Jaqui"

Transcribed by Mark Mahoney

**MUSIC KEY**

This month's *Drum Soloist* features Max Roach on the classic bop album *Study In Brown*, from Roach's days with the late Clifford Brown. The cut transcribed here, "Jaqui," contains many classic "Max-isms," some of the trademarks that made Roach one of the most in-demand drummers of the bop era. For example, measures 5-6, 21-22, and 32-34 feature the bass drum as an integral voice of the melodic line. Measures 7-8 and 13 use a simple double-stroke roll, but played in a triplet rhythm. And measures 13-14, 19-23, and 32-34 contain a couple of the swinging melodic phrases that Max is famous for. (Note: All notated 8th notes are swung.)



Max in action in the '50s

Though brilliant, the "Jaqui" solo is not Roach's most "technical" solo on the album, which actually makes it great to use as an introduction to the master. Once you do learn it, the blistering solos that appear on the rest of the album will seem a bit more approachable. Have fun!

$\text{♩} = 172$





# The One-Two Punch

by Rod Morgenstein

**MUSIC KEY**

One of my current favorite ways to create interesting, syncopated, and ethnic-sounding grooves is by positioning the cowbell over the floor tom and playing the two in succession with the right hand—a cowbell/floor tom one-two punch. Examples

1a, b, and c demonstrate three basic patterns that work very well with this concept.

**1a**

**1b**

**1c**

Example 2 is an embellishment of example 1a, with the addition of the snare on the "e" of 3 and the bass drum on the "&" of 2 and 4.

**2**

Examples 3 and 4 use the right-hand patterns from example 1b and 1c respectively, with the left hand functioning as its own separate line. Examples 3 through 8 are written on two staves for ease of reading and to view the independence of the left hand (notated on the top staff) and the right hand (notated on the bottom).

**3**

**4**

Example 5 gets interesting in measure two with a repeating three-note (RRL) hand pattern.

**5**

The feel of example 6 is partially defined by the absence of the bass drum on the downbeat. This, along with the off-beat right-hand pattern, gives it an unusual character.

**6**

For a change of pace, example 7 is in  $\frac{3}{4}$ .

7

Example 8 is a bit more note-dense with 16th-note triplets added to the left-hand tom part.

8

Example 9 is another pattern in  $\frac{3}{4}$ . (The "B" sticking indication is for both hands.)

9

Sometimes the best way to come up with new sounds is by moving things around on your drumset. Through chance and exploration, new rhythmic possibilities abound; the cowbell/floor tom one-two punch is just one example of something you might stumble upon. Experiment with your own ideas, and you might discover something equally cool!



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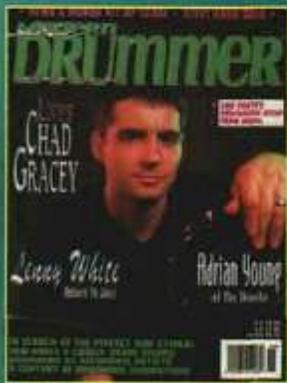
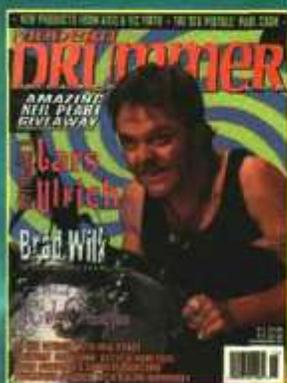
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# Drummers of *The Lion King*

by Ken Ross and Victor Rendón

photos by Paul La Raia

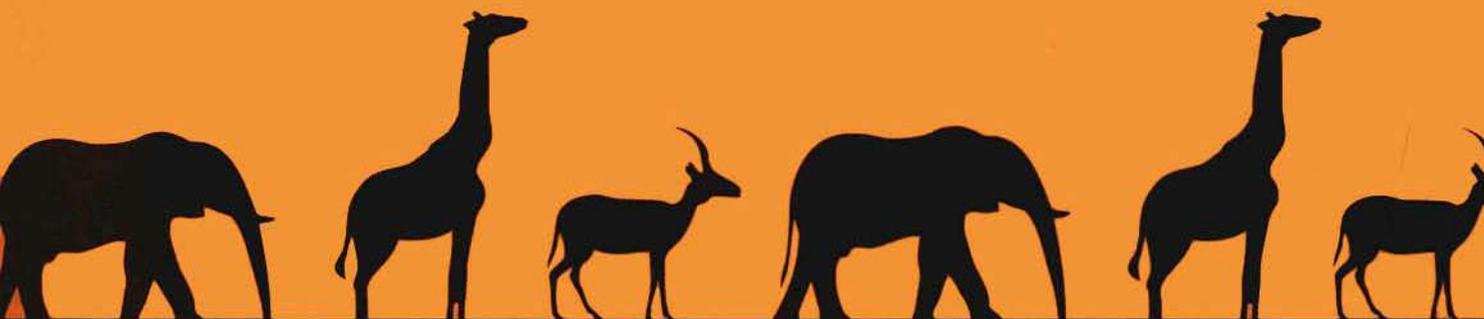
By now virtually the whole world is aware of Disney's blockbuster Broadway show, *The Lion King*. This spectacular production—winner of the 1998 Tony-award for best musical—is an adaptation of the highly successful film version, now presented live on stage with all the magic we've come to expect from Disney. African sets, actor-inhabited puppets, costumes, staging, choreography, and music envelop the audience and bring the spirit of Africa to Broadway.

The music, described in the soundtrack's liner notes as a crossroads where "African rhythms and pop songs purposely collide to create a unique sound," is scored for full orchestra and five percussionists (a number unprecedented for a Broadway musical). The pit orchestra is located on a multi-level platform below the stage, where percussionists Valerie Naranjo and Tom Brett handle mallet keyboards and Latin and African hand percussion, while Tommy Igoe plays drumset, percussion, and electronic drums. Way up above, in balcony boxes on opposite sides of the stage, are Rolando Morales-Matos and Junior Wedderburn on Latin, African, and orchestral percussion. Their presence within the auditorium provides a stunning aural and visual effect.

Percussionist/composer Valerie Naranjo has been involved with *The Lion King* since the beginning of the project, and has written several of the percussion arrangements in the score. Since her arrival in New York City from her native Colorado several years ago, she has established a reputation as a world-class musician with artists like David Byrne and Phillip Glass, and with percussion greats Milton Cardona, Airtó, Glenn Velez, and Zakir Hussain. More recently Valerie became a member of the *Saturday Night Live* band.

Valerie's greatest passion is the music of West Africa. She studied the gyl (pronounced gee-lee)—a pentatonic keyboard mallet instrument—extensively in West Africa, and has performed on it on five continents. She holds a B.M.E. from Oklahoma University and an M.M. from Ithaca College in performance and in ethnomusicology.

Born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico, percussionist Rolando Morales-Matos' high school years were spent attending a school for musicians. He received his masters at Carnegie Mellon University, and eventually earned a performance degree studying with Alan Abel. Rolando then returned to Puerto Rico to teach music and to perform with the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra. Later he toured

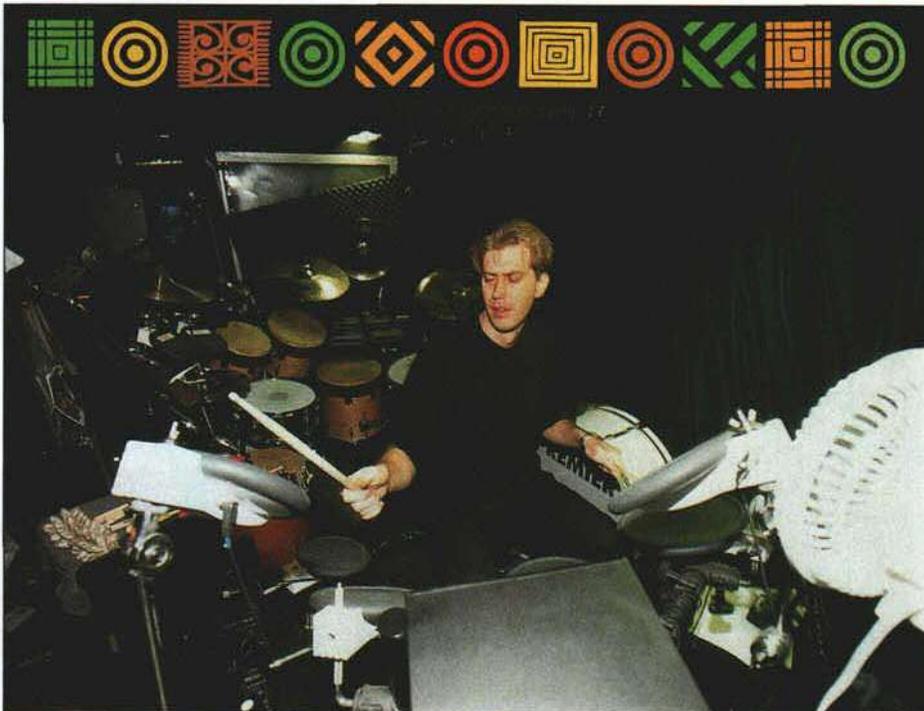


with the popular salsa bands of Eddie Santiago, Jerry Rivera, and Willie Colon.

Rolando's classical training has carried him from Spain to New Zealand, where he held principal timpani positions in their state orchestras. But eventually he returned to Pittsburgh, which he considers his second home. The percussion score of *The Lion King* offers this immensely talented musician the opportunity to demonstrate his incredible versatility, playing everything from delicate orchestral textures to a screaming flurry of timbale licks that stun the audience.

Tommy Igoe is one of today's most outstanding drumset players. His progressive style and extraordinary musical skills have, been documented on numerous recordings and live performances with such artists as Art Garfunkel, Stanley Jordan, and New York Voices. His recently completed debut recording *New Ground* showcases Tommy's compositional skills and his mastery of the drumset. Tommy worked closely with the producers of *The Lion King* to help create the drumset score for the show.

Thomas Brett earned a B.A. in music performance from the University of Toronto (where he studied with members of the Nexus percussion ensemble) and an M.A. in ethnomusicology from Tufts University. In addition to appearing as a soloist in Canada, France, and the United States, Brett has worked extensively to compose a repertoire of chamber music for



Tommy Igoe



Valeria Naranjo

percussion. He is currently recording a series of his works for keyboard percussion ensemble, which will be available from Brett Music Publications at the 1998 PAS convention.

Junior "Gabu" Wedderburn started playing professionally in Jamaica at the age of fourteen. Shortly thereafter he toured the world with the National Dance Theater Company of Jamaica. After graduating from the Jamaica School of Music in 1980, he founded the percussion-based dance and performance ensemble Dominion Percussion, which won accolades from the Jamaica festival commission.

Since moving to New York City in 1984, Junior has recorded and toured with many internationally recognized jazz and reggae artists. In 1990, he began performing and developing music for the New York City-based dance-theater company Urban Bush Women. His work with that group earned him the prestigious *Bessie* award for 1996.

In addition to his performance and compositional talents, Junior Wedderburn is a skilled craftsman. He makes some of the finest handmade drums in the world, many of which can be heard in the production of *The Lion King*.

*Modern Drummer* recently had the opportunity to meet with all these talented individuals at the New Amsterdam theater on 42nd Street in New York City, where *The Lion King* currently reigns supreme over Broadway.

**MD:** Besides the sheer magnitude of its success, one of the most surprising aspects of *The Lion King* is the five-percussionist battery that performs each night. That's unprecedented for a Broadway musical, isn't it?

**Valerie Naranjo:** It is, but it was essential to the creation of the African motif that the entire show is built on. We each have specialties, which we combine to create the percussion for the show as a complete team.

To begin with, Tom Brett plays one of the marimbas and one of the gyils. He also plays all of the one hand/one stick drums of West Africa, in addition to playing a lot of the legit parts on hand percussion.

Junior's specialty is the West African djembe style of drumming—in addition to the twenty or so other instruments he plays. Rolando also plays over twenty instruments, including orchestral stuff, the big gong cues, and concert bass drum.

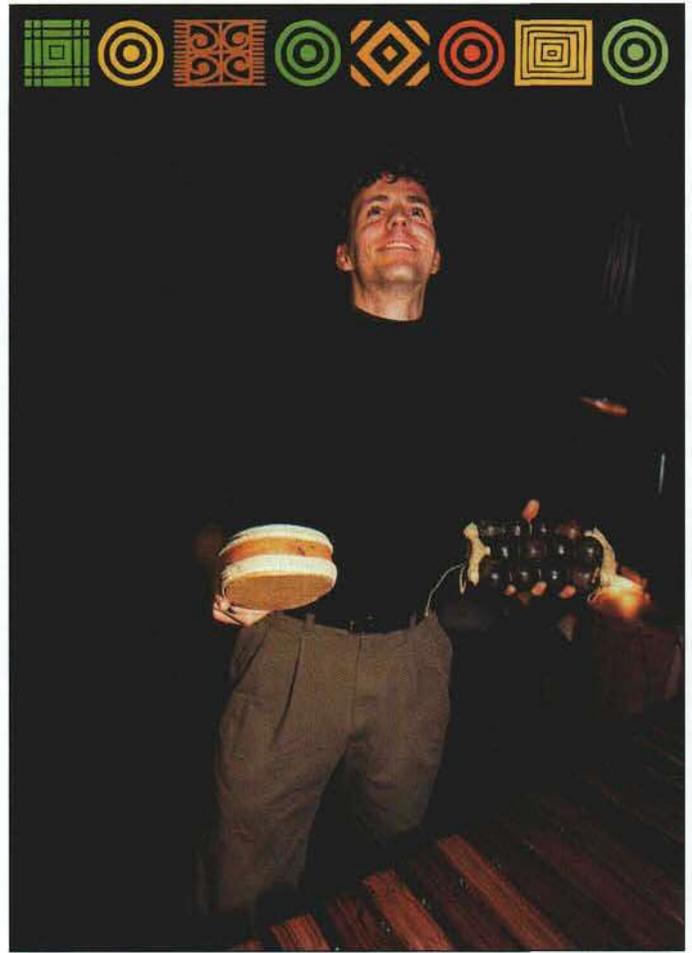
Tommy plays two drumsets. One is an electronic kit and one is acoustic. He's one of the few drummers I know who has also gone into hand drumming. He also plays concert bass drum and other assorted instruments.

The producers actually sent me to Africa to pick up some things for my setup. I play a chromatic gyil, which is made specifically for this show, and at last count about thirty-five other instruments.

**MD:** Valerie, you were the first percussionist to be involved with *The Lion King*. How did that come about?

**Valerie:** I met Julie Taymor, the director of *The Lion King*, in 1986. Her frequent collaborator, composer Elliot Goldenthal, invited me to play for one of their productions. We arranged parts for marimba, keyboard, and multi-percussion—all to be played by one musician—in a matter of days. The August '96 reading of *The Lion King* involved four musicians, with two of us playing about 150 percussion instruments. I worked closely with Julie, musical producer Mark Mancina, and orchestrator Bob Elhai to write percussion scores for the new original Broadway tunes and for two of the Elton John songs carried over from the film.

I believe it was Mark Mancina's idea to have four percussionists and a trapset player. That's when Tommy Igoe came in.



Tom Brett

**Tommy Igoe:** I met Joe Church, *Lion King's* musical director, when he was the musical director on *Tommy*. Joe called me at the end of '96 and asked me if I was interested in playing this show. Initially I said no, because I had some experience playing on Broadway, and I was afraid I couldn't make the commitment. But when he explained further about the kind of people who were

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going to be involved, it sounded pretty cool.

**MD:** You helped to create your part for the show.

**Tommy:** Yes, specifically the drumset part and the electronic programming.

**MD:** How did you come up with the appropriate grooves for the show's very stylized material?

**Tommy:** Well, a lot of times Mark Mancina would sing stuff and play "air drums" at me. I tried a lot of different combinations to give him what he wanted. Mark didn't want me to "telegraph" the fact that I was playing the drumset, which was one of my toughest challenges. When you sit down to play the drums, one hand immediately goes to the hi-hat, which just screams "drumset" as opposed to "African percussion." So I tried to get away from that and construct the grooves coming from a different place. For example, I try to stay away from the high-end splashy stuff. The cymbals I'm using are dark, and the drums are tuned deep and earthy, not "boingy." I also play with rods a lot.

At the first rehearsal I didn't know what to expect. I had a nice set of Premier drums, which worked fine for some of the material. But then Mark said, "Let's see if we can 'Africanize' this thing!"



Junior Wedderburn

The day before I had seen some of Remo's *Mondo* drums, so I suggested to Mark that we check them out and maybe try them instead of the traditional high tom-toms. He immediately said, "Let's go to Manny's [music store] and check them out." I ended

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up walking out of the store with the *Mondos* and a ton of weird sound effects.

**MD:** Tom, apparently your inclusion in the show's percussion team was a case of fortunate timing.

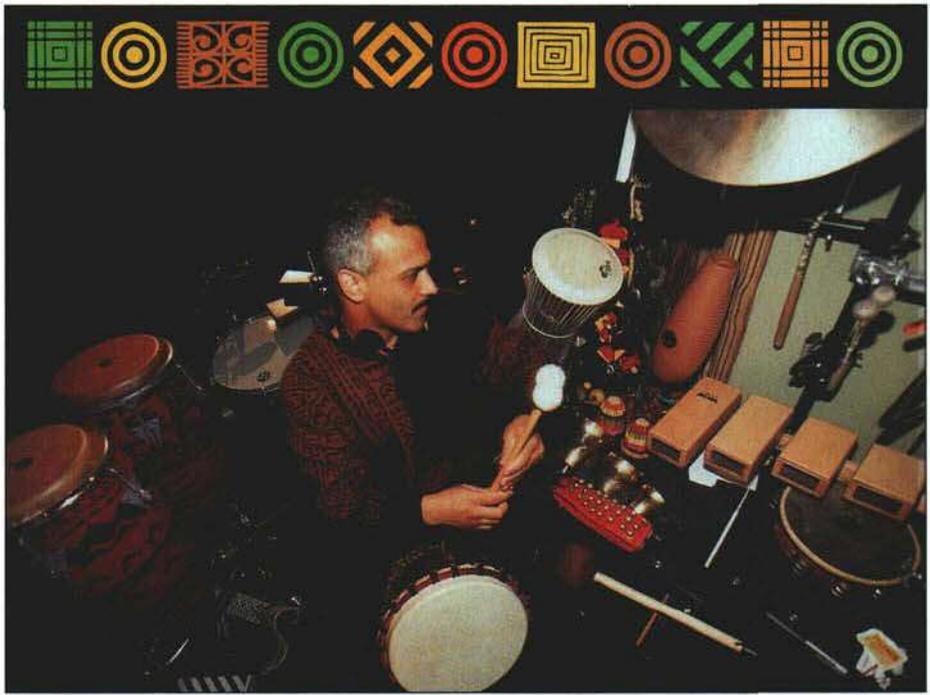
**Tom Brett:** When I was approached, the musical directors told me the show was going to be very new and unique. They were looking for people with a legit background *and* experience in African-style music. As it happened, I had just returned from my first trip to Africa, where I had gone to study music. So the timing was great.

I find it interesting that the African instruments in *The Lion King* are not always used in a traditional way. For example, in the beginning of the show I play an ostinato on the gyl in 5/8. Because of its untempered tuning, my instrument is unmistakably African-sounding—yet that part is idiomatically *unlike* the traditional gyl repertoire because of its odd-metered style.

**MD:** Junior, you actually made some of the instruments you play in the show. Isn't that a little unusual?

**Junior Wedderburn:** In Jamaica, the drummers are traditionally also drum makers. I have a company in Brooklyn called Ancient Vibrations. We make djembes, djun djuns, funde, kete, etc. I play many styles of music, including Brazilian, Haitian, Cuban, New Orleans, and the music of Trinidad. I guess that is some of what I bring to *The Lion King*.

**Valerie:** One invaluable component is the connection that Junior made with the dance company of *The Lion King*. As in any Broadway show, particularly an African-based one, the element of movement and dance is extremely important. Junior worked directly with Garth Fagen, the show's choreographer, and with the two dance captains to design the rhythmic concept for much of the



Rolando Morales-Matos

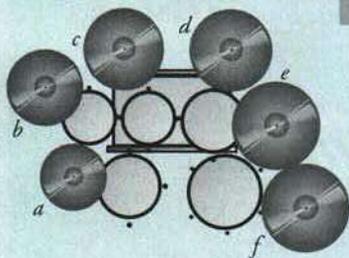
dancing.

**MD:** Besides the fact that five percussionists in a show are unusual, there is also the unusual placement of those percussionists: three in the pit and two out in the house. How did that come about?

**Valerie:** The original concept was to have *all* of the percussionists out in the house, so we could be in each other's presence—and in the presence of the actors who are performing.

**Tom:** The idea was to blur the line between audience and performer, which is a very African thing. But putting all five of us out in the house proved impractical for logistical reasons, so we have two percussionists right next to audience members in the boxes.

**Valerie:** That was Julie Taymor's idea. She's done a lot of shows with the musicians in full view of the audience. It's part of her



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concept that the musician should be a presence to the audience.

**MD:** How much creative freedom do you have within your parts?

**Tommy:** That has a lot to do with the musical director. We're very lucky to have Joe Church as the MD, because he lets us play our instruments the way they are meant to be played.

**MD:** Rolando, you're one of the "in-the-house" percussionists, whose instruments and performance become part of the visual element of the show. How did you develop your parts?

**Rolando Morales-Matos:** Well, I have to give credit to Fernando Meza, who is the director of percussion at the University of Minneapolis. He played in Minneapolis when *The Lion King* was in early rehearsals there, and he recommended me to take over his chair when the show moved to New York. I basically developed my part from what he originally played. I play a lot of traditional Latin percussion instruments, including timbales, bongos, and conga drums. In addition, I play a lot of toys, caxixi, tambourines, and shakers, along with orchestral instruments like the triangle, gong, and bass drum.

My approach to any of the African hand drums comes from my experience playing the conga drums. I found that in the beginning the hardest task was to find a rhythm that would lock in and complement the music.

**MD:** On one tune during the show you play a song groove on the timbales. Is that something you came up with?

**Rolando:** Yes. In that particular tune the original part was like a conga type of rhythm.

**Tommy:** Actually, that part mutated a lot of times. After my man Rolando came on board, it evolved into what it is now.

**Rolando:** I remember very clearly the day we were rehearsing that tune. We were trying to play it the way it was written, like a conga—but it wasn't happening. I made a few suggestions, giving them what they wanted and adding what I thought sounded good.

**MD:** Tommy, your electronic sounds are impressive.

**Tommy:** Thanks. I spent a lot of time in a room by myself learning how to get sounds out of the Roland TD7. It's funny...when we were first rehearsing the show, Mark Mancina was looking for different sounds for the drumkit. I told him that I had this really cool electronic kit, but he said, "Nah, don't bother." I said, "Look, I'll

bring it, and if you don't want to use it, no problem." Obviously it eventually got incorporated into the show.

**MD:** Some of you are wearing body mic's during the show.

**Valerie:** We are connected by what's called a "private cue system." It's our own discreet network of eight channels, where we hear each other and the orchestra. We can control the levels independently.

**MD:** Are your body mic's always hot? [Everybody bursts out laughing.]

**Tommy:** Yes, they're on *all the time*. [Playfully glaring at Rolando.] One night I missed a cue because my stick got stuck in my shirt or something. And what do I hear? "Bwahh, ha, ha!" Rolando's mic' was on, and I heard him laughing through my phones!

**MD:** Even with a discreet monitor system, it must be sort of weird to try to play with other percussionists hundreds of feet away.

**Tom:** Yes, the listening experience is kind of disembodied. So frankly, I listen to Tommy's hi-hat. I figure Tommy's with the conductor, I'm with him, and that's that!

**Rolando:** The magic of this system is that you can tune in to the one thing that will guide you. I always tune in to the drums, because that's what's right in front of the conductor.

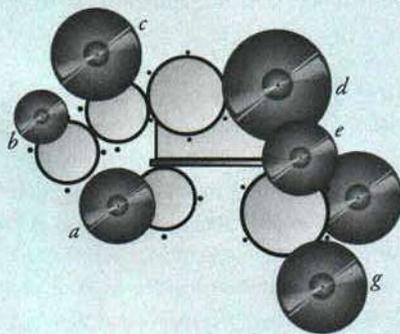
**MD:** Can you tell us about the cast recording?

**Valerie:** The recording was done live, with an hour for each tune. We had a hundred channels: the principles, ensemble, orchestra, and percussion... 1-2-3-4, *done!*

**Tommy:** All five of us were separated from the orchestra and the ensemble in the studio. We watched Joe Church via closed-circuit TV. It was freaky! But the outcome was pretty successful; the recording really captures the essence and atmosphere of the show.

**MD:** Any final thoughts on this experience?

**Valerie:** One of our cast members said that our friends across the street doing *Ragtime* are doing the Broadway show of this century, whereas *The Lion King* is the Broadway show of the *twenty-first* century. I think the aspect of bringing world percussion and instruments from all over the world to the Broadway stage is going to make the twenty-first century a pretty special time!



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# Electronic Clubdate Drumming

by Jeff Rizzo

I sit behind my four-piece Ludwig *Classic* drumset playing '40s standards, cha-chas, Frank Sinatra ballads, waltzes, and light rock with two other musicians whom I just met, for people I don't know. It's a wedding reception. Small room, no drum mic's, straight-ahead playing, not very demanding. That was 1975.

Today, competition is fierce on the clubdate circuit. Audiences demand everything from '40s jazz and standards to '90s techno and hip-hop—and often your band's cover tunes are expected to sound *just* like the original recordings. One way I've kept up with this demand is to use an electronic kit, which lets me fine-tune tom resonances, select from various snares and bass drums, customize cymbal combinations, and mix in a trunk-load of ethnic percussion instruments for every song. I've found that electronics can be invaluable in real-world gigging, and I'd like to share some ways in which they have been especially valuable to me.

## Drumkits Made To Order

On a popular ballad, I employ several instruments to add color to the song. On the segue from the introduction into the first verse, I use 36-note bar chime. In the first verse I play a clave on count 2, and a tambourine on 4, both with a good amount of reverb for depth. By the second verse I change to a standard closed hi-hat, muffled bass drum, side-stick backbeats with moderate reverb, and conga drums between the sidestick hits. In the chorus I make the sound bigger with a ping ride cymbal, a full-bodied snare drum, and low-pitched toms using a little less reverb. The ending gets the bar chimes again with a light crash cymbal roll.

For jazz I use a brighter, higher-pitched, more open kit sound with lighter-sounding cymbals to simulate a smaller acoustic kit. Rock drumming requires a fatter, dryer-sounding kit, with an additional China cymbal. Older rock 'n' roll songs take something in between. For a rockabilly flavor, I use a tight-sounding metal shaker instead of a ride cymbal.

But you say you need to use brushes on your gig? No problem. Most of the current sound modules contain sampled brush sounds. This includes snare swirls, tom hits, and a softer ride cymbal. (Note: Roland's *V-Drum* pads actually allow you to play *with* brushes on the mesh heads to capture the subtle nuances of an acoustic kit.)

Today's pop songs usually have both a drummer and a percussionist in the mix. With an electronic setup you can cover most of the parts, and Latin songs are where electronics *really* shine. Most

recent-model sound modules allow you to trigger just about any percussion instrument imaginable. You can create awesome ethnic rhythms by combining sampled congas, timbales, bongos, cowbells, agogo bells, claves, maracas, cuicas, guiros, tabla, various African, Asian, and Middle Eastern drums, bell trees, djembes, etc. For most gigs, schlepping the equivalent number

of acoustic instruments would be highly impractical.

On disco, techno, and hip-hop tunes you can add hand claps, finger snaps, bells, whistles, triangles, noise cymbals, "synthetic" and gated toms and snares, "junkyard" sounds, album scratches, and other sounds characteristic of their respective genres. Without an electronic setup or the keyboard player covering these parts, the song is not going to come off sounding hip. And you *do* want to sound hip, right?

These sounds are fairly easy to set up and access. They sound great (if you don't overdo it), and they really do add to the overall feel of the song. Your bandmembers and the audience will love them.

## Decisions, Decisions

What do drummers know about electronics? Typically, not much. But don't let that stand in your way of getting more involved with the music that's happening around you. Start by auditioning different electronic kits at your local music store. Also try to hear them in live situations. The salespeople in music stores can probably tell you who is using electronic drums in your area and where they are playing. Bridal showcases are great places to find clubdate drummers using electronics to cover a wide variety of musical styles. (Take a date!)

There are several levels of electronic setups to choose from. Hopefully you have demo'd some electronic percussion gear—probably making you even *more* confused! Don't worry, that's normal. The trick is to pick the system that is the most comfortable



for you while satisfying your playing needs. Most manufacturers maintain Internet Web sites to display their wares. Visit them to learn about their products' features, specifications, and abilities. Electronic percussion instruments can be grouped into three basic categories (excluding triggering of acoustic drums):

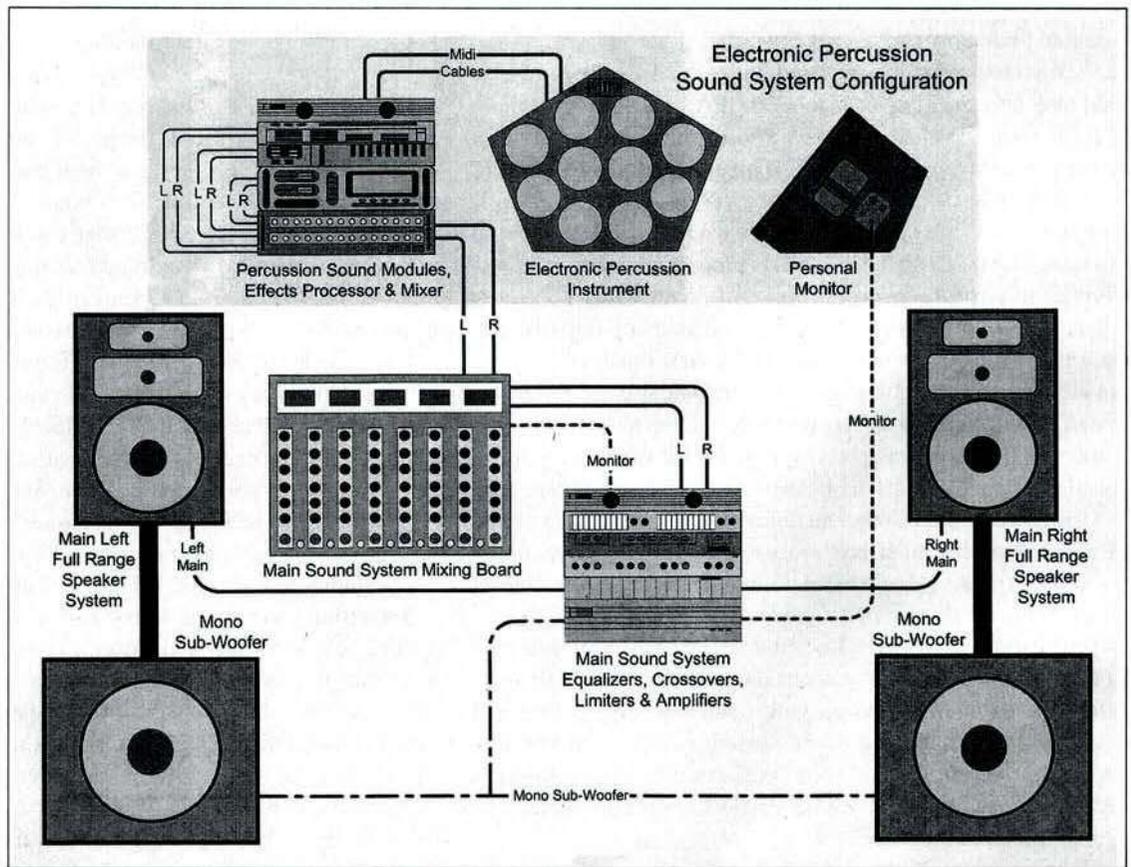
### 1. Plug 'n' play:

Complete, pre-packaged systems from Roland, Yamaha, Alesis, Kurzweil, and ddrum are probably the easiest to use for the non-electronic minded drummer. These systems include a sound module ("brain"), snare/tom pads, cymbal pads, a bass drum pad (you supply the pedal), hi-hat controller pedal, cables, and a rack to hold everything. Pads can be arranged in a typical drumset configuration. The brain's different drumkits are selected with a knob or data wheel, and the placement of instruments on most of the pads is consistent from kit to kit. *Example:* The snare is always on the same pad for all kits; it just sounds different. The sounds can be modified to taste, and they have built-in effects and sequencers for playing looped beats, keyboard and bass parts, etc.

On the high end, the *ddrum 4* and Roland's *V-Drums* are very sophisticated (and expensive) systems with tons of options, horsepower, dynamic range, and all of the "bells and whistles." *V-Drums* were specifically designed to be user-friendly, but the rock-solid *ddrums* are not for the electronically meek.

**2. Mix 'N' Match:** Trigger pads from Concept One, Daux, DrumTech, Hart Electronics, Pintech, S&S Industries, and other manufacturers can be mated to percussion sound modules to create a more customized setup. The appeal here is that you can use different trigger pads for different purposes. For instance, you might want to use trigger pads with real drumheads for your snare and toms, a bass drum pad large enough for a double pedal, and cymbal pads that resemble real cymbals made from plastic. Or you might prefer very bouncy gum rubber pads for everything. The end result will be similar to the plug 'n' play option, but you get to tailor each component to your playing style. With this approach, be certain that the accompanying sound modules/samplers are compatible with all the different trigger pads you intend to use in your setup. You will find that some hi-hat controllers and pads don't work optimally, or access every feature, of all sound modules and samplers.

**3. Multi-pad Controllers:** Electronic controllers from KAT (now distributed by Alternate Mode and E-mu Systems) and ZenDrum provide a different approach to electronics due to their layout. KAT's integrated multi-pad *drumKAT* and *trapKAT* mount on stands, or can be used on a tabletop. They are normally played with drumsticks, but their surfaces are sensitive enough to play with your fingers. *ZenDrum* is a strap-on, guitar-like instrument you play with your fingers via touch-sensitive buttons. Both product lines control triggering and provide extremely responsive multiple playing surfaces. Roland and Yamaha also offer multi-pad controllers. Separate sound modules and/or digital samplers are then connected to these controllers, which produce the actual sounds. KAT products offer complete control over playing dynamics, sound layering, sequencing, pad assignments, hi-hat functions, live program changes, and a multitude of other detailed parameters that affect the way your sound is shaped. Some models allow for external pads and triggers that can be added to the basic unit. This open-architecture approach allows the user to grow with the instrument in creating setups from simple drumkits to complex multi-percussion configurations.



### Sound Reinforcement

In using your electronic kit in live situations, you need to consider three basic live-sound requirements:

**1. Getting your sound to the audience.** A high-powered, full-range sound system is essential. "High-powered" means having enough headroom to cover the room you are playing without driving the amplifiers near the clip point. By full range I mean a system that can cover the entire sound spectrum from the lowest frequencies (bass drum) to highest frequencies (cymbals). The sys-

tem should preferably contain a sub-woofer.

Let's first assume that your band has a good PA system. You should plug into an empty channel of the PA or, ideally, two channels if the band is running a stereo mix. (Toms sound great when they are panned across the room.) The perfect sound system will have a high-quality mixing board, powerful amplifiers, a full-range speaker system including sub-woofers and electronic crossovers, outboard equalizers, effects processors, and a compressor/limiter to control dynamics. You will undoubtedly encounter smaller, scaled down systems that will need your scrutiny to determine if the sound quality is satisfactory for your situation.

An electronic kit with only one sound module usually eliminates the need for a mixer and effects processor. Since most brains contain the sounds, an effects processor, and a set of stereo outputs, you can plug directly into the house PA or your stand-alone system. Using two or more sound modules will require using a mixer. You might also need an effects processor for reverb, delay, flanging, etc. (Of course I don't listen to my own advice; my current setup incorporates *three* sound modules.)

If your band's PA system has limited capabilities or you play with several different bands, you can alternatively use a high-powered compact sound system on your own. For large rooms and clubs, a compact, full-range sound system as described above is most appropriate. In a small room you can use a powerful keyboard amp, a small system with a single PA speaker cabinet, or your high-powered monitor.

**2. Hearing yourself.** You're doomed if you cannot hear what

you are playing. Accurate monitoring is critical to hear what is coming out of the front sound system. As with the main sound system, you're going to need a robust monitor that can handle the pounding of a kick drum along with the sound of high-pitched cymbals. Your monitor needs enough punch to be able to be heard by you over the band's loudest volume level. A cabinet with a 15" woofer and a full-range horn that can handle a lot of power is highly recommended. You might additionally use a good set of headphones or an in-ear monitoring system, which provide increased clarity and a more familiar sonic "proximity."

It's great when there is a sound engineer out front mixing the band and tweaking the settings all night, but this is hardly the norm for the clubdate musician. Without one, you will need to do a thorough soundcheck with the band prior to your performance. But again, this is not always possible. Sometimes you will have to rely on the mix heard from the monitors, other bandmembers' opinions of the mix out front, and, ultimately, your knowledge of your equipment. (See diagram for basic configuration.)

**3. Getting your sound to the rest of the band.** The only complaint I hear about electronic drums is from fellow musicians who are either not used to or can't adapt to hearing the drums from speakers rather than acoustically. Not only does the band need to hear you, but, more importantly, they need *to feel* you. Ideally, you want to feed the drums into the other musicians' monitors as well. Often the band's monitor system is not up to the rigors of an electronic drumset. You need to work with the band to correct this so everyone is comfortable.

### Now What?

Okay, you've got the gear. So what's next?

Practice. Depending on your playing style, there is a period of time you will need to adapt to the size, feel, and arrangement of the playing surfaces. You will also need to get accustomed to having your sound emanate from speakers, which is a major difference for many drummers.

Start with the factory settings to get a *feel* for the instrument. Practice with it at home. Take it to a rehearsal with your group. Establish *ballpark* sound system settings. Go back home and experiment with different drum sounds. Mix in different instrument voices with the basic drumkits. Talk to other drummers already gigging with electronic kits. Visit Web sites that cover electronic drumming. Practice some more. *Then* try it in a live situation. The important thing is to take it slow and be comfortable. And most important, have fun!

*Jeff Rizzo has played drums and percussion for various clubdate bands, rock bands, jazz groups, concert bands, symphonic orchestras, and small ensembles for more than twenty-five years in the New York/New Jersey area.*



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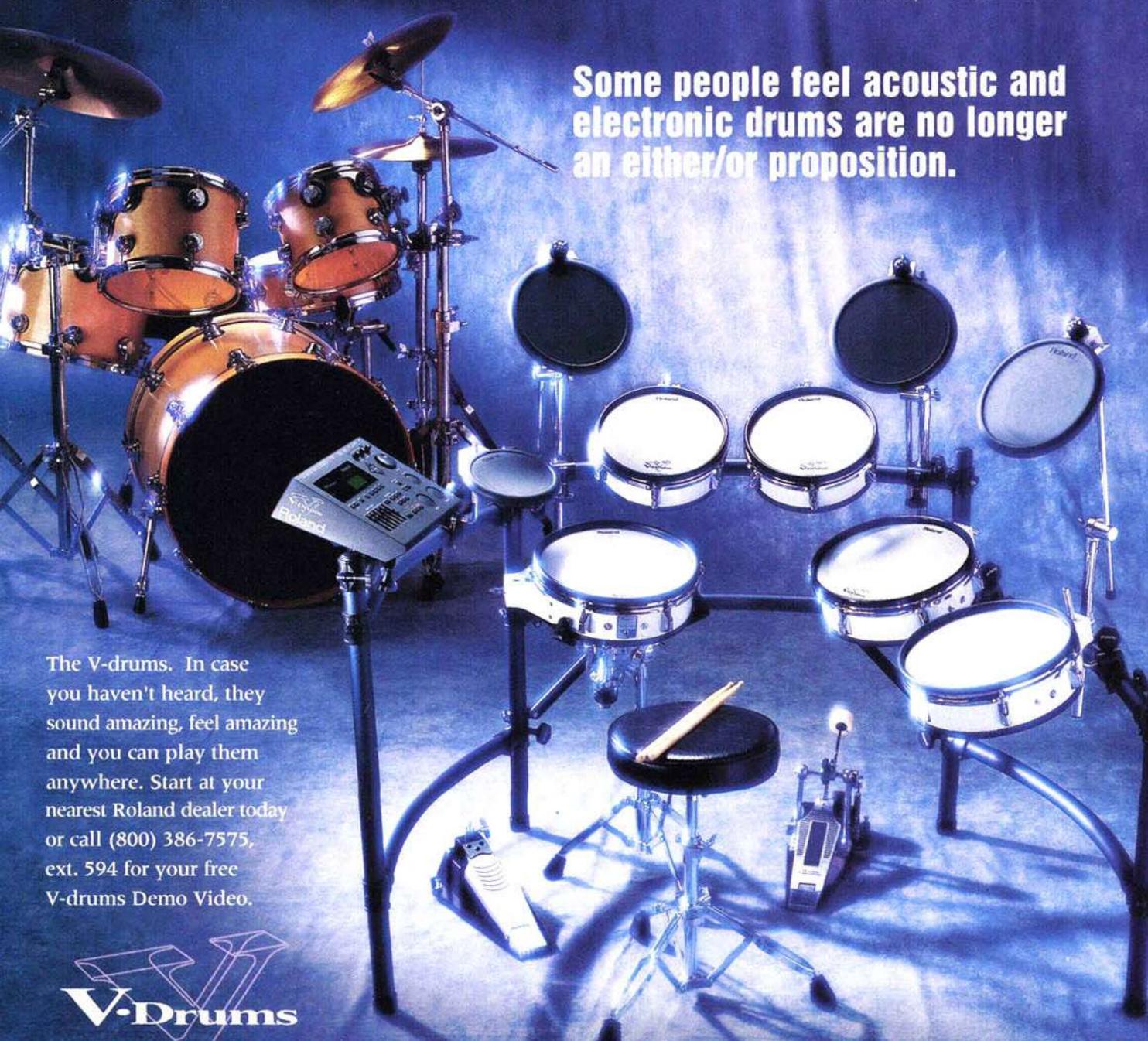
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Vital Tech Tones (Tone Center)



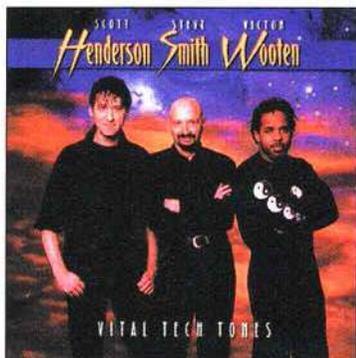
## Vital Information

Where We Come From (Intuition)



drummer: Steve Smith

with (on *Vital Tech Tones*) Scott Henderson (gtr), Victor Wooten (bs),  
(on *Where We Come From*) Tom Coster (kybd), Jeff Andrews (bs), Frank Gambale (gtr)



By taking one or two steps back in time for inspiration, Steve Smith has helped create two of the most satisfying jazz-fusion albums of the '90s.

Harking back to the days of intense, real fusion playing, *Vital Tech Tones* contains some of the most wide-open, alarming jazz-rock in recent memory. Smith is at the heart of the proceedings, inciting his worthy mates and leading by fearless example. With the opening licks of "Crash Course," the *Believe It*-era spirit of the late Tony Williams Lifetime is invoked big-time: Smith releases the throttle and goes into a breathtakingly controlled spin while Henderson's guitar creates a dreamy vapor. On the very next tune, "Snake Soda," Wooten

lays down a groovy comping pattern under Henderson's full-metal jazz cutting, and Smith seems about to lift off his seat in anticipation of his moment to let hell break loose—and when the time comes, boy does he! Smith is at his peak here, hands and mind in joyous syncopation. (Check out the impressive quick-witted interaction with Wooten on "Two For One" for even more proof.) A watershed recording. (PO Box P, Novato, CA 94948)

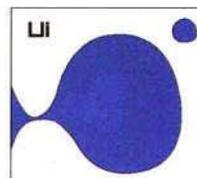
*Where We Come From* goes even further back in time for inspiration. The childhood cover photos, the retro sounds, the youthful spirit of playing—more than just a trip down memory lane, these guys want to share something *important* from their past, when musical communication was way higher on the priority list than mere "professionalism." Sure, there are moments that more self-conscious musicians might have asked for a chance to "fix," but that's part of the charm. In this time of pristine performances, how refreshing it is to hear these peerless musicians laughing during songs, enjoying the sheer fun of playing.

From the opening moments of "Dr. Demento," this homey—though far from "home-made"—album makes you feel, like you're sitting in on a rehearsal in Smith's living room. The sound? Imagine the organic grooves of Medeski, Martin & Wood, but with more chops. When he's not laying down some cool B-3, Tom Coster is bustin' up the Rhodes like Joe Sample in the early Crusaders. Jeff Andrews supports every nuance of the playing, and Frank Gambale is a much less high-powered, more content-sounding player here. And Smith swings like mad. (Dig the straight-ahead cover of Zeppelin's "Moby Dick.") But it's not an overproduced, show-me-everything-you've-got feeling; it's just sweet musical give and take. And it all *burns*: Smith lays into everything like a hungry tiger—a dirty Booker T. salute, Coster's accordion vamps, a wild surf jam. Steve Smith and Vital Information are having one hell of a time here.

Robin Tolleson

## SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Subtle variations on funky grooves identify CLEM WALDMANN's approach on Ui's latest. *Lifelike* (Southern). A rare instrumental album on which several styles coalesce into a completely unique groove. *Lifelike* allows Waldmann ample room to display confidence, care, and creativity on his Leedy kit, cowbells, and woodblock. (PO Box 577375, Chicago, IL 60657, [www.southern.com/southern/band/UI000/](http://www.southern.com/southern/band/UI000/))



Amazing galloping tunes in the mold of the Jayhawks, Teenage Fanclub, and Wilco make Pilot's *Stranger's Waltz* (Thirsty Ear) a fine example of intimate ensemble playing. Drummer RICHARD STUVERUD (since replaced by Eric Alto) is masterfully dynamic yet restrained.

If you've never heard "choro" music, think early jazz with a Brazilian "egg rolling down a hill" lope under beautiful South American melodies. On *Pixinguinha* (Blue Jackel), choro revivalists Paulo Moura & Os Batutas re-create the popular repertoire of this album's namesake, who was possibly the greatest choro musician and composer of all time. Percussionists JORGINHO, JOVI, and MARCAL are subtly sublime throughout.

Rudy Trubitt's book *Live Sound For Musicians* (Hal Leonard) might not cover many drum-specific concerns, but its clear, down-to-earth narrative and "certified 100% math-free" method make it a valuable primer on a topic that all musicians should take a responsibility for. (Are all you "it's not my problem" drummers listening?)

## Rating Scale

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

## Anthology Of Jazz Drumming

Volume 3, 1936-1937  
(Masters Of Jazz, Media 7)



**drummers: Paul Barbarin, Ray Bauduc, Cozy Cole, Jimmy Crawford, Lionel Hampton, Jo Jones, Slick Jones, Gene Krupa, Cliff Leeman, Dave Tough, Chick Webb**

So far, this French-produced project is doing a fine job with their proposed chronological seven-volume, 168-track series featuring the pioneers of jazz drumming from 1917 to 1945. The first two excellent volumes (see January '98 *Critique*) got off to a scholarly start. Volume 3 is even more fun, as we enter the explosive swing era, when drummers emerge ever more assertive and the "four" feel is king. Radio and 78s have now lessened the divisions of regional styles, and New York is the jazz hotbed.

Although New Orleans is no longer the spearhead, several great Crescent City drummers are also represented as "keepers of the flame."

The twenty-three tracks here, mostly featuring big bands, are well chosen for the drummers' styles and as examples of the evolving art. Gene Krupa and Chick Webb receive the lion's share of cuts, their high-energy, extroverted styles bringing the drummer out from the background. We're also treated to the more subtle yet irresistible pulse of masters like Dave Tough laying it down behind Tommy Dorsey's orchestra and Slick Jones pumping out time with Fats Waller. In a highlight, Jo Jones wields his famous cool, laid-back hi-hat swing behind Basie, ushering in a more modern feel. (Hopefully we'll hear more from Jo in future volumes.) Four more volumes to go, and I'm rooting for them; if the quality continues, we'll have a vital audio encyclopedia of early jazz drumming. (*Masters Of Jazz*, [800] 888-8574)

Jeff Potter

## Anders Johansson Red Shift (Heptagon)



**drummer/percussionist: Anders Johansson**  
**percussionists: Helmut Wechsler, Ahmed Alamnaghasi, Aydin Özgöröt, The Balinese Percussion Ensemble, Mr. Dong & The Yi-People**

with Jonas Hellborg (bs), Jamal Evans, Jens Johansson (kybds), Mahmud Bendi, Dieter Köpfke (vcl), Nabil Haiat, Nabil Drigal, Haile Abebe (Azerbaijani balalaikas, vla)

With *Red Shift*, Swedish drummer/percussionist/composer Anders Johansson has created an interesting and educational collection of world percussion-based instrumental compositions that highlight a fascinating group of international performers. The journey begins on the kit, with Johansson blowing out his chops on an impressive display of Terry Bozzio-style double bass improvising. Once he proves he can manhandle the drumset, the percussive adventure sets sail on the "Imaginative Ocean," based

on a Turkish folk song featuring chimes, nay, and wind sounds. The march of "Boxcar To Novosibirsk" finds Johansson trading solos with Ahmed Alamnaghasi on tuned Afghani cymbals, along with drums, bata, and korsi hadid. And so on around the world.

At one point on the journey, Zappa fans will enjoy "Blues For FZ," which was heavily inspired by "The Black Page" and features Anders performing an exercise in the metric relationship between a few prime numbers. Anders includes an in-depth explanation and transcription of this mind-boggling piece in the liner notes; in fact, his details of the instrumentation and cultural origin of each composition is an invaluable lesson in world rhythms. Also according to the notes, many of these tracks were recorded in unusual and exotic locations—from the train sounds near Anders' hotel room in Damascus, Syria to an old shack in a deep, dark forest near Kunming in southeastern China.

Johansson's combination of state-of-the-art technology with the excitement of human musical interaction should be applauded by the drumming community. (*Box 44, SE-231 08 Anderslöv, Sweden; Audiophile Imports, [410] 628-7601*)

Mike Haid

## Clutch

The Elephant Riders (Columbia)



**drummer: Jean Paul Gaster**

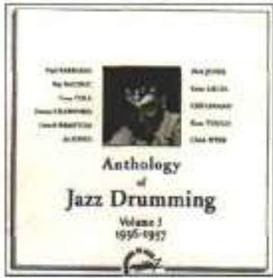
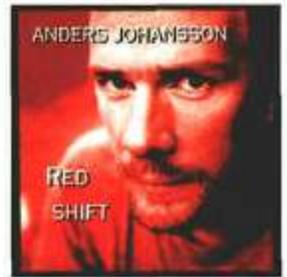
with Neil Fallon (vcl), Tim Sult (gtr), Dan Maines (bs), Delfeayo Marsalis (trmb)

Hungry for the classic hard rock sound of big backbeats and crunching guitar amps cranked to "11"? If so, *The Elephant Riders* is just what you're looking for. But wait, there's more: Clutch holds a few tricks up its sleeve on its third album, such as crafty odd-time riffs, funky wah-wah sounds, and a couple of well-placed trombone lines.

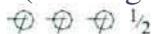
Underneath huge guitars that recall Tony Iommi's style in early Black Sabbath, and vocals that often sound spookily like Frank Zappa, lies the rock-solid timekeeping of Jean Paul Gaster, whose clear, dry sound is occasionally enhanced by clever post-production effects like a bit of flange or extra reverb. The tasteful and hard-hitting drummer accentuates each song's arrangement with a minimum of embellishment, and has the prized ability of making Clutch's many odd-metered groupings sound perfectly natural.

Judging from *The Elephant Riders*, we can expect more good things from Clutch, a band who updates the tried-and-true garage-rock sound with creative grooves and strong musicianship.

Michael Parillo



## Odyssey The Band Reunion (Knitting Factory)



**drummer: Warren Benbow**

with James "Blood" Ulmer (gtr), Charlie Burnham (vln)

Dark, forboding guitar chords give way to a more hopeful violin cry, and the drums explore fancifully, out of time. "No Other Option" serves immediate notice that harmolodics is here to stay...but then this trio explores other options too. (The three musicians recorded Ulmer's 1983 CBS release *Odyssey*, thus this reunion.) Warren Benbow—actor, teacher, drummer on the Broadway stage and an array of jazz, pop, funk, country, and rock 'n' roll gigs—is a wonderful interpreter of Ulmer's music. On "Love Dance," a sort of "Tango From Another Planet," he lifts the action skyward with a whoosh of cymbals, while on "Channel 1" he keeps it firmly grounded with a 16th-note funk groove. Benbow plays with a dynamic, sometimes offbeat charm, dealing some serious groove into the mix as well.

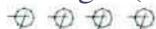


Things aren't always rosey here, though. "The blues ain't never hurt nobody," the leader poses at one point, though "I Am" might have gotten a little painful if not for Burnham's irreverent wah-wah violin darting in and out. And the tedious "Online Junkie" won't be ranked among Ulmer's best. Still, there are more than enough beautiful and honest musical moments on *Reunion* to recommend it. (74 Leonard St., New York, NY 10013, [212] 219-3006)

**Robin Tolleson**

## Gustav Mahler/Uri Caine

Primal Light (Edel)



**drummer: Joey Baron**

with: Uri Caine (pno), Aaron Bensoussan (vcl, perc), Dave Binney (sp sx), Danny Blume (gtr), Dean Bowman (vcl), Don Byron (cl), Dave Douglas (trp), Mark Peldman (vln), Michael Formanek (bs), Larry Gold (cello), Arto Lindsay (vcl), DJ Olive (turntable), Josh Roseman (tbn)

Well folks, Joey Baron has found yet another offbeat project on which to put his distinctive stamp: downtown New York pianist Uri Caine's arrangements of works by Austrian composer Gustav Mahler (1860-1911). Versatile and creative, Baron's timekeeping is the glue that unifies the many musical styles scattered throughout the recording. Sure, there are moments of straight classical, chamber group-style playing, but just as Mahler himself was an eclectic writer, *Primal Light* reflects shades of klezmer, funk, bossa nova, and free jazz.

Anchored by the unmistakable sounds of his small, dry ride



cymbal, wide-open bass drum, and crisp snare, Baron gives each track just what it needs, from martial rolls to energetic two-beat rhythms, from tribal toms to a Brazilian cross-stick pattern. Retaining his trademark sense of humor along the way, Joey shifts effortlessly from tricky composed passages to loose improvisation.

Melodious yet far from easy listening, Caine's ambitious project holds many rewards for those willing to lend it an ear. (*distributed by Alleero, [503] 257-8480*)

**Michael Parillo**

## Bill Anshell

A Different Note Altogether (Accurate)



**drummer: Woody Williams**

with Bill Anshell (pno), Rick Bell (tn sx), Scott Sawyer (gtr), Neal Starkey (bs)

You have to love a drummer who's so good, he makes you rethink your setup, the types of cymbals you use, your time.... Woody Williams is a drummer who can make you reevaluate your entire *craft*—and wonder if you are having enough fun behind the kit.

Bill Anshell's latest release is an excellent straight-ahead jazz record, with lots of personality and group interplay. Throughout, Williams commands the beat as if he's playing to a click, yet he has so much spirit, he makes this small group feel like a jumping big band on a Saturday night in the '40s. Williams fares equally well on the disc's ballads, providing colors and space yet still maintaining his dynamic groove. "Beignet Boogie," accurately described in the liner notes as "wacky jazz with exquisitely twisted drum breaks," deserves special attention. Williams' punchy fills are a breath of fresh air—not really challenging from a technical standpoint, but right on the money. The CD closes with "Solar," which is based around an up-tempo groove that moves and jumps at the drummer's whim; everyone follows in spectacular fashion.

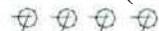
Great. Now I've got to retune my snare, change my cymbals—and where's that metronome...? (*PO Box 390115, Cambridge, MA 02139, tel: [617] 277-6262, fax: [617] 277-1924, accurate@tiac.net*)

**Ted Bonar**



## VIDEOS

**The Peter Erskine Trio**  
Live At JazzBaltica (Hal Leonard)



**level: all**

\$19.95

Though this isn't intended as an instructional video per se, *Live At JazzBaltica* is like a master class in rhythm section. A concert video from the 1993 JazzBaltica in Salza,

Germany featuring Erskine with the fine pianist John Taylor and bassist Palle Danielsson, the tape documents the trio playing beautifully together. Due to the care taken in camera angles and the producers' license to get right on top of the players, viewers are given the treat of witnessing up close how these great players interact with each other. We see the listening going on and feel the shifts in dynamics. In the midst of an intense Taylor piano solo on "Everybody's Song But My Own," the pianist and drummer go scampering off the beat for a couple of bars together, then seamlessly back to the original tempo. Okay, so Erskine is off camera during his solo on the out-vamp of "Pure And Simple"; there are more than enough other good shots of the master here to satisfy jazz drummers.

Robin Tolleson

## BOOKS

### Ballistic Bass Drum System

by Joe Stronsick  
(Savior Products)



level: intermediate to advanced

\$199 (two books, video, six cassettes)

It's a shame that high-hype presentation, low-tech production, and especially a bloated price tag torpedo this package, since it explores the development of double-pedal bass drum technique more clearly and thoroughly than anything else currently on the shelves.

The "revolutionary secret" at the foundation of the *Ballistic* system is the heel-toe doubles technique espoused for years by players like Gadd, Chambers, Donati, and Mayer, but which has remained strangely untouched in educational materials. This technique is demonstrated clearly on the video. The main book (labelled value \$29.95) contains unremarkable permutations of single- and double-stroke 16ths and 8th-note triplets.

The six audio cassettes feature Stronsick demonstrating the bass drum patterns as notated in the book, or with usable kit orchestration ideas. His execution isn't always precise, but his raw technique is impressive, and between the book and tapes, the message and the possibilities come through loud and clear. Other cassettes touch on odd times, rests, independence, and Swiss triplets and reggae beats. One tape employs a listen-and-repeat format, though in lieu of explanation of the material there are annoying testimonials by satisfied customers and heads of companies Stronsick endorses.

The accompanying "bonus book," *Ballistic Secrets For Ballistic Drums*, is a hodge-podge of learning theory and meandering, facile motivational bromides. At sixteen pages and thirty bucks, it's nonetheless featherweight in all respects, though some drummers may be inspired. The package also includes a subscription to *Mysteries Of Drumming Made Simple* newsletter and a coupon good for mail-order consultation on a student's tape by Stronsick. (11137 East Lynrose, Arcadia, CA 91006)

Rich Watson

### Changuito: A Master's Approach To Timbales

by Jose Luis Quintana "Changuito" and  
Chuck Silverman

(Manhattan Music/Warner Bros. Publications)



level: all

\$24.95 (book with CD)

As a member of Los Van Van, Changuito expanded the vocabulary of Latin rhythms with his seminal *songo* grooves. The master Cuban percussionist/kitman continues to be a major influence today. Changuito's timbale book/CD covers topics from basic strokes to personalized patterns. There are tips for all levels, but the book is most practical for those with (at minimum) intermediate skills in stick technique, independence, and reading. The mighty timbalero's concise demonstrations on the CD are valuable, as are the transcriptions of his patterns for several song styles, solo ideas, and independence exercises.

What makes this book a real winner is the input of collaborator Chuck Silverman, a true *educator* (and notable performer). His text, cultural research, and transcriptions shine. We're offered scholarly pieces on topics from "The History of the Cowbell" to a history of Danzon (an early popular Cuban style). A fine four-page treatise on "A History of Pailitas Cubanas" (timbales) is illustrated by fascinating archival photos. The method segments are also skillfully sequenced to help students *internalize* the grooves. As for authenticity, thank Silverman for lugging his DAT down to Havana, where he recorded Changuito in the master's own home, backed by street noise and a rude rooster. A good balance between hands-on and historical wisdom, this package is a praiseworthy contribution.

Jeff Potter

### Modern Percussion Grooves

by Glen Caruba  
(Hal Leonard)



level: beginner to intermediate

\$16.95

Caruba previously authored *Afro-Cuban Drumming* (Centerstream Publishing) and here gives an overview of how the basic Latin percussion instruments can be used in different styles of pop music. With help from a play-along CD, Caruba gives examples of what can be done in funk, power ballads, jazz-fusion, funk shuffle, Afro-Cuban 6/8, and what he calls "cha-cha pop," by adding one or two percussion parts per one-minute take, building the tracks and letting you hear precisely how each instrument fits in.

*Modern Percussion Grooves* is not only a concise look at the sounds and colors available for the hand percussionist, but could also be useful to producers and drummers who are doing their own demos. At the end of the CD, Caruba strings together the six grooves with no percussion in a cool play-along test to see what you'd do with each after hearing all the options. Caruba adds a brief reference guide to approaching each instrument, and includes the written parts performed on all the percussion tracks.

Robin Tolleson

## Although this CD speaks for itself....

"The best jazz documentation of Vinnie that I've ever heard!"  
- Steve Smith

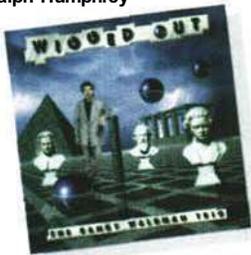
"Wigged Out presents Vinnie Colaiuta at some of his 'LA studio' best! It's a tremendously fun listen and a 'must' for Vinnie fans."  
- Peter Erskine

"The musicianship & arrangements are phenomenal. Vinnie is amazing and unbelievable as usual...his solo on Track 7 will blow your mind!"  
- Gregg Bissonette

"This is a 'must listen to' CD. It contains technical wizardry of the highest order. Clever arrangements, amazing playing."  
- Harvey Mason

"This CD burns! Vinnie shines throughout. A must for any jazz fan. Randy captures the great 'classics' in this powerful statement."  
- John "JR" Robinson

"The music of Randy Waldman is, at once, thoughtful, humorous, challenging and accessible. The playing is superb!"  
- Ralph Humphrey



"WIGGED OUT"  
The Randy Waldman Trio

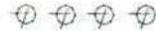
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## Easy Beats & Breaks, Funky Beats & Breaks, The Art Of Boogaloo

by Frank Briggs  
(Mel Bay)



level: beginner to advanced  
\$17.98 (including CD)

In this tutorial set, author Briggs writes out every fill and performs them on the accompanying CD, and before you know it, you've covered quite a bit of ground, starting with a simple lick and building on it. *Easy Beats & Breaks* does start "easy," but Briggs is quick to start spreading notes out around the kit, giving instant rewards for seemingly simple variations. This book sticks to 8th-note patterns, and opens up many possibilities for the beginning to intermediate drummer. *Funky Beats & Breaks* demands a higher level of groovesmanship and independence, and is particularly good for practicing reading chops and focusing on the independent musical use of each instrument of the drumkit. *The Art Of Boogaloo's* grooves start with some easy "swamp" syncopations, adding assorted snare, hat, and kick options to spice things up and create more swing. High-quality, no-nonsense drum instruction.

Robin Tolleson



The modern drummer's clothing guide

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Chick Corea Akoustic Band-Live From The Blue Note Tokyo; Steve Tavaglione-Blue Toy; Los Labotomys-s/t (w/ Jeff Porcaro & Carlos Vega) Bunny Brunel-Dedication; Jeff Richman-The Way In; Randy Waldman Trio-Wigged Out; The Bridge; Warren Cuccurullo-thanks To Frank

### SIMON PHILLIPS

Another Lifetime; Symbiosis; Protocol-Force Majeure, (Live); Protocol (Solo Debut); Los Labotomys-Candyman; Toto-Absolutely Live (2 CD's); XX (w/ Jeff Porcaro)

### STEVE SMITH

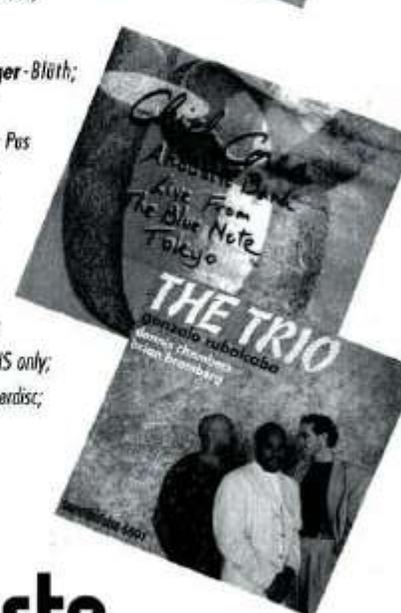
Vital Information-Where We Come From; Vitalivo; Matalex-Wild Indian Summer; Scott Henderson/Victor Wooten/Steve Smith-Vital Tech Tones; Frank Gambale/Stuart Hamm/Steve Smith-Show Me What You Can Do; Larry Coryell/Tom Coster/Steve Smith-Cause And Effect; Steps Ahead-Live In Tokyo '86 (VHS/Laserdisc)

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**ANDERS JOHANSSON**-Red Shift, Fission, Heavy Machinery;  
**COZY POWELL**-Over The Top, Tilt, Octopus, The Drums Are Back, Twin Oaks; **SIXUN**-L'ecu De La, Live, Nomads' Land, Lunatic Taxi, (w/ Paco Sery); **STEPS**-Smokin' In The Pit (2 CD's w/ Steve Gadd);  
**WEATHER REPORT**-Live In Tokyo (2 CD's w/ Eric Gravett);  
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Vic Stevens' Mistaken Identities -No Curb Ahead

**VIDEO:** Gary Husband-Interplay And Improvisation On The Drums VHS only; Jack Bruce-The Cream of Cream (w/ Gary Husband) VHS only; Jaco Pastorius-Live In Montreal '82 (w/ Peter Erskine) VHS/Laserdisc; Toto-Live In Paris '90 (w/ Jeff Porcaro) VHS/Laserdisc;  
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## Teching For Terry Wayne Wilburn

Story by T. Bruce Wittet  
Photos by Alex Solca

**“M**aybe he'd be singing a different tune if he had to lug all those drums around by himself. Bet he wouldn't have much energy left to clamber around four bass drums, fourteen toms, and forty-eight cymbals.”

These were among the more pragmatic musings that followed Terry Bozzio's uplifting performance at last May's Modern Drummer Festival Weekend. Yet history tells us that Bozzio would gladly schlep the whole lot himself—on shopping carts, if he had to. Welcome to the realm of the artist, where there are no impediments, only challenges. Terry's particular brand of zeal is documented on discs from the Brecker Brothers, Frank Zappa, U.K., and Missing Persons to collaborations with Jeff Beck and Tony Levin. At the MD Festival, Terry astounded fans with his relentless ambition to transform the drumset into a mini-orchestra, capable of producing harmony and melody as well as rhythm.

The question of whether Terry would handle his own massive drumkit is academic on account of Wayne Wilburn, Bozzio's valued employee. The two are peas in a pod: They travel together, eat together, work together, and sightsee together on days off, discussing music and antiques.

### Job Hunting In A Perfect World

It could have happened like this: Wayne awakens early one morning at his home in Los Angeles. His eyes catch an ad in the *LA Times*: *"Drum Tech wanted for famous, eccentric drummer. Complete knowledge of drums, cymbals, percussion, and diverse musical styles essential. Must be physically fit and willing to travel."*

Although such ads do occasionally appear in the trades, for Wayne it went down a little differently. An Austin, Texas native, he was well on his way to a Ph.D. in music at the University of Texas, and was doing odd jobs on the side. Meanwhile, Terry Bozzio was putting out feelers for a move from LA to Texas in the aftermath of the last major earthquake.

Wayne takes up the narrative on how they connected: "I had a job at a seafood house, shucking oysters. One evening this lady sat in front of me talking about her husband back at home, who used four bass drums. I was trying to figure out if it was some metal-head. Who in the hell plays four bass drums? She found out I was a percussion major, and eventually revealed that her husband was Terry Bozzio. She took my name and address, and sent me his videos, tapes, and CDs. We kept in touch, and a month or so later she brought Terry in to meet me."

Talk about being in the right place at the right time! Wayne recalls that "They were starting to look for a new place to live. I

think they were interested in not having their child start school in LA. She dug Austin, and thought it was neat that she had run into a percussionist there. She also thought that maybe Terry and I would get along. I was extremely lucky."

And he was qualified. Besides his academic credentials, Wayne is an active player. "I have a trio around town called Z Is For Zilla, which I describe as a Latin- and jazz-influenced rock band. My percussion influences are Raul Rekow, Karl Perazzo, Luis Conte, Brazilian percussionist Dudu Tucci, and Hakim Ludin, a Pakistani. On drumset, I'm a big fan of Will Calhoun and Danny Carey."

He continues enthusiastically: "If you're studying percussion, this is the best job in the world to have. For example, recently we did a week-long seminar at a castle in Bavaria. Since I set up Terry's drums, I got to take all the classes. In addition, Terry has taught me very valuable lessons—improving my playing, limb independence, and composition. Terry's major influence is Stravinsky. If you listen to his solo drumset pieces, you can hear the musical forms and the influence. I'm starting to compose now, including a piece with a Swiss triplet I ripped off of Terry. Although I wasn't deeply immersed in his music before, he has now become one of my biggest influences. Terry introduced me to a new way of playing drumset."

Wayne sits down behind Terry's monster drumset to demonstrate the triplet. Without hesitation, he gets the rudiment off and running, easily pedaling doubles on two bass drums. After all, this is part of his job. Wayne recalls, "Originally, playing Terry's drums was extremely intimidating. It took me a long time to be able to reach and play everything. But this is important as far as soundchecks go."

Wayne describes the aesthetic implicit in Terry's choice of each drum and cymbal: "He wanted an ancient look for a new sound. Even the cymbals represent what he's about as far as melodic drumming goes. There's a lot of soloing on cymbals over a bass drum ostinato. He'll start with regular splashes and crashes. Then, on later pieces, I'll trade those with eight China cymbals of the same sizes. That adds an 'envelope-filter' sound."

Wayne has got to be on his toes, keeping constant liaison with the sound engineer, ensuring that a *concert* tonality is maintained in the house. He explains, "I'll go back out and listen and make sure everything is *even*. We use no effects whatsoever. Unlike a rock

band, with Terry the bass drum and snare drum are not louder than anything else. The bass drums are the same volume as the toms. The cymbals are matched with everything else, too."

### Kicking Off A Tour

First come the phone calls, says Wayne, from which he nails down dates. "Next, I call Attack Drumheads, Vic Firth Sticks, and Drum Workshop, to make sure the kit is going to be there. Terry has five kits around the world, going on six. We have an LA studio kit, one here in Austin for American tours, one at his house, one in Gewa, Germany, and one in Australia."

What if they finish in Germany, have three days off, and a date pops up in Spain? Could they do it on short notice? Wayne ponders the question. "DW would probably have Gewa ship the drums to the next venue. It depends on the country. We would fly together, then take a day and check things out, making sure the kit is there. Everything is in individual cases, with coffin cases for hardware. Last I counted, there were twenty-five cases. I think we may have a few more cases for the DW *Woofers*. The next day we'll set up. We can usually do it in an hour and a half, although we have run late a couple of times. We can get that kit up in an hour if we really have to."

Wayne regularly refers to "we." Does this mean Terry is schlepping gear, too? "He'll help me set up," Wayne replies. "He'll tune up the toms. I usually have a couple of local guys helping me, and they're eager to check out the kit. That DW hardware helps. It's the best I've worked with. There are fifteen cymbals coming off one stand on Terry's right. That's tons of weight, and those stands hold up. Terry uses forty-eight cymbals at once. He has six hi-hats and ten pedals—all single pedals. When I talked earlier about changing over cymbals, I'll do that between sets when he comes out and explains to the audience what he just did. During that break, I'll go back and trade the cymbals over."

Given the complexity of the kit, it is remarkable that more train-wrecks don't occur. Wayne reflects on the worst-case scenario: "Sometimes a mic' will fall off, and we've had his *Spoxe* hat flip over. On the American kit that doesn't happen. We made U-clips for the mic's, which we *Velcro* to the drums. To these we attach the mic's: AKG 419s on toms, D112s on the bass drums, and 391s on the hi-hats. For the overheads we hang 414s, and on snare and





higher toms, we use 418s. Terry has an endorsement with AKG, plus ones with Sabian, Vic Firth, and Attack."

Wayne explains the move to Attack heads: "For us, they last longer than any other head. They also stay in tune better because of their crimped steel rim. With other heads, when you hear all that cracking going on, the head's pulling out unevenly. With the Attack head, it stays locked all around. And they have tons of tone."

### Getting Terry In Tune

Tuning is a big job, reflects Wayne. "During the Jeff Beck tour, I did a lot of the tuning myself. Terry has fourteen toms. From the bottom going up, it's tuned up by fourths: G#, C#, F#, B, E, A. From the A, all the way up to and including the snare drum, it's tuned to an A minor scale. The snare drum, with snares off, is tuned to a B. Terry has four piccolo toms underneath his main toms that are incorporated into the scale as well. We get about an octave and a third in A minor. The two main kicks are about a minor third apart. He likes a perfect fifth between his piccolo foot snare and his 20" bass drum."

Terry plays about two thirds of his show with snares off. Is this done in the name of obtaining a purer pitch? "I think so," responds Wayne. "Or he may just like the way it sounds. He uses his main snare drum more like a tom. For certain pieces, like 'Klang Farben Melody,' he'll switch it on."

Electronics? Forget it, unless you count the laptop Terry carries to his hotel room. "He has a computer to compose on, with an

adapter for European outlets. For the show, though, we use no electronics—which is ironic because he spent so much time working on them. He even has a patent, but now he has no interest in electronics."

### Keeping Wayne In Tune

Wayne has a few tips for staying healthy and alert. "I try to adjust my sleeping habits to the country I will be traveling to. For example, Germany is seven hours ahead, so before I leave, I'll go to bed earlier and wake up earlier to help with the time change and jet lag. Another thing that helps is Melatonin. Terry recommended it to me. It helps me to sleep through the night when traveling. Drink bottled water, not tap water—and maybe a little red wine!"

Wayne's zeal for his work, and his reverence for Terry, are obvious. What other qualities commend Wayne for this job? The patience of a saint, for example?

He replies, "I think it has a lot to do with who you're working for. I don't think I could work for too many other people. It would have to be someone on Terry's level. I would like to work with someone I can learn from, and if I'm working with someone whom I'm better than, or I don't really get along with, I don't think it would be worth it. Also, Terry is really tolerant, say, if we have a bad sound engineer. He may not be into signing autographs for two hours, but he's laid-back."

### So You Wanna Be A Drum Tech?

Could Wayne have scored such a gig had he scoured the ads? "I

don't think so. It's like the question 'How do you make it in the music business?' I was doing the right things in the right place. It's hard work and luck."

A tip for aspiring drum techs: Remember that when you go on the road, you are a captive employee, twenty-four hours a day. You'd better get along with your boss. We have Wayne's version. Now his employer, Mr. Bozzio, responds: "Wayne's the best. He's great—even on a day off. I'll shop for vintage pens and Wayne will look for antique furniture, and we'll sightsee."

Wayne sums it up: "To those who want to be a drum tech I recommend that they get familiar with different types of drums and percussion, and know how to set up, tune, and repair drums. They should also be able to give a good soundcheck. The easiest way someone might land a job is to ask a local touring band if they need a tech. It might not be a full-time job, but at least your name will get out, possibly to a bigger band."

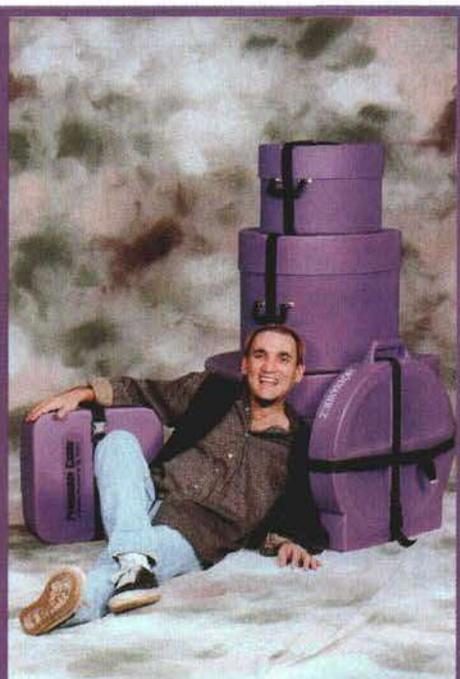
### After The Lifting

Just a quick note, in the event you can't tell from the photo: Wayne is living proof that you don't have to have a biker's build to do tech work. Sure, fitness helps, but in the end it's the old story of brain over brawn. Besides, as Wayne remarks, "I don't intend to be a drum tech forever, even though this is by far the best job I've ever had. I would eventually like to tour and perform my own music."



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# Mike Portnoy's

## Liquid Tension Experiment

by William F. Miller

The following article was excerpted from MD Hot Trax, Modern Drummer's CD/magazine package that features great drum performances by eleven of today's top artists. Mike Portnoy's contribution to MD Hot Trax is an exclusive outtake from his recent *Liquid Tension Experiment* project.

Mike Portnoy thought he was dreaming. There he was, one of progressive-rock drumming's guiding lights, in a New York City recording studio with three of his all-time favorite musicians laying down totally spontaneous, improvised tracks. Portnoy's musical soul was soaring.

For one week last September Portnoy "found himself in a recording studio with keyboard whiz Jordan Rudess, guitar virtuoso (and Dream Theater bandmate) John Petrucci, and the mother of all low end, Tony Levin. The plan was to put four super-talents into a high-pressure musical blender and see what oozed out. The result? The Magna Carta release *Liquid Tension Experiment*.

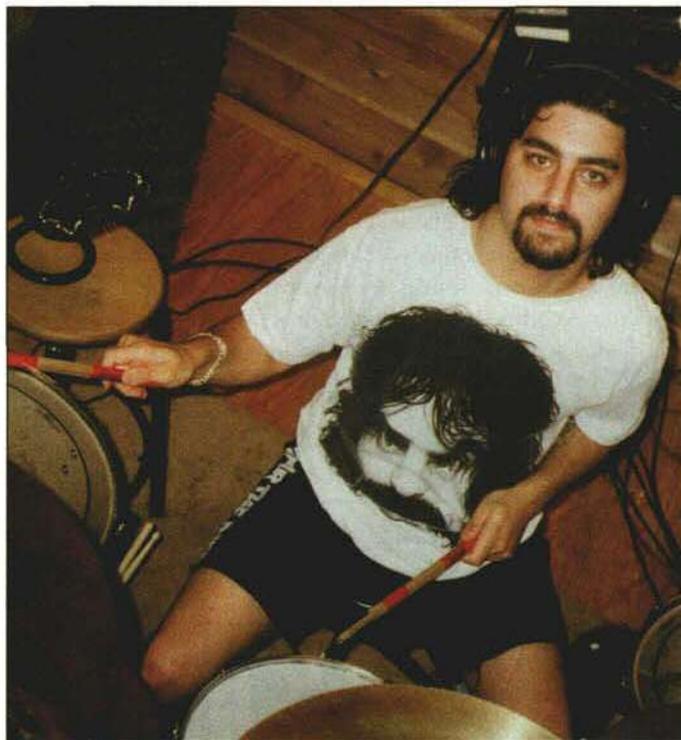
Over the course of that eruptive week several jams made their way to tape, including a few bass-and-drums duets. "Chris And Kevin's Excellent Adventure" found the Dream Theater drummer crossing sticks with Crimson/Gabriel bassist Levin. Here the two men played all over, under, and around a half-time shuffle. About a dozen wildly different versions of the jam came down the pipe.

Dream Theater fans be warned: This is not the Mike Portnoy you're used to hearing. Yes, there's a good deal of technique on display, and Mike's way of screwing with the time—one of his favorite practices—is evident. However, gone is the studied intricacy and execution we've come to expect from the drummer. Mike's playing here is "in the moment," and whatever happens—warts and all—is a part of that moment.

**WFM:** How did this whole thing come together?

**MP:** Last year the record label Magna Carta approached me about doing some sort of—and I'll use their words—"super group." They asked me to put together a list of musicians that I would like to play with, sort of a dream project for me. And they did the same thing for Terry Bozzio. At the same time they were trying to assemble this for me they were putting together Terry's *Black Light Syndrome* project with Tony Levin and Steve Stevens.

I gave them a list of bass players, keyboard players, and guitar players, although there were only two bass players and two keyboard players on the list. I wanted either Billy Sheehan or Tony



Levin on bass and Jordan Rudess or Jens Johansson on keyboards. At the time, Billy Sheehan and Jens Johansson were available, and Tony and Jordan were not. So the project was going to be Billy, Jens, and me, and at that point we started looking for a guitarist. Unfortunately, we couldn't find the right guy. I had a list of people ranging from Trevor Rabin of Yes all the way to Dimebag Darrell of Pantera. For some reason, the guitar position just never panned out. So the whole project got put on the shelf, because I had to get back to work with Dream Theater.

A window of opportunity opened for me towards the end of the making of the latest Dream Theater album [*Falling Into Infinity*], and Magna Carta called again and said, "Look, now it turns out that Tony and Jordan are available. Let's try to make this happen. Find a guitar player." And once again I went looking but couldn't find the right guy. And it turned out that the right guy was right under my nose. At first I wanted to keep this a completely separate entity from Dream Theater, and that's why I didn't even consider asking John to do it. But when push came to shove and we absolutely had to have a guitar player, I asked him to do it, and I'm really glad I did because he ended up being perfect. The

chemistry between the four of us was incredible.

**WFM:** It seems that Magna Carta loves you.

**MP:** Yeah, well, they are a very small label and they've taken some criticism because it's a smaller operation. But as far as I'm concerned they are the only label out there that is giving any exposure to young progressive bands. Not to mention the fact that I've done two side projects with them now [*Liquid Tension Experiment* and the Rush Tribute, *Working Man*], and in both cases I was able to actually collaborate with my two favorite bass players. I did *Working Man* with Billy Sheehan and now this one with Tony Levin. So as far as I'm concerned, Magna Carta is cool.

**WFM:** Once John, Jordan, Tony, and you gathered in one place, what was the game plan for making music?

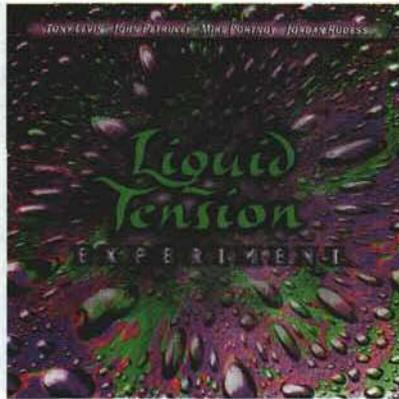
**MP:** Well, the plan was to put the four of us in a studio with barely any preconceived ideas and see what would happen—mike everything up, hit the record button, and let spontaneity be documented. We found a week where we could all get together—that's all the time we had—so we *had* to put it together this way.

The songs ended up being incredibly technically demanding and very progressive pieces of music. It's kind of strange, because normally with Dream Theater we'll have an eight-minute track with all sorts of odd time signatures, and we'll spend a lot of time sorting through it. This project had tunes that were just as complex as any Dream Theater music, but we had to write, record, and nail each of them in one day. It was pretty stressful, but it was also that pressure that inspired a creative environment unlike anything I've ever been involved with before.

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*"This project had tunes that were just as complex as any Dream Theater music—but we had to write, record, and nail each of them in one day."*

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The album has nine songs on it, four of which are full-blown written pieces. Then there are two duets: one with me and Tony and the other with Jordan and John. And then there are two shorter jams and one huge extended jam, which is about a half hour long.

**WFM:** When you mentioned you were going to be doing this project with Tony Levin, you seemed very confident about it. Have you known him from some previous project?

**MP:** No. This was my first time working with Tony, and it's actually my first time meeting him. Magna Carta put me in touch with him, and right off the bat he seemed incredibly easy to work with and to talk to. And obviously from his track record, he's incredibly versatile, and that's what we needed.

Having Tony involved with this project was really beneficial because John and Jordan are total shredders—if Billy Sheehan had been on board it could have

become total chaos. Tony added a sense of foundation to this because that's the style of player he is. He's a total groove man. But at the same time he's innovative and totally versatile. It was fascinating to listen to him jump from style to style and pull out all these different instruments—the [Chapman] stick or the bass or even an upright bass played with a bow—to add all these different flavors to the tracks. He was able to do all of that and at the same time give a foundation to some of the madness that was going on.

**WFM:** Tony has played with some of the finest drummers on the planet: Bill Bruford, Manu Katché, Andy Newmark—Tony's even credited with introducing Steve Gadd to the New York studio scene. Was there any nervousness on your part in working with him?

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**MP:** Maybe for the first minute. We actually had one little jam session at my house before we went into the studio. And you know, maybe for the first minute or so it was like, "Wow. This is the guy who played on all the classic Peter Gabriel and King Crimson stuff." So there was a little intimidation. But he came over to my house, started playing with my dog, and we made a big pot of coffee—that's his big love. The minute he strapped on his bass and I got behind the drums I immediately felt comfortable with him, and suddenly we were on the same level making music. A player of his ability is really able to make the other musicians around him feel comfortable and play better.

**WFM:** Can you be a bit more specific about how the two of you synced up musically?

**MP:** It was interesting, because I had Jordan and John on one shoulder tugging me towards the overplaying world. You know, those two were coming up with weird, strange parts and wanting me to go with them. But then on the other side was Tony, inspiring me to lay down the groove. And it was great; I loved doing both. And Tony, even though he's a groovemeister, is also pretty wacky; he comes up with some really strange shit.

Now after having worked with Tony, I hear where a lot of the really abstract King Crimson stuff comes from. I always assumed that the really out stuff came from Robert Fripp, but a lot of it stems from Tony. So it's kind of weird; Tony, with his two main outlets being Crimson and Gabriel, is able to be the super groove-man with one project and be totally off the wall with the other. No matter what *we* put on the table, something straight or really complex, he was able to jump in and come up with an amazing part.

**WFM:** Did playing with Tony, or with this project in general, bring out a different side of your playing from what people are used to hearing from you in Dream Theater?

**MP:** I suppose so. *Liquid Tension Experiment* is a progressive album, no question, so it's not too detached from what Dream Theater does. But this is also the progressive album that Dream Theater *couldn't* make, because we have to consider our future on a commercial level. So now with both Dream Theater and *Liquid Tension*, John and I have the best of both worlds: We have our

bread-and-butter band that is a more mainstream act, and we have an outlet where we can do anything we want musically. *Liquid Tension Experiment* is driven purely by musical satisfaction and selfishness, [laughs]

**WFM:** And what would you say having this freedom has done for your playing?

**MP:** There are moments on here where there are things I've never been able to do in Dream Theater. In fact, there's a piece called "Osmosis," which is a four-minute jam, that is *so* Peter Gabriel-ish it's unbelievable. I played the whole kit with *Hot Rods* and mallets, and I really felt like I was playing on a Gabriel track. Although Dream Theater has had that influence and we've tried to promote that, we've never gotten this close. A band can't fully become another style when you are so grounded in what you do. It was great working with Tony, because I was able to play a lot of things with him that I could never do with Dream Theater simply because of the nature of the musicians. When you play with different people you are going to sound different.

**WFM:** You do sound different on this, especially hearing you play a half-time, Bernard Purdie-like shuffle on "Chris & Kevin."

**MP:** I love playing that sort of thing, and I never get to do it with Dream Theater. The basic idea for the duet just came from the two of us jamming on that groove. Tony pulled out the stick and started working with it. We came up with the basic idea, and then did several different takes on that groove. We just laid into that half-time groove and then went completely out, came back in, and did lots of different things.

**WFM:** It's interesting to hear you be a bit freer and not play a well-planned part.

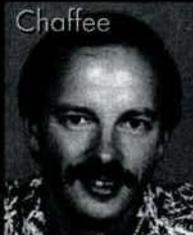
**MP:** I have to say that I'm prouder of my playing on this record than any other record to date. It's funny, we put this thing together in one week, and I think I achieved more in that one week than I ever achieved on any other record I've done with Dream Theater. I'm not insulting Dream Theater; I'm just saying that this project was something very special.

There's a thirty-minute improv jam that closes the record that I think is some of my most-inspired playing. If I had to play any

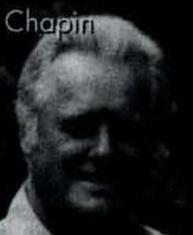
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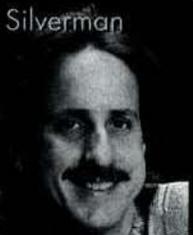
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piece of music for anybody to hear what I'm all about, this piece would be it. It just pulled things out of all four of us that I'd never heard before. I'm very excited about it.

**WFM** Speaking of improvisation, I remember Bill Bruford talking about how King Crimson would set up certain guidelines for improvisation. Crimson had a blackboard where they wrote things that they either wanted to do or wanted to avoid—thoughts like "no metallic sounds" or "no backbeats." What kind of discussion, or guidelines, did the four of you have before actually launching into a piece?

**MP** For most of the album we did exactly as Crimson did—we had a blackboard in the studio that we'd write general concepts on for specific tunes. But for that thirty-minute jam I was talking about, which is called "Three Minute Warning," we had no pre-conceived ideas for it. It was *completely* spontaneous and improvised.

**WFM** How did that happen?

**MP** During these sessions Jordan, John, and I would spend a little bit of time trying to construct a basic framework for the song we were working on. Tony wasn't really interested in contributing in that way. Tony's more interested in just playing. So there were a lot of times when John, Jordan, and I would be sitting there working out these complex passages and Tony would just be waiting for us to play.

Towards the end of the last night of recording Tony really wanted to get going, so he basically gave us an ultimatum. He said, "Look, I want to be jamming in three minutes or I'm packing up and going home." He was being funny about it, and that's why the track is called "Three Minute Warning." [laughs] What happened was that we immediately said, "Well hey, roll tape." We didn't discuss a single note, and what you hear on the album is what happened over the next thirty minutes.

**WFM** That's terrific. In that type of situation you must have been listening hard to the other musicians.

**MP** Exactly. You have to open up to the other players and really be aware of what's going on. And doing that while the tape is rolling—having to listen and focus so intensely—brought out a whole different side of my playing.

**WFM** And regarding the duet with Tony: Where did the name "Chris And Kevin's Excellent Adventure" come from?

**MP** Well, we didn't have any time for a photo session for the album, so there was actually a photographer running around the studio taking pictures while we were laying down tracks. This photographer kept calling me Chris, and Tony, Kevin. He just kept messing up our names, so when it came time for Tony and I to name this duet, I said, "Why don't we call it 'Chris And Kevin's Excellent Adventure'?" [laughs]

**WFM** One noticeable point about this track is the looseness of the performance. On a Dream Theater release your drumming is very precise, which is something that your fans have come to expect. But it's surprising that you let some of that go on this track. You seem to like it, warts and all.

**MP** Absolutely! I think that was the beauty of this whole project—it was spontaneous and raw, and that's what made it so wonderful. Even if there are clams here and there, it's natural and that's what happened.

With Dream Theater, we'll spend months polishing the stuff—really over-polishing it—and when we record the tunes we'll go for perfection. Although that's great in certain ways, there is a certain amount of spontaneity that is not even a part of that equation. *Liquid Tension* is all about spontaneity. There are moments on this duet where we are just completely out and where we lose it for a second. But that's okay—it's *us playing*.

**WFM** Do you think any of that attitude might drift into Dream Theater?

**MP** I wish it would, but knowing how the five of us are, I doubt it. Like I said earlier, now it kind of works out nicely because I have two completely separate creative outlets. I hope we get to do another *Liquid Tension Experiment* album, and if we do I want to take the same approach—you know, having that pressure of creating something right on the spot. I wouldn't want it any other way.

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# Food As Fuel

## Drummers Talk Turkey About Nutrition

by Robin Tolleson

We drummers who play to eat, so too must eat to play. Or so it seems in talking to some top working trapsters in this post-Keith Moon era. It's interesting to note the attention that's now being paid to nutrition when it comes to putting on the best possible show. Paul Wertico plans his eating routine around being ready to wail for the two and a half hours he's on stage with Pat Metheny without running out of gas. Bobby Rock has written about nutrition for *MD* ("Super Grooves & Celery Sticks," Sept. '96, "Diet For A Road Warrior," April '97, and "The Road Warrior Dines Out," September '98). And Zoro wrote an article for the March '98 issue of *Muscle & Fitness*, describing his new and improved eating habits.

The truth is that every band is relying on the drummer more than ever to be the engine, the catalyst of the music. If you've got a gig, keeping it probably requires that you take care of yourself, eat the right foods, get enough protein and carbs, and stay properly hydrated. For many of us, though, nutrition means praying that whatever burger stand is open at 2:30 in the morning has a grilled chicken combo rather than sharing a new scrambled tofu recipe.

"The trick is just trying to eat well-balanced meals on the road," says Greg DiGiovine of Santana management. The Santana band has catering provided at each stop, and a rider in their contract gets fairly specific about food. "No processed foods, no processed cheese. Fresh vegetables and juices. Food that was prepared in the last three hours, by professional chefs. Half the band is vegetarian, so Santana tries to have a wholesome variety of foods so everybody's happy," says DiGiovine, who also manages bluesman Tommy Castro. DiGiovine admits the riders are much more limited when you're playing clubs. "Mostly it's beer—that's the beginning and end of their nutrition in clubs. They're lucky if they get bottled water and some potato chips."

Keeping up a good eating regimen on the road isn't too difficult for Paul Wertico. The Metheny group has catering at each stop in the US, and caterers travel with the band in Europe. "I use food as fuel," he says. "Usually in the day I'll have a banana, an apple, some grapefruit juice, stuff that I brought back from the venue the

night before. Then rather than eat airport food or fast food, I probably won't eat anything until soundcheck. The band provides great vegetable trays, and I'll get fresh juices, and that kind of gets you through that day. Everyone else in our band eats after the show, but for me, that's a waste.

"Pat's show lasts two hours and forty minutes," Paul explains. "I realized a long time ago that if I didn't eat right, halfway through the show I'd be running out of gas. So if it's an 8:00 show, I'll try to get there at 7:35 and eat my meal. I'll eat as much as possible, with dessert and a glass of wine. It settles me down, and gives me enough strength that the show becomes easy. A lot of people look at me and go, 'How can you eat a steak and mashed potatoes and salad and dessert?' Well, ever since I started doing

that, the gigs seem a lot easier for me to play. I'm not one of those people who gets sleepy after eating. I find that it keeps my head clear. I try to eat healthy stuff. I'll have dessert, but not a lot of fried stuff that's going to make me feel kind of lame."

Paul believes that many people eat just because they're bored. "Sitting in the airport for an hour, they say, 'Let's go have a pizza and a beer,'" he says. "I'd rather not do that, because then you gain weight. When you're younger you get into bad habits—fast food, eating after shows, drinking a lot, and living like there's no tomorrow. As you get older you want to take care of yourself. You don't have to be a maniac and be so rigid that you're no fun to hang out with. But at the same time you have to follow your body's

leads. If something works for you, great, but if it doesn't, or it ceases to work, you've got to be intelligent about it if you want longevity in terms of a career.

"I'm forty-five and I feel great," Wertico says. "And a lot of it has to do with the way I look after myself. I don't drink coffee, I don't do drugs. I will have wine before the show, but I don't like to drink after the show because then I might get dehydrated—and I don't drink in the afternoon. But right before the show with the meal a glass of wine is better than drinking pop or anything like that." (Paul was also the first endorser for Musicians' Pharmacy's vitamin supplements.)

When Wertico recorded the hard-core, outside jazz of *Sign Of Four* with Metheny, Derek Bailey, and Gregg Bendian, it was

"You don't *have* to be a *maniac* and be so rigid that you're no fun to hang out with. But at the same time you *have* to follow your body's leads."

—Paul Wertico

another case of using food as fuel. "I think I had a big dinner before that one because I knew it was going to be hard," the drummer says. "When you're playing like that, it's really fun, but physically grueling. The first night I went to a good pasta restaurant and really loaded up on pasta, and the second night I think I had a big steak and some heavy-duty protein."

Anton Fig's playing schedule and eating routine are much different from Wertico's. "If my body's working to digest," he explains, "there's less energy left to play, so I find it much easier playing on an empty stomach. I once played after eating a steak, and it was really difficult. I had an overwhelming urge to take a nap—and it *wasn't* because of the music. So I think it's better to eat light and healthy before you play. I'm not saying that I do that, but I do think it's the best thing to do.

"I could see having some pasta, something with carbohydrates; you can't be starving. I'm playing on the show for an hour in a stop-start kind of way. You build up a different set of chops when you're playing steadily for two hours, and maybe you would have to eat differently. You can't go out feeling hungry, but at the same time you can't feel full. So I could see having a pasta meal two hours before the show, but I wouldn't advise eating huge amounts of meat and stuff that's hard to digest.

"I also like to eat something because the *Letterman Show* studio is so cold," Anton adds. "It's in the low fifties—it keeps the comedy fresh—and food somehow warms you up a bit. Almost always before the rehearsal, which would be like an hour and a half before the show, I have a nice bowl of soup. That keeps my energy up and keeps me warm."

While with the Charlie Hunter Quartet, drummer Scott Amendola enjoyed the challenge of finding good vegetarian restaurants on the road. "I always ate pretty healthy, but [saxophonist] Kenny Brooks inspired us all to quit eating meat, except for fish. I had a *Power Book* with me on the road, and we would download a list of restaurants in whatever town we were playing from a vegetarian Web site. That site was our savior. Also, we were total sushi heads," he says, recalling "happening" sushi restaurants in Topeka, Kansas and Ferndale, Michigan. "You might pass a McDonalds every ten feet, but you don't have to eat there. We would try to find a health food store wherever we were and stock up for the week. Each of us had a bag of food that we'd eat in the van. Also, our dressing room was stocked with hummus and other healthy food. We had our desperation stops, but those became few and far between. So eating well on the road is totally



**P**aul Wertico is as comfortable in the kitchen as he is on the bandstand. "I always cooked a bit, but I've really started getting into making up stuff," he says. "It started off with pasta—just improvising, not using books, kind of jamming on the kitchen table—and it became something that I really enjoy doing. It's a real musical kind of thing to do, and just like music it makes people happy.

"Here's a quick (non-gourmet) recipe that I came up with one day when these were the only ingredients laying around the house. A lot of my friends requested the recipe because it's fast and easy but still quite tasty and low in fat."

### **Paul's Quickie Tuna-Pasta**

#### **Ingredients:**

1 lb pasta  
2 to 8 (etc.) cloves of garlic (cut up into small/medium pieces)  
1 6 oz. can of solid white tuna in water (drain and flake apart with a fork)  
2 14 oz. cans of stewed tomatoes  
1 4 oz. can of mushrooms  
olive oil (as much as you like)  
sliced green pimento olives (to taste)  
crushed red pepper (to taste)  
dried crushed basil (to taste)  
dried crushed oregano (to taste)  
fresh ground black pepper (to taste)  
anything else you like (e.g., fresh asparagus)

#### **Directions:**

- Heat garlic and red peppers in olive oil. (Make sure not to brown the garlic.)
- Add tuna and heat until the color changes. Add stewed tomatoes, mushrooms, olives, and spices. Heat on medium flame (don't boil) until flavors blend.
- Cook the pasta at the same time. Drain pasta when "al dente" (still somewhat firm). Mix the pasta and sauce in a large bowl. PIG OUT!

possible."

Amendola also avoids the Denny's-after-the-gig trap. "If we were absolutely starving and the only place in town was Denny's, we'd go there. But generally we knew where to go, or we'd take the healthy stuff from the dressing room back to the hotel."

Whenever possible, Hunter's band prepared their own meals. "If we were somewhere for a few days and had a kitchen in the room, we cooked every night," says Amendola. "We were stoked to go to the market and fix a good meal, a fish stew, or some kind of pasta. You're kind of limited because you have to buy all the hardware, the olive oil, and all that stuff, but we'd serve a good piece of fish or steamed vegetables over rice or tofu."

Amendola claims he has a lot more energy since becoming a vegetarian, and especially since he quit eating refined sugar. "That totally changed the way I felt," he says. "Not that I had eaten a lot of refined sugar, but I would really crash after I ate it. When I quit, I lost seven pounds, and I felt like I could keep going without sleeping very much. There were a couple times when we did overnight drives, and since I couldn't fall asleep in the van, I wouldn't sleep for two days. But on the gig I'd still be fine. I really attribute that to changing my diet. The road is rough, but eating right made it a lot easier to deal with. If you're kind of emotionally burnt out from the ups and downs of the road, eating a lot of processed foods and MSG can drain you physically and really bring down your mood."

Drummer Pat O'Connell plays more than one hundred casual gigs a year, and he's usually driving to the job during dinner time.

"If I have a 6:00 gig and have to leave my house at 4:00, there's no way I can eat a big meal at 3:00 and expect my body to say, 'Okay, you had a big meal so you don't need any more.' Consequently at dinner time I'm going bananas, even if I try to eat heavily in the afternoon."

O'Connell solves this problem by bringing an insulated lunch bucket to his gigs with a sandwich and chips, "And a lot of times if it's going to be a long day I'll bring vegetables and carrot sticks and fruit," he says. "I'm just one of those people who *has* to have food, and if I don't have it my state of mind goes down the tubes. So I bring my own food with me. If there's nothing to eat at the gig, it sure comforts me to know that all I have to do is go out to my car and I can be fed."

Horacio Hernandez doesn't see the connection between food and music-making. "I am probably the worst," says "Negro." "I eat anything, anytime," he laughs. "I think that to play two hours and feel good and not be tired, you have to play for *eight* hours every day. If you do that, when you go to play for just two you're not going to feel it at all, no matter what you eat. If you have better nutrition it will help a lot, I guess, but that is the kind of discipline I really never have had.

"It's definitely not good to play when you're full, though" Horacio cautions. "I feel like I want to sleep after I eat very well. But it's no good to play with an empty stomach either. Somebody told me a few days ago that when they're hungry they can play better, which is weird. I prefer to play two or three hours after I eat. Sometimes on tour they give you catering right before you go on stage, and it's too much. At Yoshi's (Jazz Club and Japanese Restaurant in Oakland) we have food between sets, sushi and stuff that is very light. It's the perfect food for before playing."

Michael Franti, leader of the group Spearhead, is a firm believer in good food leading to good music-making. Franti even wrote a song called "Red Beans & Rice" that tells of the joys of health-food cooking. "Red beans and rice, or any type of beans and rice, is a staple around my house. It's something that you can fix a million different ways, it always tastes good, and it's good for you—especially when you're trying to be creative. We were in the studio until 4:00 A.M. last night, and we're starting early again today. I went out and had a nice Mission Street burrito. It had everything in it to get me through today's session, but I know that if I was sitting here eating candy and sucking down soda pop, by 7:00 this evening I'd just be dead.

"I drink a lot of juices, and a lot of water," Franti adds. "I'm not totally against having a cold soda if it's the only thing around at the last moment, but we try to keep stuff in the studio that people can keep being creative on. It's like being in a biosphere after a while. If you're constantly taking in crap, eventually you feel crappy and everything sounds shitty. Our tour manager is from



**"Red Beans & Rice"**  
by Michael Franti  
from the Spearhead album *Home*

Check out my hair, I keep it dreaded  
about my corn? I like it breaded  
hot from the oven? mmmm you said it!  
straight to the stomach my fuel is unleaded  
But not fossil fuels/I like olive oil  
I like my eggs scrambled/I never eat 'em boiled  
The way to my heart/is with a garlic clove  
It smells hella sexy when it's on the kitchen stove  
Red beans and rice, red beans and rice, red beans and rice  
make everything nice  
Red beans and rice, red beans and rice, red beans and rice  
I could eat a plate twice

**Michael Franti's Red Beans & Rice**

"To make good rice you can't just pour water in there. You have to put a little bit of olive oil and some garlic, fry it, sizzle it up, and put some salt in there. Then put the rice on top of it and let it sit for a while with the water in there before you cook it. Just boil it and make sure there's enough olive oil and garlic; that gives it the flavor and also makes the rice so it's not like a lump of sticky stuff. The olive oil keeps it separated and gives it its own texture and flavor. Same thing for the beans. Add some garlic and some salt and some pepper, bay leaves—something like that—and just boil them up. Beer is another good element to put in there, but salt, pepper, and bay leaves will pretty much do it."

Jamaica, and he's a great cook. So every time we have a kitchen in a hotel room he busts out his pots and pans and makes a big pot of rice and peas and curry chicken, or vegetable stew. I was a vegetarian for a long time; I didn't eat any meat at all. And I found that being out on the road made it very difficult to stay energized without eating some type of good protein. That's hard to do without eating chicken and fish, so now I do—not a great amount of it, but definitely when I'm on the road and can't get good food, I have to supplement my diet."

Since many musicians equate a night behind the drums to an athletic event, *MD* spoke with Mark Grabow, director of athletic development for the Golden State Warriors, about the food-as-fuel idea. Grabow advises his players to eat a light to medium carbohydrate meal several hours before the game. "We also try to replenish their sugar levels at least within an hour after the game," he says. "If we're on the road, we make sure that they have some type of carbohydrate, as well as some type of protein, since muscle tissue breaks down during a game. So we're restoring their glycogen levels, as well as their muscle tissue with a protein dish—meat, fish, chicken, things along that line.

"Prior to the game is kind of a personal thing—some players like to have some type of light meal two to four hours before. But unlike marathon runners—ball players are only playing thirty to forty minutes per night—they don't need to carbo-load at all. So we just have a light to medium carbo dish like a light pasta or potatoes.

"We have very young guys," Grabow explains, "and because they're young and a lot of them are single, they don't have the

patience or know-how to cook for themselves. So we give them meal-replacement products like *Met-Rx* or *Champion Nutrition*. You have to make sure that they're getting enough calories at all times, as well as a proper balance of carbohydrates, fat, and protein. It varies from player to player, because some players have a high furnace—in other words, their metabolic system is just racing at all times—and we have trouble keeping the weight on them.

"We have a nice meal set aside for them on the plane when we're flying to a game. When they're in a hotel, they have the opportunity to sit down and have a good meal on the road. So we just give general guidelines on which foods to look for—and which to avoid, like heavy fried foods, and alcohol, which dehydrates you."

For drummers, Grabow suggests a light meal a couple of hours before playing. "And fluid intake is important since drummers sweat quite a bit under the lights," he adds. "Hydration is very important before, during, and after, whether it's water or some type of sport drink—*Gatorade* or anything like that—that maintains sodium and potassium levels. But it's not a marathon; you're sitting. Probably a very light carbohydrate meal with a light protein would be the way to go: some light pasta, light chicken or fish, something along those lines."

Before making any radical change in your diet, we recommend you consult your physician. But we hope that this article gives you a few new ideas to chew on, or reinforces some things you've already been thinking about nutrition and drumming. Now, back to the training table, *er*, practice pads.



# Are You On The Move?

*Modern Drummer's On The Move* department covers drummers whose activities and talent are worthy of recognition, but who are not yet figures on the national music scene.

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

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# Bernard Purdie

by Mark Griffith

**B**ernard "Pretty" Purdie is one of the most recorded drummers ever, and has worked with musical stars from all genres. A true studio musician who can play all styles, his contributions to several legendary recordings make him one of the greatest session drummers ever.

Bernard's recording career began in the R&B and soul music of the '60s and '70s. Purdie's session career was boosted early by the fact that he contributed to several hit records. Of those, Les Cooper's funky hit "Wiggle Wobble" is outstanding. Mickey & Sylvia's early hits "Just One Look" and "Love Is Strange" also benefited from Bernard's propulsive and well-placed backbeats.

Purdie became an official "funky drummer" in 1965, when James Brown tapped him to play on the songs "Ain't That A Groove" and "It's A Man's Man's Man's World." These outstanding cuts are now included on the JB box set *Star Time*.

Purdie's stature as one of the funkier drummers around was solidified by his contributions to what is now known as "soul jazz." His playing on Johnny "Hammond" Smith's *Soul Talk* is some of the best funk drumming ever. It's a true classic, and an absolute funk drumming essential. On guitarist "Boogaloo" Joe Jones' soulful *Right On Brother* and *Boogaloo Joe*, the groove is simpler, and the flash is somewhat subdued. Bernard is also on the majority of the recordings that we now refer to as the original "acid jazz," a style that has recently had a resurgence in popularity—due mostly to the danceable grooves created by Purdie and his funky cohorts. It was also around this time that Purdie released his solo recordings *Shaft* and *Purdie Good*. The groove is on fire on these recordings.

Bernard's groove-based approach to drum solos was similar to that of another great funky drummer, Zigaboo Modeliste. He usually leaned toward augmenting the groove of the song, therefore giving the song a consistency that listeners could relate to. *Shaft* is a classic funk recording, but however funky Bernard is, he is even more *musical*. He inherited this trait from session greats such as Al Jackson and Roger Hawkins, and passed it on to drummers like Steve Gadd and Jeff Porcaro (all drummers for whom the music and the groove came first).

On Purdie's own recordings you can really study the relationship that he had with bassists. With Gordon Edwards (bassist on *Purdie Good* and *Shaft*, and later with studio superband Stuff) the bass lines and the drum parts always complemented each other. Listen to these two recordings and notice how your attention is



constantly shifted from drum part to bass line and back again throughout the performances. When Purdie was playing busy, Edwards laid back; when Edwards was playing complex and busy bass lines, Purdie laid down a simpler groove and didn't get in the way. This was a true rhythm section.

Another important aspect of Bernard's relationship with Edwards was that the parts the two played almost never mimicked each other. It was almost as if they were saying to each other, "If you're playing all of those notes on the bass, why should I clutter the groove and play the same notes with my bass drum?" and vice versa. This is contrary to how many drummers think of creating drum parts. But when a bassist and a drummer are each as strong as Purdie and Edwards, it's the only way to play. This style of playing is very similar to the way that Sting and Stewart Copeland interacted in the Police, as well as Peter Erskine and Jaco Pastorius in Weather Report. By studying Bernard Purdie's relationships with the many bassists he played with, we can start to examine the important concept of rhythm section interaction.

Although Purdie occasionally led his own bands, his busy session work always continued. In 1969, two jazz legends asked him to contribute his special drumming to their recordings. Herbie Hancock had formed a new sextet, with Tootie Heath playing drums. However, on their initial release, *Fat Albert Rotunda*, Purdie is featured on two outstandingly funky selections: "Wiggle Waggle" and "Lil' Brother."

Quincy Jones called on Bernard to play on two tracks of the amazing recording *Walking In Space* (also featuring Grady Tate).

Purdie also recorded one song with Miles Davis on 1974's *Get Up With It*. At this point in his career Purdie was developing a reputation as a session musician with a specialty. That specialty was greasy, snaky, low-down funk.

Purdie's career took a turn with a gig that seemed custom-made for him: He became the musical director for Aretha Franklin. The recording highlight of this association was in 1971. With King Curtis's band as the backup group (with Purdie on drums), two records were made. Both were titled *Live At The Fillmore West*—one under Aretha's leadership, and the other under King Curtis's name. These two recordings are among the best that Purdie ever made. With Curtis, "Memphis Soul Stew," Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love," and "Soul Serenade" are simply amazing. With Aretha, "Respect" is done faster than ever, "Love The One You're With" has never sounded better, and "Dr. Feelgood" is wonderful. On the live recordings Purdie's signature hi-hat "bark" is especially biting, and he uses it perfectly. Bernard's paradiddle-based grooves are electric, and the simpler grooves are even more undeniable. The two *Live At The Fillmore West* recordings are a textbook of R&B, soul, and funk drumming.

With all this emphasis on the live recordings, let's not forget the hits that Bernard originally recorded with Aretha and that brought the drums to the forefront. The drum groove on "Rock Steady" is an undisputed classic, and "Spanish Harlem" is one of the most understated and vital grooves of all time. Bernard wasn't on all of Aretha's big hits, but he is on quite a few. Purdie's recordings with Aretha included *Let Me In Your Life*, *With Everything I Feel In Me*, *Aretha*, and *Young, Gifted And Black*. All of them have their highlights, but none is as important as the aforementioned two songs and the pair of live recordings from the Fillmore West.

Purdie also recorded King Curtis's *Everybody's Talkin'*. While this album isn't as exciting as the live recording, it offers some more examples of Purdie's "perkalating" grooves for us to examine. Flautist Herbie Mann also employed Bernard around this same time. Mann's *Push Push* is outstanding because of the strong connection Purdie had with bassists Chuck Rainey and Jerry Jemmott. They groove hard on this unrecognized gem.

While Purdie helped establish the standard for R&B and soul drumming, he knows where his groove came from. Bernard has a strong background with jazz organists, and their brand of shuffling swing is a strong influence on Purdie's unique drumming. In 1972, organists Jimmy McGriff and Groove Holmes merged their respective grooves to record the amazing *Come Together*. This recording answers the question, "What is stronger than an organist and a drummer really hooking up on a groove?" The answer: "Two organists and a drummer playing that same groove." Bernard had played with Holmes earlier on the organist's *New Groove*, but *Come Together* is an especially strong offering.

Purdie has recorded with Jimmy McGriff quite often since 1972. McGriff's *The Starting Five* and *The Dream Team* focus more on Purdie's swinging side, as do Hank Crawford's *Groove Master* and *Midnight Ramble*.

Organ master Jimmy Smith called on Purdie for his special brand of funk on 1995's *Damn!* Purdie is terrifying on "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag" and "Watermelon Man." (The legendary Art Taylor swings on the rest of what proved to be his last recording.) Bernard lays back in the pocket in much bluesier surround-

## Tracking Them Down

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

### Mickey & Sylvia

*Love Is Strange*, Collectibles COL 5833

### Les Cooper

*Wiggle Wobble*, Collectibles COL 5157

### Houston Person

*Always On My Mind*, Muse MR5289

### Herbie Mann

*Push Push*, Embryo SD 532

### Gato Barbieri

*The Third World Revisited*, RCA 69951

### Michal Urbaniak

*Ecstasy*, Marlin 2221

### Mongo Santamaria

*Stone Soul*, Columbia 9780

*Workin' On A Groovy Thing*, Columbia 9937

### James Brown

*Star Time*, Polydor 849108-2

### Steely Dan

*Royal Scam*, MCA MCAD-31193

*Aja*, MCA MCAD-37214

*Gaucho*, MCA MCAD-37220

### "Boogaloo" Joe Jones

*Right On Brother*, Prestige 7766

*Boogaloo Joe*, Prestige 7697

### Bernard Purdie

*Purdie Good*, Prestige 10013

*Shaft*, Prestige 10038

*Soul To Jazz*, ACT 9242-2

*Soul To Jazz II*, ACT/Blue Jackel 9253

### Hall & Dates

*Abandoned Luncheonette*, Atlantic 7 19139-2

### Miles Davis

*Get Up With It*, Columbia (out of print)

### Quincy Jones

*Walking In Space*, CTI/Rebound

14520310-2

### Herbie Hancock

*Fat Albert Rotunda*, Warner Bros. WS 1834

### Johnny "Hammond" Smith

*Soul Talk*, Prestige 7681

*Black Feeling*, Prestige 7736

### Aretha Franklin

*Live At The Fillmore West*, Rhino R2 71526

*Young, Gifted And Black*, Rhino R2-71527

*Let Me In Your Life*, Rhino 71854

Aretha, Arista ARCD 8556

*With Everything I Feel In Me*,

Atlantic SD 18116

30 Greatest Hits, Atlantic 7 81668-2

### King Curtis

*Live At The Fillmore West*, Atco SD 33359

*Everybody's Talkin'*, Atco SD 33-385

### Tony Z.

*Get Down With The Blues*, Tone Cool CDTC1153

### Jimmy Smith

*Damn!*, Verve 314 527 631-2

### Hank Crawford

*Groove Master*, Milestone MCD-9182-2

*Wight Seat*, Milestone MCD-9168-2

*Midnight Ramble*, Milestone MCD-9112-2

### Jimmy McGriff

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### Groove Holmes

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### Nils Landgren

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ings on organist Tony Z's *Get Down With The Blues*.

In *MD's* Nov. '95 Steve Gadd *Artist On Track* I wrote about an unrecognized fusion classic: Michal Urbaniak's *Fusion HI*. Its follow-up, *Ecstasy*, features Bernard Purdie and is chops-oriented soul-fusion at its best.

Bernard was also favored by Latin musicians for pop-influenced Latin sessions. Mongo Santamaria called on Bernard for the *Stone Soul* and *Workin' On A Groovy Thing* sessions. While these aren't "traditional" Latin sessions, Purdie plays the music masterfully.

Gato Barbieri utilized Bernard for *The Third World Revisited*, a quality Latin-jazz outing.

The study of Bernard's career up to this point gives us a strong foundation from which to examine what are possibly the most popular grooves he has ever played: the music he recorded with Steely Dan. On *The Royal Scam*, we hear the now-familiar hi-hat barks propelling the time feel on "Sign In Stranger" and "Kid Charlemagne." Notice how Bernard incorporates the rhythm of the melody into his grooves for these songs.

The Steely Dan recordings *Aja* and *Gaucho* provide two examples of the classic "Purdie Shuffle." "Home At Last" and "Babylon Sisters" could never be over-emphasized as the quintessential examples of shuffle and half-time shuffle playing. Listen closely to how many variations of the same groove are included in each song. Bernard lets his already amazing grooves evolve and compound along with the music. You learn from these recordings that "a groove" isn't just a good-feeling static beat. Instead, it is a living, breathing feel that can be given to just about any "beat," no matter how simple or complex. For example, listen to the rather simplistic "Deacon Blues" for the understated and relaxed groove that Bernard keeps moving along at a perfect pace. These three recordings are classics.

Another popular session of its time was the soundtrack for the Beatles-influenced film *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Purdie's playing backed up everyone from the Bee Gees to Peter Frampton, and from Alice Cooper to Billy Preston. While there are no "killer grooves" on this recording, Purdie's presence is strongly

felt. Bernard makes the drastic musical changes very smoothly, and supports the music perfectly.

The pocket that Bernard creates when he plays pop music is clearly influenced by his funk and R&B background. But it is evident that he is also very capable of creating a "dead center" pocket that is neither "on top" nor "laid back," all the while *not* sounding metronomic. It's very hard for young drummers to understand, but sometimes bandleaders and producers don't *want* the most grooving, funky, or swinging drum part. However difficult this is for us to comprehend as musicians, it's reality. As a studio musician, you must fill the desires of the artist and the producer, not of the drummers listening to the recording. However, the real achievement is to do this while still developing and maintaining your own voice as a musician. Bernard is a master of this kind of drumming. The aforementioned *Sgt. Pepper's* soundtrack is a prime example of this.

Another excellent example of this approach to drumming is Daryl Hall & John Dates' *Abandoned Luncheonette*. There are two hits ("When The Morning Comes" and "She's Gone") on this recording, which means that the musicians did their job. Purdie's drumming supports and propels the music tastefully and unobtrusively. Upon closer examination of *Abandoned Luncheonette*, Bernard sounds very much like himself, while also serving the music perfectly. It's records like this that make Bernard Purdie a first-call studio musician.

Bernard has recently made a number of recordings with (or augmented by) members of the Cologne-based WDR big band. Nils Landgren's *Paint It Blue* is one of the best recent jazz/funk recordings. Saxophonist Eddie Harris's *The Last Concert* is funky, but more jazz-oriented. (The pairing of Purdie and Harris was long overdue.) Purdie's own *Soul To Jazz* and *Soul To Jazz II* are quite good. They both deliver what we all now expect from Bernard: funky, soulful, swinging, good-feeling music, driven by drumming that possesses the same qualities. In addition, Bernard's own 3B label has produced two records by a group that Bernard co-leads (called the 3B's) titled *Smoothin' N Groovin'* and *After Hours*. Also on the 3B label, The Hudson River Rats' recording *First Take* features Bernard, and is absolutely outstanding. It includes a great version of Steely Dan's "Home At Last" and a swinging "I Drink Muddy Water."

Bernard Purdie has played on hundreds of recordings; to overview them all would be impossible. However, we have touched on all aspects of his recorded career, and have heard the great "Pretty" Purdie do a little bit of everything. He is a phenomenal drummer, with a deep sense of groove. His drumming is funky, swingin', soulful, and exciting. There is a lot to be learned from his numerous drumming highlights: "Rock Steady," "Babylon Sisters," "Them Changes" (from his own *Shaft* recording), "Memphis Soul Stew," "Home At Last," etc. But most importantly, Bernard has taught us that everything we play doesn't have to be a drumming highlight. The real highlights for a session musician are hit records. And Bernard has a lot of *those*, too.



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## Roberto Alemão Marques

A native of Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, Roberto Alemão Marques has been playing professionally for twenty years. In that time he's worked with a wide variety of musical groups and acts, along with doing recording dates in major Rio-based studios. His stylistic skills range from Brazilian music to Latin jazz to commercial pop.

Roberta's current playing activities include a regular position as the house drummer for the Nikiti Pub, owned by noted Brazilian jazz bassist Arthur Maia. He also plays with an unusual trio called 2b, which, in addition to Roberta, features a



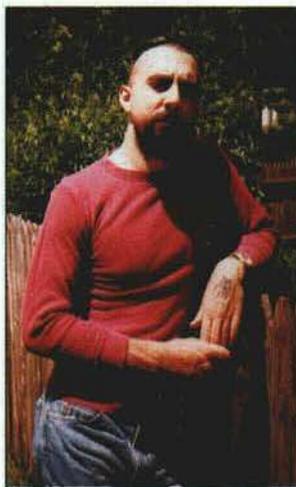
vocalist and a twelve-string guitar/Moog bass-pedal player. The group's demo CD reveals Roberto to be a creative drummer with clean, precise technique. The drummer states that his primary goal at this time is to gain American record-label interest for the band.

In addition to his performing career, Roberto is also a teacher at Rio's Estúdio Arte Escola de Musica. Among his influences are Narada Michael Walden, Tony Oxley, Harvey Mason, and Al Foster. He plays a set of Odery drums—a custom-made Brazilian brand—along with Paiste cymbals.

## Peter S. Abdou

Twenty-seven-year-old Peter Abdou lists his current activities this way: "I'm currently a member of a pop/rock group called Bumbles Bounce. We're touring Massachusetts and Rhode Island in support of our new CD, and hoping to expand to the whole East Coast soon. I'm also finishing up a CD with an artist called Quiet Cool, and I just finished recording four songs for a group named Shel Ya See. I'm about to start pre-production for another CD by a singer/songwriter named Thomas. And I teach thirty students a week." Whew!

Peter began drumming in 1982, did the school-band and private-lesson routine, and turned professional upon leaving high school. He immediately began playing live, touring, and cutting demos and album projects. At one point in 1997 he was playing with six bands simultaneously, while maintaining his teaching practice. "I finally realized that I loved stu-



dio playing," he says, "and I wanted to focus more on my drumming skills. Playing live with that many bands at once didn't allow me to do that." So Peter restricted his band activity to Bumbles Bounce, along with his studio projects.

Peter's demo cassette displays his talents in a variety of styles, including alternative and punk-rock, moody folk-rock, and power pop. He also lists funk, R&B, country, reggae, and hip-hop among his musical interests, and such drummers as Kenny Aronoff, Phil Collins, Tommy Lee, Stewart Copeland, and Omar Hakim among his influences. He plays a Pearl kit with Pearl, Ludwig, and Rogers snare drums, Zildjian cymbals, and LP percussion.

As for his goals, Peter says, "I want to play drums forever! I'm not trying to be 'the best drummer alive.' I just want to be able to hold my own and to play on as many albums as possible in my lifetime."

## G Force

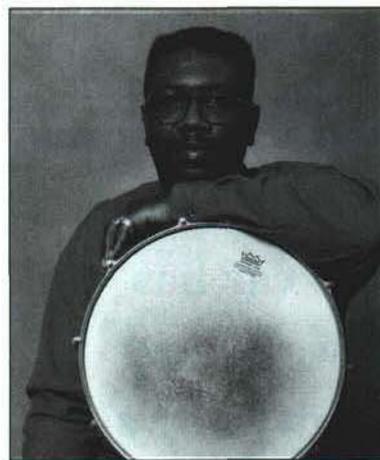
G Force has more miles behind him than a turnpike toll booth. Born in Chicago, he began drumming at the age of two, and made his professional debut at thirteen with Walter Whitman and the Gospel Soul Children. He attended college in Mississippi, where he played in the marching and concert bands while also studying studio engineering.

While in the South, G played the gospel circuit. He also immersed himself in the blues, performing with such greats as Albert King. A move from Mississippi to Memphis put him in the clubs of that city's famous Beale Street. Next it was west to San Diego, California, where G added R&B and reggae to his repertoire. Then back to Chicago

for more blues, including gigs with Windy City artists Eddie Burks, Byther Smith, and Melvin Taylor.

Blues guitarist Osee Anderson took G back to California, but only as a base for two years of touring from Vancouver to Salt Lake City. While on tour in the Northwest Territories (Canada) town of Yellowknife, G met his future wife. He moved to Yellowknife in 1996, and has since focused his energy on drumming, songwriting, and teaching. He now performs with local players and touring musicians from parts south, such as recording artists Ron Hynes and Tracy Riley.

G lists his influences as Isaac Hayes, Rush, Melvin



Taylor, Jimi Hendrix, Albert King, Led Zeppelin, James Brown, and Billy Cobham. His video demo illustrates his fundamental approach to drumming: solid, grooving, and with the focus on making the artist or band sound great.

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

you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please do not send original tapes or photos.



# XTC's Andy Partridge

by Todd Bernhardt

**I**n 1977, with punk and new wave dominating the musical landscape in England, a distinctive quartet known as XTC began attracting fanatic attention with its brand of melodic, hyperactive, and rhythmically sophisticated pop music. Though principal songwriter, guitarist, and singer Andy Partridge's increasingly severe bouts with stage fright resulted in the end of the band's touring career—as well as the exit of original drummer Terry Chambers and the ire of their label, Virgin Records—their popularity continued to climb. Subsequent albums saw several different drummers filling the gap, including Peter Phipps, Ian Gregory, Pat Mastelotto, Dave Mattacks, and ex-Tubes slammer Prairie Prince, who recorded the breakout 1986 album *Skylarking*, featuring the controversial hit "Dear God." Each new record fur-

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**"I've always tended to think like a drummer. My ear has always been drawn toward the percussive nature of things."**

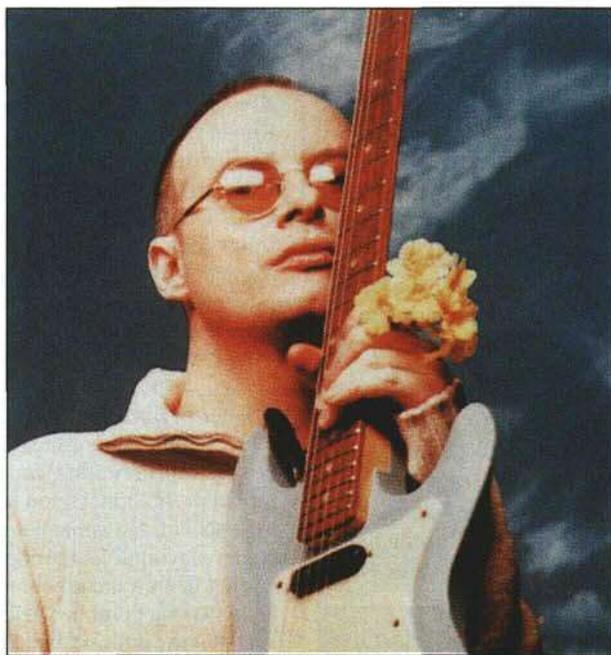
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ther cemented the band's place in the hearts of critics and on the American college charts, but their label remained displeased. Only recently, after several years of contract disputes, has the band been free to release new material, onTVT Records.

Now the band—with help from Prairie Prince and ex-Abbey Road engineer and producer Hayden Bendall—is in the midst of recording the sizable backlog of songs that Partridge and bassist/singer Colin Moulding have written. They plan to release their new recording by the end of the year, with a second album following closely

on its heels.

*Modern Drummer* caught up with Partridge during a break in a busy schedule that's been filled with recording sessions and the business of arranging distribution deals. Sitting in his kitchen sipping tea and nursing a sore throat, Andy spoke at length about the



drummers he's played with and the changing nature of rhythm in his music.

**TB:** You've been credited with drums and percussion on some of the albums you've played on or produced. Do you actually play the kit, or is most of that programming?

**AP:** Most of the things I do myself involve programming, but I've always tended to *think* like a drummer. My father had a drumkit that he left set up in my bedroom as a kid. He would go to work and I would sit there and very quietly play the drums—or attempt to. I didn't want the neighbors saying, "Oh, I heard your son drumming," because he'd probably tear into me for playing *his* drums.

But my ear has always been drawn toward the percussive nature of things, whether it's things being hit, blown, or even sung. I was always drawn toward those short, transient sounds—the way they relate to each other and the way they fit in amongst each other. My whole guitar style evolved, I think, because I wanted to be a drummer, and I would chop and slash and try to work between what the drums were doing, a) so I could be heard, and b) because I liked the funk and I liked working the holes that the drums left.

I have to say that I got into melody much, much later. I was always into rhythm, and I'm probably the fussiest of the band when it comes to rhythm these days.

**TB:** Could you talk a bit about your approach to drum parts today, and how you think that's changed over the years?

**AP:** Well, my tastes have changed. At one time, I was really inspired by people like Drumbo—John French, Captain Beefheart's drummer. I loved the inventiveness, the hand-down-your-throat, grab-your-organs-and-pull-them-inside-out kind of approach to his drumming. Devo touched on that as well.

I think in the early days I would try to suggest that the drums play inventive patterns or "wrong" things. I think we do less of that now. I get thrilled these days more by implied rhythms than where things are struck. You get this wonderful, exhilarating buoyancy—it's not where the incidents are hit, but the implied pulse between all these strikes that lifts you up. I find that much more exciting now than Western thump-whack drumming.

**TB:** Speaking of implied rhythms, have you listened to a lot of jazz, and were you influenced by it? I've always heard that in your music.

**AP:** I did listen to a lot of jazz when I was younger. My father had bebop records around the house: Charlie Parker, Oscar Peterson—basically the straighter side of bebop. Then a friend of mine got me into the more "out there" kind of stuff: Sun Ra, Albert Ayler, and others, which I liked immensely. And then I sort of blundered into stuff on my own, like Tony Williams' Lifetime. Their album *Emergency* is one of my all-time desert-island disks.

**TB:** XTC is lucky in that, with Colin Moulding on bass, you already have half of a great rhythm section, no matter who your drummer is. Could you talk a little bit about Colin's approach to working with drummers?

**AP:** He's a very melodic player. In fact, he gets compared to Paul McCartney probably more than anyone else in terms of melody; his bass lines are little tunes. But he's extremely old-fashioned—and I mean that in a good way—in that he sits there with that bass drum and is "down" on that bass drum, so that it can become the attack on the front of his bass note. It's a real old-school way of thought, but I

think it hasn't been bettered in terms of rhythm-section glue.

**TB:** Does he follow the bass drum or insist that the bass drum follow him?

**AP:** It all depends on the demand of the vocal. The vocal sets where the feel is. It's like this person walking, and you have to feel where to put the paving stones. You have to anticipate where their feet will fall, what speed and what style they're walking in, and say, "Okay, that foot's gonna fall there, that's a good place to put that solid bass-drum thing," or "It's better if you put the bass drum there *and* there to anticipate them stumbling forward from that point." It's almost like you have to aid the walking voice.

**TB:** Let's talk about Terry Chambers, your original drummer. You've been quoted as saying that he was "not one of life's musicians," yet at the same time his drumming was an enormously important element of XTC's sound, especially on the albums done with producers Steve Lillywhite and Hugh Padgham [*Drums And Wires*, *Black Sea*, and *English Settlement*]. That huge, gated drum sound of his influenced the way drums were recorded throughout the '80s.

**AP:** Because Terry had no formal grasp of different types of music, he was unfettered. He could make mistakes, or play supposedly conventional things "wrongly" or with a different feel. He was naive, a primitive. We'd work on songs, and he'd sit there and say, "What sort of thing do you want, then?" And I'd say, "Well, try this and this." He'd try it, and might get it wrong, or might say, "Well, that's good, but it's easier if I do this." And I might think, "Well, that's really inventive, he's misheard what I've asked him to do, or he

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thinks where I'm counting '1' is in a different place." Of all the drummers that we've played with, he's been the one who's been the most primitive, but probably the most thrilling for inventiveness, because he would blunder into these things.

Terry's playing on our first two albums was, I think, marked by an amazing stamina mixed with a real boxing kind of punctuation—cymbal chokes and the like. Then he started to fall into a cyclical style of playing from *Drums And Wires* onward. He'd get himself into certain patterns, which you can hear on *Black Sea's* "Travels In Nihilon," and also on things like "Burning With Optimism's Flame."

**TB:** Did that give the rest of you more room to move about musically?

**AP:** I think so. But at the same time—and I'm trying not to sound derogatory—Terry was not the most delicate of people. You really had to lean on him to converse with you, in terms of spoken language and drum language. He drummed for himself, and you had to use it as a cushion on which to put your music. He would speak musically to Colin, but otherwise I think we had to find the holes and spaces that he left us to use.

Often in the recording studio, if you played along with him you'd put him off, because he'd *listen* to the music. What he wanted to do was lock in to the cyclical groove that he had programmed himself to do, and that was how he drummed.

He was somebody that I think fell for the romance and the noise of drumming. The bands he loved were heavy-metal bands. Drumming, for him, was a kind of romantic "at one with this great big battery of noise-producing stuff and "when I hit it I'm going to make your ears bleed" sort of philosophy.

**TB:** When Terry left in the middle of recording *Mummer*, you brought in Pete Phipps. The delicacy of his drumming on "Love On A Farmboy's Wages" really stands out.

**AP:** It's funny that you should mention that song, because we rehearsed that with Terry, and he couldn't grasp the lightness I wanted him to play with. He had lots of other things on his mind at the time, and I think the boil broke while rehearsing that number. He just put the sticks down and said, "Look, I can't play this stuff, and I'm leaving in any case."

We were left in a panic, thinking, "Who the hell are we going to get to go in the studio with us? We've got all this material, and no drummer." [Guitarist] Dave Gregory reminded us of a band we had toured with called Random Hold, sort of a cross between Peter Gabriel and Soft Machine. Their drummer was Pete Phipps. Though we'd only known him as kind of a monolithic, tub-thumping drummer, he also has a very light side, which comes through on "Ladybird," "Love On A Farmboy's Wages," and things like that. He was very split—he could drum very light and jazzy, and then...

**TB:** ...hit stuff like "Funk Pop A Roll."

**AP:** Yeah. He could really lay into that stuff, kind of like an aggressive machine. He also handled stuff like "Human Alchemy," which needed a Terry-type rhythm, very well.

**TB:** He also does a terrific job on "Great Fire," with its shift between three and four.

**AP:** Sure, the tension of, "Is it a waltz or isn't it?" [laughs] It's a waltz in four. I don't know what you call that—an injured donkey, I suppose.

**TB:** The drum machine seems to make its entrance with *The Big Express*.

**AP:** Yeah, that was the time that we discovered the *Linn Drum*. I think it was a case of not knowing whether we wanted to work with a drum machine or a drummer. I think the *Linn* sounded really good on "Train Running Low On Soul Coal," because you can do those big mechanical grunts and puffs with it. But when it gets into the "think I'm going south" sections, you have that wonderful tom roll that Pete Phipps did excellently.

"Seagulls Screaming Kiss Her Kiss Her" is the *Linn Drum* triggering samples of everything from milk bottles to rulers being twanged. Then there's stuff like "Wake Up," which is almost mechanical but is actually Pete Phipps playing. You have those big, groovy holes in there, which I think is great.

**TB:** Then you guys went back a couple of decades and released two records under your alter-ego, The Dukes Of Stratospear.

**AP:** That was something that I'd wanted to do since the late '70s. I just liked psychedelic music as a kid, and thought that whenever I grew up I was going to be in a band that was like that—and of course I wasn't. So it was a way of saying, "Let's be the band that we thought we were going to be when we were kids."

**TB:** Why did you choose Ian Gregory to play on those albums?

**AP:** The budget was microscopic, and I think he did it for a couple hundred pounds and a beer [laughs]. Obviously, we knew him because he's Dave's brother, but also we figured the fact that he's an amateur—and this is going to sound terribly condescending, but it's not—would bring a sort of naive energy to these songs. And it did sound like a lot of the kind of drumming you have on '60s records, where those people were in the studio for the first time.

**TB:** How did you get that '60s sound? Did you do anything special?

**AP:** Probably used just three microphones—one on the bass drum and then a pair over the top. Which is, you know, probably no more than John Bonham or Ringo used.

**TB:** Are there any songs from either of the Dukes albums—the 25 *O'Clock* EP or the *Psonic PsunSpot* record—that stand out for you from a drumming standpoint?

**AP:** No, because they were meant to be simple. In fact, that's me drumming on "Pale And Precious." We were coming to the end of the session and hadn't recorded that song, and Ian was nervous about it for some reason. So he thought, "End of the session, I'm going to drink." [laughs] I can see him now, sitting on the floor of the studio with his back against the wall going [in drunken voice], "Oh, I hope I haven't let you down, I'm so drunk."

**TB:** So you did your best Dennis Wilson imitation.

**AP:** Yeah, I thought, "Well, Dennis Wilson can't really drum and neither can I, so it should sound just like him."

**TB:** In 1986, you released *Skylarking*, which introduced you to Prairie Prince and introduced XTC to a lot of people, especially in America.

**AP:** Yeah, we never thought we were ever going to be accepted by Americans—then "Dear God" came along and suddenly America became our biggest market by far.

A lot of the tracks on *Skylarking*, if not all of them, were cut to clicks in [producer] Todd Rundgren's studio outside Woodstock. Then we flew to San Francisco, where Prairie played to a sort of rough sketch of the music, with guide vocals and a click. That was kind of tricky, but I think he fit himself into the music really well.

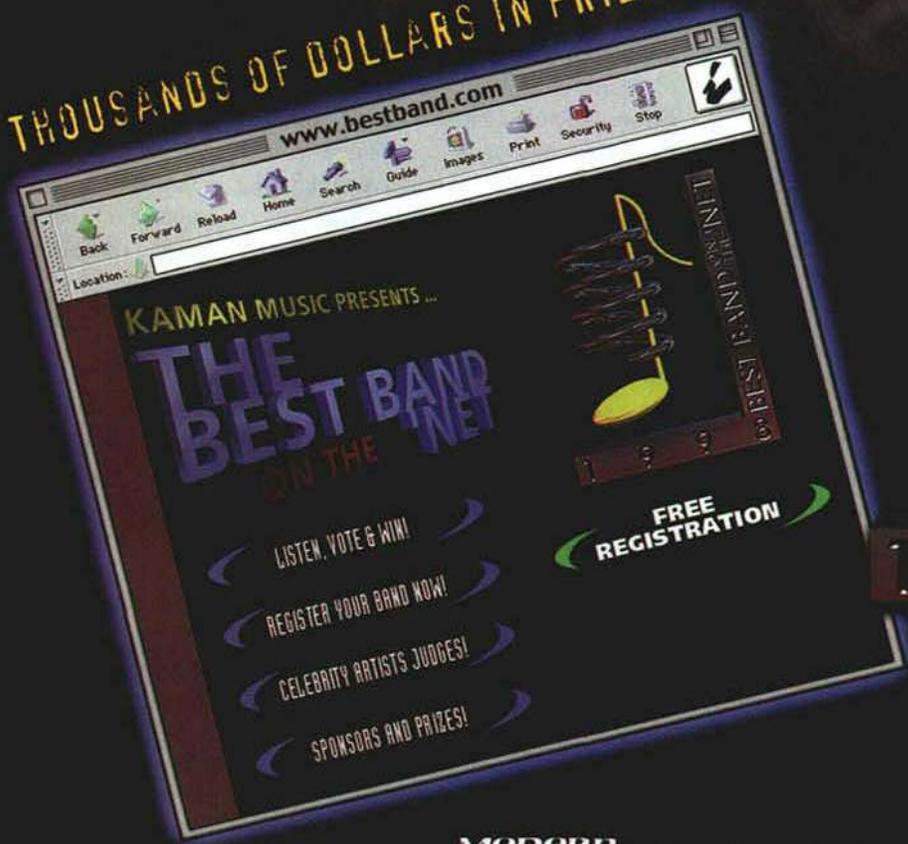
I think Prairie's strong point is the sort of savage way that he can grab stuff off the shelf right by the scruff of the neck. He fit in with a wide range of styles on *Skylarking*—from the very dark, kind of

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pagany stuff on "Sacrificial Bonfire," to samples of Victorian machinery on "The Meeting Place," to the upbeat "Season Cycle." He didn't play anything out of the ordinary, but it just fit like a glove.

**TB:** Even though he has all the technique he needs, he's not afraid to lay back and serve the song.

**AP:** That's it. He stands there with silver platter and offers you whatever your heart desires.

**TB:** Tell me about *Oranges And Lemons*.

**AP:** Pat Mastelotto was recommended by Paul Fox, the producer. And although he was in Mister Mister, we forgave him! [laughs] He was good, very keen. He arrived at the studio early every day to try stuff out and to make suggestions. And I think he was a fan of the band. In rehearsals he'd say, "Hey, let's run through so-and-so" and name some old stuff. He'd know all the drum patterns, while we'd be racking our heads to remember the chords and lyrics.

As far as that album's drums go, there's sampling, programmed stuff, and live playing. "Garden Of Earthly Delights" is Pat playing along with programmed percussion, which is also the case on "Across This Antheap."

**TB:** Pat seems to be hitting a lot of unusual stuff on "Poor Skeleton Steps Out."

**AP:** Well, things that you might think are drums and percussion on that song may be things like guitars with paper threaded through the strings. What sounds like a vacuum cleaner starting up is an electronic cymbal set to "ascend." There's also a sample of a tabla playing along.

On "Scarecrow People," Pat's playing a very screwed-up-sounding drumkit—ultra-dead bass drum and junk percussion. We laid out a load of stuff—hub caps, ashtrays, bottles, saucepans, and things—on a table, and he drummed along on it.

**TB:** *Nonsuch* was sort of a step back from that. It's a much more organic, straight-ahead album.

**AP:** We worked with Dave Mattacks on that one. Ian Gregory had gone to see Fairport Convention, bought a program, and read an interview with Dave in which he was asked, "Is there anyone in the music business that you'd *really* like to work with that you haven't?" And he said, "XTC." We were searching for a drummer at the time, so it was a case of, "Well, phone him up!"

Dave's drumming is extremely solid. He's the master of the one-beat fill. That is, you have a measure with four beats, and where someone might go [imitates busy, multi-tom fill], he'll go, "space, space, space, thump." Or he'll put it on the "4 &" or "3 &." That's his idea of a fill, which is really thrilling, because you just *ache* waiting. Where the hell is he going to put that beat?

**TB:** It's a very subtle album, and the drum parts are deceptively simple. When you actually sit down and try to play along with songs like "Omnibus," you realize that there's a lot going on.

**AP:** "Omnibus" twisted Dave's head a bit. [laughs] You know, I'm trying to sing him this pattern, and the poor devil—who's used to playing folk-rock most of his life—suddenly has to turn his head inside-out and do this "wrong" drumming. It came out quite well, but it took a bit of getting, that one.

**TB:** When you were thinking about a drummer for the new album, what attributes were you looking for?

**AP:** Well, the material was written over a long period of time and covers a wide range of musical styles, so we knew we needed someone who could handle that.

We'd been doing a long series of interviews for an upcoming book [written with music editor Neville Farmer and to be published in the fall by Hyperion Press] specifically about our songs—how they were recorded, that kind of thing—and in the process we had to listen back to everything we'd recorded, which I hadn't done for years.

When we got to *Skylarking*, we started saying, "I love that drum fill there, and I love the upside-down-ness of that roll or the fact that that rhythm there has got that kind of lazy feel to it—that's great." We were in the process of deciding who we were going to work with. Knowing that we got on great with Prairie Prince and that he is a bit of a chameleon who can work different styles, I think we sort of looked at each other and said, "Why don't we just give him a call and ask him over?"

**TB:** What can you tell me about the drumming on the new album?

**AP:** Well, although there are songs with conventional thump-whack drumming—songs like "Playground," straight-ahead rock things—there are more songs that use the implied rhythms I talked about before. There's a number called "Green Man" that has a really nice percussive buoyancy to it. We've done it with samples of various African and Arabic percussive things, plus Prairie is drumming on a couple of kits. "River Of Orchids" has no drums at all, but I think it's intensely rhythmic. It's full of string plucks and offbeat trumpet playing, and the vocal skids in triplets across this jumping straight feel.

On the demo for "I'd Like That" I recorded a bass drum thump along, and me hitting my legs—thinking that we'd do something better later on. But nobody could come up with a better idea, not even Prairie. He said, "I really love the leg sound, so I'll do that." We'll probably put some hand claps on, too. I want it to go into a kind of flamenco area at the end, very exuberant.

Then there's a song of Colin's called "Frivolous Tonight" that is almost Kinks-like in its simplicity. Prairie did some takes, but he wasn't quite sure of them. On the last day that he was with us, he said, "Look, give me one more shot at this." He did it in one take. All the slowing down and speeding up that was needed, he got bang-on.

**TB:** Once the album is released, are you guys going to actually do the tour that's been rumored, driving around the US and picking spots randomly to play from the back of a pickup truck?

**AP:** [laughs] Well, I'd like to do the tour, but we'd have to see about the practicalities of it. I've got so many other immediate worries: getting this album finished—because we're running out of money and time—and working out the rest of our distribution deals. Those are enormous problems that have to be surmounted. Then we can address things like, "How the hell do we promote it?" So, the answer is, maybe and hopefully.

*Editor's note: For more information on XTC and its drummers, check out Chalkhills, one of several Web sites devoted to the band, at [reality.sgi.com/relyph/chalkhills](http://reality.sgi.com/relyph/chalkhills).*



# DW Craviotto Snare Drums

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## In Memoriam

Charlie Perry

Charlie Perry—drummer, author, educator, and member of *Modern Drummer's* Advisory Board—died July 14, of heart failure. He was seventy-four.

Charlie established himself as one of the leading jazz and big band drummers in the New York City scene of the late 1940s and '50s, with such luminaries as Dizzy Gillespie. He played in small-group situations with such artists as Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Stan Getz, and Bud Powell, and helped to propel the big bands of Jimmy Dorsey, Stan Kenton, Benny Goodman, and Skitch Henderson.

But Charlie also found that he had a talent for sharing his knowledge and skills, and he rapidly developed that talent into a busy teaching career that spanned thirty years. Many of today's top drummers benefited significantly from Charlie's guidance and instruction. These include Mickey Hart, Jack DeJohnette, and the late Tony Williams.

The author of several introductory drumming texts under his own name, Charlie was perhaps more well known to a generation of drum students for his collaboration with Jack DeJohnette on *The Art Of Modern Jazz Drumming*, which has become a standard text for jazz drumset instruction.

Charlie also contributed several articles to *Modern Drummer* during its early years of publication, including an entire series of *Teachers' Forum* columns from 1978 through 1982. He was named to *MD's* Advisory Board in July of 1978, and remained involved with the magazine—and the drumming scene in general—until shortly before his death.

The staff of *Modern Drummer* extend their condolences to Charlie's wife, Eve, and to the rest of his family.

## Clarence Vater

The drum industry was saddened recently when Clarence John Vater, founder of Vater Percussion, died suddenly of a heart attack on July 11. He was sixty-five.

"Clarry" Vater learned music retailing from his father-in-law, Jack Adams, owner of Jack's Drumshop in Boston. He later opened his own store in the Boston suburb of Norwood, Massachusetts. With the help of his sons, Ronnie and Alan, Vater began making sticks to sell in his store. He soon sold the shop and dedicated himself to manufacturing drumsticks, initially as a private-label service for other brands. In 1989 Vater and his sons began selling sticks under their own brand name, and the line has enjoyed success ever since. Much of the company's day-to-day operations were eventually taken over by Ronnie, Alan, and their mother, Joan, who remains the company's president. Clarence's focus shifted to finances and programming Vater's computer systems.

The staff of *Modern Drummer* extend their condolences to the Vater family.

## Sixth Montreal Drum Fest Is Scheduled

The sixth annual Montreal Drum Fest will take place this November 14 and 15 at the Pierre-Mercure Hall in downtown Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The festival will feature shows, clinics, and workshops all on one stage, from 10:30 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. each day.

Confirmed artists include: John "J.R." Robinson, Japan's Akira Jimbo, a "family reunion" of Walfredo Reyes Sr., Walfredo Reyes Jr., and Danny Reyes, Adam Nussbaum, Tony Verderosa, Joey Heredia (with Marco Mendoza and Ranato Neto), Fakhas Sico (a djembe group from Senegal), Rick Steel, Denis Corchesne, and Suzanne Morissette. More artists are yet to be added.

Tickets are available by calling (450) 928-1726. Special hotel rates are also available.

## Gretsch Donates Vintage Drums To Music Museum



Gretsch Drum Company president Fred Gretsch (left) and drum expert Ernie Gadzos.

The Gretsch Company has donated several historic and vintage drums for display at the recently opened Museum of Making Music in Carlsbad, California. A unique 1929 36" concert bass drum was restored with a combination of vintage and specially made or modified drum parts. In keeping with the period, the drum features a "dancing lady" scene painted on one drumhead.

Also donated was a four-piece 1949 *Broadcaster* drumset, a 1941 Gretsch catalog, and a mint-condition 1958 synthetic drumhead, still in its original box. The entire project was supervised by Gretsch's drum expert, Ernie Gadzos. Ernie has been playing for over sixty years, including stints with the Glenn Miller Orchestra (under Ray McKinley) and the Vaughn Monroe Orchestra. He joined the Gretsch company in 1986.

The Museum of Making Music is sponsored by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM). It traces over one hundred years of American music and its impact on popular culture.

# Indy Quickies

**Audio-Technica Microphones** has a new Web site. Surf over to [www.audio-technica.com](http://www.audio-technica.com) for the latest the company has to offer.

Master classes with **Steve Houghton, Gary Chaffee, and Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez** are now being offered by **Percussion Institute of Technology (PIT)** in Los Angeles.

The recent **Larrie Londin Scholarship Event** at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas attracted one thousand people to see performances by **Hip Pickles, Dom Famularo, Chester Thompson, Will Calhoun, and Terry Bozzio**. Organized and funded by Sabian Cymbals, the event raised over \$7,000 for the Larrie Londin Scholarship Fund. A videotape of the event will shortly be available, and proceeds from the sale of that tape will also go to the fund. For information on the scholarship, contact the Percussive Arts Society, PO Box 25, Lawton, OK 73502-0025, e-mail: [percarts@pas.org](mailto:percarts@pas.org).

# NPI Percussion Extravaganza



From left: Ron Tutt, D.J. Fontana, Buddy Harman, and Paul Leim

on Friday and Saturday, July 10 and 11. The show—a combination of educational seminars and performance clinics—was also supported by *Not So Modern Drummer* magazine and the Tennessee chapter of the Percussive Arts Society, and was hosted by NPI's director, author and veteran touring drummer Boo McAfee.

The highlight of Friday's event was a roundtable discussion featuring Elvis Presley alumni D.J. Fontana, Buddy Harman, and Ron Tutt, and moderated by Nashville studio stalwart Paul Leim. The discussion focused on tracks that each Elvis drummer (and in some cases *two* of the drummers simultaneously) recorded with the legendary singer, as well as stories produced by years of touring with him.

Saturday's program began with *MD's* own Rick Van Horn, who



Boo McAfee



Rick Van Horn

Taking advantage of the music industry's convergence on the city of Nashville for the Summer NAMM Show, the Nashville Percussion Institute presented its fourth annual Summer Percussion Extravaganza

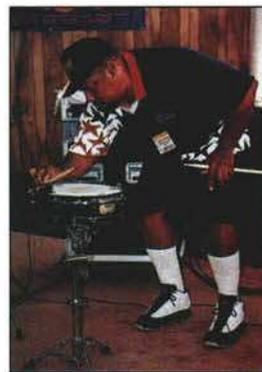
was on hand to discuss the magazine's history and operation. Rick also took the opportunity to demonstrate that the magazine's editors are definitely drum *players* as well as drum journalists.

Fusion specialist (and NPI visiting faculty member) Larry Bright wowed the audience with a combination of funky grooves, blistering double-bass patterns, and a single-stroke roll played with one stick. Larry also discussed how such techniques should be used with discretion, stating, "If *all* you can do is play lots of notes, you're going to be sitting at home waiting for the phone to ring. You have to know when to just lay back and make the music feel good."

Taking an hour off from a session with Peter Frampton, studio great Eddie Bayers shared his personal history, professional experience, and positive outlook with the audience. Eddie fielded questions regarding the studio scene, and offered advice to those aspiring to this highly competitive area of the drum business.

Eddie was followed by band-leader and vibraphone master Terry Gibbs. Recognizing that the audience was primarily drumset players, Terry concentrated his presentation on stories about the drummers he has worked with in the past (a lengthy and stellar list). He also offered opinions on what skills a drummer needs in order to be successful with a band, and stressed how the study of a mallet instrument can expand a drumset player's musical awareness.

Fresh from working with both Stevie Wonder and Al Jarreau, Gerry Brown impressed the audience with his musical finesse and showmanship. Performing alone and with a local bass player, Gerry played intense solos and solid grooves—tossing in his patented stick twirls and back-sticking to the delight of the audience. A high point of his presentation came when he brought a young drummer up and



Larry Bright



Eddie Bayers



Terry Gibbs



Gerry Brown (and friend)



Walfredo Reyes Sr.

instructed him on the finer points of back-sticking while playing paradiddles.

Group participation was the order of the day when Walfredo Reyes Sr. took the stage. Stating that rhythm was a universal language, Walfredo put members of the audience on a variety of instruments, then had the remainder clap and chant along, creating an instant percussion ensemble. He then sat behind his collection of drums and percussion instruments (and *on* one—a cajón) to close the day with a demonstration of his amazing independence and creative rhythmic sense.

## Endorser News

**Will Kennedy** of the Yellowjackets is now a Pearl drummer endorser.

New Zildjian cymbal artists include **Greg Harrington** (Martina McBride), **Mike Clark**, **Bob Moses**, **Chris Phillips** (Squirrel Nut Zippers), **Chris Ralles** (Kenny Loggins), **Don Guillaume** (The Fugees), **Pat McDonald** (Tanya Tucker), and **Oscar Seaton**. Playing Zildjian cymbals and drumsticks are **Zac Hanson** (Hanson), **Paul Doucette** (Matchbox 20), and **Brad Hargreaves** (Third Eye Blind).

Recently switching to Drum Workshop's *Short Stack* kits are **Ash Sood** (Sarah McLaughlin), **Denny Fongheiser**, **Gerald Heyward** (Blackstreet), **Stephen Perkins** (Jane's Addiction/Porno For Pyros), and **Carl Allen**.

Now playing Aquarian drumheads are **Deen Castronovo** (Journey), **J.D. Blair** (Shania Twain), **Peter Turre** (Ray Charles),

**Mike Burch** (River Road), **Spence Smith** (Big Tent Revival), **Todd Bragg** (Caedmon's Call), **Kevin Adkins** (Seven Day Jesus), **Peter Tornell**, and **Keith Killgo**.

Mapex has added Latin drumming stars **Julio Figueroa**, **Chris Trujillo**, and **Jimmy Branley** to its artist roster.

**Rod Morgenstein** and **Omar Hakim** are now endorsing Shure microphones.

**Sean Reinert** (Cynic), **Terry Hansen**, **Jeff Ward** (Percy Sledge), **Gus Rios** (Malevolent Creation), **Andy Megna**, **Rick Inmon** (Jim Stafford), **Joey Goff** (Corey Stevens Band), **Ric Craig** (Michael Crawford), **Alex Arellano** (Power Of Omens), and **Dave Allen** (Jeff Berlin) are playing Spaun drums.

New educational artists playing Sabian cymbals include **Sherrie Maricle** (Diva big band, NY Pops), **Brian Mason** (Phantom Regiment drum caption head), **Dean Gronemeier** (University of Nevada, Las Vegas), and **Jack Mouse** (North Central College, Chicago, and Janice Borla group).

Currently using Slug Percussion products are **Carter Bates** (JilFlirter), **Alvino Bennet**, **Curt Bisquera**, **Patrick Doody** (Lonnie Brooks), **Willie Hayes** (Carey Bell), **Brian Jones** (James Cotton), **Johnny Kelly** (Type O Negative), **Jerry O'Neill** (Voodoo Glow Skulls), **Shawn Pelton** (*Saturday Night Live*), **Gregg Potter**, **Dan Richardson** (Life Of Agony), **David Salcido** (Kent Peeler's Drifters), **Jason Schmidt** (Dry White Toast), **Danny Schuler** (Biohazard), **Kenneth Smith**, **Joe Smyth** (Sawyer Brown), **Twist Turner**, **Mike Terrana** (Tony MacAlpine), **Sam Ulano**, and **Paul Wertico** (Pat Metheny).



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### Study Materials

**Drum books by Joel Rothman.** Send for catalog to: J.R. Publications, 170 N.E. 33rd Street, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33334. Tel: (954) 563-1844.

Almost everything: Percussion music/compact discs at **Drum Specialist**, 1740 MacLean, Glenview, IL 60025. Tel: (847) 724-3937, fax: (847) 724-3880. Biggest US selection. Visa/MasterCard. Web site: [members.aol.com/drmspecial](http://members.aol.com/drmspecial), e-mail: [Drmspecial@aol.com](mailto:Drmspecial@aol.com).

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**London, England:** Study drums with Joel Rothman. Tel: 0171-431-0873.

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Bobby Chiasson's **Jollity Drum Farm** vintage mail-order list includes **Rogers Swiv-O-Matic**. Coach Road, Box 2324, RR #2, Argyle, NY 12809. Tel: (518) 638-8559.

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Vintage Drums, especially Gretsch, Ludwig, Leedy, catalogs, K Zildjians, etc. Blair 'n Drums, tel: (616) 364-0604, or call (800) 555-1212 for toll free number, or fax: (616) 363-2495.

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## Miscellaneous

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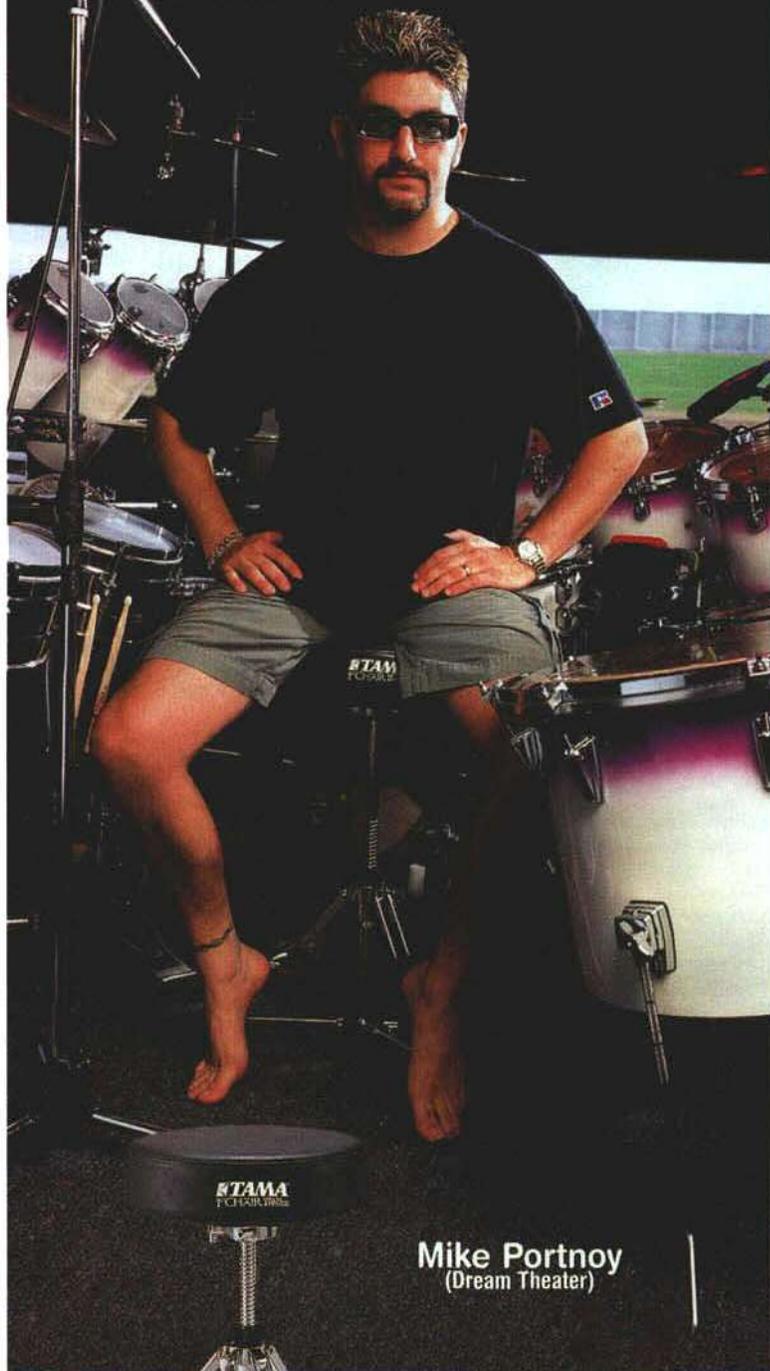
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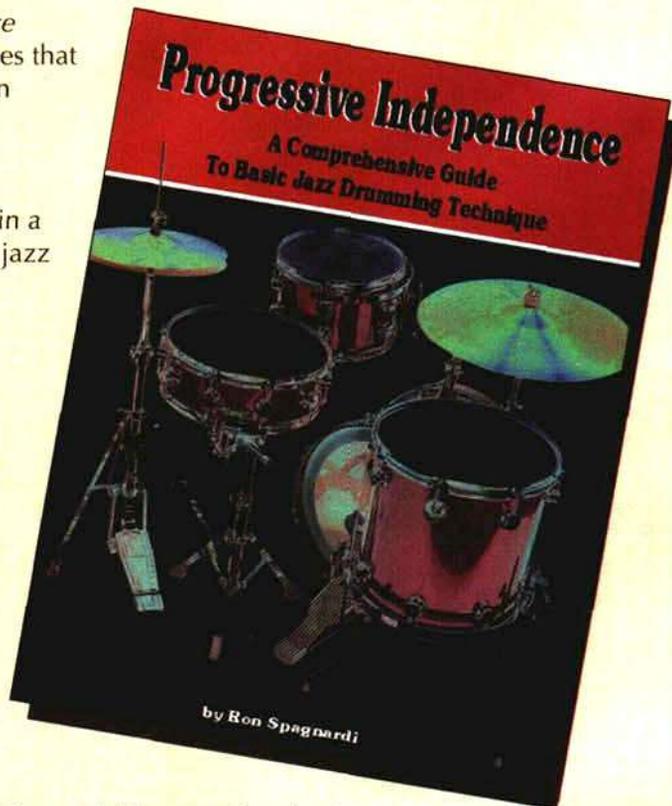
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3. Only show drums, no people.
4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds.
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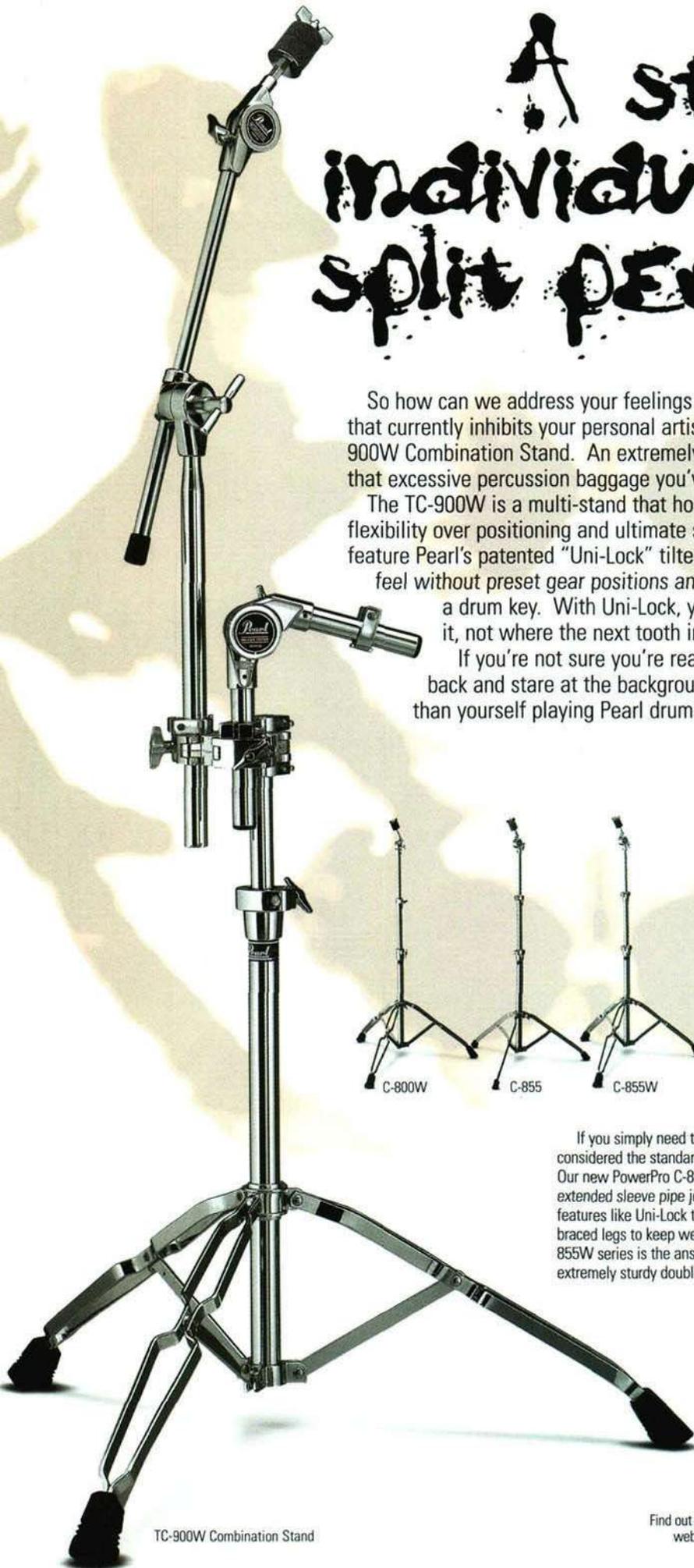


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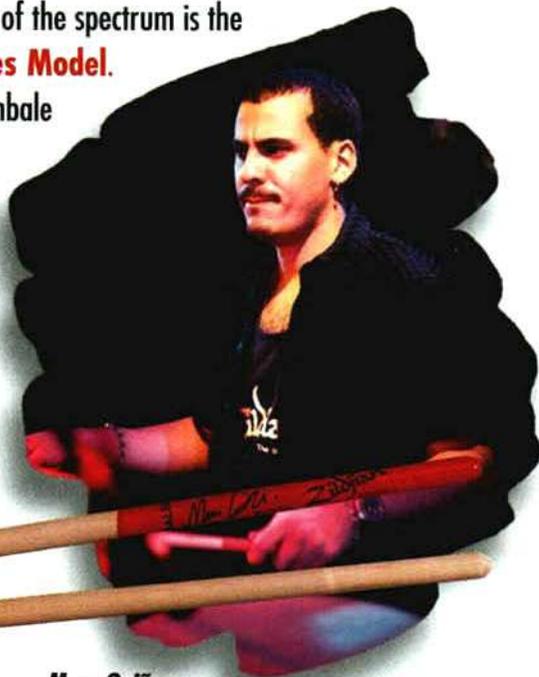
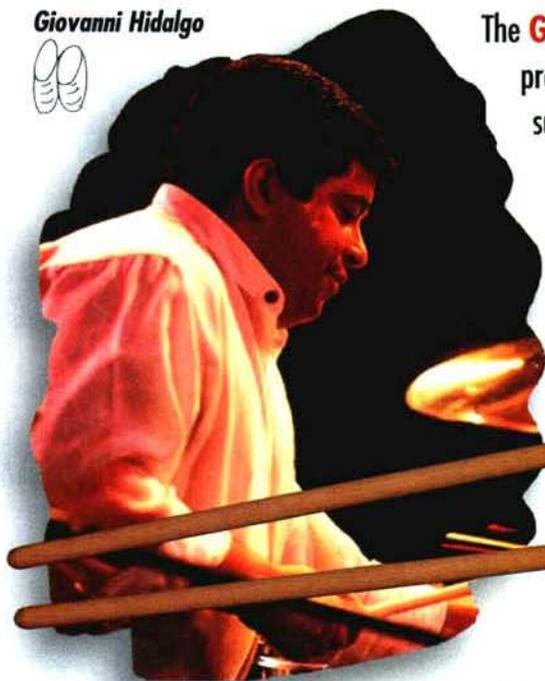
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